
UNIT 7 FINAL FILM PROJECTS*

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you would be able to:

- Discuss how film projects are conceptualised.
- Describe the process from story to a finished product.
- Explain the role that state plays.
- Discuss examples of some famous film projects and their behind the scenes story.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit, we observed the relationship between ‘camera and social research’ and we explored the use of camera for conducting social research. In the present unit ‘Filming Oral testimonies, Interviews and Interaction: Case Studies, we are going to take this discussion further and will be discussing Final Film Projects.

Discussing the process of film making, here with Final Film Projects we are looking at how the progression happens from an idea to story and then culminates into a finished product which is then brought in front of the world as a ‘film’.

7.2 STAGES OF FILM-MAKING

Film making is a long drawn out process. Let us have a look at the different stages of film making.

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7.2.1 Role of Producer and the Story idea

Project initiation can vary from project to project. The idea from a book or social life/ society can be turned into a script or a brief story line. Producer can come up with the idea himself or a director/ writer can also suggest the idea to him. Producer selects the story/writer, guides the story-writing process then gets the funding, appoints the creative team, overlooks the production process and supervises the post-production till the release of the film. Marketing and distribution processes may also involve the Producer.

7.2.2 Start of Production

The idea of film can be from event/ person (biography)/ issue all of which can be from history or from current times. True story or fictionalized stories (deals/ agreements worked out with writers in case of book/biography) all of which are given a dramatic treatment which would make audience identify with the story's conflict/change and characterization added for interest. Before the start of the film, project finalization requires writer, script, budget, director and cast of leading actors are selected. Then at the stage of planning selected options are narrowed down before the start of shooting and generally visualization for the project happens. Casting for the film and shoot details, locations, etc. get decided as well. Assistants and other professionals are hired, budget is worked out and schedule is finalized.

7.2.3 Production

The production period can be divided neatly into three phases: preparation, the actual shooting and post-production. The actual shooting period is the shortest as it is also the most costly and establishes the value of the accomplished project.

As the project starts Line Producer or Unit Production Manager (UPM) is appointed to handle responsibilities regarding the following:

- 1) Appointing and firing people,
- 2) Regulations and clearances required,
- 3) Equipment availability for the crew,
- 4) Travel and transportations,
- 5) Daily production cost analysis,
- 6) Functioning of all departments and processes with regard to film making.

(Line Producers and UPM have a minor difference as Line Producers can also be creatively involved along with all the tasks mentioned above while UPM are in charge for logistical and organizational details).

A location office is selected where base-office is created and from where operations are conducted for different shoot locations. Script is turned into a shooting script as scenes are numbered and location details are specified with director, producer and the UPM. Casting of supporting cast is completed and a shooting schedule is issued by the First Assistant Director (AD) with full details of everything needed to complete work on each day. Final budget of daily/ weekly costs is worked out by UDM.

The director takes the charge once shooting starts. First AD is the person responsible for logistics and the second AD is responsible for the background of each scene. The Director of Photography is the in-charge of camera and crew and decides the *appearance* of the film including its lighting. Recording of dialogues is done by production sound mixer and boom operator. Art decorator, production designer, set decorator decide the sets and backdrop aesthetics for the scenes. Costume designers, hair and make-up professionals work on the artists' and their looks in the film. Office staff and communications are supervised by production coordinator and production accountant keeps the records, bills updated.

7.2.4 Shoot

A call sheet is developed as the work is announced before the day of the shoot. The following day's work is listed in the call sheet with reporting time mentioned for each department. Advertisement, dress and make-up professionals arrive first, followed by the actors who have their scene listed for the day. The assumption is that once the camera starts rolling everyone must be ready as the camera waits for nobody. A single scene may require different shots until technically it is acceptable to DP, sound mixer and camera operator and Director. Script may undergo changes where lines get edited/ added by the actors on the sets. After a day's shoot gets finished, the film is sent to a laboratory for developing it and then transferred to videotape for the director, editor, executives and producer to have a look at it.

7.2.5 Post-Production

Post- production period can be divided into three parts: editing, music and effects addition and dubbing and printing. Re-shooting of scenes is scheduled if the story demands. The flow and final look of the film gets decided by the editor during post production.

7.2.6 Distribution and Publicity

Once post production work gets finished the final product requires distributors and publicity is done on various media forums to attract interest to the film.

When we discuss Indian films we also have to take into account the aspect of music and songs which are an integral part of Indian films. Sometimes the music is even composed ahead of the film-shoot. The music director, lyricist with the film director and producer decide the timing of songs in the film, singers, dance choreographers, editings etc.

In India, *Alam Ara* was the first 'talkie' film which had released in 1931. Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Punjabi are different languages in which Indian films are popularly made.

ACTIVITY

At your Study Center with other students make a short film on a social issue.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What is the role of the Producer?

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2) Production can be divided into how many parts?

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7.3 ROLE OF STATE

In India, the Cinematography Act was passed in 1952. Since then to accommodate the changes that have happened, a committee was formed under Justice Mudgil to propose changes. Based on the recommendations, the Cinematograph Bill was proposed in 2013.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting deals with all the matters relating to films, i.e. promoting production, dissemination and preservation of film content. It also looks into the organization of International Film Festival of India, other national and international film festivals, sanctioning of films, granting film shooting permission, and also holding National Film Awards. No film can be publicly viewed in India without the Certification by the Board of Film Certification. The guidelines given by CBFC have to be strictly adhered to.

Guidelines by CBFC

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 5B of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 (37 of 1952) and in supersession of the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting No. S.O. 9E , dated 7th January, 1978, except as respects things done or omitted to be done before such supersession, the Central Government hereby directs that in sanctioning films of public exhibition , the Board of Film Certification shall be guided by the following principles.Objectives of Film Certification

- The medium of film remains responsible and sensitive to the values and standards of society;
- Artistic expression and creative freedom are not unduly curbed;

- Certification is responsible to social changes;
- The medium of film provides clean and healthy entertainment; and
- As far as possible, the film is of aesthetic value and cinematically of a good standard.

In pursuance of the above objectives, the CBFC shall ensure that anti-social activities such as violence are not glorified or justified the modus operandi of criminals, other visuals or words likely to incite the commission of any offence are not depicted; scenes -showing involvement of children in violence as victims or perpetrators or as forced witnesses to violence, or showing children as being subjected to any form of child abuse; showing abuse or ridicule of physically and mentally handicapped persons; and showing cruelty to, or abuse of animals, are not presented needlessly pointless or avoidable scenes of violence, cruelty and horror, scenes of violence primarily intended to provide entertainment and such scenes as may have the effect of de-sensitising or de-humanising people are not shown; scenes which have the effect of justifying or glorifying drinking are not shown; scenes tending to encourage, justify or glamorise drug addiction are not shown; scenes tending to encourage, justify or glamorise consumption of tobacco or smoking are not shown; human sensibilities are not offended by vulgarity, obscenity or depravity; such dual meaning words as obviously cater to baser instincts are not allowed; scenes degrading or denigrating women in any manner are not presented; scenes involving sexual violence against women like attempt to rape, rape or any form of molestation or scenes of a similar nature are avoided, and if any such incidence is germane to the theme, they shall be reduced to the minimum and no details are shown; scenes showing sexual perversions shall be avoided and if such matters are germane to the theme they shall be reduced to the minimum and no details are shown, visuals or words contemptuous of racial, religious or other groups are not presented; visuals or words which promote communal, obscurantist, anti-scientific and anti-national attitude are not presented; the sovereignty and integrity of India is not called in question; the security of the State is not jeopardized or endangered; friendly relations with foreign States are not strained; public order is not endangered; visuals or words involving defamation of an individual or a body of individuals, or contempt of court are not presented.

EXPLANATION: Scenes that tend to create scorn, disgrace or disregard of rules or undermine the dignity of court will come under the term "Contempt of Court": and national symbols and emblems are not shown except in accordance with the provisions of the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950 (12 of 1950).

The Board of Film Certification shall also ensure that the film is judged in its entirety from the point of view of its overall impact; and

Is examined in the light of the period depicted in the films and the contemporary standards of the country and the people to which the film relates provided that the film does not deprave the morality of the audience.

Films that meet the above – mentioned criteria but are considered unsuitable for exhibition to non-adults shall be certified for exhibition to adult audiences only.

While certifying films for unrestricted public exhibition, the Board shall ensure that the film is suitable for family viewing, that is to say, the film shall be such that all the members of the family including children can view it together.

If the Board, having regard to the nature, content and theme of the film is of the opinion that it is necessary to caution the parents / guardian to consider as to whether any child below the age of twelve years maybe allowed to see such a film, the film shall be certified for unrestricted public exhibition with an endorsement to that effect.

If the Board having regard to the nature, content and theme of the film, is of the opinion that the exhibition of the film should be restricted to members of any profession or any class of persons, the film shall be certified for public exhibition restricted to the specialized audiences to be specified by the Board in this behalf.

The Board shall scrutinize the titles of the films carefully and ensure that they are not provocative, vulgar, offensive or violative of any of the above-mentioned guidelines.

Source: <https://www.cbfcindia.gov.in/main/guidelines.html>

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What is the role of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with regard to films?

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7.4 FILM MAKING STORIES

We have seen some of the biggest films on screen but some of these classic films also have interesting film making stories about them. Let us look at some of the iconic Hindi films and stories of their making.

7.4.1 Mother India

Mother India released in 1957, a remake of Mehboob Khan's earlier film Aurat (1940). The title was borrowed from Katherine Mayo's book (1927, Mother India) which criticized Indian society. The movie is loosely based on The Mother (1934) a film which depicted the struggles of a Chinese woman abandoned by her husband and raising her children. Mother India, epitomizing Indian womanhood, is the

story of a poor village woman named Radha (Nargis), who struggles to raise her sons and survives against a cunning money-lender in the absence of her husband.

Chatterjee (2002) describes the film and its opening shot, which was a tight close-up of an old woman's face. She is old but strong, villagers come to request her to inaugurate the dam and put a garland on her. She seems irritated and the story goes into flashback where she is shown as young bride getting married to actor Raj Kumar.

The film reflected high moral values and self-sacrifice, also somewhere plays on the idea of nation as the mother alluding to a strong sense of nationalism and nation-building. The film was shot in Mumbai's Mehboob Studios and in the villages of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. Shot mainly on sync sound, very little dubbing as Khan was against dubbing, with dialogues mostly in vernacular Hindi. Naushad gave the music and did some experimentations, including Western classical music and orchestra to Hindi cinema.

It was an epic film for its time and was a huge commercial hit. It won many awards, including for Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress, Best Sound Design, Best Cinematography etc. It became the first Indian film ever to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film from India, film came close to winning the award but lost by a single vote. The government of India supported their travel as they represented India at the Academy Awards.

7.4.2 Sholay

Anupama Chopra in *Sholay the Making of a Classic* (2000) talks about the making of the famous film *Sholay* (1975). It is basically a revenge story. It was developed from four lines that writers Salim-Javed had shared with Ramesh Sippy and he asked them to develop it into a script. The actors and characters kept changing. Gabbar's role was originally given to Danny Denzongpa and later went to newcomer who was suggested by Javed Akhtar, Amjad Khan. Sanjeev Kumar and Amitabh Bachchan were both interested in Gabbar Singh's role and Dharmendra wanted to play Thakur. Ramnagar, 50 kms from Bangalore was selected as location shooting of the film.

Sippy shot Hema Malini's scenes in the first half of the schedule, as Hema Malini's dialogues were long, which she had trouble in memorizing. Javed Akhtar had to enact them for her to help her get the character. Some single shots took even twenty days as Sippy wanted each shot perfectly enacted. Some real life situations were made a part of script, for example, the scene where Jai (Amitabh Bachchan) tries to convince Basanti's aunt (Mausi) for Veeru, came from real life. Javed Akhtar had asked Salim Khan to meet Honey Irani's mom and convince her about him as a suitable son-in-law.

The film *Sholay* won the Filmfare Award for Editing. CBFC had asked the makers to change the climax of the movie where Thakur (Sanjeev Kumar) kills Gabbar (Amjad Khan) to Gabbar gets arrested by the police.

7.4.3 Mughal- E- Azam

Mughal-E-Azam (1960) directed by K. Asif starring Madhubala, Dilip Kumar and Prithviraj Kapoor, is one of the most grand of the film with massive budget

(the most expensive film of its time). It had magnificent sets and authentic costumes, spectacular cinematography and art direction. Elaborate costumes were embroidered in Surat and stitched in Delhi. The jewellery came from Hyderabad, the crowns from Kolhapur, weapons from Rajasthan and the shoes from Agra. For the war scenes 2000 camels, 4000 horses and 8000 extras - some of them actual soldiers on loan from the Indian Army. The entire movie was colorized, restored and re-released worldwide in 2009.

The story idea came around 1944-45 as K. Asif thought of adapting Imtiaz Ali Taj's play about a love story between Salim, the Mughal prince and Anarkali, courtesan-dancer in Akbar's court. Although, the story has no basis in historical fact. In 1946, when the first shooting schedule began, for the roles of Akbar, Salim and Anarkali, Chandra Mohan, D.K. Sapru, and Nargis were taken respectively. Due to Partition as some of his cast and other team members went to Pakistan he had to shoot major portions again of the film, another reason of its delay and increase in budget. The chains worn by Madhubala were authentic and heavy and she took days to recover post-shooting.

Naushad gave the music and K. Asif wanted Bade Ghulam Ali to sing for the movie. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan Sahab quoted a big figure but K Asif agreed and paid him the advance then and there. Each scene was shot meticulously paying attention to the details. Mughal-E-Azam was a huge commercial success too, breaking all box office records at the time of its release. The film was originally shot in black and white with only a few scenes and one song in color.

Check Your Progress 3

1) How many awards had Mother India won?

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2) How did CBFC change the climax of Sholay?

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3) From where did the original idea came for Mughal- E- Azam?

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7.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have looked at how film projects are conceptualized in detail have described the process from story to a finished film. We have also examined the role that state plays through certification and its guidelines for film exhibition in India. Lastly, we discussed examples of few famous films like *Mughal e Azam*, *Sholay* and *Mother India* in detail as successful film projects and their behind the scene stories from conceptualization, to period film depictions, to casting, shooting, locations, etc.

7.6 KEYWORDS

Call sheet : Day's work is listed in the call sheet with reporting time mentioned for each department.

Location Office : Base-office from where operations are conducted for different shoot locations.

First AD : Person responsible for logistics.

Second AD : Person responsible for the background of each scene.

Director of Photography : In-charge of camera and crew and decides the appearance of the film including its lighting.

7.7 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

Benedetti, Robert (2002) *From Concept to Screen*, Allyn and Bacon, London.

Chatterjee, Gayatri (2002) *Mother India*, British Film Institute.

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7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Producer selects the story/ writer, guides the story-writing process then gets the funding, appoints the creative team, overlooks the production process, and supervises over the post-production up to the point of release of the film. Marketing and distribution processes may also involve the Producer.
- 2) The production period can be divided neatly into three phases: preparation, the actual shooting and post-production.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting deals with all the matters relating

to films, i.e. promoting production, dissemination and preservation of film content including organization of International Film Festival of India, other national and international film festivals, sanctioning of films, granting film shooting permission, holding National Film Awards are handled in Films Wing.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) It won many awards including for Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress, Best Sound Design, Best Cinematography etc. It also became the first Indian film ever to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.
- 2) CBFC had asked the makers to change the climax of the movie where Thakur (Sanjeev Kumar) kills Gabbar (Amjad Khan) to Gabbar gets arrested by the police.
- 3) Mughal- E- Azam's story is an adaptation of Imtiaz Ali Taj's play.

