

## Film and Print Media

Latha went to her great grandfather's town in summer holidays. She wanted to see the latest film with her great grandfather Rangaiah. Since Rangaiah was not well they talked about his childhood days. Latha was surprised to know that there were no films in her grandfather's childhood. There were plays and folk *artistes* performing various arts like *Harikatha*, *Burrakhatha* and *Tholubommalata*. The plays were both *Padya natakam*, famous for rendering poems with lengthy ragas, and *Gadya natakam*. Rangaiah recalled vividly the experience of watching, they play *Satya Harishchandra* and waking until dawn. The other plays he recalled were '*Bhuvana Vijayam*', '*Kanyashulkam*', '*Bobbili Yudham*', '*Vara Vikrayam*'. Latha has acted in a play that they put up for their school anniversary and also saw a stage performance. But she was surprised to know that at one time they were the major form of entertainment.

### Birth of Cinema

The birth of cinema in India can be attributed to Lumiere brother's first public show at Watson Hotel in Mumbai on July 7, 1896. In 1887 William Friese-Green of England invented camera capable of taking upto ten photographs per second using perforated celluloid film (Fig 22.1). In 1895 Woodwill Latham invented cinema projector capable of exhibiting lengthy film reels without break.

- Ask your parents about the plays during their childhood.
- What changes have occurred in drama over the period?



Fig 22.1:  
Camera (above),  
Projector (below)



### Evolution of cinema

While drama is to be performed live with all the instruments for music, development of technology has helped in shooting of a play and projecting it at several places at

the same time and again and again. Further the cinema could be shot over a period of time and mixing and editing of the footage can give an entirely new effect. The plays written by George Bernard Shaw and Shakespeare were visualised with camera and exhibited on the screen as a film. Similarly, popular plays in Telugu like *Vara Vikrayam*, *Satya Harishchandra*, *Kanyashulkam* were made into films. The stage artistes made a beeline to the studios for a chance in films. The popularity of plays has decreased significantly while the films have gained prominence. However, several film artistes who became famous continue to work for the theatre like Gollapudi Maruti Rao, Naseeruddin Shah.



Fig 22.2: Photograph of a scene from Shakespeare's play

- What are differences in a stage play and a film? Make a comparative table.
- With the help of your teacher discuss the changes in the livelihood opportunities from play to films.

Latha was surprised to know that initially the cinema did not have sound and that the projection was to be

accompanied by live musicians and sometimes by commentary by the projectionist. It was only after several technical developments that the films had sound and were known as 'talkies' as they could talk.

In Telugu the first *mooki* was '*Bhishma Pratigna*'. The first talkie movie was '*Bhakta Prahalada*' released in 1931, produced by H. M. Reddy.

- Make a mime presentation of five minutes and a play for five minutes. Compare the ease of performance, the themes that can be presented and the communication to the audience.

The first Talkie movie in Hindi '*Alam Ara*' was released in 1931. This was made by Ardeshir Irani.

The father of Telugu film industry is Raghupathi Venkaiah. He was born in Bandar



Fig 22.3: Poster of Alam Ara



Raghupathi Venkaiah

and settled in Madras as a still photographer. He built a cinema studio named 'Gaiety' in Madras. As the owner of Cinema Studios and theatres and

the producer of cinemas, he rendered his valuable services to Telugu industry. Hence, Government of Andhra Pradesh



Fig 22.4: Nandi Award

awards Raghupathi Venkaiah award every year along with Nandi awards to people for their contributions to Telugu film industry.

### Cinema - form of entertainment

Before the cinema there were various forms of entertainment like folk art forms, folk dances, classical dances, music, dramas etc. But gradually cinema became the major form of entertainment. The songs from films have a popularity of their own. Earlier radio and now T V broadcast these songs independent of the movie. The actors have a following in the public and fan clubs have emerged. Popular dialogues from films have become part of daily life. The style and dresses of the actors and actresses are imitated by the people. With the advent of television, one need not go to a theatre to watch a movie. There are dedicated channels and time slots for telecasting films, songs, news about film industry etc.

- Make a list of sources of entertainment in your village or town. How will you assess their popularity? What changes are occurring over time?
- Select some popular TV channels. Form a team of 4 to 5 children. Each team should assess the proportion of

time allocated by a channel to various themes like religion, News, films, serials, etc. Share your findings with other teams in the class.

### Cinema and freedom movement

Rangaiah is visibly excited even now

when he talks about the films *Mala Pilla* and *Rythu Bidda* released in 1938 and 1939. *Mala Pilla* is about untouchability and about entry of



dalits into the temple. The protagonist is Chowdarayya, a Gandhian, who preaches to the upper caste to mend their ways and exhorts the dalits to give up drinking and get educated. The priest's son falls in love with a dalit girl. The priest's wife caught in a fire is saved by a dalit, and that is when the priest realises that there should be no untouchability. The dalits are given entry into the temple and the marriage of the priest's son and the dalit girl is blessed.

*Rythu Bidda* is about the Zamindari system, which shows the plight of the toiling farmers. A farmer who takes a loan from the zamindar votes for the peasant party in elections. For this he is harassed and put to difficulties. The zamindar's son is kidnapped by his own brother, which brings a change of heart in the zamindar. In the true Gandhian thinking of Trusteeship he gives away his lands to the tillers of the land.

Latha told Rangaiah that their school screened the film 'Gandhi'. Rangaiah informed her that this film was made in 1982 by Richard Attenborough in English. What she saw was the dubbed film in Telugu. This was

also dubbed into Hindi and many regional languages.

Several films on national movement were made later. In Telugu, 'Alluri Seetharamaraju' and 'Komaram Bheem' are films related to the struggles of the tribal people.

The British passed the Forest Act in 1882 and were denying the tribals free movement in the forest and *Podu* cultivation. Raju led the tribals in protesting against the British harassment and raided several police stations, popular as Rampa Rebellion of 1922. They fought the British both with their traditional weapons and arms captured during the raids. The British deployed a company of Assam Rifles under Rutherford and ultimately killed Raju and all the tribal leaders including Gantam Dora. The film apart from being a big commercial success won the National Best Lyric award for the song 'Telugu Veera Levara' by Srirangam Srinivasarao, popularly known as Sri Sri.

'Komaram Bheem' was made into a feature film and was released in July 2010, after more than 20 years of its making. Mukumdangari Bhupal Reddy played the lead role. The film director Allani Sridhar received the Best First Film Director Award. The film also received Best Feature Film on National Integration and several state level Nandi awards. Komaram Bheem is a Gond tribal from Adilabad. Though illiterate, he fought against the exploitation of the tribals by the Nizam government. He took up both legal



battles and armed struggles. Bheem was killed on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1940 in his fight with the Nizam government at Babe Jhari.

There are several other films in Telugu which are on national movement or have a part of the story focusing on it. Similarly there are several songs on patriotism and national movement.

Suddenly Rangaiah started singing the song '*Vedalipo Tella Dora Vedalipo...*' ('Go away white ruler, go away...') from the film '*Mana Desam*' made in 1949. Latha sang '*Bhale taata mana Bapuji...*', which is regularly played in her school on Gandhi Jayanthi and other national celebrations. She was surprised to know from her grandfather that this song was from the film '*Donga Ramudu*' released in 1955.

- List at least two more films which tell about the freedom struggle.
- Collect patriotic songs from the Telugu movies.

### Influence of film on the society

While the society influences the art, and hence films, it is also true that the films influence the society. Hair and dress styles follow the latest popular films. Dialogues, songs and mannerisms are also copied and mimicked. The fan following is the highest and most organised for various heroes and heroines and there are several fan organisations. No other professionals nor sports persons have such a fan following.

- Form two groups and have a debate on pros and cons of fan clubs.

Films can influence opinions and ideas of people in the society. There are several

films in Telugu depicting patriotism, people's struggles for land, real life heroes who have braved many challenges, fought against corruption etc. While this is so, there are several bad influences of films. Women are shown in poor light in most of the films, which strengthens the gender discrimination in the society. Smoking and drinking are often depicted in the films which influence the young impressionable minds as acts of adults and heroism. Many films are depicting more violence and are vulgar. Juveniles caught in acts of robberies and violence have said that they got the idea after seeing such and such a film. Children exposed to too much of violence can either become immune to violence or violent themselves.

On the other hand there are also films made about social or political events happening in society. These are called documentary films.

- Analyse the latest movie that you saw for its content and influence on children like you.
- Make a list of movies that various students in the class have seen during the month. Rank them on a scale of 0 to 5 for violence; where 5 is for films with no violence and 0 for films with repulsive violence.

### Film as an industry

The Telugu film industry has a record of number of films produced in a year – averaging about 200, which includes dubbed films. The film industry which was initially located in Chennai shifted to

Hyderabad with the encouragement from the government. The production of each film costs anywhere between Rs. 5 to 35 crores. There are more than 2000 theatres in the state. The film industry employs thousands of people directly in production and indirectly in exhibition.

### Print Media



In the earlier classes you have learnt about some great texts. Initially people wrote on various materials like palm leaves, bark and cloth.

With the introduction of paper production in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the printing machine by Gutenberg in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century things have changed. Earlier reading and writing was limited to the elite few. Printing has played a role in spreading literacy to the masses.

Apart from making copies of various texts easily available, printing has introduced the culture of newspapers and



magazines which are published daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly intervals.

- There are journals for various purposes. Collect a cover page of old issues of various magazines available in your village/ town and classify them according to the subject. Are there any other ways of classifying these journals?

Print media includes daily newspapers, weeklies, monthlies and other forms of printed journals. The contribution of print media in providing information and knowledge is remarkable. Even after the advent of electronic media, the print media had not lost its importance.

The newspapers play a very important role in our daily life. Many researchers consider “The Peking Gazette”, published from China, as the first newspaper. It was started in the year 618. In the initial stages, this newspaper was handwritten. Later it was printed and circulated. The first news paper in the modern concept was published at Oxford in London in 1655. It was the ‘Oxford Gazette’. In USA, the first newspaper was “Public Occurrences” which was launched in 1690. It was from Calcutta the first newspaper was published in India in 1780. It’s name was ‘Bengal Gazette’. It has another title ‘Calcutta Advertiser’. The Indian Gazette, the Calcutta Gazette, Bengal Journals, India’s second, third, Fourth newspapers also started from Calcutta. The first newspaper in Telugu was

‘*Krishna Patrika*’. It was edited by Mutnuri Krishna Rao.

Technological revolution has modernised the print media. For a long time, newspapers were produced by hand composing. Later, these were replaced by monotype and linotype. In this process, a machine operated by a keyboard was used to compose letters. This has also become obsolete now and type setting computers, offset and laser printing have taken over. In earlier days, newspapers were printed only in black and white. But now almost all the newspapers are printed in colour.

The newspapers give information about current affairs/ politics at various levels, business, sports, films etc.

- Bring to the classroom various newspapers available in your area. Form as many teams. Now analyse the papers for the way the news is organised.
- Collect one week issues of the above newspapers. In the above teams make a list of special features and the days on which they appear and present it to the class. Give your reasons why such features are published by the newspaper.

### Role of Newspapers in Cultural Awakening and Freedom Movement

During the British period, Social reformers began actively campaigning for radical changes in the society. The reformation of Hinduism, the move for abolition of ‘*Sati*’ and efforts to encourage widow re-marriage were some of the

major reforms. Inspired by these great leaders, many newspapers were started in different parts of the country.

Many freedom fighters of Indian Independence were the editors of newspapers. *Amrit Bazar Patrika* (started in 1868) was edited by Sisir Kumar Ghosh, *Bengalee* (started in 1833) was edited by Surendranadh Banerjee, *'The Hindu'* (started in 1878) was edited by G. Subramaniya Iyer, *'Kesari'* (started in 1881) was edited by Balagangadhara Tilak. The editors expressed their views through these newspapers. These papers played a prominent role in arousing national

consciousness among Indians. You have already read in brief about the *Krishna Patrika* edited by Mutnuri Krishna Rao in an earlier chapter.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote profusely. He took over the 'Young India' in 1918 and started another journal 'Navjeevan' in Gujarati. He wrote extensively in 'Harijan' under the editorship of Mahadev Desai.

### Key words

1. Projector
2. Commentary
3. Compose
4. Gazette
5. Publish



### Improve your learning

1. Write any three differences between drama and film. AS<sub>1</sub>
2. Do you think any story or poem in your language textbook could be made into a small film? Can you think of various people you will need in making a film based on that? AS<sub>1</sub>
3. Some people argue "Cinema is a powerful tool to transform the society" others argue "It has a negative impact". Whom do you agree with and why? AS<sub>4</sub>
4. What were the major themes discussed in early films? How is it similar or different from the films you have seen? AS<sub>1</sub>
5. How did newspapers play a major role in freedom movement? AS<sub>6</sub>
6. Collect the newspaper clippings that depict latest issues. Exhibit them in your classroom. AS<sub>1</sub>
7. What are the reasons for the disappearance of dramas now-a-days.

### Project:

Prepare the script for a drama. Perform the drama in your class.