



## Film and Print Media

Latha went to her great grandfather's town in the summer holidays. She wanted to watch 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 great grandfather's childhood. There were performances of various arts like plays, *Harikatha*, *Burrakhatha* and *Tholubommallata* by folk artistes. The plays were both *Padya natakam*, famous for rendering poems with lengthy ragas, and *Gadya natakam*. Rangaiah vividly recalled the experience of watching the play *Satya Harishchandra* and staying awake until dawn. The other plays he recalled were '*Bhuvana Vijayam*', '*Kanyashulkam*', '*Bobbili Yudham*' and '*Vara Vikrayam*'. Latha has acted in a play that they performed for their school anniversary and has also seen a stage performance. But she was surprised to know that at one time, they were the major form of entertainment.

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



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



### 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.

### 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 the 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

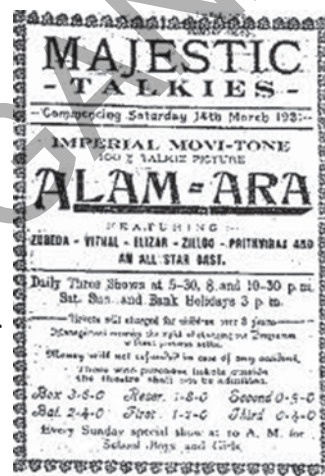


Fig 22.3: Poster of *Alam Ara*



Raghupathi Venkaiah

and settled in Madras as a still photographer. He built a cinema studio named 'Gaity' in Madras. As the owner of Cinema Studios and Theatres and the pro-

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



Fig 22.4: Nandi Award

awards, Raghupathi Venkaiah Award every year along with Nandi to artistes for their contributions to Telugu film industry.

### Cinema - form of entertainment

Before 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 television broadcasts 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 a part of daily life. The style and dresses of the actors and actresses are imitated by the people. With the advent of TV, one need not go to a theatre to watch a movie. There are dedicated channels and time slots for telecasting films, songs, news about the film industry etc.

- Make a list of sources of entertainment in your village or town. How will you assess their popularity? What changes are taking place over time?

### 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 a film about untouchability and about the 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, who is caught in a fire, is saved by a dalit, and the priest realises that there should be no untouchability. Dalits are the 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 through 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 film was also dubbed into Hindi and many regional languages.

Several films on national movement were made later. In Telugu, 'Maa Bhoomi' and 'Komaram Bheem' are films based on landlordism and the struggles of the tribal people respectively.

"Maa Bhoomi", directed by Narasinga Rao, depicts the revolt by Telangana farmers. Ramaiah, the main character as, was a labourer of a zamindar who owns 50 thousand acres of land. Ramaiah migrates to Hyderabad and joins a factory. He interacts and develops friendship with communist leaders. He learns about changes



brought about by the Revolution in Russia. He decides to return to the village and struggles against Feudalism. Thus, bringing an end to the Nizam's rule through an armed struggle, after the merger of Hyderabad, the Indian Army suppresses the armed struggle and during the course, Ramaiah dies. The songs “ *Bandenaka Bandi Katti*” and “*Palleturi Pillagada, Pashulagache Monagada*” became very popular among the people and are popular even today.

‘Komram Bheem’ was made into a feature film and was released in July 2010, after more than 20 years of its making. Mukundamgari Bhupal Reddy played the lead role. The director of the film 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. Komram Bheem is a Gond tribal from Present Asifabad. 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 based on national movements 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 are based on the freedom struggle.
- Collect some patriotic songs from 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 dressing 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 the 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 depict violence and vulgar language. 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 violence can either be-

come immune to violence or become violent themselves.

On the other hand, there are also films made on 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.



Apart from making copies of various texts easily available, printing also introduced the culture of newspapers and magazines which are published daily, weekly, fortnightly, and monthly.

## Film as an industry

The Telugu film industry has a record of number of films produced in a year – averaging about 200, which also 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 50 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 few elite people. Printing has played an important role in spreading literacy to the masses.

- There are also journals on various subjects. Collect the cover pages 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 newspaper with 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 that the first newspaper was published in India in 1780. Its name was ‘Bengal Gazette’. It also had 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 written by hand. 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, 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 for why such features are published by the newspaper.



**Golkonda news paper cutting in 1938**

## 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.

Andhra Mahasabha published pamphlet called *vettichakiri raddu* (abolish the bonded labour) to sensitise the people of Hyderabad state towards the civic problems





under the rule of Nizam landlords, and jagirdars. Some of the important magazines and publications in Telangana were : *Nilagiripathrika*, edited by Sabdavisu Venkatarama Narasimha Rao of the then Nalgonda; *Tenugu pathrika* by Vaddiraju brothers from Inugurthi in the then Warangal. *Golkonda*, edited by Suravaram Pratapa Reddy, began with the objective to

create nationalist feelings; Urdu magazine *Rayyat*, edited by Mandumula Narasing Rao, highlighted the peasant problems; Shoiabulla Khan's *Imroz* published articles that criticized the dictatorial rule of Nizam, and gundaism of the landlords. As a result, his hands were cut off and he was murdered by the Razakars.

Mahatma Gandhi also 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.

### Keywords

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

### Improve your learning

- Find any three differences between drama and film.
- Do you think any story or poem in your language textbook could be made into a small film? Can you think of the various people you will need in making a film based on that?
- Some people argue "Cinema is a powerful tool to transform the society"; others argue that "It has a negative impact". Whom do you agree with and why?
- What were the major themes discussed in early films? How is it similar or different from the films you have seen?
- How did newspapers play a major role in the freedom movement?
- What are the reasons for the disappearance of dramas now-a-days.



**Debate:** Is cinema knowledge giving or life spoiling? Conduct a debate.

### Project:

- Look at a News Paper and classify how the pages have been organised? What type of images and photographs are used? How much space is given for advertisement? What issues are covered in the editorial?
- 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 the other teams in the class.