**UNIT 7: AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA: FILM**

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## 7.1 Learning Objectives:

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Define film as a mass media and its various characteristics
- Analyze the impact of film on audience and their importance in film making
- Describe the history of Indian film
- Describe the history of Assamese film
- Differentiate between art film and popular film
- Define the concept of documentary

## 7.2 Introduction:

After having a thorough study of the earlier unit, we hope you have developed an adequate understanding of the concept of Photography as a visual form of communication. We have discussed various types of camera and the differences between still and movie photography. We have also discussed the different concepts of composition and exposure in photography with all its characteristics and aspects.

Hence, we will deal with this important media in this unit. The cinema, one of the marvels of the modern world, can be said to have come of age. Since the silent era to today's age of digital Dolby and techno-savvy films, cinema's popularity has never been questioned. In fact, with a global audience now at its disposal and with a global market, the Indian cinema in particular has diversified over the years and now has reached a great height intern of innovations in technique and excellence in overall performance. It is difficult to find its parallel as a mass medium in terms of entertainment, appeal, and effectiveness.

## 7.3 Film as a mass medium:

Film is one of most popular media of mass communication. Prior to the advent of television, as an audio-visual medium it used to which enthrall the audience with its moving spectacles. The seamless flow of moving images had appealed the audience of all categories world over. It is considered one of the most potent means of entertainment.

The messages of film are mass produced, meaning that film is not produced by just one individual. Rather, many people contribute to the making of a film. The ultimate aim of film is to appeal to majority of the people in the audience. Similarly, the film is watched by mass people belonging to different categories.

The audience members are geographically scattered and the messages do not have lasting value among the masses, like any other mass media situation.

The film carries all the characteristics of mass medium, hence it is called a mass medium.

### 7.3.1 Characteristics:

Film came before the advent of radio and television. And when it came it shrouded the audience with spectacles and excitement. In fact, film came with a bang. Its impact was so complete that when people saw the moving images for the first time, they fled the hall thinking that the images are actually coming to them.

However, the appeal that film generates on people is incomparable. Due to some inherent qualities film distinguishes itself from all other mass media. Let us discuss the characteristics of a film.

- A mass medium:

Film is a mass medium as it is viewed by mass audience. The messages are meant for the mass people. It is an audio-visual medium which uses sound, light and action to convey various messages.

- A medium of entertainment:

Film is chiefly a medium of entertainment. Even though it can be equally used for imparting information to the masses it is valued more for its inherent quality of entertaining the audience.

- A collaborative medium:

Film is a collaborative medium in the sense that it is the result of the collaborative efforts of a large number of people. It means that film involves the contribution of so many people like the producer, director, script writer, choreographer, music director, action director, editor, make up artist, cinematography besides the actors and actress. All these people work in a team and contribute towards the making of the ultimate product, or the film.

- A medium of art:

Film making is an art by any virtue. A film is a director's craft. It is the director who leaves a mark on the ultimate look of a film by his artistry and sense of aesthetics. So, like any other art, film is also a product of an individual creation, a gifted genius, who is capable of turning the medium into a form of story telling applying different tools.

- A medium of development:

Film is an effective medium for communicating with the masses. Film creates magic on the minds of the audience, who are temporarily transcended into a different world, a world of illusion. Film is primarily considered a medium of entertainment. However, seeing the impact that it generates, its potential as a medium for communicating development messages can not be under estimated. As it is capable of leaving a lasting impression on the audience, it can be used as a medium for developmental purposes of the people.

- A medium that demands people's concentration:

For the audience to understand a film, they must remain involved. They should pay attention to what they hear or see in the film which spreads both ideas, messages and entertainment.

- A realistic but expensive medium:

Film creates illusions of reality. Whatever is portrayed in films is believed to be true or realistic by the audience. Hence, film offers numerous possibilities of creating realistic experiences to the audience but of course with a price tag of its own. Film is very expensive as compared to television and radio.

- Oldest electronic medium:

Film is the oldest of all other three electronic media. Film came in the year 1895 before the radio (1927) and television (1959) and since then it has been entertaining the masses. With It is the most popular means of entertainment.

- More effective:

Film is extremely effective when used as a medium of mass communication. Its effectiveness emanates from its audio-visual nature. As seeing is believing, when people watch a film they get

emotionally attached of the characters in the film who are sometimes depicted as larger than life. Many times we identify ourselves with them.

**7.3.2 Audience of film:**

Like the directors, producers, script writers and other important personnel who put in combined efforts in making a film, the audience also forms a crucial part by pronouncing the fate of the film. The success and failure of any film depends on the acceptance and non-acceptance of a film by the audience. Hence, the role of the audience in film making can not be ignored. They are as important as the script of a film thus it can be said that film is a kingdom ruled by two kings-script and audience.

It is true that a film is considered to be successful when it is watched and accepted by the largest possible audience. Audience never remains loyal to any one film or any one film maker. But their loyalty always sticks to their money. They are ready to pay when the film has been able to touch their senses some way or the other. The audience is satisfied when the film has been able to quench their thirst for good film and their expectations are met.

The audience is thus the single most important factor in film making. Therefore, needless to say that establishing a rapport with the audience and to acknowledged their taste is of paramount importance for a film maker.

**7.3.3 Impact of film on audience**:

Since the beginning film has always been fund to have exerted significant influence on the minds of the audience. No other mass media has as much impact on audience as film. The most important role of film is to provide entertainment and this accounts for the immense popularity of film as a mass media among the common mans. Lest us now discuss the impact of cinema.

- Cinema operates as an agent of change. It is capable of changing the attitudes, beliefs and value system of the people. It is also one of the which, by, binding forces of society, binding caste, creed and communities, creates harmony in society. So it has a great role to play in social cohesion.

- Cinema is an effective medium of providing information. It is capable of portraying realities audio-visually. Providing information and portraying the realities are effectively done by film.
- Cinema's appeal is all encompassing. Film makers are after called dream merchants because of their portraying a world which every member of the audience wishes to have in need life. Through the careless flow of images film makers create that dream before their eyes audience it is like dream come true, and for the always to switish.

**7.3.4 Film as an industry**:

It is a world that never blinks. Indian cinema is a dream machine that churns out a new fantasy, a new romance every day. The 800 odd films the industry produces each year, makes it the most prolific film factory in the world.

When you think of the handful of films made in such film capitals as France and England, India's cinematic centers of Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bangalore appear almost impossibly unreal churning out films by the hundreds. In fact, India is the largest manufacturer of feature films in the world at the moment.

Some may disagree but the fact remains that this very cinema - particularly that peculiar genre of mainstream Hindi cinema - is possibly the single most binding force that unites communities and people in a land as diverse as India.

**7.3.5 Art and popular movie**:

Largely Indian cinema has been categorized into two distinct categories, Art and popular movies. Art movies are also called 'parallel cinema'.

Art films are serious films, made for artistic contemplation of the audience. They are predominantly artistic in nature, amalgamating technique and style and personifying director's sense of aesthetics. The art films are not made for garnering profits; on the contrary, the thematic supremacy rules the roost. The emphasis is on depiction of contemporary socio-political situations of the society and it is aimed at

reaching the elite or intellectual class of the society, with a motive to affect their thought processes. The art movies had their beginning during the period of new wave films in India which was incepted by film makers like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihalini, Mani Kaul, Kumar Sahni, Sai Paranjpe, and in the recent time Meera Nair, Deepa Mehta etc. The latter are also credited with continuing the tradition of parallel cinema in India.

On the other hand, the popular movies are commercial movies made with the supreme motive of earning profits. They are meant for satisfying the entertainment needs of the people. Also termed as masala movies or formula movies, they are mostly more rich in color, and treatment, and deals with simple stories. Sex, glamour, music, mass appeal etc. are some of the features of this category of films. The number of such movies are more in India, and also very popular among the audience. Some of the best known film makers of this category are K Asif, Manmohan Desai, Naseer Hussain, Raj Kapoor, Subhash Ghai, Ram Gopal Verma, Ashotosh Gowarikar, Karan Johar, Yash Chopra, Suraj Barjatya, to name a few.

**7.3.6 Concept of film appreciation**:

Film is studied for its intrinsic art value. Film is studied by organizing it into a discipline which has evolved over the decades. The formal study of film as a discipline has not been a very age old tradition, even though efforts were made in the past to study film in a structured manner by film critics of forties and fifties. However, it is only in seventies that the study of films as a discipline took shape when it incorporated various systematic approaches for the purpose.

Film appreciation is the organized way of studying films. It is the body of techniques and methods applied to study the various aspects of film. It is the art and science of approaching the multi dimensional rendition of film and film making.

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – A**

1. What do you mean by New Wave Film?

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2. Discuss the importance of audience in film making?

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## 7.4 Film in India:

### Pre-cinema age

It was an age old tradition in India to tell stories from the epics using hand-drawn tableaux images in scroll paintings, with accompanying live sounds. These tales, mostly the familiar stories of gods and goddesses, are revealed slowly through choreographic movements of painted glass slides in a lantern, which create illusions of movements. So when the moving pictures or cinema was introduced, the Indian viewer took the new experience as something already familiar to him.

The strong influence of its traditional arts, music, dance and theatrical elements accompanying India cinema since its early days, is probably responsible for its characteristic enthusiasm for inserting song and dance sequences in Indian cinema, even till today.

Initially, films were inspired by mythological and historical themes. They were aimed at preaching values. Dadasaheb Phalke is considered the 'father of Indian Cinema'. Phalke's was the pioneering role in bringing about film movement in India.

### Pre Phalke Era

The first exposure to motion pictures which India received was in 1896, when the Lumiere Brothers' Chinematographe unveiled six soundless short films at Watson Hotel, , Bombay. And the first exposing of celluloid in camera by an Indian and its consequent screening took place in 1899, when Harishchandra Bhatvadekar (Save Dada) shot two short films and exhibited them under Edison's projecting kinetoscope.

Hiralal Sen and F.B. Thanawalla were two other Indian pioneers engaged in the production of short films in Calcutta and

Bombay in 1900. In 1912, N.G. Chitre and R.G. Torney made a silent feature film '*Pundalik*' which was released on May 18.

Dada Saheb Phalke was responsible for the production of India's first fully indigenous silent feature film '*Raja Harishchandra*' which heralded the birth of the Indian film industry. Dhiren Ganguly, Baburao Painter, Suchet Singh, Ardershir Israni, and V. Santharam were the prominent film makers of the twenties.

**The talkie era**

The first Indian talkie '*Alam Ara*' produced by the Imperial film company and directed by Ardershir Irani was released in 1931 at the Majestic Cinema in Bombay. The year 1931 marked the beginning of the talking ear in many other places in India.

**V Shantaram** was arguably the most innovative and ambitious film maker of the time. From his first talkie *Ayodhya ka Raja* (1932), he was a filmmaker with a distinct style and social concern. He dealt with issues like cast system, religious bigotry and women's rights. *Amarjyoti* (1936) was an allegory on the oppression of women in which the protagonist seeks revenge. It could perhaps be called the first women's lib film in India.

The family drama ruled the charts after the mythological. The 1930s to 1940s was the period of transformation in India because of some troublesome time insulated by the Great Depression, World War II, the Indian independence movement, and the violence of the Partition. There were a few filmmakers who tackled tough social issues, or used the struggle for Indian independence as a backdrop for their plots.

1950s saw the colour coming to Indian cinema. However, the majority of films continued to be black-and-white until the mid-1960s. At this time, lavish romantic musicals and melodramas were the staple fare.

**Golden fifties:**

Fifties saw the rise of great directors like Mehboob, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt and Raj Kapoor who changed the fate of Indian cinema. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, romantic movies and action films took precedence and actors like Rajesh Khanna, Dharmendra and the likes became the heart throb of the country men. In the mid-1970s, romantic films made way for gritty, violent films about gangsters and bandits.

**New Wave Films:**

Films by the new wave directors were often characterized by a fresh brilliance of technique that was thought to have overshadowed their subject matter. Although it was never clearly defined as a movement, the *New-Wave* stimulated discussion about the cinema and helped demonstrate that films could achieve both commercial and artistic success.

**The evolution new wave in India:**

During the 1960s intellectual film makers and story writers frustrated with mindless dance and song genre of the then existing cinema, turned towards a stream of films which depicted reality from an aesthetic perspective. Most films made at this stage were funded by state governments to promote an authentic art genre from Indian cinema fraternity.

Through his first film *Pather Panchali* (1955) Satyajit Ray became the pioneer of a genre of films later known as the 'Indian Parallel Cinema'. Even though Ritwik Ghatak made his first film *Nagarik* in 1952, he became well known by his film *Ajantrik* (1958) and became a strong presence in parallel cinema. Mrinal Sen made his first film *Raatbhor* in 1955.

Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome* (1969) and Mani Kaul's *Uski Roti* (1969), both sponsored by State owned Film Finance Corporation (FFC), inspired by the French nouvelle vague, set new film sensibility and cinematic language in India. This movement was labelled as the 'New Indian Cinema' or the 'New Wave Indian Cinema'.

Cinematography in such films followed no preconceived notions of style. Visual effects and music were based on the characters' mood and development

FTII graduates Kumar Shahani, Mani Kaul, Saeed Mirza, Shyam Benegal and Ketan Mehta were the important names of New Wave Indian Cinema in Hindi. Mani Kaul's *Ashad Ka Ek Din* (1971) and *Duvidha* (1973), Kumar Shahni's *Maya Darpan* (1972) and Shyam Benegal's *Ankur* (1973) played important role in this new movement in Hindi during the 1970s. M S Sathyu's *Garam Hawa* (1973) is a remarkable film in this category. Govind Nihilani, who entered film industry as Shyam Benegal's cameraman, made his directorial debut through *Aakrosh* (1980). He continued making socio-political films like *Party* (1984), *Tamas* (1987) and *Drishti* (1990). Saeed Mizra made notable political films like *Arvind Desai ki Ajeeb Dastan* (1978), *Albert Pinto ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai* (1980), *Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho!* (1984) and *Salim Langde Pe Mat Ro* (1989).

The success that New India Cinema enjoyed in the 1970s and early 1980s could largely be attributed to Shyam Benegal's quartet *Ankur* (1973), *Nishan*t (1975), *Manthan* (1976) and *Bhumika* (1977), which were artistically superior yet commercially also viable films. Tapping fresh talent mainly from the FTII and National School of Drama like Shabana Azmi, Naseeruddi Shah, Om Puri, Smita Patil, Kulbhushan Kharbanda and Amrish Puri, Benegal has made several sensitive and stimulating films.

**New Wave and Film societies and institutions:**

The first film society was founded in Bombay in 1943 and Satyajit Ray founded a film society in Calcutta in 1947. By the beginning of 1970s there existed above 150 film societies all over India. Through these societies people could see the best of Indian cinema and also they got access to the best of foreign cinema. The first International Film Festival of India was held in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta by the Films Division in 1952. Western classics like De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* shown in the film festival created waves among young filmmakers who were frustrated with the mindless song-dance dramas made in India. The Film Training Institute of India was set up

in Pune in 1961 and the National Film Archives of India (NFAI) was established in 1964. The Film Finance Corporation (FFC) was set up by the Government in 1960, with the objective of giving loans to directors who wanted to make feature films outside the commercial circuit.

From the 1960s through the 1980s, the art film or the parallel cinema was usually government-aided cinema. Such directors could get federal or state government grants to produce non-commercial films on Indian themes. Their films were showcased at state film festivals and on the government-run TV.

All these factors lead Indian Cinema to a revolutionary change, a new genre of Indian films arrived, which are often termed as the 'New Wave Indian Cinema' or the 'New Indian Cinema'.

**The recent past**

In Mumbai, the 80s marked the dichotomy of Indian cinema. On the one hand it produced Govind Nihalani's film *Ardh Satya* about nexus between crime and politics. Mahesh Bhatt came on the scene by producing sophisticated commercial films. His *Arth* (1983) proved a great success. Although it dealt with the perennial lover triangle, its cinematic values set it apart from they films on similar themes. Even more importantly, the film ended by asserting the Indian woman's independence, a theme seldom attempted in Hindi films.

**The 1990s**

With the process of globalization in the 90s the whole scenario changed, including that of the Indian cinema. The new wave films resorted to sharper critique of commodification of culture while the popular ones escaped into traditionalism, family values, sanctity of relationship - in fact all those aspects of social life which came under threat as a result of marketisation, foreign television channels and displacement of indigenous industries under the onslaught of multinational companies.

These films gave the audiences a false sense of security and, as a result, became highly popular. The trend was set by Sooraj

Barjatia's *Hum Apke Hain Kaun* which, with the help of 14 engrossing songs, created the illusion of happy joint families by glorifying wedding rituals. Ironically, in Barjatia's celluloid family, modernity is permissible but only in material terms- expanding business, sprawling bungalows and opulent interiors.

Other films like *Dil Wale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, *Dil To Pagal Hai* and *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* also pleaded for a behavioural code sanctified by tradition and custom like obedience to the patriarchal law, respect for elders and an overwhelming desire to belong to the fold, clan or community. Or, they celebrated love, friendship and commitment and the need to internalise conflicts.

But it is hazardous to make generalisations about Hindi cinema. During the same period, film makers like Mani Ratnam (*Roja*), Gulzar (*Maachis*), Kaazad Gustad (*Bombay Boys*) Nagesh Kukynoor (*Hyderabad Blues)* and Deepa Mehta (*Fire*), made films which had individuality, explored new themes and imparted freshness to the film scene.

All this shows the vigour and vibrancy of the Indian cinema and its tremendous capacity to keep abreast of changes. It is these qualities which have made Indian cinema a dominant urban culture influencing all other art forms: television, theatre, advertising, music, new modes of information technology. Its influence has spilled into practical politics also. Tamil Nadu has been ruled by film personalities for decades and film clubs have become vote banks. In Andhra, it was again left to a film actor to restore "self pride" to the Telugus. Elsewhere, film actors, on the basis of their popularity, have entered into legislature, both in States and at the Centre.

### 7.4.1 Regional Cinema

The best film makers in the country have come from regional cinema - Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada. The best-known of them is, of course, the late Satyajit Ray.

Adoor Gopalakrishnan through his first film *Swayamvaram* (1972) extended the New Wave Cinema to Malayalam cinema. Aravindan through his first film *Uttarayanam* (1974) strengthened the

movement. John Abraham, K R Mohanan and P A Backer were strong presence of the new Malayalam cinema.

Kannada was the other film industry in South India, which took over the cinema movement in South India. B V Karanth, Girish Karnad and Girish Kasaravalli spearheaded the Kannada parallel cinema. Girish Kasaravalli, a graduate from the Pune Film Institute, directed his first film, *Ghata Shradha* in 1977, which won the National award for best film.

In Assamese, Jahnu Barua made his first film *Aparoopa* (1982). His *Halodhia Choraye Baodhan Khali* (1987), which achieved international recognition, dealt with the social problems of rural Assam. Before him, Late Bhabendra Nath Saikia had been relentlessly trying to popularize meaningful cinema through his series of award winning films till his death. Even now there are a number of film makers like Manju Baruah,

### 7.4.2 Assamese film:

Assamese cinema had a kaleidoscopic growth. The first Assamese film was Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's 'Joymoti' released in 1935. 'Joymoti' was made at a time when there was no infrastructure available for such ambitious efforts. Jyoti Prasad took up this mammoth project after he was exposed to Bengali films while he was at Calcutta. This initiative made him establish a small temporary studio at factory office of the Bholaguri tea estate. However, all his toils did not yield lucrative result as his maiden venture failed on the audience. But he did not lose heart and went on to make 'Indramalati', his second film in the year 1939.

Notably, a little over 300 films in Assamese language and other dialects of Assam have been produced so far since the time of the first Assamese film "Joymoti". Out of the lot some of the films could earn national recognition. The themes of these films ranged from mythological to love story, historical to comedy, patriotic to horror etc and gave the audience the overwhelming experience of celluloid.

It is worthwhile to mention that Assamese films have won awards at the National as well as International level from time to time. Films like 'Piyali Phukan', 'Mak Aru Maram', 'Tezimala' produced in

the fifties were awarded President's Silver Medal. Similarly, during the same period 'Puberun' got International acclaim in the Berlin Film Festival.

The golden era of Assamese film Industry:

The golden era of Assamese film industry was marked by proliferation of film activities in Assam. This period not only saw an increase in number of films produced per annum but also uplift in the kind of films produced in terms of themes and other cinematic techniques. It all happened during seventies and eighties in which films like 'Jug Biyug', 'Upaja Sunar Mati', 'Bhaiti', 'Chameli Memsaab', 'Meghamukti', 'Duronir Rang', 'Ajoli Nabau', 'Sendur', 'Ghar Sansar', 'Buwari', 'Sunmaina' and host of other hits and super hit films were produced.

Some of the popular film makers of Assam are Jyoti Prasad Aggarwal, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, Phani Sharma, Parbati Prasad Baruah, Kamal Narayan Choudhury, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Shiva Thakur, Ajan Barua, Padum Barua, Nip Baruah, Sailya Baruah, Brajen Baruah, Abdul Majid, Jahnu Baruah, Dr, Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Munin Baruah, Manju Bora to name a few.

### 7.4.3 A few important film makers of India:

Indian film has a great reckoning world over. Because of its diversity and vastness the Indian cinema has been able to impress the viewers all across the global. This global presence of Indian film industry has not been achieved in a day or two. It has been the result of relentless efforts of host of film makers and film personalities over the decades that have turned the Indian cinema into a global household name today. The list of such film personalities is an exhaustive one but we are going to discuss.

- **Dada Saheb Phalke**:

Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, popularly called as Dada Saheb Phalke, was the pioneer of Indian cinema. Called the 'Father of Indian Cinema, Phalke made the first silent film 'Raja Harishchandra', which was also the first feature film in India. And this film had set the genre

of mythological film in India. He made series of films thereafter, most of which were mythological in nature and in some of his films are concerned with social issues. Some of his notable films are : 'Bhasmasur Mohini', 'Lanka Dahan', 'Bhakta Prahlad', etc.

Phalke set up his company in Nasik (Maharashtra) in 1918, called 'Phalke and Company', which was the first independent company to set up a full-fledged studio system to produce in house studio productions. Phalke not only made feature film, for which he is rightly remembered but also mode valuable by contribution making short films, documentaries and also one talkie film Gangavataram', which was the last film of his life as a film maker.

- **Satyajit Ray:**

Satyajit Ray, the doyen of Indian cinema, was the first Indian to have earned International acclaim. His name and fame superseded all other film makers of his time and even those who have made films after his departure from Indian film industry. It is the sheer artistic brilliance of his that films set him apart from the rest. Even while dealing with run of the mill stories ray demonstrated his uncommon ability as a film maker log making them astatically pleasing. He was a pioneer of new wave film making in India and imported a personified individualistic approach to film making. His was a repertoire of films, marked by technical brilliance and simple storyline taken from the mundane realities of human lives his characters, even the most common ones, come out in concrete individuality. A film maker to use the medium for aesthetic ends, Ray was never unmindful of the social and cultural issues. In all his almost thirty odd films, he redefined the boundaries of Indian art movement. Some of his noted films that got him world class fame were : 'Pather Pachali' (1955), 'Aparajto' (1956) 'Apur Sansar' (1960), 'Devi' (1960), 'Mahanagar' (1963), 'Charulata' (1964), 'Ganasatru' (1975), 'Gopi Gayen Bagha Bayen' (1969), etc. The list is an exhaustive one and includes both popular and parallel films.

- **Jyotiprasad Aggarwala**:

The name of the Jyoti Prasad Agarwala shines gloriously in the annals of Assamese film for his being the pioneer of Assamese film industry. An artist of composite talents he was equally apt at

composing songs, giving music, play writing, film making, besides writing poetry and excelling in other creative fields. This has made him a cultural icon of Assam.

With his first film 'Joymoti' he set the trend for Assamese film industry in the year 1935. He studied music at Edinburgh and Cambridge but introduced the traditional forms of Assamese music in his plays, films etc.

- **Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia**:

Another notable film maker of Assam was Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, who made seven films during his short career as a film maker. A Physicist from London, Dr. Saikia was not only an established film maker but also earned as a established short story writer and play wright of great excellence who can claim credit for laying solid the foundation of Assamese film industry after the initial efforts of Jyoti Prasad.

Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia will always be remembered for his contribution to Assamese film movement through his films like Sandhyaraag (1977), Agnishnaan (1985), Kolahol (88), Sarothi ('91), Abartan (93), Kalasandhya (97) and Exploration (95). It is significant that in all his films he made sensitive and sympathetic portrayal of women.

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – B**

1. Fill in the blanks.

a) ---------- is considered the 'father of Indian Cinema'.

b) The first Indian talkie ---------- produced by the Imperial film company and directed by ---------- was released in 1931

c) Through his first film ---------- Satyajit Ray became the pioneer of a genre of films later known as the 'Indian Parallel Cinema'.

d) From the ----------through the ----------, the art film or the parallel cinema was usually government-aided cinema.

e) The first Assamese film was Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's 'Joymoti' released in ----------.

## 7.5 Central Board of Film Certification

The Central Board of Film Certification was set up on 1 June, 1983. It was set up by the Central Government under the powers granted it by the Cinematograph Act (1952) and the Cinematograph Rules (1958). The objective of the Board is to make provision for the certification of cinematograph films for exhibition and for regulating exhibitions by means of cinematographs. The board consists of a Chairman and not less than twelve and not more than twenty five other members appointed by the Central Government. Advisory Panels are constituted at each regional office by the Central government which also decides in consultation with CBFC, the number of panel members for each office.

The producer of a film has to submit an application for a certificate to CBFC at the first place paying a fee. The film is then examined by the Examination Committee. However, the film must be complete in all respects before it is placed for examination. All previews of films for the purpose of certification and the reports and records related to it are treated as confidential, including the members of the screening committee. The CBFC has to come out with specific reasons when it asks for cuts in a film and it must also furnish the particulars of guidelines under which cuts are sought to be affected to the film producer.

The recommendations of the Examination Committee are sent to the Chairman of the CBFC within three days of the preview. Within the next seven days, the producer is informed about the Board of the Certificate issued. Under the Cinematograph Act 1952, the films are certified 'U' (for unrestricted exhibition), 'A' (for public exhibition restricted to adults only), 'UA' (for unrestricted public exhibition subject to parental guidance for children below the age of twelve) and 'S' (for public exhibition restricted to specialized audiences such as doctors, artists, etc.).

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – C**

1. What are the certificates issued by CBFC in India?

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## 7.6 Concept of documentaries:

The term 'Documentary' was coined by John Grierson, the British documentary maker, in the year 1926. The documentaries are non-fictional films, in which the maker tries to depict the real world. Unlike fictional or feature films, there is no scope for presenting the imaginary events. The filmed events in the documentaries are unstaged. The documentary film maker actually goes to the field and makes an objective record of real events through observation.

The documentaries are more educative in purpose and focus on dealing with social issue. It tries to bring to light the unheard or the hidden aspects of any event or issue.

Historically documentary evolved out of the reaction to the prevailing studio system with selected cast, chosen from the elite class. Hence, the documentary deals primarily with real people and real events, sliced out of the real world. The adherence to reality gives it the authenticity. However, the documentaries are not above criticism, especially on the ground of realism. Many argue that it is not possible to remain absolutely objective while making a documentary.

Some of the famous documentaries and documentary makers are, '*Nanook of the North*' by Robert Flaherty based on the life of an Eskimo family, 'Drifters' by John Grierson based on the lives of the fishermen of the Northern sea, 'High School' by Wiseman based on the life in a school, 'Man with a movie camera' by Dziga Vertov based on scenes from everyday life that add up to represent the working day-from waking up, going to work, leisure activities, "The Thin Blue Line" by Errol Morris based on the murder of Dallas Police Officer Robert Wood in 1976, 'Roger and Me' by Micheal Moore based on the decline of the town Flint in Michigan as a result of General Motor's chairman Roger Smith's strategy of series of closures of factories in Flint in order to shift the plant to Mexico where the labour cost was very less, 'Ferenheight 9/11 by Micheal Moore based on September

9/11 tragic event and President George Bush's involvement in the fall of the event.

The pioneer of documentary films in India was P.V.Pathy, who had gained training in Paris. Two other doyens of Indian documentary movement were D.G.Tendulkar and K.S.Hirlekar, who had training from outside India and later contributed immensely towards the growth and development of documentary films in India. However, that was just a humble beginning of documentary making in 1940's. At present there is a spurt of documentary activities in India and every year a good number of documentaries are made in various regional languages in India which own acclaim in both national and International arena.

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – D**

1. What is a documentary? How is it different from feature films?

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## 7.7 Let us sum up

Film came before the advent of television and radio and since its inception film has always attracted the audience. The film is a mass medium and carries all the characteristics of mass media. Film is predominantly entertaining in nature and its impact on audience is presumed to be very vast.

Film is not only a mass medium but also a very collaborative medium, a medium that incorporates the efforts of many people in one.

The audience plays a very crucial role in deciding the fate of a film. It is the audience whose acceptance is the primary concern for any film maker because it is they who can make or break the fate of a film.

Indian cinema had its beginning when Dada Saheb Phalke made 'Raja Harishchandra', considered to be the first Indian film. Since then there has been no looking back for the Indian film industry as many film makers over the ages have contributed to establishing the world's largest film industry, the Indian film industry. Ardeshir Irani, Raj Kapoor, Hiralal Sen, Dhiren Ganguly, Mehboob, Guru Dutt etc. are some of the notable examples of such film makers.

The Indian movies can largely be divided into two broad categories, Art and Popular movies. The art movies are the result of the New Wave film movement in India, characterized by technical brilliance and artistic superiority. The pioneers of this movement were Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihalini, etc.

On the other hand we also have popular movies which are made with an aim of garnering profits. More appropriately called formula movies, the popular movies are characterized by sex, violence, dance, songs, grand locales, larger than life portrayal of events and characters etc. They are largely made for appealing the largest audience possible and also to satisfy the lowest denominator of taste in the society.

India also has a prosperous regional film industry; one of the prominent among them is the Assamese film industry, established by the efforts of Jyoti Prasad Agarwal way back in 1935. some of the acclaimed film makers of Assamese film industry are Jahnu Barua, Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Manju Bora, etc.

The Documentaries are another genre of film making, in which the film maker tries to showcase the reality. They are non-fictional films depicting real life events and dealing with real issues and problems plaguing the society.

## 7.8 Further Readings


1) Encyclopedia of Journalism, by Om Gupta
2) The Cinemas of India, by Yves Thoraval
3) The Oxford Guide to Film Studies, by John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson.

4) Mahurat, edited by Ankuran Dutta, Cotton College

## 7.9 Answers to the Check your Progress

**A.**

**1.** The New Wave films are basically intellectual films, devoid of the characteristic concern of popular films with sex, drama, violence and music, which are the features of popular films of India. They are more taken for artistic brilliance which supersedes all other aspects of film making. Depiction of realistic events, is one of the chief features of the new wave films. More often called as art movies, the new wave films are credited with technical supremacy and artistic design and aesthetic quality.

**2.** The audience plays a crucial part in pronouncing the fate of a film. No matter how technically sound or artistically superior or expensive a movie is for a film maker until and unless the audience accept the film it is bound to fail in the box office. Hence, a film maker should try to make a film that has the potential to appeal to the audience.

**3.** Art movies are serious cinemas. In these films the commercial aspect gets a backstage while artistic values find a prominence their making. The purpose of an art movie is the representation of the socio-cultural-political aspect of the society in an aesthetic manner.

On the other hand, popular or parallel movies are commercial movies made with a commercial interest in mind. They are rightly termed as 'formula movies' as depiction of sex, violence, music, dance, glorification of characters and events etc are the dominant characteristics of such movies.

**B.**

**1.** Fill in the blanks.

**a)** Dadasaheb Phalke is considered the 'father of Indian Cinema'.

**b)** The first Indian talkie *Alam Ara* produced by the Imperial film company and directed by Ardershir Irani was released in 1931.

**c)** Through his first film *Pather Panchali* (1955) Satyajit Ray became the pioneer of a genre of films later known as the 'Indian Parallel Cinema'.

**d)** From the 1960s through the 1980s, the art film or the parallel cinema was usually government-aided cinema.

**e)** The first Assamese film was Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's '*Joymoti*' released in 1935.

**C.**

**1.** Under the Cinematograph Act 1952, CBFC certifies four types of certificates. These are - 'U' (for unrestricted exhibition), 'A' (for public exhibition restricted to adults only), 'UA' (for unrestricted public exhibition subject to parental guidance for children below the age of twelve) and 'S' (for public exhibition restricted to specialized audiences such as doctors, artists, etc.).

**D.**

**1.** Documentary is another genre of film. Documentaries portray the slice of reality. The real events, real characters and real ambience- are the dominant features of documentaries. Fiction has no place in a documentary; instead it is a well researched and minutely executed product that allows the audience to face the prevailing reality.

## 7.10 Possible Questions:

1) Differentiate between art movies and popular movies using suitable examples.
2) What do you understand by New-Wave films? Discuss with suitable examples.
3) Briefly analyze the history and growth of Assamese film industry. Also describe the contribution of Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia to it.

4) What is a documentary? Write about the features of documentaries.
5) Who was Satyajit Ray? Briefly discuss his contribution to the Indian films.
6) Discuss the characteristics of cinema and the importance of audience in film making.