CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF CINEMA IN DELHI

Though the social and economic organisation of cinema in Delhi is not well documented, history shows that the cinema is a clear case of where there was first an invention, with no apparent commercial possibilities, a toy, a plaything. With the passage of time, however, it was seen to have possibilities if only an audience, a demand could be created. Thus, as I.C. Jarvie puts it, supply created demand in cinema thereby refuting the Marxist view that pressure of economic need or necessity produces inventions at the time they can be used and the classical economic theory that entrepreneurial initiative creates supply to meet existing demand.¹

This is because since inception cinema was considered as a novelty with very limited exploitation value. In the words of I.C. Jarvie,

. . . It is often said that Edison's only bothering to patent it for the USA and not for other countries, indicated his feeling that the invention had little long-term future. Certainly at first neither he nor anyone else knew how to exploit it. They shot films of trains arriving, or processions, of numerous events of interest merely because they were moving and — wonder of wonders — this movement could be reproduced. These strips were exhibited in music halls and at fairgrounds as just another 'act'. But by the mid-1890s, the attraction and exploitation-value of these novelty snippets was rapidly wearing thin. It was as though Edison's doubts as to

the long-term prospects of this machine were amply justified.\textsuperscript{2}

He continues that

\ldots However, it was not to turn into a quick fade-out. The solution to falling audiences was to do something interesting with the gimmick; not to be content with fact that it moved’. One obvious possibility was to record current events: a fire, a race, a boxing match. Another was to show people and places – exotic locales. A variant was a home-produced simulation of these, like faked boxing matches, etc. \ldots But this was precarious too, dependent on exploiting the right moments. It served, however, to set up the beginnings of a film making industry.

Very rapidly, its principal product was films which told stories. All kinds of stories: fantastic ones of visits to the moon (\textit{A Trip to the Moon}, Melies, France 1902), simple ones of kidnap (\textit{Rescued by Rover}, Hepworth, U K 1905) and above all, perhaps Western adventures like \textit{The Great Train Robbery}, Porter (USA 1903).

These early films were made by semi-amateurs, by eccentrics and often by genuine creative artists, and they were financed hand to mouth. Melies in France and Hepworth in Britain after initial success were both financially ruined by film making; only Porter in the USA prospered, although he was not to remain long in films after he was superseded as the leading director by D.W. Griffith. Men like these laid the foundation for an industry – for film making rapidly became an industry. Indeed, industry was what it quickly \textit{had} to become, simply because once the demand was created it was well-nigh insatiable.\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{itemize}
\item[2.] Jarvie, \textit{ibid.}, p. 39.
\item[3.] Jarvie, \textit{ibid.}, p. 39-40.
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Just as the building of the film industry in the West began with the production of sufficient story films to allow frequent changes of programme, and building of permanent places of exhibition, in India too, film business has always included three basic sectors (i) production, (ii) distribution and (iii) exhibition. Infact, the process of production, distribution and exhibition has represented a basic descriptive model of film business since the turn of the century. For all film industries since then have devised ways to handle these three fundamental tasks. India has been no exception to this. For example, from the beginning, the prominent Bombay, Calcutta and Madras production companies participated in all the three activities i.e. they produced, distributed and exhibited films. This participation in all the three activities is known as vertical integration.

In the case of Delhi this was not so. Delhi because of historical and other reasons spelled out in Chapter 3 came to concentrate on exhibition and distribution activities and showed films to its audience mass produced in Bombay. The present Chapter thus makes an effort in bringing to the forefront the manner in which business networking of distribution and exhibition takes place in Delhi and thereby tries to analyze as to what is the social and economic organisation of cinema in Delhi. Before one begins this exercise it will not be out of place to mention that there are in all five major distribution circuits in the country – Bombay Circuit, Central Circuit, Northern Circuit, Eastern or Bengal Circuit and Southern Circuit. See Map for States/UTs covered by these circuits. Delhi-Uttar Pradesh which comes under the jurisdiction of Northern circuit, constitutes one of the largest territories of film business in India. As the present study is confined to Delhi the focus would primarily be on Delhi and not Delhi-Uttar Pradesh together.
Business Networking of Distributors

In film business, by distribution is meant what is described in other business activities as 'wholesale'. The distributor came as an intermediary between the producer and the exhibitor and they took films from the studios/film makers and made them available to cinema houses. They also off-set specialization. For example, before the onset of distributors a cinema house wanting to show a 'romantic' film or a 'social' film, or a 'mythological', had to negotiate separately with makers of different kinds of films. The distributors, however, could obtain films from several sources and offer a variety. This had its economic logic as the supply and demand of the film came to be linked with the distributors. For distributors would not buy films they thought the cinema houses would’t show. Just as the cinemas would’t show films they thought the public would’t pay to see. Thus production decisions became far removed from what really the audience wanted. In many cases, the distributors were also found to be directly financing the productions and retaining their interests in the cinemas, though their main function still remains the hiring out of films.

Though the exact number of film distributors operating from Delhi could not be known, it is believed that there are big distributors, small distributors and the ones in

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4. This section draws upon Chapter 13 of R.K. Jain's book titled *The Economic Aspects of the Film Industry in India*, Atma Ram & Sons, Delhi, 1960, pp. 182-190 and personal interviews held with some prominent distributors of Delhi.
between. The big distributors service the whole country. They have branch offices at key places all over the country. The small distributors confine their operations to a district or to a group of districts in one language area. In between, covering a province or so, come the others.

These distributors obtain films directly from the producers. The terms on which the films are obtained depend on various factors. However, the distributors have been found to be mainly governed by the popularity of the producer, his background in the production in relation to the success of his past films, the cast in the film and other elements influencing box-office success. In majority of the cases, the films are secured from the producers by the distributors, while they are on the sets. The distributors generally obtain the films on the following terms: (a) By outright purchase of 'negative' rights or exploitation rights for a fixed period or in perpetuity. (b) By taking the films on commission basis for exploitation, and in such cases the commission ranges from 15 per cent to 20 per cent. (c) By taking the exploitation rights on lease of the films against advance. In this case, the amount advanced is treated and adjusted as loan after the deduction of commission. (d) By giving a minimum guarantee to the producer against the lease of exploitation rights of a film, and a commission on the proceeds over and above the guaranteed amount.

Capital on the distribution side is mostly adequate, though a few of the distributors work with capital on loan. As a matter of fact, the distributors have generally been found to be self-sufficient as far as money is concerned. In places where they seem to have fallen short of it, they manage it mostly in shape of advances from the
exhibitors. The profit of the distributor depends directly on the number of films distributed by him and his exploitation facilities. There are chances for loss only in those cases in which the distributor goes blindly for films. In the words of R.D. Jain, truly speaking, in the motion picture industry these are the persons who command finance and seek remunerative investment. ¹

The importance of the distributor thus cannot be minimised, because without his services the producer will be required to have his own distribution office, which will need more capital and greater expansion of his organisation. If the producer tries to release his films all by himself without seeking the services of a distributor, he will not only find it difficult to release the film in prominent cinema halls, but will also fail to get the playing time in major cinema halls from where maximum returns of his income are assured. The distributor is able to surmount all these problems because of his regular contact with the exhibitors and producers, and in many cases they seem to be controlling a chain of cinemas. Infact the existing shortage of cinema houses further lends support to the distributors, because this shortage makes the availability of the playing time difficult, and the producers can secure it without much trouble and difficulty through the good offices of the distributors.

The chances of quick recovery of the distributor's money are governed by the release facilities available to him for his films, and it makes him dependent on the exhibitors. With the exhibitors, the share of the distributor is either a minimum

guarantee per week or a percentage of the gross collections. The distributor, however, guarantees on his side a minimum return for his film or a 'hold-over' or 'protection' in many of the cases. The amount in each case varies with, and depends on, the quality and type of the film and the bargaining position of the parties. In spite of all these favourable circumstances for the distributors, in many cases, they suffer from certain disabilities and are often cheated by the exhibitors. Cases are not rare in which films are exhibited beyond the contracted time or are removed before it by the exhibitors or the accounts are manipulated to suppress the gross collections or the prints are deliberately damaged.

Business Networking of Exhibitors

The exhibitor in whose cinema house the film is ultimately shown procures the films directly from the distributors, and the conditions on which films are procured vary from one exhibitor to another exhibitor. As a general rule, the distributor gets more share on an average for the first two weeks, because of the films being new or in first run. Distributor's percentage, in such cases, is found to be more than 60 per cent. The share of the distributors, however, is generally found to be less than 70 per cent for the second, third and fourth run and foreign pictures. Distributors are mostly found to claim from 60 to 75 per cent of the net box-office collections for the first two weeks and then 50 per cent for the third week and 40 per cent for the subsequent weeks when the picture is in the first run. But, in Delhi like in other metropolitan cities, some of the cinema managements have also been found charging fixed rentals for

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6. This section draws upon Chapter 14 of R.K. Jain's book titled *The Economic Aspects of the Film Industry in India*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1960, pp. 191-202 and personal interviews held with some of the prominent exhibitors of Delhi.
each week from the distributors. This tendency to charge fixed rentals per week for the cinema is the outcome of the Second World War, and now is at its peak in many cinema houses. At a few places, the exhibitors also take premium over and above the rentals fixed with the distributors. The exhibitors, in such cases, do not give a receipt for such payments, and the payments are not shown in the account book of the either party. This in many cases leads the distributor to bargain and ask for a minimum guarantee for the film. In many cases, agreements are also made fixing a certain amount as the minimum for every week, which the exhibitor must get at the box-office for keeping the picture in exhibition. The amount taken for 'house protection' also provides a security to the exhibitor. In such cases, falling of the collections at the box-office below the 'house protection' figures means the taking off the film from the exhibition irrespective of the agreement.

The practice of charging fixed rentals for the cinema or the 'house protection' figures enables the exhibitor to take away a fixed amount of money as his share without any consideration of the size of business done by a particular film. It also provides an opportunity to the producers and distributors to secure a 'prestige' run of their films by 'padding' the cinema house. This practice of a 'prestige' run of the film or of 'padding' the house is carried on mostly in those cinema houses, which are considered important from the business point of view and where the film is not likely to do good business at the box-office. It, thus, enables the producers and the distributors to exploit those films which they feel are not likely to do good business on merits. Such efforts, generally create a false air around the film. Because what happens is something like this. The audience on finding a particular film in exhibition in a parti-
cular cinema for many weeks, feel tempted to see it. And many unsuccessful films, in this manner, get enough success at the box-office. But such tendencies have also harmed the film industry, as many good films fail to get screening time in cinema houses on merits and have to suffer on this account. Even in many cases, where the 'house protection' amounts are given or the fixed rentals are paid, they prove so excessive that the distributors and the producers cannot get substantial gain out of the films. The net result, in each case, has been that the acclaimed success of the films and heavy collections at the box-office out of such efforts leave little margin of profit to the distributor and the producer, and, in many cases, even the cost of advertisements cannot be covered. But this practice, which came into existence during the Second World War due to increased film production, poor quality of films and shortage of cinemas in the country, has really proved to be a boon for the exhibitors.

'Block booking' is another way by which exhibitors procure films from the distributors. Under this system, the exhibitors accepts films in a group from the distributor. Exhibitors also indulge in 'blind purchasing', and in such cases, they accept even those films from the distributors which are yet to be started. In such cases, the risk of the exhibitors is increased and the security of returns at the box-office becomes doubtful.

The position of the exhibitor is in a class by itself, as compared with that of the producer and of the distributor. Producers mostly make films on money advanced by the distributors who, in turn, take financial help from the exhibitors. But the exhibitor does not take money for his out-lay from either source. Exhibitors, at times, either fall
prey to the tempting offers made and promising talks indulged in by the distributors
or are lured by the promise of a lion's share in the weekly returns of the film, and
thereby advances heavy amounts to secure the films. Whatever the method of enchant-
ing the exhibitor, once he parts with his money he is inevitably entrapped into the
vicious circle, and has to continue parting with more and more money from all sources
just to save the amount originally advanced from being wiped out.

Exhibitors are absolutely free to use their own discretion in selecting a film for
their cinema hall. The films which are star-studded or directed by a very successful or
popular director or based on popular novels and stories or having other popular
ingredients are seldom refused for exhibition by the exhibitors. The exhibitor, after
all is a businessman and he has to look for his profits. Producers and distributors suffer
at the hands of the exhibitors due to the shortage of exhibition facilities. Today these
exhibitors, who charge a fixed rental for their cinemas or take a guarantee by way of a
'protection' figure for the cinema, do not take personal interest in the screening of a
film at their cinema hall. They do not feel any necessity for it simply because they
have not to earn a percentage of the collections at the box-office; their earnings being
secured under all circumstances. Formerly, exhibitors contributed much to the success-
ful run of the films with their best efforts, because they felt at that time that the more
a film grossed at the cinema the more will be their share. This tendency on the part of
the exhibitors cannot be decried, according to R.D. Jain, since the exhibitor is a
businessman and, as such, he must cater to the desires of the people and must advertise
the film to the best advantage. This makes it necessary for the exhibitor to serve the
film on an attractive plate. But, today, all these basic things are invariably neglected and most of the exhibitors are no good showmen at all.

The exhibitors, on the other hand, however, have their own tale of woes to tell. 'Don't blame us', say the exhibitors in Delhi. Blame the respective administrative authorities who frame policies with a view to filling their own coffers rather than providing a healthy base to the film industry. An industry that provides them with the second largest source of revenue after excise.

The entertainment tax, for instance, which is looked upon as the main piece of villain by all the exhibitors. Levied since 1952 when the Indian Cinematographic Act came into existence, the avowed purpose of the tax was to recycle the profits back into the film industry. "Far from doing so, the entertainment tax levied is so unreasonable which is 60 per cent of the actual admission fee in Delhi, as to leave next to nothing to be shared between the exhibitor and the distributor. For instance, out of a balcony ticket costing Rs. 14/-, Rs. 8/- end up as admission fee, and Rs. 6/- as entertainment tax exclaimed an exhibitor.

The problem does not end there, according to some of the leading exhibitors of Delhi. Unlike many other States where water and electricity is supplied at concessional rates to cinemas, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has been on its own idiosyncratic trip. From last three years it has started charging the highest slab for water supply to cinemas by clubbing them with ice factories, ice-cream manufacturers and aerated soft drink manufacturers. "These companies charge money for the sale of
water based products and the MCD has conveniently forgotten that cinemas provide free drinking water”, said one of the leading exhibitors of Delhi.

Similarly, many exhibitors were of the view that by not categorising the toilets in cinemas as public urinals and latrines which would have enabled them to get concessional rates enjoyed by restaurants, guest houses and eating places, they were being forced to pay the highest rate of tariff to the water supply and sewage disposal undertaking. Now one knows why the waterless toilets are a reproduction of hell on earth in many cinema halls. “Tell me, are the toilets in the cinemas for our private use”, asked a bemused exhibitor.

Even electricity is provided to cinemas at commercial rates rather than industrial rates for other establishments. Apart from these major inputs and normal taxes exhibitors have to contend with a show tax, a submission of 1 per cent of gross collections for compulsory screening of Films Division documentaries and a licence fee hiked arbitrarily from Rs. 600/- to Rs. 3600/- in 1985.

“Compare these inflated expenses (up by 1300-1600 per cent since 1975) with marginal 100 per cent rise in admission rates and you can see the problem for yourself,” said an exhibitor. “Since the late seventies cinemas of Delhi have come under the office of DCP licensing, that is the Police Commissioner system and rates of admission have been held at unreasonably low levels,” exclaimed another exhibitor.
One of the leading exhibitors pointed to metros like Bombay where balcony rates in various theatres are fixed according to their grading as A class (city location with AC) B class (in suburbs) and C class locations. “Though cinemas can put in a proposal for raise in admission rates every six months, the unyielding attitude of DCP licensing has been an obstacle,” according to exhibitors based in Delhi. They feel that unless admission rates are hiked cinemas will not be able to instal modern equipment like four track stereo system or labour saving equipment that will help them meet the challenge of video and cable TV. Or maintain the cinema halls properly.

One of the exhibitors claimed that the argument that cinema is the cheapest form of entertainment is no longer true; that place has been taken by TV. “So give us a chance to do well”, he said passionately. “If the authorities say cinema is the cheapest form of entertainment why do they tax it?”

According to exhibitors, “changes on these levels may help cinemas stabilise but the bottomline of their existence is that cinemas have become uneconomical to run.” Some of them feel that the only answer is to have a multiple use of the complex - a cluster of two or three smaller cinema halls catering to the select few who want to watch films in the cinema halls, a restaurant, amusement shop or even offices.
But the exhibitors in Delhi are deprived of this as the local development authorities forbid the conversion of cinema hall for commercial uses which is not so in Bangalore, Bombay, Madras and Hyderabad. This is because according to cinema rules in Delhi one cannot have anything above, below, or adjacent to a cinema.

One of the exhibitors lamented that if TV technology brought with it a corresponding passivity and addiction to programmes whether good or bad, video dealt a death blow to cinema. Any film released in the cinema hall has to compete with a spate of video cassettes, pirated or legal that draws away a large chunk of viewers from cinemas. To counter this though the Government has legalised home viewing, it has not been able to contain the problem of video piracy. Because as soon as a film is released, video shops and parlours, whose number has been increasing day-by-day in the city, buy a cassette from the video company and make several prints out of it and loan it to the their customers at concessional rates. As even among them there is lot of competition because of their growing number each day.

Despite all the difficulties faced by the exhibitors, it is generally believed in trade circles that the exhibition side, as a matter of fact, has always remained more profitable than production and distribution. While unity seems to exist between the producer, distributor and the exhibitor and a sort of interdependence on one another, the three have always been very keen rivals of one another in the field of competition. It is these organizational in-fightings that has rendered the Indian cinema, as an industry, infirm, if not invalid. The tendency of giving wrong reports of the collections at the box-office to the distributors by many of the exhibitors and to the producers by
the distributors is a very common practice. All this is done with the motive of making more profit than the others. As majority of the distributors and exhibitors come from humble or middle class backgrounds with an eye to become rich overnight, their concept about public taste often misleads the producers. This tendency is found to be more in those cases where the exhibitor or distributor advances money to the producer for the production of a film. These are instances where the exhibitor or distributor manipulates public taste for want of more money.

This, in a way, has put an end to all purposeful film making and heralded an era of thorough vulgarization of the medium, which continues till today thereby making film business a big gamble. This is because with the structural change in the organizational set-up brought about by heterogeneous crowd of new independent producer at Bombay — independent of overheads like studio, laboratories, acting staff etcetera, during the period and after World War II and India’s independence, respected no law of the industry and lived only for themselves. They not only brought about the decline and fall of the organised one-big-family studio system but also brought along with them no business ethics nor any principles of industry — their main motto was to amass wealth for their self-existence and for this, they did not hesitate to destroy the old tradition. The free-lancing producer attracted free-lancers in all branches of the industry and ushered in an era of the “individual”. The new producer could be a complete outsider, or a star or a director who had found a backer. Many studio owner, renting his studio to these new producers, gradually became dependent on them, and so helped to establish the new system and destroy the old.
All this had its profound effect on the Indian cinema which have come to stay till today. As the industry became more and more fragmented into small production units, which more often than not dissolved after one production, to be replaced by others, the film industry became an increasingly attractive investment opportunity for black marketeer and profiteer. Just how large a role this played in the rise of the "mushroom producers" in the early war years and after the war, no industry or Government statistics can tell us. However, an Enquiry Committee under the chairmanship of S.K. Patil was later set up by the Government of India from 1949-51 to go into this persistent and ever increasing problem.

The three-tier system, in the ultimate analysis, consolidated the exhibition and distribution sectors to the point of strangulating the production sector. This is because while active producers multiplied, there was no corresponding increase in exhibition outlets. The exhibitor was now subsidized by scarcity of competition. The days when an exhibitor feared he would not have films to show were gone. Fear had shifted to the producer: would he have an outlet? As the producer was subjected to more and more competition and pressure, power shifted to distributor and exhibitor.

These knew what they wanted, just as the financier knew what he wanted: big stars, a dozen hit songs, several dances, beautiful locations, a little of comedy etcetera. Producers, to clinch investments and distribution, knew that these were the fixed essentials. They therefore started bidding competitively for the small group of "big" stars so designated by distributors and exhibitors after evaluating the audience
responses. The producer thus became a victim of his own circumstances in the new system perpetuated by him. Yet the alternatives, as many saw them, were to play the game or quit rather than restructuring the new system once again on the basis of old. From a prewar average of Rs. 90,000 production budgets in Bombay jumped to a postwar range of lakhs and today run into crores. Black money thus percolated into film financing and strengthened the distribution-exhibition sector. This also brought about a change in their value systems which gave precedence to illusion and fiction rather than facts and reality. The introduction of a patent formula comprising of big stars, a dozen songs, dances, comedy, fights and last-minute rescue, left no room for new ideas and became an end in itself. The obvious result was that the average film lost all its content within the existing conditions. Not interested in experimenting with content in view of the steadily rising costs of production, they continued to propagate stereotypes in set patterns. The escapist formula was thus to be the norm of the Indian cinema in years to come.

The film business quickly adapted to the new situation. However, by the mid-'80s, video killed the star system. It also forced producers to release the film at the same time in all territories. When earlier they used to stagger its release and recover investment over three to four years. With video, people also, stopped coming to cinema halls, distributors went bankrupt overnight and producers this time compromised with the video pirates. As big budget formula films started flopping, distributors began to prefer films made on a smaller scale. It is at this juncture that cinema moved into the hands of underworld mafia who flaunted their wealth in the wake of umpteen newcomers.
The net result of all this has been that extravagant productions made by renowned film makers flopped at the box-office while a quickie made by an unknown producer succeeded. At present, three kinds of films are being made by producers. The big budgeted films made by renowned banners comprise the first kind followed by middle-of-the road directors. These are people who have excelled in direction and are gradually shifting to production. The third kind refers to the purely commercial film made for the front benchers. It is the third category of film that the dubious producers — with or without underworld money — are making in abundance.

It is interesting to note that this linkage with the underworld came at a time when film business was going through a turbulent period. The video pirates of the mid-'80s had already ripped out the financial floor of virtually every film maker. And with the spurt in extortion and land rackets, the underworld witnessed a financial boom. The excessive cash went into the movies and helped to lift up production at a time when sales were plummeting.7

**Distributors and Exhibitors Association**

In order to watch the interest of the trade of both the distributors and exhibitors, the Motion Pictures Association was formed with its Head Office at Delhi. All the distributors and exhibitors operating from Delhi have to be its members. At present it comprises of 1,500 members which includes both the distributors and the exhibitors. The main aim of the Association is to promote, aid, help, encourage and develop the production, distribution and exhibition of Indian films and motion picture industry.

in all possible ways. The other advantage of this Association is that it settles disputes between members of the Association and between all persons engaged in the production, distribution and exhibition of the Indian film industry. It also arbitrates in respect of all disputes between a member and another member or between a member and an outsider.

During the mid-sixties, however, to look into the interest of exhibitors of Delhi, a National Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors was formed. However, when problems crop up between producers and distributors or between producers and exhibitors a Joint Tribunal is set up where representatives from both the groups sit together and decide on the case.

Business Networking of Producers

During the course of the present study, a number of producers were also found to be residing in Delhi but most of them expressed that it was just a coincidence or a matter of choice that they happen to be residing in Delhi. But all their business transactions took place in Bombay. This is because Bombay is a place where professionals from all fields - script-writing, direction, acting, music, editing etc., were available which was not so in Delhi. Though of late with the expansion of TV and video there has been increase in the number of technicians, especially camera persons, but majority of them were not trained enough to handle work related to cinema. Further, Delhi was devoid of studios and shooting places. They further expressed that the development of film centre at NOIDA initially aroused some hope of making films in and around Delhi but the time taken by the Film Centre to develop fully diminishes that hope today.
A probe into their financial resources revealed that majority of the producers depend on borrowed finances, and their working capital is almost loan capital. People who lend these producers money were not banks but money lenders distributors, exhibitors, film-stars and underworld people who charged them exorbitant rate of interest. The bulk of the investments, however, came from the distributors and exhibitors.

Other Organizations

Apart from the existence of cinema halls, offices of the producers, distributors and exhibitors, there exists in Delhi certain other offices related to cinema activities in one way or the other. They are the Directorate of Film Festivals which was set up in 1973 under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to help promote good cinema and Indian films in the country and abroad. The functions of the Directorate are to organise: (a) international film festivals; (b) national film festivals; (c) film weeks under cultural exchange, and (d) participation in international festivals abroad. It also gives away National film awards and organises special film programmes.

It also houses the office of Children's Film Society now renamed as National Centre of Films for Young People with the objective to provide the children and the young people films with clean and healthy entertainment. It is engaged in production, acquisition, distribution and exhibition of such films.

Besides, it also functions as the headquarters of Film Certification Appellate Tribunal which hears appeals against the decision of the Central Board of Film Certification set up under the Cinematograph Act, 1952 by the Government.
Then, there is the Delhi Film Society which was established in 1954 with the aim of promoting good cinema that is more close to art and realism than entertainment. However, due to the unprecedented growth of video and television there is decline in the Film Society Movement. It also accommodates one of the central offices of the Federation of Film Societies of India which was established in 1957 to function as an umbrella organisation to distribute films in a centralised manner, to the societies. But there is hardly any critical analysis of the films because of the degenerating film movement in Delhi.

This then is the Delhi scene. Modern technology like TV, video and of late cable TV, accompanied by changing social trends, irrational policies regarding entertainment tax and mounting overheads seem to be eroding cinemas. Of the 73 odd theatres in Delhi, barring the cinemas at Chandini Chowk, Pahar Ganj, Karol Bagh, Connaught Place and the resettlement colonies, numbering about 25, the rest are in doldrums. According to one of the exhibitors, the south Delhi theatres are virtually finished and are waiting for an opportune moment to close. Unlike the theatres in central Delhi which have the benefit of a floating population, south Delhi cinemas lost out to the video menace in these affluent colonies. The film people of Delhi became aware of the crisis when Archana and Kamal closed down quietly. Even cinemas like Chanakya have seen their collections dwindling by nearly 20 per cent since 1982-83 and the enterprising owner candidly states that he is concentrating more on his other business, namely designing and exporting jewellery.8

But for some of them the future is not all that bleak. Many of the exhibitors are revamping their cinemas with the hope of getting the crowd back as they have come to

realise that the experience of watching a film on the video and cinema are different. One such cinema hall is Priya. Its young proprietor says that "we have installed 70 mm projectors, a new sound system and we have tried to get new prints, which creates a terrific impact. We are now thinking of adding show-windows and a good eating joint. Our main aim is that Priya cinema should be seen as an entertainment building." Similarly the owner of Archana has got his cinema renovated by installing U-Matic projection system with a view to catering the smaller number of audiences. It is now known by the name of Archana Mini. For others, it is the change in the thematic content of the films from violence to romance that is keeping the hope alive of cinema doing brisk business once again.