CHAPTER 8

CINEMA, TELEVISION AND VIDEO

Television was introduced in India in the sixties and the video in the eighties. In developed countries, such as the U.S.A., Great Britain, and the European countries, television came about as a post Second World War phenomenon in the early fifties and its use was patterned on the commercial radio, a government protected, private monopoly. But by 1961, the video technology came into vogue and the Television began to use it extensively by replacing live recording with videotape production. "The live production on video tape, though delayed in reaching the home by a few hours or days was generally accepted as actual live television by the average viewer."

With the development of television(TV) and Video technology, the popularity of film as a medium waned for a period, all over the world. Audience preferred television and video films to actual film shows in theatres for various reasons such as a) the immediacy of the shows in television which evoked the feeling that one is watching an event as it is happening, b)  

the convenience of watching a film (on video) in the comfort and seclusion of one's own home, c) the variety in the nature and substance of programmes on television (Apart from cinema, recordings of other events such as sports, festivals etc can be seen on television). For producers, the fact that the programmes on TV and Video are less expensive and less cumbersome, became an attractive feature.

The purpose of this chapter is to guage the effects of the introduction of television and video in Kerala on Malayalam cinema. Television and Video and their effects on cinema, are treated under separate headings, even though video, in actuality is only an extension of television.

A. Television

A few factual details with regard to introduction of television in India and in Kerala will be relevant to the discussion on the social and political effects of this medium on cinema.

Television in India is a wing of the Government of India’s Information and Broadcasting Ministry. There is a proposal to make it into an autonomous body, but it has not, as yet been put into practice.

2 One of the items in the Election Manifesto of the ruling National Front Party at the Centre.
Television was first introduced in India, as an experimental service in Delhi on September 15, 1959. The regular service was started in 1965. The school Television Service was in existence from 1961 onwards and Programmes for Universities in collaboration with University Grants Commission started in 1984. The television went commercial and began to show advertising spots, series, sponsored programmes and family serials in 1976. National programme (relayed from Delhi) was introduced in 1982, which is being simultaneously relayed from all centres between 8.40 p.m. and 12 at night. A second channel was introduced in Delhi on September 17, 1984 and subsequently in other centres to cater to local viewers and in providing alternate viewing. Through 210 transmitters, TV today reaches an estimated population of 70.6%. The network now has 12 full fledged centres.³

The television programmes in Kerala are as follows:

6 p.m. to 8.40 p.m. : local programmes
8.40 p.m. to 12 midnight: National Network Programmes

It is important to remember, that the TV being a government body was extensively used as a propaganda machine by successive governments. Most of the

³ PUBLICATIONS DIVISION, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING Mass Media in India 1997 (Delhi, 1987), p.71.
programmes on TV, therefore, reflected the viewpoint of the government. In general, TV presented establishment-oriented programmes and propagated the continuation of status quo. During election times, the ruling party at the Centre used the TV to project their ideology, manifestos etc. Thus the Indian TV was benighted from the very beginning, and desisted from showing any experimental or innovative programmes.

The second political implication of the TV itself was, that communication through this audio-visual medium, became more of a family-oriented and personal one and not a wider, social and political ideology-oriented one. Programmes were designed to be seen by the families in the cloisters of their homes as light entertainments. Creation of an awareness to the wider social and political problems was never taken up by the TV. One cannot expect such an attitude from a government owned, status quo maintaining media. The effect of the TV programmes was to soothe the frustrations of the viewers and act as palliatives. This is the main reason why, TV in India never became a medium for presenting controversial, lively topics.

When we discuss the economics of TV industry, the first fact to be remembered is that India being a developing country with 900 million people, TV and other such new technologies have a different implication
as media. The economics of TV industry and the revenue earned by the Government of India is worth noting. In 1985, the number of licensed TV sets in India was approximately 3 million (30 lakhs). The annual revenue from license fee, at Rs.50 per set was Rs.150 million (Rs.15 crores) (This license fee has subsequently been abolished in the Central Budget of 1985-1986 by the Finance Minister of that Cabinet, V.P. Singh) Commercial Telecasts netted another Rs.70 million (Rs.7 crores). Besides the recurring income of Rs.220 million (Rs.22 crores), excise and other taxes on TV sets also contributed significant amounts to the Central exchequer. The sale of 3 million TV sets at an average price of Rs. 2000/ per set (the price of a black and white TV at that time) has resulted in a turnover of more than Rs.6000 million (600 crores). It would not, therefore, be wrong to estimate that television had within a span of 16 years generated sales, service and investment of more than Rs.10 billion (Rs. 1000 crores). Taking into consideration, the pattern of growth in the television industry, the total assets, products and services in the Industry could easily be Rs.30 billion (Rs.300 crores) now. The importance of Television as a revenue earner, generator of assets, products and services cannot be underestimated.4

In Kerala, the first television centre was established in 1982 at Trivandrum and subsequently in four more centres - Calicut, Cochin, Cannanore and Palghat - coverage by TV transmitters linked with Delhi was introduced in 1984.\(^5\)

Has the advent of Television affected film industry in Kerala in any way? The question has to be viewed from three points of view - that of the audience, that of the film director and that of the industry, consisting of Producer/distributor/exhibitor.

When we take the film viewing audience into consideration, they can be roughly divided into upper class, upper middle class, Lower middle class and Lower or Working class. Another factor to be taken into consideration is the cost of a television set and the number of people in Kerala who can afford to have their own TV sets. A black and white television set costs approx. Rs. 3,500/- (min) and a colour set Rs.6000/- (min). The population of Kerala as of 1986 was estimated to be 27.4 million\(^6\) The average income per person is estimated to be Rs. 170-200 per month.\(^7\)


\(^7\) Ibid., p.142.
Therefore, the people who can afford a TV set will be, on a rough estimate, the upper class and the upper middle class who form approximately 15% of the total population i.e. 4.1 million. Even if we take group viewing in family situations or public places, it will cover only approx. 6 to 7 million people. The majority i.e. approximately 20 million are still outside the ambit of television viewing. Again, if we take into consideration, the number of theatres, the number of films produced each year and the people who can see films per day it works out as follows. There are 1301 theatres in Kerala as of 1987.\textsuperscript{8} The average films produced in a year is 100. Normally there are three shows in each theatre and the seats in a theatre average around 400. Even if all the shows in all the theatres are assumed to be full, the people who view films per day will work out to only 1.6 million which as a percentage of total population will be only 5.8%.\textsuperscript{9} That leaves out approximately 18 million people who are not able to see either film or TV because of external factors such as scarcity of theatres or inability to purchase TV sets. Therefore, it would be only correct to assume that there will not be a sizeable decrease in film going people because of the

\textsuperscript{8} SARASWATHI, M.S., Op.cit, pp.146-161.

\textsuperscript{9} Discussions with HARIHARAN, K., Tamil Film Director.
advent of the Television. On the contrary, even if a section of another 5 million people move away and watch TV only, this will not affect the film going habits of the people.

As far as the directors are concerned, the advent of TV has not in any way harmed their prospects. On the contrary, it has helped a section of them immensely. Many of the film makers (especially the parallel film makers and the middle of the road film makers) have been commissioned to make telefilms. In Kerala in the year 1988, approximately 60 to 80 film makers have been commissioned to make telefilms with financial aid from television ranging from Rs.1,000,000 to Rs.1,500,000/-,10 prominent among them being Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Aravindan and K.G. George.11 Apart from this, many film makers such as P.Bhaskaran, P.N. Menon etc. have been commissioned to do television serials. Thus TV has actually come forward and given jobs to film makers at a time when they did not have any regular film contracts. Besides this, the TV shows one Malayalam film per week and this gives the producers/directors the fees for the rights to show their films on TV. If a film is chosen for the

10 Discussions with KUNHIKRISHNAN, K., Director, Doordarshan, Trivandram.
11 Supra, ch.2, p.105.
National Award or the Indian Panorama, the TV pays a certain amount ranging from Rs. 400,000/- to Rs. 700,000/- and exhibit it in the National Network.\textsuperscript{12} Thus TV has actually, encouraged, and complemented the film industry and its directors and not thwarted them.

As for the producer/distributor/ exhibitor network, they have also not been affected, because of the unsatiated demand of a sizeable section of the population to see films, arising from the scarcity of the theatres and the increased number of films produced. Their box office receipts have not come down as there is always enough people wanting to see films, because of the cheap cost of seeing films, i.e. Rs. 2 to Rs. 10 (Max). The demand for films, especially the commercial, mainstream ones has not diminished, as can be seen from the number of films produced per year. In spite of all these factors, one hears reports of theatre owners wanting to close down their theatres, complaining of increased maintenance costs. This is not, primarily, on account of the advent of TV and the decrease in box office collections, but on account of the cheap cost of film viewing. The film viewing rates have not gone up considerably over the years, whereas, the infrastructural costs such as the electric charges, wages to employees etc have gone up. Besides this, the

\textsuperscript{12} Supra, ch. 2, p. 105.
State entertainment tax of 30% also cuts into their earnings. Therefore the profit margins of the theatre owners have dwindled. On the contrary, real estate prices have shot up and the theatre owners feel that they would get better yields if they converted the theatres into alternate business venues, such as shopping complexes, and this is the motivation to close theatres in search of alternate viable business propositions.13

After examining the statistics, of cinema and TV, one can go on to analyse their popularity for the audience from the qualitative point of view—taking into consideration the kind of programmes organised by the TV as against the kind of films produced in Kerala. TV has always had the problem of funds. Though it is bringing in a great deal of revenue, through sponsored programmes, the investment in new TV centres with transmitters, latest technology etc is lacking because of a lack of understanding by the Government of India and its economic advisers of the true potential of TV in disseminating information, education etc. Therefore, the quality of TV programmes is hamstrung by cost considerations. TV is not able to engage good artists, by paying them well and commissioning them to do quality programmes, because of cost considerations.

13 Discussions with HARIHARAN, K., Tamil Film Director.
Nor are they in a position to approach good researchers, pay them well and organise in-depth researches on the programmes they do. The growth of TV is also stifled by other factors such as the opposition of the press, who are afraid that they will lose all their advertisers, once they realise that TV with its ability to reach larger and untapped rural markets, through its visuals, is a better medium than the press.\textsuperscript{14} The quality of the TV programmes has further been affected because of the induction of the All India Radio (AIR) personnel on the basis of their seniority in the AIR and placing them above TV personnel with years of experience, promoting them to play a leadership role in designing TV productions.\textsuperscript{15} These AIR personnel, who are not conversant with the technology or expertise of TV, dictate terms to the TV personnel and do not allow them to have a free hand in TV productions. The situation is very demoralising and the end result is that the programmes which are churned out are inferior and banal. These mediocre Telefilms and serials presented by the TV are no match for even the ordinary, formulae ridden, commercial cinema, which maintains a better standard in theme, technical excellence and quality of acting.


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.552.
"Essentially TV is more like radio... As with radio, the concept of flow is all important, the product of both media is continuous and continuing within both the smaller unit of the show, and the larger unit of the days or evenings programme... Dead space and dead time are to be avoided. The flow must continue".16 So the basic unit of the TV is not the show, but the series which gives the TV an advantage in character building over every other narrative medium except perhaps the novel saga. This is why the TV is not so much a medium of stories as of moods and atmosphere. "We tune in to spend time with the characters".17 The strength of the TV, apart from documentaries and news telecast, lies in the serials. But the serials which are presented by the Kerala TV are so weak and inane that they present no competition to the worst of commercial cinema.18

There are other inherent weaknesses in the TV technology itself, which also diminishes its popularity in comparison with the film. "Even as TV is better equipped to deal with subtle developments of character, it is also poorly equipped to succeed with other basic

17 Ibid., p.392.
18 Discussions with PANIKKAR, AYYAPPA, Head of the Department, in English, University of Kerala, Trivandrum and KURUP, O. N.V., poet and lyricist
dramatic elements. Because it is much less intense than cinema, (it gives us less visual and auditory information), action and spectacle come off more poorly than in the movie theatre. And because it is measurably less intimate than live theatre, it can't deal as well with the high drama of ideas and emotions.”

Compared to the TV which is still in its infancy, as far as Kerala is concerned, and because of the poor quality of TV productions, the cinema and the theatre stand out as good examples of experimentation, technical excellence, and variety in themes and they are more appreciated by all sections of people. The mainstream and middle of the road cinema competes effectively in theme and form with TV productions and are more popular with the working class and the middle class audience, because of its superiority in presenting drama, suspense and emotion more intensely. Viewers are able to identify and empathise more with cinema than with the TV.

Again, because of the relatively poor quality of the TV image, (as compared with the theatrical film) TV depends heavily on its audio content. This means that


20 Theatre performances or plays of PILLAI, SANKARA, PANIKKAR, NARAYANA, KAVALAM and BHASI, THOPPIL are varied in theme and form and are good examples of experimentation.
the success of the TV program lies in the effectiveness of the dialogue, music, background music and other sounds. Strangely enough, most of the serials, and telefilms do not pay much attention to the dialogue and other sounds, and as a result, they turn out to be ineffective and boring. But, in Malayalam cinema, the dialogue, the sound effects and the music are all crafted well and this naturally gives cinema an edge over TV.

Unlike in the developed countries, TV has not still reached the majority of the rural audience, in spite of its phenomenal growth in the last 5-10 years. There are some National Network programmes such as Mahabharat and Ramayan which have caught the fancy of a sizeable section of people, but it is debatable whether this popularity is due to the quality of the presentation or the deeply rooted fascination for the epic themes. As in other advanced countries, efforts are not made to make TV "equivalent of the folk literature with durable plots, situation and characters and developing myths".21

B. Video

Video has come into India, in the eighties and is a recent phenomenon. But, however, video more than

television, posed a threat to the film world, as video piracy was rampant in all the cities of India and the video copies of films reached the viewers, sometimes even before the film had its run.

Some statistics on video is relevant. Reportedly, there were more than three lakhs of VCR's in India (1985), with an average of 20,000 entering the market every year. A VCR which used to cost Rs.60,000/- about five years back, is sold for less than Rs.16,000/- today. Any person who visits Hong Kong, Singapore or Dubai comes back with a VCR. It costs him Rs.5,000/- there and by the time he pays customs duty, the price rises to Rs.14,000. There was a report to the effect that there are 400 VCR cinemas running in Madhya pradesh. Besides a number of cafes, restaurants, bars, hospitals, hotels and travel buses have videos for entertainment of their customers. This was the state of affairs in the video field before the act legalising the sale of video rights by producers/distributors/directors was passed by the Government of India. But now, these sale of rights have been legalised and that has brought down the video

23 Ibid., p.303.
24 Ibid.
piracy considerably. Even as the picture is being made, the video rights are sold to video owners.

A comparative study of the rates for the sale of video rights are as follows:

Hindi
- Multistarrer film: Rs. 3.5 million
- Middle level film: Rs. 1.5 million
- Parallel cinema: Rs. 300,000 to Rs. 400,000

Tamil
- Mainstream cinema: Rs. 400,000
- Parallel cinema: Rs. 100,000

Kerala
- Mainstream cinema: Rs. 400,000
- Parallel cinema: Rs. 100,000

In the case of videos, they are beyond the purchasing power of the common man of Kerala whose average earning is Rs. 200/-. But as the influx from the Gulf countries is more in Kerala, the video culture also is probably more felt in Kerala. There are groups of people who hire a video for a day or two paying Rs. 100/- or Rs. 150/- as hiring charges and watch films and the hiring charge for a video cassette for a day is normally Rs. 10/-26 However, with all these

25 Discussions with HARIHARAN., Tamil Film Maker.
26 Discussions with HARRIS, V.C., Lecturer in English, Feroke College, Calicut and film critic.
arrangements, the number of persons who can afford to watch the video movies are limited and they do not seriously affect the film going habits of the people of Kerala. As film making on video equipments is easier, less cumbersome, and less costly, many people have entered into the field of video film making. Mostly these films are of a documentary nature.

Thus in Kerala, Television and Video have not as yet, encroached seriously into the sphere of film. Film still remains the cheapest form of entertainment for the common man and therefore the most popular form also.
CONCLUSION

A study of Malayalam cinema has shown that it has four distinct phases apart from a brief silent film phase.

1. The theatrical phase, when it imitated Tamil cinema and included theatrical and melodramatic traits, a surfeit of songs, dances and humourous bits.

2. The Neo-realistic phase, when outdoor location shots, and other indigenous elements such as folk songs, folk dialect and folk themes were introduced to give film an authentic Kerala touch.

3. The literary phase when artists from other art forms such as literature, music, painting and theatre were inducted into film making and a close link was maintained with Malayalam literature, by adopting themes from the novels and plays.

4. The artistic phase, when the language of cinema was redefined through experiments in form and theme and cinema emerged as a truly visual art.
During all these phases, Malayalam cinema represented the society in which it developed, to some extent. However, it was not truly representative of the society and politics of Kerala due to various reasons. Most of the film directors were middle class intellectuals, and this prevented them from giving true representation to working classes or the poorer and exploited sections of society. Whenever they tried to depict these sections, it was from a superior, supercilious middle class point of view and therefore, they failed to become people's cinema. Even when they depicted middle class realities, their concern was to do it in a pro-establishment manner, without upsetting the status quo. They achieved this aim through romanticisation of themes thereby diluting their intensity. Political cinema did not develop as a trend, because of the lack of a clear ideology and commitment to film. There are a few films which qualify as political films. But the majority are family themes, which hardly upset or questioned the establishment or conventions. On the administrative side, cinema was mostly financed by private entrepreneurs. The government, which has not recognised film as a regular industry and thereby opened up the normal sources of financing such as banks/financial institutions support has, of late, woken up to the fact that India being a country which produces the maximum number of films per
year (approx. 900) and cinema being one of the most important media of communication, it deserves better attention and support and through its organisations such as National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and Kerala State Film Development Corporation (KSFDC) has started to give partial/full finance to serious film makers. But this financing is very minimal and cinema is by far dependent on the private financiers for sustenance.

The financing of film has a decisive effect on the nature and quality of the films produced. As the financiers are private businessmen, their primary motive is profit, or return on investment which comes from the box office collections. As a result, the commercial element in the film which is to provide, temporary escapist entertainment, takes priority to artistic and educational motives. A major portion of the films produced therefore, are mainstream formula films. Attempts to make serious cinema are few, and by a handful of directors, who do not depend on box office collections, but aim at national and international recognition and thereby entry into the foreign markets. So the parallel film makers have even given up the pretension that they are making the films to exhibit them to the audience in Kerala. They aim at Panorama selection, national awards, TV shows and marketing at
international centres. One wonders at the logic of Kerala films being made for basically foreign audience. These films, though they are technically excellent, fail to reach out to the people at large because of the cerebral and abstract approach they take which distances them from the common people of Kerala. So after the completion of fifty years, Malayalam cinema is a medley of various types of films - the esoteric, and abstract parallel films on one end followed by the entertaining middle level cinema with a touch of the formulaic elements and the crass commercial cinema with its crowd-catching gimmicks.

Film societies, film appreciation courses and film seminars are trying to bring about a better awareness to serious cinema among the common people, through exhibition of international films of the masters and lectures/discussions on the same. They have succeeded in their attempts to some extent, but due to the lack of active support from the intelligentsia to promote the artistic and educative aspects of cinema, the entertainment aspect thrives.

The only way to redeem cinema from being a superficial entertainer is by the government taking an active interest in films and coming forward to help serious film makers in a significant way through financial and marketing support. If the film maker is
not left at the mercy of private financiers for funding and exhibition of films, the quality of film will not be compromised. Along with helping the film maker, the audience awareness also has to be built up. For this, the film should be introduced as a subject for serious study at the school and college levels. The Government is thinking along these lines, and the University Grants Commission has decided to introduce film study in 6 centres, out of which Trivandrum is one.

Side by side with the Government’s efforts to revamp the production/exhibition apparatus and stimulating the audience awareness, informal attempts can be made by film societies such as Odessa in taking the film to the people through exhibition on a 16 mm projector in village and semi-urban centres and creating a fund for financing films through the small collections at such shows. These shows attain two aims - defusion of capital to a wider and mass-based source and creation of a better awareness to serious films among the masses whereby their expectation on film changes from mere escapist entertainment to serious social and political films. Their financial involvement in film production will instil their participatory pride in building up good cinema through collective efforts.
Cinema has affected the day-to-day life of the people of Kerala in a significant way. It has affected every aspect of their lives. This is evident in the publicity given to cinema in mass media such as newspapers, radio and TV and the recognition and respect accorded to film actors and other associated people. With all the publicity and glamour pervading films, star system is taking hold of Malayalam cinema also. Unlike the other neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the influence of the stars is restricted to the field of film only. However, the two reigning stars, Mammootty and Mohan Lal seem to be able to dictate terms to producers, sure of their hold on the audience. With the star system coming to the fore, there is a certain extent of stereotyping in themes and form of cinema. To counter the effects of the stars on the audience, the government and the producers have to educate the people and steer them from indiscriminate and irrational star worship.

In spite of the strictures of the Censor Board, a great deal of violence and sex is exhibited in Malayalam films, in an explicit manner. Though this is the trend in other regional films also, Malayalam cinema has acquired a reputation for making soft porn or blue films. There is a ready market for such films
within India and outside, in the Gulf countries. Unless these tendencies are curbed through strict vigilance and rejection by the public, the quality of films will be eroded. The Censor Board has to revamp their guidelines and make them more specific so that the film makers will not be able to thrive on the ambivalence of the guidelines and introduce sex and violence through backdoor methods.

Cinema is a powerful media. Because of its reproductibility and its consequent ability to reach the masses, it is different from other art forms. Being a visual medium, it can reach out even to the illiterate masses and this has a special significance in a developing country like India. So, it can be used effectively as an educative medium. Malayalam cinema, which has improved technically, has not shown enough flair to represent the social and political tensions, preoccupations and ideologies of the State. It has touched upon the historical, social and political issues in a peripheral and superficial manner. In most such cases the seriousness of the content is diluted by lack of sharp focusing and introduction of alien elements such as love themes, songs, dances and humourous bits. A few film makers such as Adoor Gopalakrishnan, G. Aravindan, John Abraham, P.A. Backer, K.R. Mohanan, V.R. Gopinath, C. Ravindran, K.R.
Chandran etc, have made conscious efforts to evolve serious cinema. But the majority, even when they attempt a variation in themes, fall into the trap of diluting the content by romanticising it. A serious attempt to change this trend has to be brought about.

One area in which Malayalam Cinema is seriously lacking, is having an ideology and presenting it clearly without any ambivalence. Lack of serious ideological commitment is evident in the general trends of film and the narrative closures especially. Events are narrated without any personal comment or view point. While strident or blatant criticism or appreciation may mar the artistic quality of a film, a complete lack of ideology or view point tend to have adverse effects. A realistic portrayal without the backing of ideology becomes a meaningless reproduction or imitation of reality. One does hope, that more and more film makers will take a clear ideological stand on issues such as ecological encroachments, communal conflicts and oppression and exploitation of the weaker and downtrodden sections. In fact, one wonders, whether in a country like India, with its growing population, harassing poverty and other inequalities, one can afford to have the luxury of purely artistic films without any social or political ideology to back it. In any case, such films will only be appreciated by a
targeted audience and would remain museum pieces relevant only to researchers and purists.

Another area in which the Malayalam films are found lacking is the representation of women. Women are excluded from most meaningful film activities such as production, direction, and technical work. As a result, the films invariably are male-oriented and depict a male point of view. The social and political environment in Kerala are also not conducive to women entering the field of film making. Kerala is a predominantly male chauvinistic society and the women activists have not been able to make a serious dent in this attitude. The women are objectified, fetishized, and marginalised, relegating them to a position of inferiority and silence. As viewers also, they do not protest or demand for changes, as the consciousness raising attempts are also scattered and fragmented. This is an area in which film makers and women activists can join hands and bring about a change and create a space for women in the sphere of cinema.

Film is a medium where a great deal of the essence of other art forms such as literature, music, painting and theatre can be incorporated intelligently. But, in incorporating these art forms, film makers have to be careful about not losing the basic visual character and movement within the film, and its own
language and grammar. However, as in other countries, a great deal of experimentation can be done in the form of the film so that there will be variety and innovation in representing the constant changes in the environment. In Malayalam films, a great deal of innovation and technical excellence is visible in the sphere of sound, especially music, and in the sphere of editing. Even the mainstream cinema is far ahead in camera work, editing and sound when compared to other regional films. If the same commitment and excellence can be incorporated in the content and the totality of the film, Malayalam film can easily be a forerunner to other regional Indian cinemas.

With the introduction of TV and video into the sphere of audio visual media, the importance given to cinema may dwindle to some extent. However, in a place like Kerala, or even in India in general, TV and video need not be adversaries to film. They can complement and supplement film and be used as alternate media to give additional work and remuneration. For this, the Government has to chalk out a comprehensive film and TV policy so that they don't encroach on each other's domains but have a peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

Whenever an assessment of cinema is made, one has to bear in mind that in Kerala, it has had an existence of only 40 to 45 years and even during that
time it was floundering without any guidance and support from the government or the intelligentsia. To realise that film is different from other media and has its own grammar and language, it has taken nearly 35 years. This is because, film education, film awareness, exposure to international cinema etc. were all minimal. Also, as a medium it took a long time to establish its credentials as a meaningful, artistic and educational medium and not a mere escapist entertainment. Judged against all these factors, the progress made by Malayalam cinema in form and content is appreciable. If the intellectuals had taken a more serious approach to cinema and had realised its full potential and integrated it into the other Kerala traditions and ethos, it might have had a better innings.