

## **CHAPTER 3: HISTORY OF MARATHI CINEMA IN MUMBAI AND THE MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED**

## 3.1 CINEMA COMES TO MUMBAI

Cinema came to India on one rainy day in July a mere four years short of the new century. The exact date was July 7, 1896 and the location, the prestigious Esplande Hotel, better known after its owner, James H. Watson, as the Watson's Hotel (now known as the Army & Navy Building), near Kala Ghoda and the Prince Of Wales Museum. The programme comprised six films from the vast repertoire of the Lumiere Brothers: **Entry Of Cinematographe, Arrival Of A Train, The Sea Bath, A Demolition, Leaving The Factory** and **Ladies And Soldiers On Wheels**. The admission price was a flat Rupee One and the show was being held a scant half-a-year after the first showing of the films at the Salon Indian in Paris on December 28, 1895.

A week later, an enhanced version of the programme found its way to the Novelty (a hastily converted stage theatre) at Fort with ticket prices ranging from eight annas to Rupee Two. Ironically, the higher priced tickets were for the front seats, in keeping with the tradition that was followed in stage theatres. Mesmerized audiences flocked to the unique shows which ran to packed houses for the entire initial run of 35 days, which ended on August 15, 1896. There were no more shows for the rest of the years but the delighted Bombayites had definitely not heard the last of the miraculous new entertainment.

History does not record whether Harischandra Sakharam Bhatawdekar, then a still photographer and equipment dealer with a studio at Kennedy Bridge, saw the Lumiere shows at the Watson's Hotel or the Novelty theatre but the fact remains that he did see them and was enthused enough to want to get into the business. Not one to lose time in speculation he quickly bought a projector and a few short films and began to show films in the houses of the wealthy families of Bombay. Among the films he showed was Can Can Dance (1897), the first colour short in the history of cinema.

Obviously the business flourished since he was probably the only Indian in a business which was entirely in the hands of visiting showmen who exhibited their wares under the most amazing names guaranteed to catch the eye: P.Stewart's Vitograph, Hughes Moto-Photoscope, Professor Anderson's Andersonoscopograph and Biurnial Optical Diorama. These shows were held in makeshift tents constructed on playgrounds or any other open space, small halls of institutes like the Framji Cawasji Institute at Dhobi Talao or in hastily converted stage theatres like the novelty or the Gaiety (now the Capitol). The more elite of these shows were held at the Watson's Hotel and sometimes even in the imposing premises of the Town Hall.

### 3.1.1 THE MAKING OF THE FIRST FEATURE FILM

Thought Dadasaheb Phalke, actually a rank outsider and a late (if not accidental) entrant to the medium of cinema, eventually won the race of making the first feature film, there were many aspirants, even in Bombay itself. The trio of Anantram Parshuram Karandikar, V. P. Divekar and Shree Nath Patankar who purchased a disheartened Sawa Dada's Camera for the throwaway price of Rs. 700 was among them.

Patankar was then working as the manager of the Coronation cinema at Sandhurst Road in Girgaum while his colleagues Karandikar and Divekar were in charge of decorating the theatre at the time of the new release. (Incidentally, Karandikar and Divekar worked as full time artists at the Laxmi Art Printing Works, now fully owned by Seth Purushottamdas Mavji after the angry departure of Dadasaheb Phalke a year earlier.) As such the trio was exposed to a wide variety of films which flowed in from the West as also those made by Indian filmmakers like Sawe Dada and Hiralal Sen.

Soon after purchasing the camera from Sawe Dada the trio set about producing a series of topical, as the short films in those days were called, which included the filming of the Imperial Durbar in 1911 and it was only in 1912 that they felt confident enough to pursue their main ambition: that of making a feature-length film. Why it took the trio five long years (from their purchase of the camera in 1907 to when they actually set about production in 1912) is a matter of conjecture. One can only assume that the trio was familiarising itself on the technicalities of the medium.

In any case, in 1912, the trio joined hands with two other financing partners - Ranade and Bhatkhande - and formed the Patankar Union. The popular story of Savitri from Hindu mythology was selected and a young girl from Ahmedabad, Narmada Mande, recruited to play the title role. Divekar himself was to play the role of Sage Vyasa while a popular stage actor and gymnast K.G. Gokhale was selected to play Jayamuni. The film - running to a bare 100 feet - was filmed in May 1912. Even during its filming Patankar, who was directing the venture, realised that there were a few technical flaws in the film. Later, it also encountered processing problems and the entire film came out blank thus frustrating their chances. Narmada Munde also missed her chance to become the first woman artiste of Indian films.

Even if the film had been complete successfully, Patankar and his friends could hardly have staked their claim to being the makers of the first Indian feature film for exactly a week before their venture went on the floors another pioneer Ramachandra Gopal alias Dadasaheb Torney had already released the film version of Shreepad Sangeet Mandali's popular stage play **Pundalik**, written by Ramrao Balkrishna Kirtikar. Though employed with the Greaves Cotton Electrical Company as a clerk, Torney had an artistic bent of mind which brought him in contact with others similarly inclined.

With their difficulties solved, the friends set about making the film with the cast of amateur actors already associated with the play. Ironically, D.D. Dabke, who was to play the lead in Dadasaheb Phalke's **Raja Harishchandra** and who was to become a leading cameraman of the silent era, was also cast in a minor role. Kiritikar with another friend Nandkarni condensed the play and Torney was to direct it. Filming began at an open ground then owned by Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai and which now houses the Naaz, Imperial and Swastik cinema houses on Lamington Road in Bombay. Additional filming was also done at Tribhuvandas Road and Vithalbhair Patel Road. The film was sent abroad for processing and was eventually released at the Coronation cinema on May 18, 1912, a full year before Dadasaheb Phalke's much-vaunted effort.

None of his many friends were willing to advance him the money required for his venture. In fact, many of them thought that the venture was a foolhardy one and hence doomed to failure. Some even thought of having him committed to an asylum. The only exception was Yeshwant Ghanshyam Nadkarni, a long-standing friend who was convinced of his sincerity and honesty. However, even he needed proof that Dadasaheb could produce a story-film. Hence, it was not enough for Dadasaheb to produce a "topical" short, which was the rage in those days. He had to make a short film centred around a theme if he had to prove his worth.

Phalke planted a pea in an earthenware pot and began to record its growth with his simple five-pound movie camera imported from London, one frame at a time. It took him a full 45 days to shoot the 200-foot film which ran for a bare two minutes. A show of the film was held at Mathurdas Wada in Dadar for an amazed audience was Yeshwant Nadkarni who immediately agreed to finance Phalke's venture. Various recorded in film history as **The Growth Of Pea Plant** and **From Peanut to Plant**, this short film was the first to use time lapse techniques in India.

Shooting for **Raja Harishchandra** began soon after the monsoon of 1912 at the bungalow owned by Mathurdas Monji Walji on Dadar Main Road. Phalke had to do everything: teach acting to the artistes, write the scenario, design and erect the set and direct the film and do the filming. That apart he had to work round the clock: shoot during the day and perforate the negative, develop the exposed film, print and edit it during the night. There was no alternative because no one really knew anything about making feature films.

Six months later, and edited 3700 feet of **Raja Harishchandra** was ready. Canny as usual, Phalke wrote the titles of the film in Hindi and English so as to reach the widest possible audience. Phalke's dream of producing a story-film like **The Life Of Christ** had come true. He arranged a preview of the film on April 21, 1913 at the Olympia cinema in Bombay for the elite of Bombay. The film was commercially released on May 3, 1913 at the Coronation cinema. Phalke was to produce more films and his sustained effort was to last for the next two decades thus establishing him as the Father of Indian Cinema.

### 3.1.2 THE FATHER OF THE INDIAN CINEMA 'DADASAHEB PHALKE'

The first response to Dadasaheb Phalke's **Raja Harishchandra** was not believed that a feature-length film could be made by an Indian and thought it was some kind of a hoax. Or probably the curt single line "double admission rates will be charged" at the end of the advertisements proved to a dampener. Indian audiences were used to paying half the price they paid for an ordinary cinema ticket to watch a all-night musical stage play. For them a charge of two annas for a mere 40-minute entertainment was ludicrous.

Phalke realised all this instinctively and decided that without the right marketing his film would be a non-starter. The first thing that he did was to arrange a 10-15 minute dance programme by two European girls for the crucial first few days. Outside Bombay he tried to appeal to the masses by changing the tone of his advertising, which now began to stress that the film contained 50,000 "still photographs" (frames) and ran to a length of two miles. Written in this manner, the film seemed immensely long and the audience felt that it was getting its money's worth.

Finally, Phalke invited the representatives of leading newspapers to witness the show free, thus starting the practice of having press shows. The press was naturally enthused and wrote about the film in glowing terms. The *Bombay Chronicle* described it as "the first great Indian dramatic film" and "a remarkable triumph". The campaign was an immediate success. Crowds thronged to the theatre and the film was well on its way to becoming the legend that it is today. It must be underscored at this juncture that Phalke's intrinsic product was a good one and hence, his hard sell yielded results. For example, his trick scenes created with a simple hand operated camera and a black curtain compare quite favourably with those created today.

Phalke had instinctively realised what the earlier pioneers had failed to understand: that it was not enough to produce a good film, it was more important to market it properly. He thus became his own distributor. In a sense, Phalke was ideally suited for the medium of cinema. Born on April 30, 1870 at Trimbak, on the outskirts of Nasik, Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, son of Sanskrit scholar and college professor Dajishastri Phalke, was educated at Trimbak, Bombay (where his father was working as Professor of Sanskrit at the Wilson College) and later Baroda where he got a good grounding in the Arts.

Placed in charge of Kala Bhavan's photographic studio by a sympathetic professor, Phalke soon imbibed the elements of photography and bought his first still camera in 1890. He then made full use of his photographic background to study the printing profession. Almost simultaneously he learned magic and took part in stage performances. He worked briefly with the Government of India's Archaeological Department but quit when he had saved enough money to start his own printing business. He prospered but his headstrong nature did not endear him to his partners and hence the quarrels which led to his search for a new profession. It was as if his entire life to date had been a mere preparation for what he was to do in life later.

With the stupendous success of **Raja Harishchandra** and with the hope of settling down in the new medium Phalke made a daring move. He had realised that he could not really concentrate on his filmmaking work in the city of Bombay, which had already become a leading commercial city of India. Besides, the environs of Bombay could not give him the atmosphere that he wanted for his films. Thus, on October 3, 1913, he shifted to his "native" Nasik which provided him with just such an environment.

Within three months of shifting to Nasik Phalke had produced his second mythological film **Mohini Bhasmasur**. This film was slightly shorter than his previous film and ran to a length of 3245 feet. For the first time Phalke had also been able to secure the services of two actresses: a mother-and-daughter duo, Durga and Kamala, who played the roles of Mohini and Parvati in the film, thus becoming the first women to star in films. Kamala went on to act in many more films and was thus hailed in later years as the first woman artiste of Indian cinema. (Incidentally, Kamala was Kamalabai Gokhale whose son Chandrakant Gokhale and grandson Vikram Gokhale were to dominate Marathi cinema in later years.) As a side attraction with this feature Phalke produced a short comedy **Pithache Panje** or **Hand Prints**, which told the story of how a philandering husband is caught in a compromising situation by his wife a subject which generated a controversy in the Press.

His third film **Satyawan Savitri** was ready in the next three months and released in June 1914. The revenue from a single print of each of the first three films was enough to pay for Phalke's accumulated liabilities.

### 3.1.3 CONTEMPORARIES OF DADASAHEB PHALKE

While Phalke was busy making exclusively mythological films under the banner of the Hindustan Film Company on the premise that these were the only kind of films which would appeal to an all-Indian audience which was so divided by culture and language, there were other filmmakers who were willing to limit their audience to chart new territories pointed out by pioneers like S.N. Patankar. Among them were the Deware Brothers, Pandurang Taligeri and to a lesser extent the Jagtap Brothers and the Kadam Brothers. (Of course, the more prominent of Phalke's contemporaries was the scenic painter-turned-filmmaker Baburao

Mestry, better known as Painter due to his vocation but more of him later since his career is as important as Phalke's own not in terms of output but in terms of the influence he had on an entire generation of filmmakers who were almost exclusively his disciples at the Maharashtra Film Company.)

A significant feature of United Pictures Syndicate was that at a time when everyone was making mythologicals or stunt films, it made films based on stories written by well known literary personalities: Warerkar, V.S. Aundhkar, V.S. Gurjar and N.C. Kelkar. This was because Taligeri was himself a voracious reader and interested in bringing the best of literature to the screen. Several talented directors also emerged because of his encouragement, the more prominent among them being Nanasaheb Sarpotdar and P.Y. Altekar. With the coming of the talkies Taligeri went south. But he did produce and direct two Marathi films Marathyanchi **Mulgi** (1938) and **Devyani** (1940) before he was lost in anonymity.

The Jagtap Film Company, for obvious reasons, closed down in 1929 and Madhavrao left the industry for good. His younger brother Vasantarao continued but on the technical side. He first formed a partnership with M. Udvardia and started the Vivekananda Studio & Laboratory. In 1932 he began to work with the Deware Film Laboratory and was briefly cameraman for the Royal Film Company before joining Wadia Movietone as Chief Cameraman. In the talkie era he co-produced **Star Of Asia** (1936) with Wadia and the film's director Haribhai Desai. He later wandered into film equipment manufacture with Dhanji Desai.

Another filmmaker who made films in the stunt genre was the actor-turned-producer Chandrarao Kadam. He steadily rose to the top as a leading man with saroj Movietone's **Lal Punja** or **Fighting Blood**, directed by Dhirubhai Desai. After that there was no looking back and so, in 1932 he floated the Chandra Art Productions. At a time when everyone was looking to the talkie, Chandrarao embarked on a series of low-budget stunt thrillers: **Fauladi Jigar** (1932/B.Vasania), **Nek Dost**, **Pyari Katar**, **Flaming Soul** and **Daivi Khazana** (all 1933 and all directed by G.P. Pawar). The first two films starred his younger brother Harishchandra but the others starred Chandrarao himself opposite Lalita Pawar.

At this point it would be interesting to catch up with another pioneer, a talented practitioner of the new art form, who showed a marked indifference to posterity preferring to be in the midst of the action rather than planning his career with care. Ramchandra Gopal Torney was born on April 13, 1880 at Sukulwadi in the Sindudurg district of western India. He completed his high school at Malvan and came to Bombay to join the Greaves Cotton Electrical Company in Bombay. As we have seen earlier Torney was instrumental in making the first story-film **Pundalik** in 1912, a full year before Dadasaheb Phalke made his path-breaking **Raja Harishchandra** but could not make a further breakthrough because he was almost immediately transferred to the company's office at Karachi.

These were filmmakers who were more or less self-taught and had made it in the industry exclusively on their own merit but there were also those who had trained with one or two of the prominent film companies before setting up on their own. Among these were filmmakers such as Nanasaheb Sarpotdar, K.P. Bhave and the five partners of the Prabhat Film Company.

If at all Dadasaheb Phalke can be faulted it is in his refusal to try out new themes or explore new techniques. This did not become obvious in the first few years of feature filmmaking when Phalke was literally the only filmmaker in India making such story-films. However later, when many more filmmakers were attracted to the new medium, this rather blinkered view seemed all the more pronounced. One such contemporary of Phalke's was Baburao

Painter who started in films almost a decade after Phalke did but who gave the fledgling Indian cinema a new definition, a new grammar.

Kolhapur-based Anandrao and Baburao Mestry were busy scenic stage painters who had acquired the sobriquet "Painter" because of their profession. The success of Phalke's films inspired Anandrao and he soon became obsessed with the idea of making a film in Kolhapur. Buying a second-hand projector in a sale, Anandrao hit upon the idea of converting it into a movie camera. Simultaneously he teamed up with his cousin Baburao and their assistants Vishnupant Damle and S. Fatechlal and began to screen foreign films at the Shivaji Theatre in Kolhapur and in the surrounding areas. All along he also experimented with the projector and soon he was successful. Anandrao bought a camera but died before he could go ahead with his feature-length project.

Undeterred by this setback, Baburao set about completing the dream of his cousin. He briefly teamed up with Baburao Ruikar to establish the Maharashtra cinema and continued exhibiting foreign and India films while looking around for possible investors in his proposed production unit. It was probably at around this time that he made the short film **Goodnight**, which was shown at the end of the main features screened at the Maharashtra cinema. Whether this film was an additional attraction for the patrons or an attempt on Baburao's part to present his credentials as a budding filmmaker is not known. Eventually a noted singer Tanibai Kagalkar agreed to advance an amount of Rs 15000 for the project and the Maharashtra Film Company was formed. At first Painter toyed with the idea of making **Seeta Swayamwar**, a safe tested theme which could not go wrong.

Following the success of **Sairandhari** Baburao quickly made two more mythologicals: **Surekha Haran** and **Bhakta Damaji**. However, a chance fire which broke out in the studios of the Maharashtra Film Company in the last few years reduced to ashes, Painter was temporarily disheartened and for a long time the company ceased to function. It was only a year later, in 1921 that Baburao Painter returned to the task of filmmaking with renewed vigour.

Not only had **Sairandhari** established Baburao Painter as a director of quality meaningful films it also clarified his views on the potential of cinema as a medium of mass awakening. The title bestowed upon him by Lokmanya Tilak was probably another goad, Like most Indians, he was sympathetically inclined towards the Indian freedom struggle which had eventually crystallised in Mahatma Gandhi's Non Co-operation movement of 1921-22. He realised that the genre of the historical movie could be used to spread the message of nationalism since it was the perfect blend of entertainment, education and message.

Towards that end Painter set about making a series of historicals which had but one aim: to highlight the ongoing struggle for Indian independence in a manner so implicit that the then British censors would be foxed. The films were: **Singhad** (1923), **Kalyan Khajina** (1924), **Sati Padmini** (1924), **Rana Hamir** (1925), **Shahla Shah** (1925) and **Baji Deshpande** (1929). Of course, he also made his share of mythologicals which were the perennial favourite of the audience and which no filmmaker could escape making: **Vatsala Haran** (1923), **Shri Krishna Avtaar** (1924), **Bhakta Pralhad** (1926), **Gaj Gauri** (1926), **Muraliwala** (1927), **Sati Savitri** (1927) and **Lanka** (1930). The last silent film he made was a fantasy called **Premasangam** (1931), a sound synchronised version of which was also released in 1934. (Of course, Painter's career extended well into the talkie era but more of that later.

The historicals may have given Painter a special position in the silent cinema of the 1920s but one film, **Savkari Pash**, has ensured his position in the entire history of Indian cinema. Made in 1925, much after Patankar's **Jaduchi Goli** (1920) and Dhiren Ganguly's **England**

**Returned** (1921). **Savkari Pash** anticipated the no realist style of filmmaking popularised by the Italian filmmakers almost a quarter of a century later. Based on a short novel by the noted Marathi literateur Narayan Hari Apte (who also wrote the titles of the film later), the film told the story of a young farmer who is caught in a debt trap by the village money-lender--a story which struck a chord in very Indian heart because of its true-to-life situations and realistic handling.

The film starred, among others, Keshavrao Dhaiber and V. Shantaram who were among the enthusiastic youngsters who had joined the Maharashtra Film Company in the hope of making a career in the new medium. In fact, Painter had collected about himself a group of talented dynamic young people like Narayan Hari Apte (story writer and title writer), Nanasaheb Sarpotdar (story writer), K.P. Bhave (director), Baburao Pendharkar (production), Machwe (cinematographer), Bal Gajbar (art direction) as also several talented aspirants like Keshavrao Dhaiber, V. Shantaram and his earlier disciple V. Damle and S. Fatehlal. The Aspirants were expected to roam from department to department, imbibing whatever they could through observation. It is said that Baburao Painter's institution gave the Marathi film industry more than 250 to 300 personnel in various departments in the years to come.

### 3.1.4 THE FIRST MARATHI TALKIE 'AYODHECHA RAJA'

Indian movies first began to speak in 1931 when the Imperial Movietone's **Alam Ara** was released at the Majestic cinema on March 14, 1931, thus not only catapulting the company's owner and the film's director Ardeshir Irani into the pages of history but converting the Indian cinema into a veritable Tower of Babel by opening up the possibility of so many fractured regional cinematographies. It was soon after this that the scramble to make films in one's own regional language began and the universality of the silent film was lost.

The fact the **Alam Ara** became the first Indian talkie was a mere quirk of fate for the much more powerful Madan empire was very much in the race to make the first talkie and, given its extensive international contacts and business risk of making a talkie had he not been talked into it by his general manager R.G. Torney, who had just bagged an agency to market the Audio Camex Recording Machinery. Irani, of course, went ahead and installed the Tannar equipment to make **Alam Ara**.

However, it was Torney and his Audio Camex Recording Machinery that the Prabhat partners turned to when they decided to embark on their first feature film a scant six months later in order to be able to work in silence (the prime requisite for a sound film at least in those days when there were no dubbing facilities), the fledgling Prabhat Film Company shifted its base from its centre-of-the-city location at Managalwar Peth to the Tarabai Park, then on the outskirts of Kolhapur.

Titled **Ayodhyecha Raja** in Marathi and **Ayodhyaka Raja** in Hindi, it was decided to make the film in two language versions. This decision was crucial to not only Prabhat but the entire Marathi film industry since it set the pattern for much of the filmmaking on the western coast in the 1930s. These dual versions not only helped filmmakers reach a wider audience but made the limited-audience Marathi film a economically viable entity when its business was balanced with that of the Hindi version.

Coincidentally the story chosen for the first Marathi talkie was that of the ever-truthful King Harishchandra who prefers to face all manner of tribulations merely to fulfill a promise the

same as that of Dadasaheb Phalke's **Raja Harishchandra**. It was natural that Prabhat's star director V. Shantaram was selected to direct the venture which was to be photographed by K. Dhaiber with the technically-minded Vishnupant Damle as the sound recordist. The fourth partner S. Fatehlal was the obvious choice for art direction.

Both the versions of the film were shot over a period of 19 days during which there were enough mishaps and merry mix-ups to fill a book. However, none could match the near-tragicomedy that took place on the day after the shooting. Soon after the film had been processed Shantaram sat down to edit it and to his horror discovered that it was totally out of sync. Both Shantaram, the director, and Damle, the technician, spent a sleepless night before Damle figured out that it was only a loose switch which had thrown a spanner in their works. The fault was corrected and **Ayodhyecha Raja** was ready for the world at large its Hindi version was shown as widely as Burma, Java and Sumatra.

For many years it was believed that the first film to be made in the Marathi language was Prabhat Film Company's **Ayodhyecha Raja** (1932). Evidence to the contrary was unearthed only recently in 1989 to be precise, while preparing a detailed year-wise Marathi filmography for the Chitra-Utsav organised by the Jagatik Marathi Parishad. Now the first Marathi film is believed to be Master and Company's **Sant Tukaram**, written by Babajirao Rane of the Rajapurkar Natak Mandalim and directed by K. B. Athawale on the advice of none other than Dadasaheb Phalke. The film was actually a sound synchronised version of a silent film based on one of the more popular plays in the theatre company's repertoire and was filmed on outdoor locations in Pune. At first it was thought that the film was nothing more than the filmed version of the stage play but still photographs from the film reveal that it was also filmed outdoors,.

Thanks to the archival foresight shown by the Prabhat partners a complete print of **Ayodhyecha Raja** is preserved at the National Film Archive of India, Pune. However, no print of **Sant Tukaram** survives because it was burned soon after its first release but there is enough ancillary material (still photographs, news items and published advertisements in local newspapers, principally Dnyanprakash of Pune) to support the claim. Moreover the film's censor certificate bears the number B-11033 dated January 26, 1931 while the censor certificate of **Ayodhyecha Raja** bears the number B-11060 and is dated February 7, 1932. Both films were first released on the very day they were censored with **Sant Tukaram** preceding **Ayodhyecha Raja** by ten days.

Both films opened in Bombay (Mumbai) on the same day (February 7, 1932): **Sant Tukaram** at the Hindmata and **Ayodhyecha Raja** at the Majestic. But while the latter ran for a phenomenal 14 weeks, **Sant Tukaram** sank without a trace after a couple of weeks. With six silent films behind them, it is obvious that the then Kolhapur-base Prabhat Film Company had come up with a superior product. The fact that **Ayodhyecha Raja** was a bilingual (in fact, the first Indian bilingual, made in Hindi and Marathi) and starred noted artistes (Govindrao Tembe, who also scored the music, Durga Khote and Baburao Pendharkar) contributed to its fame and durability at the box office.

To add to the confusion, yet another film with the same title **Sant Tukaram** was made in the same year by Sharda Film Company under the direction of K.B. Athavale but with the same actor, Purushottam Waman Shukla, in the title role. This was a much later film and was censored on July 7, 1932 with a censor certificate number B-11460. In later years, the two **Sant Tukarams** must have been confused and **Ayodhyecha Raja** being the better-known film, the claim that it was the first Marathi feature film must have gained currency. Reinforcing this belief was the fact that Master and Company was soon lost in oblivion after

that lone herculean effort while the Prabhat Film Company not only survived to make more films but actually dominated the 1930s.

### 3.1.5 PRABHAT DOMINATES IN THE 1930'S

As many as eight feature films were made and released during the very first year of Marathi cinema (1932), thus imparting to it an enviable stability and durability. The notable films made during the year included Dadasaheb Torney's **Shyamsunder**, which far surpassed the achievements of the first Marathi talkie **Ayodhyecha Raja**, and Marathyateel Dahi, the second directorial venture of the former stunt king Balasaheb Yadav who, due to his ever-increasing girth, had given up acting and taken to making films besides directing action scenes for other directors. Of the eight films released during the year, three were from Prabhat alone: **Ayodhyecha Raja**, **Agni Kankan** and **Maya Machhindra**. Prabhat was to dominate the Marathi film scene for the next decade and a half with a contribution of 20 films, a large portion of them bilinguals the highest by any company in the pre-independence era.

And it was not in terms of quantity alone that Prabhat was to dominate Marathi filmmaking (and indeed Indian filmmaking) for the next decade or so. Its films were to also have a lasting social impact and were to be considered milestones in the history of Indian cinema. But between 1932 and 1936, the newly-found company was content to tread along the well beaten path of historicals and mythologicals. However, it would be unfair to stop merely at saying that because the spirit of experimentation continued. In the very next year (1933), Prabhat embarked on an ambitious venture of making the first film in colour: **Sairandhari**, based on a popular episode of the Mahabharat which had been filmed often enough in the brief history of Indian movies. The colour film was sent to be processed at the UFA Studios in Germany but the final result was too gaudy for exhibition. The financial loss suffered by the company was to some extent compensated by the fair success of another 1933 venture **Sinhgad**.

It was during the making of **Sairandhari** that the partners decided to shift from Kolhapur to Pune, which was a much more convenient locale from the point of view of future expansion and the availability of facilities such as electricity. Besides this, it was also closer from Bombay, which was slowly emerging as the major cosmopolitan filmmaking and distribution centre on the western coast and thus was in a position to offer a wider range of facilities. From its new base in Pune the company went on to make one successful film after the other: **Amrit Manthan** (1934), **Chandrasena** (1935), **Dharmatma** (1935), **Sant Tukaram** (1936) and even a Tamil film **Seetha Kalyanam** (1934). All of them with the exception of **Sant Tukaram** were directed by Prabhat's star director V. Shantaram.

Shantaram Rajaram Vankudre was born on November 18, 1901 at Kolhapur in Maharashtra. He formed the Prabhat Film Company with the other disciple of Painter. It was obvious right from the beginning that, as a director, Shantaram was something special. Though Dhaiber also directed films during the silent years of Prabhat (1929-31) the brunt of the directorial work fell on Shantaram's young shoulders and in the early years of the talkies (1932-36) it was almost exclusively Shantaram's domain. But these years were only a preparation for the final glorious half-a-decade to come (1937-42) when three of the finest films of social relevance would emerge from Prabhat, placing the company on the national map and consolidating Shantaram's reputation as an all-time great. A hint of that had already been provided by **Amrit Manthan** which was almost like a test film since the message was

carefully hidden in its costume drama trappings. Here one gets a glimpse of Shantaram's cinematic technique and an eye for detail which would become more obvious in the later films.

The first of these three films was **Kunku (Duniya Na mane** in its Hindi version), made in 1937 from a novel by Narayan Hari Apte and centering on the implicitly dual theme of a May-December second marriage.

The next film **Manoos (Aadmi** in its Hindi version) was based on another unusual theme: a honest policeman's love for a prostitute and his attempts to rehabilitate her, going to the extent of taking her to his mother in order to get her approval for their marriage. The final film of this triumvirate was **Shejari (Padosi** in its Hindi version), Shantaram's last film in the Prabhat fold. Made in 1941 from a story and script by Vishram Bedekar who had distinguished himself earlier as a writer and director, the film tells the story of changing relationships between two neighbours: a Hindu (Keshavrao Date) and a Muslim (Gajanan Jagirdar). Even during Shantaram's tenure at Prabhat there were other directors who had emerged as equally capable filmmakers, garnering recognition and awards. Vishnu Govind Damle and Syed Fatehlal became friends even before they began their film apprenticeship at the Maharashtra Film Company.

However, the two friends are better known in history as the director duo of four of the best saint films made in Prabhat: **Sant Tukaram** (1936), **Gopalkrishna** (1938), **Sant Dnyaneshwar** (1940) and **Sant Sakhu** (1941). Of course, these films were not their initial forays into direction. The two of them had jointly directed a film for the Maharashtra Film Company in 1928: **Karna**, which became the talk of Kolhapur for its spectacular battle scenes, conceived and executed by none other than Balasaheb Yadav, who also played the title role of Karna. How the makers of such a spectacular film (inspired, on their own admission, by **Ben Hur**) got around to making a subdued devotional like **Sant Tukaram** is a bit of a mystery but there is no denying that the latter has its share of spectacular trick scenes which are the highlight of the film and a partial cause of the film's all-time success.

Another Damle-Fatehlal film which was destined to be an all-time classic and lauded abroad was **Sant Dnyaneshwar** (1940), shown at the Carnegie Hall in New York and praised for its technical excellence by Frank Capra.

In a sense the post-1942 period was a miserable one for Prabhat, at least with reference to the Marathi film. The only memorable film of that period is **Ram Shastri**, directed by Gajanan Jagirdar who had returned briefly to the fold after having made a reputation outside. **Ram Shastri** told the story of the famed Maratha judge who even dared the might of the Peshwas in the interest of justice. For the rest of the decade Prabhat tried to offset its overheads and bolster its failures by producing one Hindi film after another but with scant success. **Sant Janabai** (1949), directed by Govind Ghanekar, and **Gurudev Dutta**, directed by R.V. Rane. Both failed to resurrect the flagging Prabhat image which died an inglorious death just one year short of its silver jubilee (1929-1953).

### 3.1.6 THE DAYS OF UNCERTAINTY IN 1940's

The Mid- 1940s was particularly disturbing period for the Marathi film industry. Established production companies like New Hauns, Navayug Chitra, Prafulla Pictures and Prabhat Film Company, which had dominated production and thus dictated audience tastes in the 1930s,

had either closed down or were in their death throes. Directorial talent like V. Shantaram, Vishram Bedekar and Gajanan Jagirdar, who had given Marathi cinema an edge in the 1930s, and Vasant Jogekar, who had shown tremendous potential, was being drained out of the Marathi industry as it migrated to the more prosperous Hindi film industry. Many others like Yeshwant Pethkar and Vasant Painter, who had begun their careers at Prabhat Film Company, had concentrated on Hindi films from the very beginning, primarily because Prabhat was in its final “Hindi phase” whereby it hoped to achieve financial stability and hence, durability.

It was not that Shantaram immediately turned his back on Marathi cinema. Soon after he had left the Prabhat Film Company and after a brief tenure as the Chief of the Information Films of India, he founded his company Rajkamal Kalamandir in Bombay in 1944. One of the early films he produced under his new banner was **Bhakticha Mala** (1944 /**Mali** in its Hindi version), directed by actor Keshavrao Date whose second attempt in directed it was. The film narrates the story of Sant Savta Mali who believes in the simple philosophy of serving God through the service of Man. However, when plague strikes the village his belief is misinterpreted by the villagers who destroy his beautiful garden. The film starred composer Master Krishnarao in the title role. The next Marathi film Shantaram made was, of course, **Lok Shahir Ram Joshi**, which proved to be a trend-setter.

Shantaram’s last Marathi film during this period was the Marathi-Bengali bilingual **Amar Bhoopali** (1951), about the Marathi poet Honaji Bala. Starring Panditrao Nagarkar in the role of the poet and Lalita Pawar as his encouraging mother, Shantaram probably hoped to repeat the success of **Lok Shahir Ram Joshi** which he did. The film caught the imagination of Marathi audiences who were enthralled by its music and dance sequences. Another acclaimed highlight of the film was Lalita Pawar’s realistic performance. The film was an immense success but it was Shantaram’s last foray in Marathi cinema, returning to it only in 1966 to give it colour with **Iye Marathichiye Nagari** and more purposefully in 1972 with another classic **Pinjra**.

Another talented Marathi actor-director lost to the world of Hindi cinema was Raja Nene, also a product of the Prabhat Film Company. He, too, briefly returned to Marathi cinema in the immediate post-independence period with three films: **Sant Ramdas** (1949), **Patthe Bapurao** (1950) and **Ketkichya Vanaat** (1950). The first was a biographical about Chhatrapati Shivaji’s religious teacher Swami Ramdas whose intense patriotism helps to awaken the spirit of Moghul-dominated Maharashtra. **Patthe Bapurao** was a biographical about a tamasha shahir and Nene probably wanted to re-create Shantaram’s success with such films. The final Marathi film under the banner of Raja Nene Productions was **Ketkichya Vanaat**, which dealt with the problems of an unwed mother and her illegitimate off-spring in a dramatic manner. Anant Mane, who was the editor and associate director of the two films, was to emerge as one of more significant directors of the 1950s.

With rising prices and salaries, costs of production rose drastically to new heights. Since the Marathi and Hindi film industries were so close to each other geographically there was a tendency to compare the two, sometimes to the detriment of the Marathi film industry. Given this situation, it was thus natural for both capital and talent to gravitate towards the Hindi film industry. Production thus dropped to its lowest-ever level with not a single Marathi film being produced in 1945 and only two films being made in 1946. In spite of all this, there were still enough eager investors to gladden the heart of any filmmaker. Euphoria over impending independence was in the air and audiences, for the first time in many decades of self-denial, were looking forward to having a good time. Cinema undoubtedly would be in the forefront

of the entertainment media. However, it was all marked by uncertainty over what the future held in store for the industry.

Oddly enough, the resurgence of Marathi cinema, when it came, was in the form of two companies which had risen from the ashes. After producing two Hindi films and one Marathi film under his new banner of Rajkamal Kalamandir, V. Shantaram assigned the direction of his bilingual **film Lok Shahir Ram Joshi** (Marathi)/**Matwala Shair Ram Joshi** (Hindi) to his mentor Baburao Painter but had to complete the film due to the latter's illness. Set in the days of the Peshwas the film tells the story of a Brahmin romantic poet who loses caste because of his friendship with low-caste tamasha artistes, whom he befriends because of his love for poetry and dance but later redeems himself when he mesmerises Poona with his romantic poetry. The ostensible format of the biographical was a mere excuse to interject the vibrant lavnis and sawaal-jawabs which became the rage of audiences in Maharashtra.

The tremendous box office success enjoyed by these two films gave the emerging filmmakers an indication of the trends audience tastes would take in the coming years. These two films made it obvious that there would be a shift in the theme from the urban to the rural. With this new trend in filmmaking a number of new directors and producers came to the fore though it must be said that these new filmmakers, trained as they were in the old studio system, had the old values and traditions enshrined in their hearts and mind. Old traditions were now being channelised in new directions. However, it was not only the emergent directors of the 1940s and 1950s who would rule the roost during this period. There were still a few old-timers who had neither defected to Hindi cinema nor faded out.

Leading among the ole guard who continued to be active in Marathi films was Bhalji Pendharkar. In fact, his film **Sasurvaas** was one of the two Marathi films made in 1946. 1947 saw the release of his historical **Jai Bhawani**, directed by his erstwhile assistant Jaishankar Danve, and it was a resounding flop! The signal was clear: the audience wanted something new, something different from what had been churned out in the earlier decades. If the twin successes of **Jai Malhar** and **Lok Shahir Ram Joshi** had clearly indicated what the new audience wanted, this failure was another indication of what the audience did not want.

The shrewd filmmaker that he was, Bhalji once again shifted his attention to the making of social films (having made **Soonbai** and **Sasurvaas** in the recent past) which would meet the aspirations of the new generation. Taking into consideration the new mood of the industry, he also realised that a rural backdrop to the film would only help matters further. Probably to hedge his bets Bhalji also made a historical film in the same year: **Shilaganache Sone**, about another golden page from Maratha history. The film didn't do too well at the box office and two other social films followed: **Mee Daru Sodli** (1950) and **Mazhi Zameen** (1953).

The With both films failing to enthuse the audience, Bhalji went back to the genre he understood best: the historical films which would make him the best and most accurate celluloid chronicler of Maharashtra's beloved king, Chhatrapati Shivaji: **Maharani Yesubai** (1954), **Pawankhind** (1957), **Naikinicha Sajja** (1957), **Mohityanchi Manjula** (1963), **Maratha Tituka Melvava** (1964). The films were all woven around the life and times of Shivaji and dealt with individual episodes of valour, strategy and even romance. In fact, it has often been said that between themselves Bhalji's films on Chhatrapati Shivaji tell the warrior-king's entire life story.

In between Bhalji also made two social films, one of which was directed by himself. **Akashganga** (1959) takes up where **Manoos** left off: A young man, jilted in love, is inspired by his foster parents to join the police force where he distinguishes himself. Later, when his earlier girlfriend and her husband try to trap his foster parents in a criminal case he outwits them. This film, though in keeping with the audience taste of that era, didn't do too well but

the other film which Bhalji produced and Raja Paranjpye directed, **Gaath Padli Thaka Thaka** (1956) fared much better at the box office. Bhalji once again reverted to the genre of social relevance at the end of his directorial career with two classics of Marathi cinema: **Saadhi Maanse** (1965) and **Taambdi Maati** (1969).

Another director who preferred to stick to Marathi films in the post-independence era, and indeed bring acclaim to the entire industry, was noted educationist-turned-dramatist-turned-filmmaker Pralhad Keshav alias Acharya Atre who had begun his career in the cinema as a writer for Winayak's social satires at Hauns and had gone on to become the fourth partner of Navayug Chitrapat Limited. Having left Navayug he had formed his own banner Atre Pictures (1940) and made two socials directed by Jagirdar. He then made his debut as a director and briefly flirted with Hindi cinema making two films which didn't fare well at the box office: **Dil Ki Baat** (1944) and **Parinde** (1945). After a brief respite Atre returned to filmmaking in 1948 as the writer-producer-director of **Moruchi Maushi**, based on his own play adapted from Charlie's Aunt, and with the irrepressible Damunanna Malvankar playing the role of the "aunt". **Brahmaghotala**, which followed a year later in 1949, was also based on his own (unadapted) play Lagnachi Bedi.

Major institutions which have helped to shape the film industry and give it an impetus and direction often have far-reaching repercussions which extend even after the institution has faded into insignificance or passed away into oblivion. Something similar happened in the case of the major film institutions which dominated the Marathi film industry in the 1930s and early part of the 1940s. Prabhat, naturally, was the foremost of these institutions and by far the most trend-setting. Hence, though it lost much of its edge in the post-1942 period and eventually closed down in 1953 following a series of unsuccessful Hindi films, the company made its impact felt through its many disciples who had spread out all over the industry.

Gabale made his debut in 1948 with a G.D. Madgulkar story set against the 1942 Quit India background. **Vande Mataram** tells the intensely heart-warming story of an unknown family, of three brothers and three sisters, from a small village of Maharashtra which decides to sacrifice itself for the cause of the freedom struggle. Made for Mangal Pictures, **Mothi Maanse** (1949) was the first Marathi film based on Gandhian ideals and dealt with the emotional aspects of the arson that followed the assassination of Mahatma

From 1950, Gabale made a series of films for Mangal Pictures and tried his hand at various themes. **Dev Pavala** (1950) was ostensibly a comedy with Damuanna Malvankar in the lead role of a simpleton who realises his own worth when he falls in love with a girl but was actually a fable about Gabale's ideal post-independence world and his solution to how the simple common man could deal with situations which were outside his ken. **Johar Maibaap** (1950), on the other hand, was a straight devotional biography of a low-caste saint, Sant Chokhamela, who strives to bring salvation to his people. Obviously the devotional was merely the skeleton around which Gabale could hang his twin concerns: the creation of an ideal world through social uplift.

His next film **Jashyas Tashe** (1951) was a revenge drama about a low-caste street performer who avenges the rape of his sister at the hands of a wealthy womanising land-owner. Once again the film boasted the best of performers: Baburao Pendharkar, Durga Khote, Usha Kiron and Raja Paranjpye with Sudhir Phadke composing the music, G.D. Madgulkar scripting his brother Vyankatesh Mangulkar's story

One Prabhat protege who has become a significant director in Marathi cinema because of his prolific output as also the fact that he has held onto his own invincible position as a versatile director for close on to four decades is Anant Govind Mane who joined the Prabhat Film Company in the editing and direction department in 1930, when the company was barely one

year old. Mane was just 16 years old then. Through sheer application he rose to become an independent editor and edited the all-time Prabhat classic **Ram Shastri**. Outside Prabhat he edited **Bachchon Ka Khel** (1946) for Raja Nene and **Bala Jo Jo Re**, **Chimni Pakhre** and **Stree Janma Hee Tuzhi Kahani** for Datta Dharmadhikari.

### 3.1.7 THE ERA OF INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE IN 1950'S

The post-independent period saw a major change in the pattern of the Indian film industry. Major studios were closing down all over the country and there was a very definite shift towards the free-lancing system which was further reinforced by the huge amounts of money being pumped into the industry in an effort to get quick returns. The Marathi film industry, naturally, could not remain unaffected. Being a more close-knit industry than the Hindi film industry there was an attempt in the initial period to start a few stable film production companies like Mangal Pictures, Rajkamal Kalamandir, Amrut Chitra, Alhad Chitra, Prabhakar Pictures but most of these had to be closed by the early 1950s because they just could not withstand the pressures of the market. Making films had become far too big a business to be left in the hands of artistes

With the closure of these creatively effective production units rendered unviable by the new economics of filmmaking, the focus at once shifted to the individual, who rose magnificently to the occasion. If the previous era of the 1930s and 1940s was the era of big studios and their pathbreaking films, the 1950s was destined to be an era of individual excellence. Though directors often get credited for the success or failure of a film, cinema essentially is teamwork a fact which most excellent directors accept and admit. The 1950s not only saw the rise of some of the most enduring directors who did their best work during this period but it also saw the rise of a few other personalities who gave them the important ground support to achieve this.

One such personality to emerge during this period was writer G.D. Madgulkar, probably the first specialist film writer to emerge in Marathi cinema.

Strangely enough this behind-the-scene worker actually started in front of the camera! He joined Hauns Pictures in 1938 as an actor and appeared in **Brahmachari** and **Brandichi Batli**. He then worked as an assistant director to Parshwanath Altekar (**Sukhacha Shodh**) and K. Narayan Kale (**Lapandav**) while also playing roles in the films. His first writing assignment was in 1942 as a lyricist in **Pahila Palna** and it was as a lyricist that he worked for the next five years. His first full fledged writing assignment (story, screenplay, dialogue and lyrics) was for **Lok Shahir Ram Joshi** and the film's immense success can, in a large measure, be attributed to his writing. In any case, the film's success ensured Madgulkar's position in the film industry.

Within the next three years Madgulkar had consolidated his position and he was writing for all the major directors: Raja Paranjpye (**Jeevacha Sakha**), Ram Gabale (**Vande Mataram**), Datta Dharmadhikari (**Maya Bazaar**), Raja Thakur (**Bolavita Dhani**), Anant Mane (**Aboli**) and, of course, V. Shantaram, who even made him write his Hindi films like **Do Aankhen Barah Haath** which won international renown. What is really creditable about this wide-ranging association is that Gabale, Dharmadhikari and Mane were themselves accomplished writers.

This was also the period which saw the rise of a number of stars the first genuine stars of the Marathi film industry. True, there have always been stars in Marathi films: Master Vithal, Balasaheb Yadav, Zunzarrao Pawar, Ganpat Bakre, Lalita Pawar, Durga Khote, Shanta Apte, Mandrekar, Vanmala ... but none was exclusive to Marathi films. The stars of the 1950s and 1960s like Chandrakant, Suryakant, Chandrakant Gokhale, Hansa Wadkar, Baby Shakuntala, Sulochana, Rekha, Chitra, Smita, Jayashree Gadkar, Seema, Rajan Jawle, Raja Gosavi, Arun Sarnaik and Ramesh Dev were all exclusively Marathi film stars. And so were the character actors like Baburao Pendharkar, Raja Paranjpye, Sharad Talwalkar, Dhumal, Vasant Shinde, and Dada Salwi.

Of course, one film personality deserves special mention though he deserted the industry very early on in his career to achieve fame in another allied art form: literature. Purushottam Laxman Deshpande started in films as an actor-singer in **Kuber** (1947/M.G. Ragnekar). A year later he played the lead opposite his wife in **Vande Mataram** (1948/Ram Gabale) which was an important break and probably crystallised his decision to try his hand at films. After that he worked as an actor in **Johar Maibaap** (1950) and **Pudhche Paool** (1950); collaborated with G.D. Madgulkar on the writing of **Manache Paan** (1949), **Kalyan Khajina** (1950), **Ammaldar** (1953) and **Devbappa** (1953); independently wrote for **Navra Baiko** (1950) and **Dudh Bhaat** (1952); composed for **Mothi Manse** (1949), **Dev Pavla** (1950), **Navra Baiko** (1950), **Ghardhani** (1952), **Dhudh Bhaat** (1952), **Ammaldar** (1953), **Devbappa** (1953), **Maisaheb** (1953) and **Vithalpayee** (1953). P.L. Deshpande's final effort in the cinema was as an actor-writer-composer-director of **Gulacha Ganpati**, a brilliant Indianisation of the Hollywood film **The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty**, but in spite of the film's success Deshpande preferred to wander into other more lucrative pastures. Cinema's loss was literature's gain! He returned to cinema many years later to write the script and dialogues for **Ek Hota Vidushak** (1992/Jabbar Patel).

Many refer to the 1950s as the Golden Age of Marathi cinema because it was during this period that the regional industry came into its own. During the 1930s and 1940s the regional cinemas, at least in the western and eastern regions, lived under the shadow of the Hindi film industry. A large majority of the films produced were bilinguals and the regional version was often subsidised by the Hindi version which had an all-India release and thus made enough to cover the costs of both versions. During the 1950s regional cinema learned to survive on its own. More than that, it developed its own closed system of stars, technicians and directors. Thus the regional cinema became a separate entity with its own specific identity.

However, Marathi cinema also suffered due to the changed pattern of filmmaking in the 1950s. Probably the ones to suffer the most were the directors who were directly responsible for the success of the film. Now they had also taken on the financial burden as producers to survive in the marketplace. What the filmmakers of this era like Anant Mane, Raja Paranjpye, Datta Dharmadhikari, Dinkar Patil, Raja Thakur and others missed most in their careers was the backing of a major studio, which would have freed them from the financial worries of production and given them the base support which every creative artiste needs in order to do superlative work. Had they got the backing of a Prabhat or a Hauns who knows another Shantaram or Winayak may have emerged

### 3.1.8 NEWER FILMMAKERS TO THE FORE IN 1960'S

May 1, 1960. The states of Maharashtra and Gujarat are carved out of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency. Veteran politician and Royist Yeshwantrao Chavan is appointed the first Chief Minister of the new state of Maharashtra. With the realignment of the states on ethnic/cultural lines, it is now possible for the regional Governments of Maharashtra introduces a

system of awards for excellence in the Marathi cinema. Designed on the lines of the National Awards, introduced a decade earlier, the Maharashtra State Awards will honour practitioners of the film art in 17 distinct categories.

The very first year of the awards attracted 23 participant-films, of which seven films were short-listed by the seven-member jury headed by M.D. Bhat. The top three films/directors for 1961-62 were: **Prapanch** (Madhukar Pathak), **Suvasini** (Raja Paranjpye) and **Shahir Parshuram** (Anant Mane). It goes to the credit of those who laid the foundation of these awards that there has been no need to change either the criteria or the basic structure of the awards over the last three decades and more, except probably increase the number of categories or the amount of cash prize that accompanies the awards. More creditable is the fact that the awards have been handed over, year after year, without a break.

One of the first effects of the award was that it spotlighted the work of the promising new director Madhukar Pathak whose first directorial venture **Prapanch** not only bagged the top award but also awards in five other categories, making it the most-awarded film at the Marathi State Awards. In spite of this promising start, Madhukar Pathak was unable to get much work in the genre of social relevance. His next two films, **Sant Nivrutti Dnyandev** (1964) and **Swayamwar Zhale Seeteche** (1964), were a devotional and a mythological. They did nothing more than exhibit Pathak's competence as a director and achieved a little popularity at the box office. Another three-year wait resulted in his next **Santh Wahate Krishna Mai**, a film which dealt with community development and told the story of a graduate of agriculture who opts to return to his hometown to till his land rather than waste his expertise in the city. Here he initiates a community project to bring water to his parched village by diverting the waters of River Krishna but not before facing stiff opposition from vested interests in the village.

Another director who showed some promise was Datta Mane, a former assistant of Datta Dharmadhikari and Anant Mane. His first film, produced by Dinkar Patil, **Panchari** (1960), was a routine rural drama of a trained girl who fights her way through life. Given his apprenticeship with Dharmadhikari, it was but natural for Datta Mane to gravitate towards themes which had strong female protagonists: **Sukh Aale Mazhya Ghari** (1962), **Tu Sukhi Raha** (1963), **Aai Kuna Mhanu Mee** (1965), **Patlachi Soon** (1966), **Sheras Savva Sher** (1966), **Pathcha Bhau** (1967). None of these films, however, were out of the ordinary. The only promise that Datta Mane showed was in films, however, were out of the ordinary. The only promise that Datta Mane showed was in films like **Waat Chuklele Navre** (1964), a hilarious pre-marital comedy of mistaken identities starring Raja Gosavi and Sharad Talwalkar; **Sudarshan** (1967), about an idealistic rural journalist who starts his own newspaper to challenge the vested interests inimical to the interests of the village; and **Janaki** (1969), about a misguided girl who meanders through life and marriage eventually finding her true love.

These were the first directors to emerge from the freelance system that had evolved soon after the Second World War and more particularly after independence. The earlier generation of directors like Anant Mane, Datta Dharmadhikari, Dinkar Patil, Madhav Shinde, Raja Paranjpye and Raja Thakur, though they had worked as freelance directors, had trained within the studio system which had given them an all-round understanding of cinema and, more important, a cinematic vision. These emergent directors had merely worked (and not trained in the conventional sense) under individual directors and thus lacked the holistic approach to cinema. They were directorially competent but that was all!

Another sign of the times was the deterioration in the content of the film. If one studies the contents of films made in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s one can see a gradual decline in

the the maticquality. This was not confined to the Marathi cinema alone but was also obvious in the all-India Hindi Cinema. Though several social films had been made in the silent era, the genre of the social film was essentially an innovation of the early sound period. The subsequent periods did not contribute much in terms of innovation but merely elaborated on this genre to create various other sub-genres as we have seen in the case of many directors who emerged in the immediate post-independence period.

### 3.1.9 CONFLICTING TRENDS IN 1970'S

The very first year of the decade saw the release of two films which gave an indication of the conflicting trends that were to be discernible during the entire decade. Of course, both trends would take some time to mature and it would only be in the mid-1970s that audiences would be aware of them. The two films were: **Shantata Court Chalu Aahe** directed by the enfant terrible of the theatre movement Satyadev Dubey, and **Songadya**, directed by Govind Kulkarni who had made his debut in the fading years of the last decade. The first film sank without a trace after a few prestigious shows but it did set the ball rolling. **Songadya**, of course, was a super sensational hit and launched the career of Dada Kondke who was destined to give a brand new direction to comedy in Marathi cinema.

It was Bhalji Pendharkar who first introduced him in films with **Tambdi Maati** (1969). Two years later he turned producer with **Songadya**. More than the film, it was Dada's character of a simple-minded but golden-hearted do-gooder which became a success with the audience who craved for more.

Two more films followed in quick succession: **Ekta Jeev Sadashiv** (1972/Govind Kulkarni) and **Andhala Marto Dola** (1973/Dinesh, the pseudonym of Prabhakar Pendharkar). Both were stupendous successes which gave Dada the impetus to turn director with his next film, **Pandu Hawaldar** (1975). Established as a director and with the reins now in his hands Dada embarked on a series of films which would eventually win him a place in the Guinness Book of Records as the producer with the maximum number of consecutive silver jubilee hits (nine in all): **Tumcha Aamcha Jamla** (1976), **Ram Ram Gangaram** (1977), **Bot Lavin Tithe Gudgulya** (1978), **Hyoch Navra Pahije** (1980) and **Aali Angavar** (1982). Dada not only acted in, produced and directed his films but also wrote most of them (including the lyrics), which gave him total control over the making of the films.

His other films were not grand successes but they were still crowd-pullers: **Muka Ghya Muka** (1987), **Mala Ghevun Chala** (1988), **Palva Palvi** (1990), **Yevu Ka Gharat** (1992) and now **Sasarche Dhotar** (1994), a take-off on his nephew Vijay Kondke's all-time superhit **Maaherchi Saadi** (1992). In between he also made two Hindi films: **Aagi Ki Soch** (1988) and **Khol De Meri Zubaan** (1989), a remake of **Muka Ghya Muka**.

Dada Kondke's tremendous success in the 1970s attracted its share of imitators. A whole new genre of cinema came about: the rural-based comedy with its roots in the folk theatre. Among the first was Govind Kulkarni's **Harya Narya Zindabad** (1972), about two simple-minded unemployed youths (Ram Nagarkar and Nilu Phule) who struggle against all odds and emerge triumphant. Kulkarni made only a few more films in this genre before reverting to other forms: **Banya Bapu** (1977), a rehash of his earlier film **Harya Narya Zindabad**, and **Govinda Aala Re Aala** (1981). Kulkarni's other films are either family themes or rural-based dramas though they derive more from Datta Mane and Dinkar Patil than Dada Kondke: **Tamasgeer** (1981), **Maanache Kunku** (1981) and **Daivat** (1982). In any case, Kulkarni could never repeat the success of **Songadya** though **Harya Narya Zindabad** was a fair success

Another director who took to Dada Kondke's genre of comedy and remained in it was Prabhakar Nayak who made clear his intentions in 1973 with two films: **Patle Tar Vhai Mhan** and the similar-sounding **Thapadya**. In the early 1970s, Nayak made rural-based family dramas like **Aai Aahe Shetat** (1970), **Daam Kari Kaam** (1971) and **Pathrakheen** (1972). Now he made a series of films imitative of the Kondke style: **Tevde Sodoon Bola** (1974), **Pandoba Porgi Phasli** (1975), **Mansa Paris Mhendare Bari** (1977) and **Laath Marin Tithe Pani** (1981). None of them met with any degree of success but Nayak's other films were the-matically better. **Padarachya Savleet** (1977) and **Chandal Chowkadi** (1978), though based on rather routine stories, were better-handled.

There were other films which were not strictly within the Dada Kondke mould but inspired by the trend of sexually-implicit rural comedies with double-edged dialogue. Most of them did not do well: **Bayano Navre Sambhala** (1974/Datta Keshav), **Aundha Lageen Karaiche** (1975/Krishna Patil), **Jawal Ye Laju Nako** (1976/Arun Karnatki) and **Navra Mazha Brahmachari** (1977/Madhusudhan Mukadam). Usha Chavan who had been Kondke's most consistent leading lady also made her debut as a director with somewhat similar films:

**Gauracha Navra** (1988) and **Dharpakad** (1992). Though the craze to make such comedies ended by the end of the decade the echoes could be heard well into the 1980s. **Jhatpat Karu De Khatpat** (1981/Shriram Gojumdunge), **Dhagala Laagli Kal** (1985/Kamlakar Torne).

The other trend discernible in contemporary Marathi cinema was the one initiated by **Shantata Court Chalu Aahe** (1971) Marathi cinema had to wait for another four years before it could see another off-beat film. Once again, it came from a man who had strong links with the theatre: Dr Jabbar Patel, a paediatrician by profession, who was already a renowned stage personality fresh from the triumph of *GhashiramKotwal*, written by Vijay Tendulkar. On the face of it **Samna** (1975) was no different from the ordinary run of Marathi films with a background of rural politics. The storyline was simple: an ordinary schoolmaster, inspired by the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and horrified by a murder, takes on the might of the village headman and eventually brings him to book.

Dr. Jabbar Patel was to become the only director who would consistently make films within what came to be known as the New Cinema. His next film **Jait Re Jait** (1977) tells the rather fanciful story of superstition and its fatal end-result.. Two years later, Patel redeemed the promise he had held out in his first film with **Simhasan** (1979), based on two novels by journalist Arun Sadhu, Mumbai Dinank and Simhasan To many film critics, Patel's next film, a bilingual made in 1982, **Umbartha** (**Subah** in its Hindi version), is the highpoint of his career probably because the theme is woman-oriented and hence, in keeping with the concerns of the time.

Patel's next bilingual **Musafir** (1986) was in Hindi and Malayalam and has not been seen widely. After that, for almost half-a-decade he concentrated on documentaries returning in 1992 to direct **Ek Hota Vidushak**, the meandering story of a clown who claws his way to the very top, only to be politically used by a former classmate who is now the state's Chief Minister. Shot in India and USA, **Mukta** (1994) tells the story of NRI family.

In a sense, 1980 was a good year for the New Cinema movement. There was a spurt of activity on the front, probably because of the setting up of the National Film Development Corporation in April 1980. Several off-beat films emerged in that year alone. Architects-turned-art directors Jayoo and Nachiket Patwardhan also made their debut as directors with an interesting chapter from the freedom struggle set in the fading years of the last century. **22nd June 1897** (1980) tells the story of the three Chaphekar brothers who conspired to kill Walter Rand of the Indian Civil Service for his use of strong-arm methods to control the plague which struck Pune in January 1897. Even more interesting is the Patwardhans' next

(and last) film **Anantyatra** (Hindi), which is about a middle-aged executive searching for escape from his dull everyday routine.

Yet another off-beat film made in 1980 was FTII graduate Baba Mazgaonkar's **Garimbicha Bapu**, based on S.N. Pendse's novel, a classic of Marathi literature

The fourth off-beat film of the year 1980 was the first directorial venture of actor Amol Palekar, **Akreit**. Written by Vijay Tendulkar, the film is based on the infamous Manwat murder case in which a childless married woman prevailed upon her influential paramour to arrange for the sacrifice of several children in the hope of begetting a child.

In 1971 he had played the lead in two Marathi films: **Santata Court Chalu Aahe** and **Bajiraocha Beta** (Raja Thakur). However, it was only in 1974 when he played the lead in the Hindi film **Rajanigandha** that he became a star made several such films before returning to his first love: direction. After **Akreit**, however, Palekar never made a Marathi film preferring to either concentrate on Hindi feature films (**Ankahee** and **Thodasa Romani Ho Jaayein**) or television (**Kachchi Dhoop**, **Naqab**, **Mrignayanee** and **Paoolkhuna**).

Ganganvihari Borate's **Suryodaya** (1989), which tells of how politicians make use of the people around them to advance themselves in the political hierarchy; Ramakant Kavthekar's **Aghaat** (1990), which also has a Dalit background; Aruna Raje's **Patit Pawan** (1992), which deals with the Devadasi system of dedicating a daughter to the Goddess Yellamma; actress Sushama Deshpande's one-woman filmisation of her own play on Savitribai Phule, **Vhai Mee Savitribai** (1992).

### 3.1.10 NEW CINEMA MOVEMENT

The New Cinema movement may have failed to take root in the Marathi film industry but it was not without its effect. Over the years there have been many producers and directors who have honestly tried to create a more sincere and sensible cinema within the restrictive matrix of the mainstream industry. During the pre-independence era, the studio system guaranteed the making of at least a few good films since the producer could offset any losses on the off-beat film against the gains made on the more conventional box-office oriented films.

Though Rajdutt's next film **Gharchi Rani** (1968), written by veteran Bhalji Pendharkar, was a routine tale of a villain creating misunderstandings between husband and wife, his third film **Apradh** had an unusual twist in the tale: two lovers cannot marry because the boy is not rich enough to cater to his would-be wife's expensive taste. After that, however, Rajdutt went into a shell making a series of routine films: **Dev Manoos** (1970), a film with shades of Wuthering Heights with a rape case thrown in as a bonus; **Jhep** (1971), depicting the usual fight between good and evil; **Bholi Bhabdi** (1973), about the innocent wife of a criminal and her failure to reform him.

**Varhadi Ani Vajantri** (1973) was another interesting comedy which had a Winayakian social sting as it dealt with the ongoing borderline Marathi-Kannada controversy which had started with the formation of the state when certain towns were integrated into the bordering Karnataka state. For some time he took refuge in the South where he worked as an associate of K. Balachander till he was called back to direct **Ya Sukhano Ya** (1975), which marked actor Ramesh Deo's entry into the realm of film production.

His next film **Devaki Nandan Gopala** (1977), based on the life and times of Sant Gadge Maharaj, the whimsical social worker-saint of Maharashtra, would have remained a conventional devotional. Another series of routine films followed: **Chandra Hota Sakshila**

(1978), a routine story of friendship; **Ashtavinayak** (1979), about the struggle between belief and atheism; **Bhalu** (1980), about a faithful dog who foils a plot against his master.

**Arre Sansar Sansar** (1981) was an epic saga of a woman's struggle against those who seek to undermine her. Inspired by **Mother India** the film went much beyond the original inspiration and followed the central figure to her old age.

In the following years Rajdutt directed many more films in the familiar mould but at least three of them stand out: **Mumbaicha Faujdar** (1984), a comedy about a Bombay policeman marrying a village girl interwoven with a crime base; **Maficha Sakshidar** (1985), which spent so much time at the Censors and went through so many revisions that even Rajdutt would be hard put to recognise his film; **Aaj Jhale Mukta Mee** (1986), a rehash of the Hollywood film **The Reincarnation Of Peter Proud** done with great finesse; and **Pudhcha Paool** (1986), made for Vinay Newalkar, producer of his earlier **Shaapit**. It is not that none of these films were not flawed but they were surely different within the context of Marathi cinema.

The other films during this period were rather routine but competently made: **Raghu Maina** (1983), **Sasu Varchad Jawai** (1983), **Hech Mazhe Maher** (1984), **Ardhangini** (1985), **Mazhe Ghar Mazha Sansar** (1986) and **Anandi Anand** (1987). **Sarja** (1987) was Rajdutt's last film based on a story of a daring lad who lived and fought during Shivaji's times. The film, financed by the National Film Development Corporation, was a moderate runner. Rajdutt made a few television serials which were praiseworthy and showed that he could

Another director who did not live up to the promise shown by his debut-making film is Satish Randive. His first film **Behroopi** (1984) was about a man who is forced to adopt many masks for a living. Starring the Marathi comic hero Ashok Saraf in his first serious the film failed to even recoup its cost. Simultaneously he made another off-beat venture for another producer **Anyay** (1987), which never saw the projection lamp. Two off-beat films later he turned commercial with a vengeance and produced a series of commercially successful films which were in keeping with the mindless trend of the 1980s: **Chal Re Laxya Mumbaila** (1987), **Majjach Majja** (1988) **Maal Masala** (1989) and **Shubh Bol Narya** (1990).

One promising director who has shown a willingness to tackle different themes and experiment with form is Kumar Sohoni who has a theatre background and has also served a brief apprenticeship with Hindi filmmaker N. Chandra. His first film **Ek Ratra Manterleli** (1991) was a routine one-night thriller but Sohoni's treatment and creation of atmosphere promised of better things to come. **Anuradha** (1992) is a meandering tale of a girl widowed before her time and the sacrifices she makes for her dead husband's family while **Aahuti** (1992) is the story of a working girl who is forced by circumstances to make the ultimate sacrifice to save her daughter's honour.

Among the younger set of directors who hold out promise but who have to still go on to their next films are: Kanchan Nayak, who make a brilliant debut with **Kalat Nakalat** (1989), about a marriage which is threatened by the entry of the second woman; Sanjay Surkar, who trackled the unusual (and risky from the box-office point of view) theme of mental retardation **Chaukat Raja** (1991) with the great elan, drawing out a superb performance from the versatile Dilip Prabhavalkar as also his exploration of family relationships in **Aapli Maanse** (1992); Smita Talwalkar, producer of two films made her film debut with **Savat Mazhi Ladki** (1992), a conventional theme which was differently presented giving it freshness and appeal. Both Sanjay Surkar and Smita Talwalkar had earlier collaborated on the direction of the television serial **Rau** which was excellently executed.

There are a few other filmmakers who have not yet achieved thematic maturity but show promise in their technique. Among them are: Vivek Deshpande whose debut-making **Nishpaap** (1992), based on the real-life Rinku murder case of a schoolgirl being burned in public by her lover, gave evidence of a fresh new technique; editor-turned-director Sanjeev Naik whose first two films **Anapekshit** (1991) and **Premankur** (1993) showed an inclination for the tautly-controlled suspense story; newcomer Pradeep Berlekar's **Vedh**, a well-controlled suspense story; Sharavani Deodhar who made an interesting debut with **Lapandav** (1993), a sophisticated situational comedy; Gajanan Sarpotdar who superbly blended the theme of environmental preservation with an interesting plot with **Dost Mazha Mast** (1989); and Vilas Rakte's **Pratikaar** (1992).

In spite of this Datta Keshav has met with limited success probably because a majority of his themes are pedestrian. The few films that have unusual or at least interesting themes have not done well at the box office: **Asel Mazha Hari** (1971), about an insurance agent who does his best to save the life of a dacoit because his death will mean a huge loss to his company; **Mala Dev Bhetala** (1973), a story of three different shades of atheists and their changeover; **Owalte Bhauraya** (1975), about a brother who rescues his sister from a brothel thus becoming a target of social ridicule and the sister who makes the ultimate sacrifice to save his honour; **Zidd** (1980), the story of how pride can destroy a friendship; **Kashala Udyachi Baat** (1983), about a prostitute who reforms in the company of a good family; **Porinchi Dhamaal Baapachi Kamaal** (1987), an anti-dowry film.

The only exception in Keshav's career is his devotional **Sant Gajanan Shegavicha** (1987). Another film which acquired some measure of fame merely because cricket star Sunil Gavaskar played the lead in it was **Sawli Premachi** (1980) but it was no different from his other films which are basically Hindi cinema clones with melodrama blended with crime or suspense. Even within this genre, Keshav's three films stand out: **Bhingri** (1977), **Phatakdi** (1980) and **Mosambi Narangi** (1981). All three are woven around the character of the films' producer, Sushama Shiromani, who added to this trilogy with another film under her own direction, **Gulchhadi** (1984). These four films star Sushama Shiromani as the daredevil heroine cast in the Fearless Nadia mould but in more rational situations. **Sushila** (1978) and **Rickshawalli** (1991) are films which also have daredevil heroines.

Another director who was caught between the new and the old due to his late debut was editor-turned director N.S. Vaidya. An editor with almost three decades of experience, Vaidya made his debut with the superhit anti-dowry film **Lek Chalali Sasarla** (1984), which was remade in several languages. Sensing the change in audience mood, he tried his hand at comedy with films like **Khatyal Sasu Nataal Soon** (1987), **Dhumakool** (1990) and **Bandalbaaz** (1991) but could not make much of an impression. **Bandalbaaz** was based on **Atre's Moruchi Maushi** (a reworking of **Charlie's Aunt**). Vaidya's forte was the family film and he proved it once again in **Kuldeepak** (1991), which had an interesting story-line though it did not do well at the box office.

### 3.1.11 THE AGE OF COMEDY IN 1980'S AND 1990'S

Comedy has always been the mainstay of the Marathi cinema from almost its inception. Master Winayak dominated the first era (1932-46) while Raja Paranjpye dominated the second era (1947-70) but never did it reach the heights that it did not in 1970s and 1980s, each decade giving birth to its own brand of comedy. In fact, so strong was the comedy wave

in these two decades (and more so in the 1980s) that every other film which was not a comedy was literally swept off the marquee within a matter of days. The audience, fed up with the syrupy sentimental romances and the weepy maudlin family melodramas of the Serious Sixties, saw eagerly in search of entertainment which would make them laugh with a vengeance.

Dada Kondke was hailed as the new messiah of the robust, tamasha-backed rural comedy in the 1970s while Sachin and Mahesh Kothare were hailed as the young geniuses who had correctly diagnosed the pulse of the urban college-going audience and wooed them back into the theatres. Budgets soared skywards but Marathi cinema became brighter, slicker and, more important, a money-making proposition. New Government policies had already made Marathi films a financially viable proposition by the new sophisticated drawing room comedies starring Ashok Saraf and Laxmikant Berde brought boom-time to Marathi cinema. However, the desperate search for comedy at all costs resulted in a total degeneration of the genre as anyone and everyone who could put together some money cast Laxmikant Berde and Ashok Saraf and crossed their fingers in the hope they would click and come up with some magic recipe.

With two hits under his belt, Naik made the mistake of changing tracks and came up with an emotional subject in **Khichdi** (1985) which failed to find favour with the audiences. His next two comedies, **Chhakke Panje** (1986) and **Ghabraiche Nahin** (1990), did not reach the level of his first two films. **Ghabraiche Nahin**, based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, was extensively revised by the Censors which led to its delayed release thus reducing whatever chances it had of success. Naik's next **Godi Gulabi** (1991), about twin sisters and their romantic escapades, became a bit too serious at the end which probably disappointed audiences. He has not made a film since then.

Sachin was the first to make his debut with a serious film **Mai Baap** (1982), produced by his father Sharad Pilgaonkar, a long-time producer of Marathi films. The film did fair business but did not set the Ganges on fire. It took Sachin two more years to come up with **Navri Mile Navryala** (1984), about a pair of house servants who solve the problems of the masters they serve and eventually get married. **Savvasher**, made in the same year, met with a comparatively lukewarm response. However, Sachin consolidated his success with **Gammat Jammatt** (1987), which told about a pair of greenhorn crooks who kidnap a rich man's daughter who turns the tables on them. After that there was no looking back. A series of hits followed: **Ashi Hi Banwa** (1988), **Mazha Patil Karodpati** (1988), **Mazha Pati Karodpati** (1988), **Bhutacha Bhau** (1989), **Aamchyasarkhe Aamich** (1990) **Aitya Gharat Ghoraba** (1991) and **Eka Peksha Ek** (1993).

Each one of the films had a well etched storyline: **Ashi Hi Banwa Banwi** deals with the space shortage in Bombay and how three young men hit upon a unique idea to solve it; **Mazha Pati Karodpati** is about a beautiful young girl who claims to be married to a millionaire in order to ensnare him; **Bhutacha Bhau** has a suspense track of three partners in crime fleecing their kind-hearted boss woven into the comedy of two estranged brothers and a reluctant imposter; **Aamchyasarakhe Aamich** is as comedy of errors twice magnified; **Aditya Gharat Gharoba** is inspired by the old Hindi film hit **Pugree** (Anant Thakur/1948) while **Eka Peksha Ek** is about a blind man and a deaf-mute who discover a murder and what follows. In between Sachin directed a serious film **Atmavishwas** (1989), about a woman who rediscovers her self-confidence after the death of her husband.

Mahesh Kothare made his debut as a director a year after Sachin did with **Dhoomdhadaka** (1985), a free-wheeling adaptation of the original Tamil hit **Kadhalika Narammillai** (C.V. Sridhar/1964), which was remade in Hindi in 1966 as *Pyar Kiya Jaa* (C.V. Sridhar). The

success of his very first established him and a series of superhits followed: **De Danadan** (1987), which blended a crime track with the comedy; **Thartharat** (1989), which tells of a hoaxer who pretends to be a much-feared dacoit till the dacoit actually arrives; and a woman who rediscovers her self-confidence after the death of her husband.

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Probably the lukewarm response to this film turned Ghanekar away from serious themes for all his remaining films were in the comic vein: **Rajane Wajavila Baja** (1989), fantasy about a man and his talking dog who avenge a crime; **Balache Baap Brahmachari** (1989), a reworking of the Hollywood film **Three Men And A Baby**; **Aflatoon** (1991), a farce about a Village boy substituting for a dreaded criminal who is dead; and **Wajva Re Wajva** (1993), about two confirmed enemies whose children intermarry thus bringing the two reluctant families together.

Other contemporary directors who have made films within the genre of situational comedy include Bipin Warty and P.R. Berde. Bipin Warty was an experienced production man who turned to direction with **Khara Warasdar** (1986), inspired from several Hindi film sources tells the story of an heir who pretends to be mad in order to win back his inheritance. Though Ashok Saraf, in one of his rare serious roles gives a tremendous performance which is the mainstay of the film there is no denying Warty's excellence as a director. After this successful debut Warty turned to comedy with **Changu Mangu**, a rehash of the 1973 Hindi film **Do Phool** (S. Ramanathan); **Ek Gaadi Baki Anadi** (1990), derived from the Hollywood film **Love Bug**; and **Fekafeki** (1990) and **Doctor Doctor** (1991). Of his comedy films only **Ek Gaadi Baki Anadi** has been a success. The others have coasted along.

P. R. Berde is a graduate of the J. J. School of Arts and a product of Bombay's experimental theatre who turned to the cinema in 1987 and assisted Rajdutt and Girish Ghanekar before making his debut with **Hamaal De Dhamal** (1989), a Pygmalin in reverse wherein a railway porter is picked up and turned into a high society gentleman. In spite of its familiar theme, the film was a success but his next two comedies **Ek Full Char Half** (1991) and **Shame To Shame** (1991) failed to appeal. He turned to serious family drama with **Haach Soonbaicha Bhau** (1992) and **Ghayal** (1993) but with scant success. His latest **Bhasma** (1994) sees him tickle the off-beat theme of masanjogi (a lowcaste cemetery worker) working towards improving the future of his sons.

There were many other filmmakers who worked in this genre with less spectacular results. Many of them merely relied on the magic combination of Ashok Saraf and Laxmikant Berde to do wonder at the box office little realising that an actor, however good he may be, cannot rise above the script. Some short-sighted ones even thought that merely a similar sounding title was enough: Kothare's **Dhadakebaaz** alone inspiring **De Dhadak Bedhadak** (Rajiv

Barve) and **Dhadaka** (Dr. Malik Pawar) in the same year (1990). Of course, a few good films did emerge: **Ek Daav Bhutacha** (Ravi Nemade/1982), **Dharle Tar Chavtai** (Shriniwas Bhangé/1991) and **Lapandaav** (Shravani Deodhar/1993).

Once again, the very first year of the 1990s saw a major shift in audience taste. Comedies ceased to do well. Even major comedy trendsetters like Sachin (**Atmavishwas, Kunku**) and Mahesh Kothare (**Jiwalaga, Mazha Chakula**) saw the writing on the wall and began to shift towards more emotional family films. Evidence that Marathi film themes had come a full circle was available in the stupendous success of Vijay Kondke's **Maherchi Saadi** (1991). At first, observers of the film scene shrugged it off and attributed it to the "Kondke luck" but as the film continued its amazing march towards a seemingly eternal run the same observers began to examine "the phenomenon": a film costing a mere Rs. 25 lakhs and less had brought in a return running into crores and was still going strong wherever it was released. Other films in the same genre followed but with somewhat less spectacular results: **Nagesh Darak's Halad Rusali Kunku Hasale** (1991) and Pitambar Kale's **Mahercha Aaher** (1993). It seemed as if emotion-drenched family films were back in fashion.

### 3.1.12 MARATHI FILMS POST THE YEAR 2000

In past few years, the Marathi cinema industry has produced many films that are not only critically acclaimed but commercially successful as well. It has brought fresh ideas, untouched subjects and deeper human sensitivity on the celluloid.

Acclaimed director Dr Jabbar Patel explains the reasons behind the change, "The kind of Marathi cinema that is being made today is very fresh and different. This is thanks to directors and writers getting exposed to world cinema via television, film festivals etc. They are coming up with new storylines and innovative concepts."

Actor Mrunal Kulkarni remarks, "There is a lot of content and variety in Marathi films. A lot of bold subjects have been handled well by them. They carry a lot of substance." But, she adds, "We need to start watching a lot more Marathi films. Until we see the films ourselves, we will never be able to appreciate them when they are sent to the Oscars."

With outstanding contribution and efforts from different producers and directors of Mumbai Film Industry, Marathi cinema relatively outshined other Indian Film Industries such as Bollywood in the first quarter of 2010 in terms of box office collections and critical appreciation.

Marathi Cinema received critical acclaim in the year 2004 with the film *Shwaas* bagging the Golden Lotus National Award. It was also India's official entry to the 77th Academy Awards and it also won the President's medal for best film, beating Bollywood's prolific output with quality. *Shwaas*, after *Shyamchi Aai* (1950) is only Marathi film to win the President's Medal.

The Maharashtra state government has begun to issue grants to Marathi film (between 1.5-3.0 million rupees). After the success of "Shwaas", Indian media players like Shringar Films and Zee Telefilms are exhibiting a re-emerging interest in Marathi cinema. The growing popularity of Marathi television (notably Zee Marathi and ETV Marathi) has also helped to popularize older Marathi cinema and promote the genre. Zee Talkies, a 24 hour channel dedicated to Marathi movies has been introduced. Movies like *Agabaiareccha*, *Khabardar*, *Dombivali fast*, *Anaahat*, *Sarivar sari*, *Yanda kartavya aahe*, *Uttarayan*, *Tingya*, *Valu* - The

Wild Bull, "SAAWALI", 'De Dhakka, Maati Maay, Kadachit, Me Shivajiraje Bhosale Boltoy SAAVARIYAA.COM", Samaantar, Rita, Restaurant, Nirop, Vihir, Vartul, Gabhiricha Paus, Harishchandrachi Factory, Natarang, Jogwa have received commercial and/or critical success. This decade has seen the emergence of stars like, Makrand Anaspure, Sunil Barve, Shreyas Talpade, Sandeep Kulkarni, Sadashiv Amrapurkar, Sonali Kulkarni, Amruta Subhash, Ashwini Bhawe, Sanjay Narvekar, Atul Kulkarni, Sachin Khedekar, and Bharat Jadhav. Film-makers like Kedar Shinde, Gautam Joglekar, Gajendra Ahire, Bipin Nadkarni, Mahesh Manjrekar, Prashant Pethe, Sanjay Surkar, Chandrakant Kulkarni, Nishikant Kamath, Paresh Mokashi, Umesh Kulkarni, Mangesh Hadawale, Avdhoot Gupte, Nitin Nandan, Yogesh Dattatraya Gosavi, Sachin Kundalkar are new entrants with veterans like Mahesh Kothare, Chitra Palekar (Maati Maay), Sumitra Bhawe (Devrai, Vaastupurush, Doghi, Nital, Badha) Smita Talwalkar, Amol Palekar (Anaahat, Samaantar, Bangarwadi), Renuka Shahane (Rita).

In 2009, Marathi film Harishchandrachi Factory, depicting the struggle of Dadasaheb Phalke in making Raja Harishchandra in 1913, India's first feature film, directed by theatre-veteran Paresh Mokashi was selected as India's official entry to Academy Award in the Best Foreign Language Film Category, making it the second Marathi film, after *Shwaas*, to receive this honour.

In the year 2009 released the blockbuster musical movie Natarang which got both commercial and critical applause and has served as a path-breaking movie for Marathi cinema in many ways. The direction, concept, acting performances and music of this film are well superb and well received by both critics and general audience.

In the year 2010 released Vihir (Umesh Kulkarni), Zenda (Avdhoot Gupte), Jhing Chik Jhing (Nitin Nandan), PRATISAAD - The Responce (Yogesh Dattatraya Gosavi), Mumbai - Pune - Mumbai (Satish Rajwade), Paaradh (Gajendra Ahire) had given different direction to Marathi films.

Coming this November (2010) is probably the first complete Marathi film on sports. This film is titled Manyaa - History will be made. The film is produced by Artha Motion Pictures, directed by Sangramsinh Gaikwad and written by Harish Nayar. The film stars Rajesh Shringarpure (Sarkar Raj and Zenda), Amitriyaan, Mayuri Waugh (Star Pravah) and Madhvi Zuikar. Music is by Nilesh and lyrics by Ashwini Shende. MANYAA was extensively shot in Kankauli (Sindudurg district, Konkan) and Balewadi Sports Complex, Pune. This film was shot on Red Digital Film cameras. The first teaser is available for viewing on youtube.com

**TABLE NO 3.1 ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE MARATHI FILM INDUSTRY**

Production Year	Film	Director	Actor	Actress	Music
1963	<a href="#">Maza Hoshil Ka</a>	L.B.Thakur			
1964	<a href="#">Sant Nivrutti Gyande</a>	Vinayak Sarasvate & Bal Chavan			
1965	<a href="#">Lakshmi Aali Ghara</a>	Madhav Shinde			

1966	<a href="#">Gurukilli</a>	Raja Paranjpe			
1967	Pawnakanthcha Dhondi	Vinayak Thakur			
1968	Ekti	G. Chaugule			
1969	Jiwhala	Atmaram			
1970	Apradh	Sharad Pilgaonkar			
1971	Shantata! Court Chaloo Ahe	<a href="#">Satyadev Dubey</a> & <a href="#">Govind Nihalani</a>			
1972	Kunku Mazhe Bhagyache	Shamrao Mane			
1973	Andhala Marto Dola	<a href="#">Dada Kondke</a>			
1974	Sugandhi Katta	Not Awarded	<a href="#">Shreeram Lagoo</a> (Sugandhi Katta)	Sarla Yevlekar (Sugandhi Katta)	
1975	<a href="#">Samna</a>	<a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> (Samna)	<a href="#">Shreeram Lagoo</a> (Samna)	Sandhya (Chandanachi Choli Ang Ang Jali)	
1976	Aaram Haram Aahe	Vasant Joglekar (Ha Khel Saavlyancha)	Ravindra Mahajani (Zunj)	Asha Kale (Ha Khel Saavlyancha)	
1977	Naon Mothan Lakshan Khotan	Murlidhar Kapdi (Naon Mothan Lakshan Khotan)	<a href="#">Shreeram Lagoo</a> (Bhingree)	Usha Chavan (Naon Mothan Lakshan Khotan)	
1978	Devki Nandan Gopala	<a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> (Jait Re Jait)	Yashwant Dutt (Bhairu Pahilwan Ki Jai)	<a href="#">Smita Patil</a> (Jait Re Jait)	
1979	Sinhasan	<a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> (Sinhasan)	<a href="#">Sachin</a> (Ashtavinayak)	<a href="#">Ranjana</a> (Sushila)	
1980	<a href="#">22 June 1897</a>	Jayu & Nachiket Patwardhan (22 June 1897)	<a href="#">Nilu Phule</a> (Sahkar Samrat)	Usha Chavan (Ran Pakhre)	
1981	<a href="#">Umbartha</a>	<a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> ( <a href="#">Umbartha</a> )	<a href="#">Girish Karnad</a> (Akriet)	<a href="#">Smita Patil</a> ( <a href="#">Umbartha</a> )	
1982	Shapit	Raj Dutt & Arvind Deshpande	<a href="#">Ashok Saraf</a> (Gondhalat Gondhal)	Madhu Kambikar (Shapit)	

		(Shapit)			
1983	Gupchup Gupchup	V. K. Naik (Gupchup Gupchup)	<a href="#">Ashok Saraf</a> (Goshta Dhamal Namyachi)	<a href="#">Ranjana</a> (Savitri)	
1984	Lek Chalali Saasarla	N. S. Vaidya (Lek Chalali Saasarla)	<a href="#">Ashok Saraf</a> (Sage Soyre)	Supriya Sabnis (Navri Mile Navryala)	
1987	Dhoom Dhadaka	Mahesh Kothare (Dhoom Dhadaka)	<a href="#">Laxmikant Berde</a>		
1994	Vazir	Sanjay Rawal (Vazir)	<a href="#">Vikram Gokhale</a> (Vazir)	Sukanya Kulkarni (Varsa Laxmicha)	<a href="#">Shridhar Phadke</a> (Varsa Laxmicha)
1995	Aai	<a href="#">Mahesh Manjrekar</a> (Aai)	<a href="#">Sayaji Shinde</a> (Aboli)	<a href="#">Renuka Shahane</a> (Aboli)	Anand Modak (Mukta)
1996	Putravati	Nichiket & Jayoo Patwardhan (Limited Manuski)	<a href="#">Ashok Saraf</a> (Soona Yeti Ghara)	<a href="#">Sonali Kulkarni</a> (Doghi)	<a href="#">Shridhar Phadke</a> (Putravati)
1997	Bangarwadi	<a href="#">Amol Palekar</a> (Bangarwadi)	Mohan Joshi (Rao Saheb)	Sukanya Kulkarni (Sarkarnama)	Anand Modak (Sarkarnama)
1998	Tu Tithe Mee	Sanjay Soorkar (Tu Tithe Mee)	Mohan Joshi (Tu Tithe Mee)	Suhas Joshi (Tu Tithe Mee)	Anand Modak (Tu Tithe Mee)
1999	Bindhast	Chandrakant Kulkarni (Bindhast)	<a href="#">Dilip Prabhavalkar</a> (Ratra Aarambh)	Sharvari Jamenis (Bindhast)	<a href="#">Shridhar Phadke</a> (Lekru)

**TABLE NO 3.2 MAHARASHTRA STATE AWARDS**

Production Year	Best Film 1	Best Film 2	Best Film 3
1962	Prapanch (Madhukar Pathak)	Suvaasini (Raja Paranjpe)	Shaahir Parshuraam (Anant Mane)
1963	Ranglyaa Raatri Ashyaa (Raja Thakur)	Ha Maazaa Marg Ekla (Raja Paranjpe)	Phakir (Chandrashekhar)
1964	Chhotaa Jawaan,	Pahu Re Kiti Vaat (Raja	Thoraataanchi Kamalaa

	Paathlaag (Raja Gabale, Raja Paranjpye)	Thakur)	(Madhu Shinde)
1965	Vaawtal (Shantaram Aathavale)	Sawaal Maazaa Aikaa (Anant Mane)	Third award not given
1966	Saadhi Maanse (Bhalji Pendharkar)	Kelaa Ishara Jaataa Jaataa (Anant Mane)	Shewatchaa Maalusaraa (Vasant Joglekar)
1967	Santh Vaahate Krushnaamaai (Madhukar Pathak)	Kaakaa Malaa Waachwaa (Raja Paranjpe)	Swapna Tech Lochani (Chandrawadan)
1968	Gharchi Raani (Rajdatt)	Aamhi Jaato Aamuchyaa Gaawaa (Kamalakar Torne)	Ekti (Raja Thakur)
1969	Apraadh (Rajdatt)	Mukkaam Post Dhebewaadi (Madhukar Paathak)	Dharmkanyaa (Maadhav Shinde)
1970	Mumbaicha Jawai (Raja Thakur)	Warnecha Wagh (Vasant Painter)	Laxmanresha (Manshav Shinde)
1971	Gharkul (Raja Thakur)	Shantata Court Chalu Aahe ( <a href="#">Satyadev Dubey</a> )	Dohni Gharcha Pahuna, Songadya (Garjanan Jagirdar, Govind Kulkarni)
1972	Jawai Vikat Ghene Aahe (Raja Thakur)	Bholibhabdi (Rajdutt)	Aandla Marto Dola (Dinesh)
1973	Sugandhi Katha (Vasant Painter)	Kartiki (Datta Mane)	Ashi Hi Sataryadi (Murlidhar Kapadi)
1974	Pandu Hawaldar ( <a href="#">Dada Kondke</a> )	Saamna (Dr. <a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> )	Bayanno Naure Sambhala (Dattatry Kulkarni)
1975	Charicha Mamla (Babsaheb Phattelal)	Tumch Aamch Jamle ( <a href="#">Dada Kondke</a> )	Pahuni (Anant Mane)
1976	Phrari (V. Ravindra)	Bala Gau Kashi Aangai (Kamlakar Torne)	Naav Motha Lakshan Khota (Murlidhar Kapadi)
1977	Devkinandan Gopala (Rajdutt)	Bhairu Phehelwan Ki Jai (Kamlakar Torne)	Jait Re Jait (Dr. <a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> )
1978	Janki (Vasant Joglekar)	Ashtavinayak (Rajdutt)	Bot Lavin Tithe Gudgulaya ( <a href="#">Dada Kondke</a> )
1979	22 June 1897 (Nechiket and Jayu Patwardhan)	Sinhasan (Dr. <a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> )	Paij (Babasaheb Phattelal)
1980	Umbartha (Dr. Jabbar Patel)	Gondhlat Gondhal (V.K. Naik)	Aakrit (Amol Palekar)
1981	Shapit (Rajdutt and Arvind Deshpande)	Ek Dav Bhootacha (Ravi Namade)	Aali Angawar (Dada Kondke)
1982	Raghu-Maina (Rajdutt)	Goopchoop Goopchoop (V.K. Naik)	Thorli Jau (Kamlakar Torne)

1983	Hech Mazhe Maher (Rajdutt)	Thkas Mahathak (Raja Bargir), Mumbaicha Phoujdar (Rajdutt) (Divided)	Bahurupi (Satish Randive)
1984	Ardhangi (Rajadutt)	Deva Shapath Kharan Sangen (Bhaskar Jadhav)	Stridhan (Babasaheb Phattelal)
1985	Pudhcha Paul (Rajdutt)	Tuzhyavdachun Karmena (Damu Kenkare)	Aaj Zale Mukt Me (Rajdutt)
1986	Prem Karuyaa Khullam Khullaa (Girish Ghanekar)	Gammatt Jammatt (Sachin)	Khatyaal Saasoo Naathaal Soon (N.S. Vaidya)
1987	Ashi Hi Banwaa Banwi (Sachin)	Nashibwaan (N.S. Vaidya)	Rangat Sangat (Girish Ghanekar)
1988	Kalat Nakalat (Kanchan Nayak)	Aatmavishwaas ( <a href="#">Sachin</a> )	Hamaal De Dhamaal (Purushottam Berde)
1989	Aaghat (Ramakant Kavthekar)	Ekaapekshaa Ek ( <a href="#">Sachin</a> )	Kooldeepak (N.S. Vaidya)
1990	<a href="#">Chaukat Raja</a> (Sanjay Surkar)	Vedh (Pradip Berlekar)	Anapekshit (Sanjiv Naik)
1991	Ek Hotaa Vidushak (Dr. <a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> )	Aapli Maanasa (Sanjay Surkar)	Wajwaa Re Wajwaa (Girish Ghanekar)
1992	Vajir (Sanjay Rawal)	Sawat Maazi Laadki (Smita Talwalkar)	Lapandaaw (Shravani Devdhar)
1993	Muktaa (Dr. <a href="#">Jabbar Patel</a> )	Waarsaa Lakshmichaa (Madhukar Pathak)	Maazaa Chhakulaa (Mahesh Kothare)
1994	Doghi (Sumitra Bhawe)	Baangarwaadi ( <a href="#">Amol Palekar</a> )	Aboleee (Amol Shedge)
1995	Raosaahab (Sanjay Surkar)	Putrawati (Bhaskar Jadhav)	Sunaa Yeti Gharaa (A. Radhaswani)
1999	Gaabhaaraa (N.F.D)	Gharaabaaher (Suyog Chitra)	Bindhaast (Devyani Movies)

**TABLE NO 3.3 NATIONAL FILM AWARDS**

Production Year	Best Feature Film in Marathi	Director
1954	Shyamchi Aai	Acharya Pralhad Keshav Atre
1955	Mahatma Phule	Aacharya Atre
1956	Mee Tulas Tuzhya Angani	Raja Thakur
1957	Shirdiche Saibaba	Kumarsen Samarth
1958	Gruhdevta	Madhav Shinde
1959	Dhakti jau	Anant Mane
1961	Kanyadan	deepak

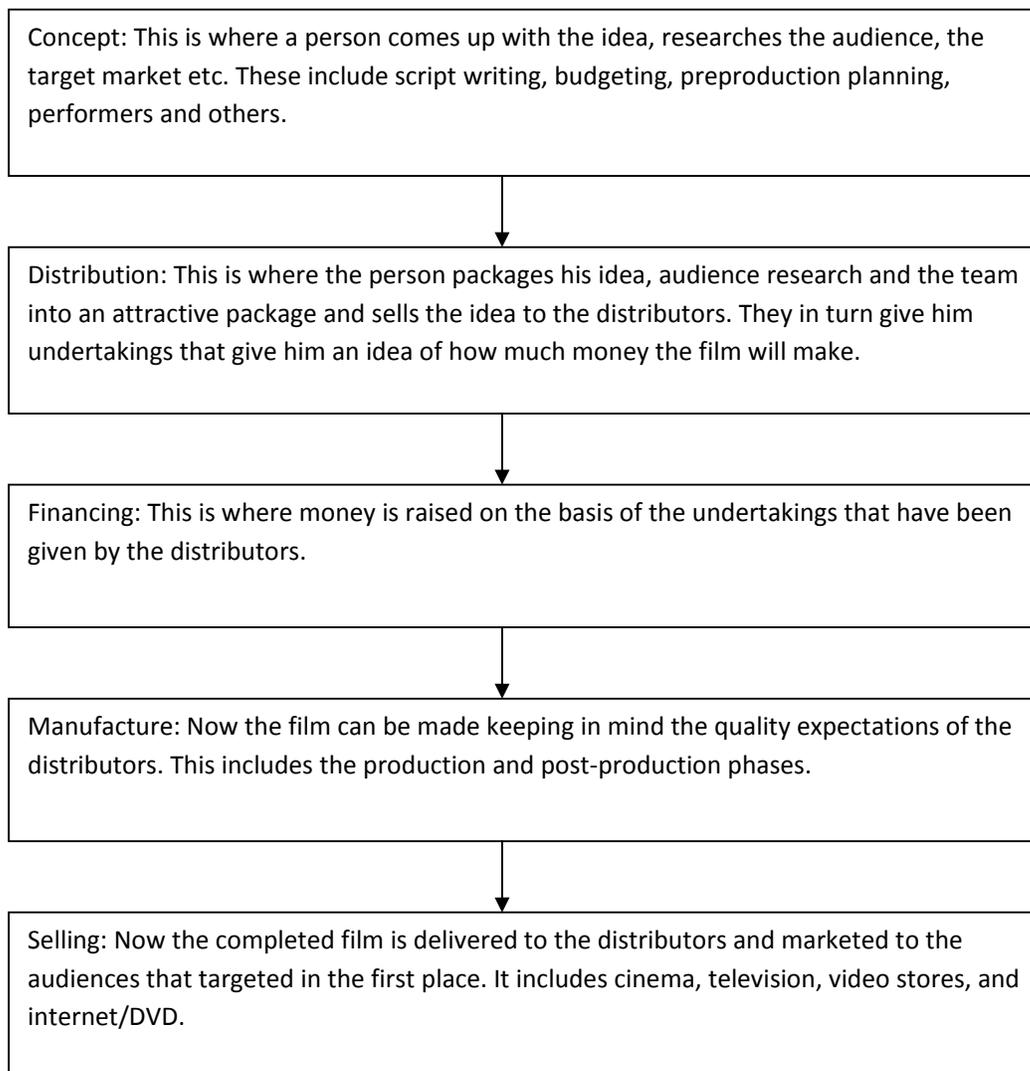
1962	Prapanch	Madhukar Pathak
1962	Manini	Anant Mane
1962	Vaijyanta	Gajanan Jagirdar
1963	Ranglya Ratri Asha	Raja Thakur
1963	Gariba Gharchi Lek	Kamlakar Torne
1963	Jawai Mazha Bhala	Neelkanth Magdum
1964	Ha Mazha Marg Ekla	Raja Paranjpe
1964	Te Mazhe Ghar	Ganesh Bhatt
1965	Pathlag	Raja Paranjpe
1966	Sadhi Manasa	Bhalji Pendharkar
1967	Pavana Kathcha Dhondi	Anant Thakur
1968	Santh Wahate Krishnamai	Madhukar Pathak
1969	Ekti	Raja Thakur
1970	Tambdi Mati	Bhalji Pendharkar
1971	Mumbaicha Jawai	Raja Thakur
1972	Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe	Satyadev Dubey
1972	Ajab Tuzhe Sarkar	Raja Thakur
1973	Pinjra	V. Shantaram
1976	Saamna	Dr. Jabbar Patel
1978	Jait Re Jait	Dr. Jabbar Patel
1979	Sinhasan	Dr. Jabbar Patel
1980	22 June 1897	Nachiket and Jayu Patwardhan
1982	Umbartha	Dr. Jabbar Patel
1983	Shaapit	Arvind Deshpande-Rajdutt
1984	Smruti Chitre	Vijaya Mehta
1985	Mahananda	K.G.Korgaokar
1986	Pudhcha Paool	Rajdutta
1987	Sarja	Rajdutt
1989	Kalat Nakalat	Kanchan Nayak
1992	Ek Hota Vidushak	Dr. Jabbar Patel
1993	Lapandav	Shravani Devdhar
1994	Mukta	Dr. Jabbar Patel
1995	Bangarwadi	Amol Palekar
1996	Doghi	Sumitra Bhavé
2000	GharaBaher	Sanjay Surkar
2001	Astitva	Mahesh Manjrekar
2003	Vaastuprush	Sumitra Bhavé/Sunil Sukthankar
2004	Not Only Mrs. Raut	Gajendra Ahire

2005	Uttarayan	Bipin Nadkarni
2006	Dombivali Fast	Nishikant Kamat
2006-2007	Shevri	Gajendra Ahire
2008	Nirop	Sachin Kundalkar
2009	Harishchandrachi Factory	Paresh Mokashi

## 3.2 MARKETING OF A MARATHI MOVIE

### 3.2.1 FILM INDUSTRY CHAIN

**FIGURE: 2. 1 FLOW CHART**



Marketing is undertaken at every step of this chain. From the time the story is thought and the cast is selected, the marketing process begins. Directly or indirectly, the news that is spread about the movie tells the customers about it thus promoting the movie.

Marketing teams consist of strategists, negotiators, publicists, photographers, graphic designers, sales reps, writers, media producers and announcers, editors, and many more specialists who move the product from a script through the industry system into the consumer system. Marketing a movie involves a roll-out calendar that first reaches out to industry channels: distributors, theatrical exhibitors, sales reps, producers' reps, and the industry media.

### **3.2.2 MARATHI MOVIE MARKETING**

Marketing is a broad category encompassing a broad range of services that are based on scientific approach and artistic creativity. While the act of marketing may include everything from personal networking to full blown ad campaigns, there are elements which are common to both, which include effective and clairvoyant presentation of ideas and messages and the necessity to elicit a favourable response. To achieve 100% favourable response towards the product, brand and the company behind, Rajat Jain, MD, Walt Disney came up with the 4 Es – emotions, engagement, experience and enhancement. If these Es are satisfied by the product or service offered, the product will be said to have got a good response. This stands true especially in marketing of services like travel and tourism and entertainment.

Entertainment is an amusement or diversion intended to hold the attention of an audience or its participants. The entertainment industry consists of a large number of sub-industries devoted to entertainment. However, the term is often used in the mass media to describe the mass media companies that control the distribution and manufacture of mass media entertainment. It includes movies, television, radio, theatre, sports, and many such services. Film is a field that encompasses motion pictures as an art form or as part of the entertainment industry. They are a popular form of entertainment, and a business produced by recording "real" people and objects (including played-out fantasy and fakes) with cameras, and/or by animation.

Success in digital cinema is built upon several critical ingredients: content, technology and people. The people factor is where marketing comes in. Finding their itch and supplying a solution is the process of marketing. Today's marketing is about design as much as it is about product life cycle. A marketing attitude of connecting people with people through a product and/or service is at the heart of every decision and process in business – An attitude of identifying the audience/customers, an attitude of giving them more bang for their buck, an attitude of getting their attention in a world of media clutter, an attitude of building value for your company through smart business negotiations. All those choices and skills are elements of marketing.

The main objective of movie marketing is to reach as many targeted consumers as possible at the lowest cost. This is accomplished by creating innovative messages that engage moviegoers in a highly effective manner. Movie marketing can take months of planning and organizing and its success can make or break a film. Movie marketing can be expensive and is often a significant part of the entire movie cost. Certain elements of film marketing do differ from conventional efforts, as films can utilize the cachet surrounding the actors

themselves. Often, big names sell the film more effectively than other marketing efforts. Reviews by top critics are also an extremely important element of film & movie marketing.

Effective movie marketing goes beyond traditional media and reaches consumers in unique and creative ways. This can include alternative advertising, one-to-one promotions, partnering with events, sponsorships, etc. Movie theatre advertising can be handled at the venues themselves, with marketing teams promoting a variety of products to consumers as they are waiting in line or approaching the theatre.

A movie can be rightly termed as a service of mass consumption, a service to be rendered to the mass based audience. In the West, movies have been long looked upon as products which have to be marketed and as an occasion offering a fantastic opportunity to cut through communication clutter, create excitement in the market place and reach the consumer. In India it has been only in the past few years that marketers have begun to take movie business seriously.

### **3.2.3 STAGES OF MARKETING A MARATHI FILM**

Marketing of a Marathi movie can thus be divided into following stages:

Pre-production and development stage marketing consists of research to identify the best niche markets, genre and cross-over strategies, product placements, star recruitment, and of course a refined, marketable script. The gathering and evaluation of data regarding the preference of consumers for products and services, market research and market surveys enable a business to make informed decisions based on actual customer needs. Market research and market surveys can help develop and implement successful marketing campaigns that are more focused and targeted toward a desired audience. It also helps the producers know about the favourable distributors for their film.

During production, marketing activities include on-set activities including the taking of production still photography for upcoming packaging, posters and media illustrations, as well as set visits and promotion for the media who work way ahead of the release of the film to get the story out to the industry and the ultimate consumers. This is also called 'unpaid publicity' as the media may not be paid for the publicity done. However, they press may charge about 50%, to the producers for the publicity once the film is ready to release. One or two prints ready are shown to the distributors in trial cinemas/ halls who are also provided with the posters, show cards, etc. made for promotions along with some prints. Distributors like to get into the movie marketing picture early so they can work with the producer in getting adequate coverage shots for their various niche markets, make sure they have quality images and stories for their marketing materials, and have adequate time to distribute the promotional energy throughout their market niches. In addition, teaser trailers are shown on televisions and theatres to create buzz among the audience.

Post production isn't left in the marketing dust. During the last couple months of editing, there are private screenings that test for audience feedback to hone the story into its finest, most marketable form. There are also screenings in the trial halls for the distributors and media. The media is provided with a psychostyle (a film industry jargon; a review written by the producer and given to the pres telling about the shooting, making, story, etc.) report given by the telling about ) by the producers to get a favourable review. There's no direct payment

made for this and thus the results are not sure to be positive all the time. Positive reviews can generate sales as much as conventional advertisements. And similarly a negative response from the media can completely drown the movie. This is a kind of 'Silent marketing'. Length, cover shots, story elements and even colour correction can be refined for greater marketability.

Launch of a film is considered the high point of marketing, but it is really a culmination of months of behind the scenes marketing work. The message has been crafted, the visuals assembled, the stars put into the public spotlight, and the distribution channel negotiated into a seamless flow of product flowing into the various channels that take the product into the service and product markets. The launch of music of the movie is also a marketing activity. Indian movies that are still recognised by their songs and dances use them as promotional tool.

After the launch, the working of a Marathi movie depends on the word of mouth. It is all in the hands of the audience. Publicity can be controlled until the audiences see it. That is why not many producers think much can be done after that. But this view is changing gradually. Even if the image that is portrayed in the minds of the people who have already seen the movie cannot be changed, at least bad publicity can be curbed. Post release promotions are taken place by the stars themselves attending the launch of the movie in different regions. Other promotion activities like contests keep going at least till 1 month (or 4 weeks) after the release of the movie. Also the film festivals add to the promotion. Production houses like Ashtavinayak production believe more in the post launch marketing.

### **3.2.4 MARATHI MOVIE MARKETING TRIANGLE**

The Marathi movie marketing has the producer, distributors and the customers at the 3 different ends of the service marketing triangle. Thus marketing takes place in three ways:

1. Selling the movie to the distributors,
2. Marketing the movie to the masses by the producers,
3. Marketing to the masses by the distributors/ exhibitors.

Selling the Marathi movie to the distributors is as important as selling it to the final customer. Only if the distributor is satisfied and understands the message the producer wants to convey through his movie, will he (the distributor) market it well to the final audience. The exhibitors themselves take up activities like tying up with corporate, announcing contests, etc. to attract customers.

The main marketing done for the movies is by the producers for their customers directly. This might be done in conjunction with the distributors. It includes T. V. trailers, Theatre trailers, press conferences, arrangement of star interviews, star premieres, in-film advertising, merchandising, and all the marketing strategies undertaken directly by the producers. In addition, the posters and billboards/ hoardings are also prepared by the producers and then supplied to the various distributors; hence it becomes an indirect marketing by the producers.

### **3.2.5 MARATHI MOVIE COMMUNICATION MIX**

In order to make a profit on movies they release, movie studios usually engage in a sometimes expensive marketing campaign to ensure that people will actually attend the movie.

Several different techniques serve this end. Trailers - assemblies of excerpts from the movie - screen prior to other movie showings. Advertisements in newspapers, on television, and movie-oriented websites can also help. More questionable practices include movie junkets, reliance on so-called quote whores and (allegedly) fake movie fan websites.

The marketing communications mix can be divided in the following parts:

#### **A: ADVERTISING**

The various mediums of advertising are:-

1. TV
2. Radio
3. Print (newspaper and magazine)
4. Billboards (mobile advertising)
5. Trailers (television and theatre)

Television is the favoured and probably the most effective form of advertising films to people who are not regular cinemagoers. The advertising message can be made visually appealing and delivered to target audiences. It is also the most expensive. However, because film is a cultural product, publicity can be generated for virtually nothing. The publicity circus generates much free media coverage. Most stars will be contracted to do interviews with television, radio, newspapers and magazines; they spend a day in a hotel seeing a different interviewer every few minutes and say positive things about the film. A press pack will disseminate information to every relevant publication and will include images and sequences from the film that can be used. Nowadays television is being used more effectively. The making of the movie to be released is shown a day prior to the release. Then there also shows hosted to tell more about the movie. For example, the movie 'Zenda' directed and produced by Avdhoot Gupte aired a show on television telling the audience more about the movie.

Radio advertising is used less often, but its popularity is increasing day by day especially for people who are on travel whole day. Through this medium not only the songs and star interviews but also contests are being carried out and hence it is very useful.

Print advertising i.e. newspaper and magazine; include movie reviews, star interviews, stills from the movie, et al. It has been declining, but the independent distributors tend to spend proportionally more on this medium. But sometimes these mediums are cheaper compared to the others as most of the cost is covered by the independent press reports.

Billboards are an effective medium to advertise the movie. They show stills from the movie, brand associations, etc. in addition to the normal billboards now digital billboards are being used which are more attractive. They seem to be still from far and when approached a small clipping of about 10 seconds is seen and then it turns back to a simple billboard for some time. This repeats after few minutes (as per the time set). Normal billboards are also rapidly being replaced by Mobile Advertising.

Mobile advertising uses platforms such as cars, trucks, moving vans, public transportation, trolleys, etc. which are taken on rounds in high-traffic locations. This mobile advertising placement can include magnetic signs, bumper stickers, window decals, and advertisements painted directly onto the vehicle. While it may compete with numerous other ads in these locations, mobile advertising is different enough from conventional advertising that it creates interest. A classic example is of the Balaji Telefilms movies which use their own vans, used for shooting purposes, as billboard location. This method is not so expensive also.

The other important form of advertising is Trailers are short (90 seconds or less) advertisements for films and are probably the most cost-effective selling tool for films. They can be shown on television and in theatres to a captive audience. They are very likely to be reaching the target audience. They can convey a feel for the story, which is important to the potential audience.

Theatrical trailers are 2-3 minute advertisements for movies that play in cinemas before another movie, or during the interval. Trailers are placed by the film's distributor, not the cinema. Thus trailers almost always advertise another film from the same firm. This makes a hit film even more valuable as means more people will see ads for the companies other films. This ability can also affect when films are released. If a studio has a guaranteed hit they will schedule similar films for release soon after so that the audience who saw the trailer before the first film will see the second. This advertising is especially valuable as it can be carefully targeted. Movies appealing to one age group or demographic will have trailers for films targeting that same group. Trailers tend to appeal to specific markets, and if different trailers are compared for the same movie, it can be seen that they also portray specific themes depending on their intended market.

The most common technique is to show some the highlights of the film. Thus for an action movie some of the most elaborate special effects shots will be cut into the trailer.

For a comedy two or three of the funniest jokes will be put in the trailer. All trailers also emphasize what high profile stars are in the film, sometimes listing some of the awards these actors have achieved. Noted directors and producers are also listed, but since few directors and producers have name recognition among the general populace far more common is to mention a previous successful film the director or producer released in the same genre. As well as highlights from the film, another ubiquitous feature of the trailer is a voice over. The voiceover is usually essential to inform the audience about the plot of the film, as brief disconnected scenes rarely can do this. The trailer also shows briefly a list of the main cast and production team. This list normally contains dozens of names and is impossible to read in the brief period it is on the screen. It is still insisted upon by union contracts, however. How much to give away in a trailer is a controversial question. Most filmmakers believe that some surprise is necessary and that a trailer should show no more than is needed to convince the audience to see a film.

A Teaser Trailer is a truncated version of a Theatrical Trailer intended to entice the audience about an upcoming movie and to begin hype on big name titles. Teaser Trailers unlike the typical long trailers are usually very short in length, usually under 30 seconds. The purpose of the teaser trailer is not to show a bunch of out-of-context clips in order to give the audience an understanding about the movie's plot or theme, but rather to let them know that the movie is coming up in the near future, and to add to the hype of the upcoming movie event. Recent examples of major motion picture events that used teaser trailers to gain hype are 'Guldastha'

and 'Vihir'. Teaser Trailers usually appear months before the longer and more detailed trailers do.

## **B: PUBLICITY**

1. posters in cinemas
2. website
3. press (tabloids & broadsheet) articles and reviews
4. magazines
5. tie-ins (including single, music video, script, book, the making of documentary)
6. music launch, premieres
7. festivals
8. stunts

Distributors specifically target community 'opinion leaders' for their advance screenings to assist in speeding word-of-mouth promotion. Influential journalists that write about the arts or an association that embodies the target audience may be invited to a special screening.

Posters and displays adorn the foyers of cinemas. Posters also appear in appropriate magazines.

The Internet is regarded as an essential medium. It's very rare these days to not have a movie hit the theatres without a website promoting it. In the last few years, web sites have increasingly become part of the marketing mix for movie companies. They inform about the various places the movie is being shown, and other details like the cast, crew and also they have the trailers put up on the websites. It mainly helps when the movie is to be released overseas. For example, 'Kass' an Akruiti Productions movie used their website very effectively for promotion.

Media opportunities are a low-cost method for promotion. The mere mention of a film and its details in newspapers, magazines, television, or radio may produce more word-of-mouth awareness than an advertising campaign. This may be related to the fact that the public accepts news stories more than advertising messages because of their so-called authenticity. For example, when a movie is released the stars travel across all over the country where it is being released and give interviews promoting the movie.

The movie junket is another commonly used method of movie marketing. The studio that produces a movie (or its marketing partner) invites several journalists/entertainment writers to see a movie before its release, then gives them the opportunity to interview its stars. The studio usually expects the journalists to give favourable press to the movie after returning home. A negative review is likely to inhibit the studio from inviting its author to more junkets. Some consider movie junkets a kind of practice where journalism and marketing merge to a dangerous point.

Mobile downloads are also help in the publicity of the movie. Various songs, ring tones, wallpapers, games and many such downloads for the mobile are growing in demand. They too add to the promotion of the movie to a large extent.

Corporate Sponsorship is the ability to attract a national sponsor. It usually requires the film to have a wide-release pattern in a major market. For example, trailers, posters, micro sites

and hoardings aside, tied up with The Times of India, Sony Entertainment's, music channel MTV etc to promote the movie.

Premieres are also used to garner coverage, often as a news item. These are often designated 'for charity' to help news editors justify the coverage and if a famous personality can be persuaded to attend then the 'photo opportunity' is very likely to be taken up. Previews, usually start up to a week before the film's release, and are used to generate 'word of mouth'.

The release of songs associated with the movie has become de rigueur and extracts from the film are likely to be included within the pop video. Songs and music are the integral part of an Indian movie. Even if songs are not included in the movie, an album of the movie songs is sure to be made. Any time the song is played on the radio the movie is likely to be mentioned. Some films get nominated at the film festivals & get recognition and thus create hype among the audience to watch it. These events can maximize exposure for the film. These are straightforward ways of promoting a film however there are a multitude of other ways of getting a film noticed.

### **C: SALES PROMOTION**

Another tactic that many movie makers rely on is the use of retail tie-ins (such as contests and point-of-purchase displays) in related media outlets, such as book and record stores. These efforts can help build awareness with modest investments in time and labour.

Sampling is the technique by which tickets to sneak previews and premieres are given away. A film distributor would make a deal with a radio station (selected for its demographics to deliver the film's target audience) to provide a determined number of announcements inviting listeners to phone or write in to win tickets to a special advance screening (the distributor pays for the theatre rental and invitations, but not the air time). These contests are also initiated by the theatres (exhibitors).

### **D: PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Personal communications is the communications done on the face to face level with the customers. It is either through the sellers or through word of mouth. Sellers include the helpline services of the theatres, and the VCD and DVD sellers. The way the movies are sold by them, help the customers decide about the movie to a certain extent. These sellers take up certain marketing efforts themselves promoting the movie. Word-of-mouth publicity is the most powerful form of promotion for films, particularly the upscale film. Word of mouth is a communication between the customers themselves. It originates from outside the organisation and thus can have a negative effect. As it is rightly said bad news spreads faster than good news, if a person likes something he tells it to four people, otherwise he tells it to 17 people. Thus more care is to be taken to curb bad word of mouth situation. Negative publicity also should be fought during the post-release phase.

### 3.2.6 MARKETING COST DISTRIBUTION FOR A MARATHI FILM

The following table shows a break-up of the money invested in advertising through various different mediums. From the table we can see that amount invested in TV is reducing and that in internet, posters, etc. is gaining importance.

**TABLE 3.4. MARKETING COSTS OF A MARATHI FILM**

The Divide	2001	2004	2009
Average marketing cost (Rs.)	1.2mn	2.8mn	5mn
Print (%)	5-7	7-10	12-15
Terrestrial TV (%)	2-5	Negligible	Negligible
C&S TV (%)	80	75	60-65
Internet/Online, Trailers, Radio (%)	Negligible	<2	5-7
Hoardings, Publicity, Design and Posters (%)	8-10	10-12	12-15
Events (%)	Negligible	<2	3-5

**Source: Industry estimates, Yes Bank research**

### 3.2.7 DISTRIBUTION OF MARATHI FILMS

In the value chain of film making, Production, Distribution and Exhibition are the three key segments, of which, the distributor is the key stake holder. It includes distribution to the theatres, to homes through VCD, DVD, and satellite.

The flow of product in the distribution industry is as follows: a film property is produced by the production company, which then sells the distribution rights to the distributor. These rights are often bid for by distributors through film markets or through sales agents. Often, the distributor will bid for the distribution rights before production is finished and the distributor pays an advance to the production company. The rights to show the film property are then bid for by exhibitors.

The distribution people down the line (in remote parts of India) play a very big role in the film hits and misses. These distributors have an uncanny ability to 'smell what is right' and the money-making opportunities therein.

In the initial stages of a distribution deal, sometimes even before production has started, the distributor will assign a project director to the film to determine promotional materials required and to develop marketing ideas and events. A unit publicist (who is responsible for the promotional campaign during production and for preparation of publicity materials and press coverage during the production) and unit photographer (responsible for publicity stills) will be selected.

Promotional materials developed by the distributor during the production phase include the press kit (which contains a synopsis of the film, production information, production stills, interviews with cast and crew, advertising copy, etc.-- this kit is sent to all major media to provide background and 'clips' for reporting), trailers (short advertisements to build interest and awareness of the film in both the theatres and television), advertising copy (for hardcopy advertisements in printed media), product reels and samples (to promote sales to exhibitors), bid brochures (also to promote sales to exhibitors), and press mailings.

During pre-release, the distributor would commit to producing all advertising materials for the mass media, buying the advertising space, and conducting test marketing if necessary. A media plan would be generated, usually by the advertising agency representing the distributor, outlining the objectives/strategies of the advertising campaign, the release, the target audience, the media mix, reach and frequency objectives, the costs associated with it, the activities of the media plan, and schedules of all media advertising.

Film distribution in India has traditionally been a regional business and each territory has its own set of competitors. Very few Indian distribution houses have a cross-regional presence on a large scale. The Indian territories are divided into six distinct markets: West (Bombay/Mumbai), South (Madras), East (Calcutta), North, North East and Central India. The largest territory is the West followed by the South which is also known as 'Tollywood' because of the Tamil language. The large number of cash-rich Non-Resident Indians (estimated at 20 million) is considered to be India's seventh territory. The USA, Canada and UK are the major export destinations. Other territories such as Japan, South Africa, Mauritius, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East are fast becoming important markets for Indian films.

Yash Raj Films, Rajshri Films and Shringar films are three Indian distributors, who have developed a large presence outside their traditional stronghold in the Mumbai territory through physical presence and/or alliances / joint ventures with strong distribution houses in other territories. Foreign distributors like Columbia Tristar, Warner Brothers, 20th Century Fox and Paramount have been present in India for quite some time, but their operations have been limited to releasing their respective US products to select Indian markets and audiences.

After the distributors come the exhibitors. Exhibitors have always had a significant role to play in show business. In the olden days there were only a handful of decent theatres even in the film capital Mumbai and many movies waiting in queue. Metro and Liberty were the only theatres in town to screen select Hindi films. If they couldn't screen their films in these two theatres, producers fought to release them at Minerva, Roxy, Opera House, Novelty, Imperial, Krishna (Dreamland), Maratha Mandir, Badal, Bijli, Super, Alankar and as a last resort, Swastik. The fierce in-fighting led to exhibitors throwing attitude, dictating terms and cutting sweetheart deals for themselves.

### **3.2.8 MARATHI FILM VALUE CHAIN**

Below is a simplified business system for the typical film value chain, illustrating how a fictional Rs.100 (excluding tax amount) spent by the consumer is divided up between the various players in the theatrical market,

Producer → Distributor → Exhibitor → Consumer  
Rs.25 + Rs.65 + Rs.10 = Rs.100

And home-video market for films:

Producer → Distributor → Duplicator → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer  
Rs.10 + Rs.20 + Rs.25 + Rs.25 + Rs.25 = Rs.100

### 6.3 Pay TV/ Direct To Home (DTH)

TV is a very effective medium for showcasing a movie as not all can afford to go to a theatre or buy a VCD/ DVD. The producer sells the movie rights to the TV channel who can air the movie on his channel for a particular period. They are a long lasting channel for showing the movie. Even after the movie is removed from the theatres, TV can take over. But the producers prefer to show the movie on the TV after a long time of release (except when the movie doesn't work so well in the theatres) so that people have the craze to go to the theatres and watch it which gives them better returns compared to TV.

### 6.4 Risk Sharing between Producers and various Distributing agents

Risk sharing between distributors and exhibitors is cyclical and is a function of either the type of the demand supply mismatch of films in specific time periods.

#### 6.4.1 Minimum Guarantee (MG) Distribution Deals:

Producers demand and get MGs from distributors for big budget or big star cast film, thus de-risking their business model and also getting finance for their movie. The amount earned over and above the minimum amount decided, is shared between the distributors and the producers in a pre-decided ratio. Thus in this method the Theatrical, Overseas, Music, and Pay TV Distributors are at a risk. Also when supply of film is limited due to specific time period or general lack of content, distributors demand MGs from exhibitors, who generally pay upfront MGs in order to block films for their screens.

#### 6.4.2 Revenue Sharing/ Commission Deals:

For films without a big star cast, distributors & exhibitors usually work on revenue sharing arrangement wherein they share total box office revenue (net of entertainment tax) in the ratio of 50:50. Thus, here the producer is at a high risk. Even the VCD/ DVD, and Pay TV Distributors have a high risk whereas; Theatrical, Overseas DVD, and Music Distributors are at a lower risk.

## 3.2.9 FINANCE FOR MARKETING OF MARATHI FILMS

Marathi movie industry is a great sector for foreign investment by corporative entertainment companies. Though risks are high on a per-movie basis, the risk spreads out across a number of films. However, the domestic Marathi film-making industry, despite its profligacy, is yet to acquire the character of professionalism on a large scale. It still remains highly informal, privately-held, personality-oriented and family-dominated by film production companies which rely on traditional financing through a network of 'friends' and 'private financiers'.

They produce on average 1-2 films every year. Some disturbing trends in Marathi film industry seem to have set in since the 1960s. Until the 1960s, film producers would get loans

from film distributors against a minimum guarantee. This meant that the distributors had to ensure that the film was screened in cinemas for a fixed minimum period. If this minimum guarantee was fulfilled, the producers had no further liability. Profit or loss would be the destiny of the distributors.

There are some exceptions, however. For instance, India's most celebrated film-maker, the late Satyajit Ray, is known to have pawned his wife's jewellery to part-finance his first film. The financing pattern, centred on distributors, is suspected to have changed since the 1960s when the studio system collapsed and 'freelance' performers emerged. This gave rise to the 'star system' in which actors and actresses ceased to have long-term contractual obligations towards any studio or film production firm, such as the now defunct Bombay Talkies, New Theatres and Prabhat Studios. Rather, they began to operate as freelancers commanding fees in proportion to the box office performance of their recent films. This increased costs of film production since the more successful actors and actresses hogged major proportions of the producers' budget.

In the changed system, distributors would pay 50 per cent of the film-making cost leaving it to the producer to get the rest from other sources. The 'other' sources are:

- Conventional moneylenders who lend at an interest rate of 36-40 per cent annually;
- Non-conventional but corporate resources,
- Promissory note system, known as 'hundi' system: this is the most widely prevalent source, and
- Underworld money: about 5 per cent of the movies are suspected to be financed by these sources which are illegal

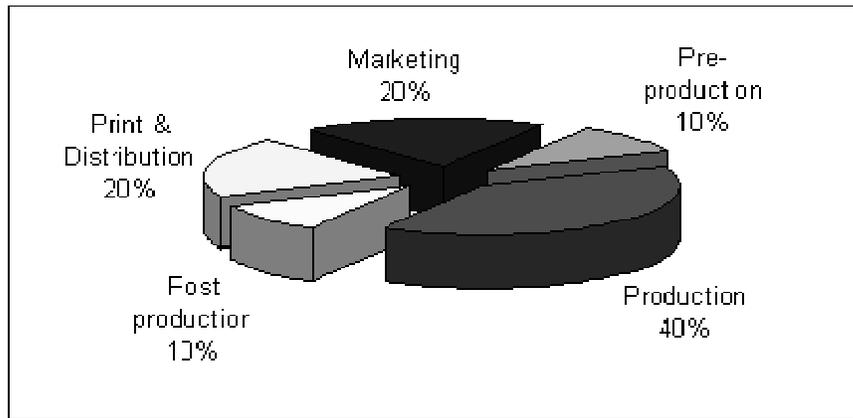
Film production thus became a risky business and the relationship with usurious moneylenders strengthened over the years. Surprisingly, however, the oft-murky world of film industry's finances has not tainted the film industry's perception in the general public eye or in the government's attitude.

The overall cost of the Marathi movies movie can be divided into the phases discussed below:

- Pre-production – In this phase the story and script writing, research work carried out for the story, for a suitable location, fees for technical cast and crew, the star cast fee, and other such activities require certain amount of cost to be incurred.
- Production – This is a phase where the actual making i.e. shooting of the movie takes place. Cost incurred during this phase is also very high.
- Post production – This is an important phase of making of a movie. Editing, colour correction, dubbing, et al are required for preparing the recorded scenes i.e. films into an entertainment package. Though this phase involves less cost compared to that of the other phases.
- Print and Distribution – This is the next phase in which the final prints are made and distributed as per the requirements by the distributors. Here the major cost is for selling the distributor.

The above mentioned phases (marketing is carried out in every phase) have different importance for different film-makers and the budgets are decided on the basis of their importance. The graph below shows a general pattern of cost distribution in Indian films on an average:

**FIGURE 3.2 COST OF DISRIBUTION** (Figures are approximate)



At the start of 2001, a reasonable budget film in Marathi movies would be 30-40 lakhs of rupees .Until the late 1990s, Indian cinema was in the unorganised sector and it was not even recognised as an industry by the Government, meaning it was not available for concessions and incentives. Even though it has since been recognised as an industry, banks and other financial institutions continue to avoid the industry due to the enormous risks involved in the business. Two banks, Canara Bank and Indian Bank, have reportedly lost heavily by financing films. However, the prospects of bank financing and risk insurance are becoming brighter, albeit at a slow rate. As a result, the financing of films in India often remains shrouded in mystery.

One has to remember that 95 per cent of the producers need bank finance. What most producers have been demanding is that the banks should finance the industry with the negatives and distribution rights, including overseas and copyright such as music and satellite being construed as collateral security, rather than the traditional immovable property. The Marathi industry is not asking for the moon. But considering the high risk factors, banks will have to adopt a different strategy for the film industry which will serve as a guideline. There is no denying the fact that the film producers will have to be a lot more organised and transparent in all their dealings.

It is herein the agglomeration of the single screens into an integrated theatre chain holds significance as it will negate the investment barrier / knowledge barrier / negotiation barrier present in the current individual owned and individually managed single screen theatres.

### 3.3 MARKETING MIX OF 7 P'S FOR MARATHI FILMS

FIGURE 3.3



A combination of marketing elements used in the sale of a particular product, the marketing mix is centred on combining elements of the four P's of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion. These marketing mix components must be combined in an optimal manner depending on the nature of the products and services. In determining the marketing mix of a

Marathi film which is a combination of product and service, one should carefully define the marketplace, the product positioning, and the unique selling proposition. The target market and market requirements have to be decided too based on the Test Marketing analysis. A plan is made looking at the sets of audiences whom the film appeals the most, & accordingly marketing budgets are allocated & publicity campaign is planned and launched, e.g. according to test data, the film is intended to appeal to Hindi-speaking, college-going groups, then marketing & publicity campaigns are focused on such segments. The objective is to target the right audience & to derive maximum mileage from promoting & exploiting the product. For example, the film 'Bindhast' was targeted towards the young generation of a metropolitan city so all its marketing was centred on that same market.

“Marketing attitude” behind each of these critical elements of engaging people in the exchange of entertainment and enlightenment for the greenback is discussed below.

## **A.PRODUCT MIX**

A Marathi movie product consists of intellectual property than can be ported to a variety of deliverables: theatrical exhibit, non-theatrical exhibit, video tapes, DVDs, CDs of the soundtrack, collectible editions, television and cable broadcast, Internet-served, and then there is the split dimensions of domestic, foreign, and niche markets. Not to mention ancillary products such as clothing, toys, games, posters and even restaurants for successful franchises. And then there are the franchise rights, endorsements, product placements and a host of offshoots that are bought and sold, leased and rented.

The digital cinema product is also a service. It's a product that can be a valued collectible or a gift. It's also entertainment opportunities in a theatre or in someone's home. The movie is one of the most complex businesses in the communications industry because of its creativity, its diversity and its continual explosions of technological delivery options.

Production value is a nice global term in product marketing of Marathi movies. Included in this catch-all basket are:

- Strength of the story
- Star power – promotional quality of actor, director and maybe, director of photography
- Visual quality
- Sound and Music quality
- Deliverability: quality, on-budget, on-time and marketing materials

## **B.PROMOTION MIX FOR MARATHI FILMS**

This part of the Marathi marketing mix is the most important in determining whether a film is successful or not. For most movies aimed at a mass audience the opening weekend is crucial to its box office performance, if it does not open well (Friday to Sunday) then it is likely to be a flop. Therefore most of film promotion is designed to open a movie big and then hope that positive word of mouth will kick in afterwards.

Promotion involves advertising, publicity and sales promotion techniques. Advertising consists of paid for space (in a magazine for instance) or time (on television and radio). Publicity includes the reviews of the movies but as it can be negative also it cannot be considered as publicity completely. It also includes interviews and profiles on a film's stars and, sometimes, the director. This would also be 'free of charge' to the film's distributors (who are responsible for the marketing) and will be positive. In addition, newspapers, magazines, radio and television programmes may carry stories about the making of the film;

most of which would be positive. Distributors can be confident that coverage will be positive because of the nature of the 'publicity circus'. For instance, film magazines know if they are critical of a film star they are not likely to get to interview them in future. As stars are important selling points for the magazines this would be detrimental to their sales. Hence most non-review coverage accentuates the positive. Similarly stars and celebrities only appear on chat shows if they have an opportunity to plug their new film. Promotion also includes the film premieres, corporate sponsorships, and contests.

The promotion must be affective in two ways: (a) it must give the right impression about the film (b) to the appropriate audience. For this reason, promotion has to be well planned and should begin as early as possible.

### **C: PRICING MIX FOR MARATHI FILMS**

Marathi Movie making is an art. Producers, Directors, Stars and other all involved in creating the movies are nothing less than the artists. Artists should treat their art as art and take the process of making it as seriously as anyone takes their chosen profession. Great skill and insight are required in order to create truly original art (movie). Transforming an idea or concept into technically and thought-provoking or emotion-arousing or even a simple entertaining work of art is a talent that few people possess.

Each movie-maker perceives his product (movie) as an excellent piece of work but has an extremely difficult time convincing the distributors (his buyers) and justifying the amount he wants to get for it. Pricing of the movie should be done realistically, understanding and respecting the movie business. A large number of players exist in the distribution segment, each operating in one or two territories. Since there are only a few national players, a producer generally sells his film to more than one distributor, who bears the marketing, publicity and print costs. Differential pricing of rights for different territories is the general norm as the revenue earning potential of different territories varies widely due to diverse consumer preferences. The distributors almost always compare the work with the others. Thus pricing of movies is cost as well as market based. Music of the Marathi movie is sold differently to music companies on the basis of the stars in the movie, technical cast, and other such criteria.

### **D: PLACE MIX FOR MARATHI FILMS**

The Marathi film industry mainly undertakes multilevel marketing (mlm) wherein the product (movie) is sold through distributors. Other names for mlm are network and matrix marketing. The mlm concept is based on a promise from a company that if a person signs up to sell their products, they will pay a commission on all sales generated by that person as well as other distributors the person recruits. It is either sold at a fixed price where the distributors have to bear all the loss and in case of profit they don't have to share with the producers; or it is at MG (minimum guarantee) basis. In MG basis risks are shared by both, the producer as well as the distributor. Nowadays MG method is prevalent.

Decisions regarding the number of prints required in each territory and the number of languages it needs to be dubbed is also needed to be taken on time so that distribution can take place smoothly. Also the various other mediums through which the movie can be released, satellite, video CDs, and other such mediums are to be considered.

The release pattern of the movie affects the movie market. A wide release is preferred. With a wide release, the producers and distributors can realise revenues to recoup their investment in a shorter time period (provided that the film is successful). Due to reduction in the time lapse between the theatrical release and that of video cassettes to 6-8 weeks, revenues can be

realised faster. Abhi Roy of Siddhivinayak Pictures said that considering the short shelf life of films, the fate of any film is often decided on the first weekend itself. This makes it harder for any distribution company to market the film and ensure its success. Thus a timely distribution of the movie plays a very important role in its success.

#### **E: PEOPLE MIX FOR MARATHI FILMS**

'People' includes the service provider and the customers. The service providers i.e. the director, producer, artists, story writer, editor, etc. all affect the decisions of the customers watching the Marathi movie. Also the distributors, exhibitors, the front line staff at the theatres, all of them have a different impact on the customers and their experience in watching the movie. The people element has become most important today since the consumers not only look for the product but they are more interested in the service component. Thus the role of human resource becomes extremely critical. The people element involves the Management which is responsible for the functioning of the activity. The training and development of the human element in the Marathi film industry is most crucial to survive in the long run.

#### **F: PHYSICAL EVIDENCE FOR MARATHI FILMS**

Physical evidence is the environment in which the service is delivered and where customers and firms interact. Any tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communicate the service are also physical evidence. Physical Evidence for a movie consists of the theatre, film city, copyright, tickets, hoardings, television, merchandise, and other such things that tangibilise the movies.

#### **G: PROCESS**

Process is the way of undertaking transactions, supplying information and providing services in a way that is acceptable to the consumers and effective to the organisations. Since service is inseparable, it is the process through which consumers get into interaction with the service provider. Process of movie marketing includes the various marketing techniques used. Marathi Movie marketing is a yet a simple process (step involved are numerous), and but there is immense divergence (variability in each step) in it. Movies have a short term contact with the customers since it's just for a particular movie.

#### **H: PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY**

Productivity is how inputs are transformed into outputs: The Transformation Process. It involves financing, screenplay, scripting, casting, directing, stunts, music, acting, animation, editing, dubbing, printing, and developing.

Quality is the degree of satisfaction a customer gets from a service, by meeting their needs, wants and expectations. In movie, service is provided regardless of any individual purchase. More the number of advantages customers get from a movie will be appreciated more i.e. a movie that is comedy, horror, romantic, as well as emotional will be more accepted by the customers. Production companies are challenged with establishing a well-balanced marketing mix. There are many options available which make it imperative to choose components of the marketing mix that provide the highest return on investment.