

## A Legacy of the Prabhat Film Company and the beginning of Film Institute of India: A Historical Overview

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**Abstract:** - Beginning from the already-explored world of celluloid to the new digital landscape, it has been a memorable journey so far. In 1933, the five partners of Prabhat Film Company decided to shift their base from Kolhapur mainly on two grounds: uninterrupted electricity supply and proximity to the hub of cinema, Mumbai. A piece of land on a hill near Law College Road near Pune was acquired, and two large shooting studios were built. A woman holding a Tupari against the background of a rising sun depicts the progressive attitude of the studio. This symbolised the Prabhat, which soon became a household name in Pune. While producing mythological films to keep the studio commercially viable, Prabhat also made several other films that quietly supported the freedom struggle and made socially relevant films. But after reaching the pinnacle of achievement, Prabhat slowly fell apart in the 50s. In 1960, Shri BV Keskar, the minister of Information and Broadcasting, took the initiative to purchase the property of Prabhat Studio to establish the Indian Film Institute. S K Patil headed this committee, including veteran filmmaker V Shantaram. And B N Sarkar, among others, it was on the 20th of March 1960 that the Film Institute of India began functioning. This is still celebrated as the first Technical Film Institute of India. Secular and liberal viewpoints helped make the Film Institute of India an esteemed institute of film pedagogy. So, this article will discuss how the legacy of the Prabhat Film Company influenced the formation of the First Film Institute in India. Did the pedagogy of the Film Institute of India encourage a group of young filmmakers to experiment with film theory and praxis, which was a steppingstone towards a new cinema movement in the 1970s?

**Keywords:** Prabhat Studio, Classic Marathi Films, Film Institute of India, Film Pedagogy, Cognitive Divergence, Historical Overview

*"I was sleeping when Namdeo and Vitthal Stepped into my dream.*

*"Your job is to make poems. Stop wasting time," Namdeo said.*

*Vitthal gave me the measure and gently aroused me from a dream inside a dream.*

*Namdeo vowed to write one billion poems.*

*"Tuka, all the unwritten ones are your responsibility."--- (Sant Tukaram: 1936)<sup>1</sup>*

The Film *Sant Tukaram* (1936) is considered a paradox of Indian cinema, which brought enormous success to the Prabhat. It was running for fifty-seven weeks at one theatre in Bombay. A print of *Sant Tukaram* (1936) has been preserved by the George Eastman House, Rochester. The film was the first Indian film that gave international recognition to the Marathi Film Industry in the International film market. In 1937, it was showcased at the Venice Festival. After the production of this film, Prabhat Film Company gained popularity in the international movie Bazar; from the beginning, Prabhat Film Company had its historical legacy. Its choice of content, the stylistic structure of narratives, experimentation with cinema technology, and production methods embraced and showcased its exceptional creative vitality in the pre-independence Indian film industry.

The evolution of Prabhat Film Company from a mere film production entity into an expansive filmmaking conglomerate represents a significant transition within the history of early Indian cinema landscape. This transformation was underpinned by the pivotal contributions of key personnel like Damle (Art Director), Fattelal (Cinematographer), and Dhaiber (scriptwriter), playing significant roles in shaping the studio's creative direction and production processes. Prabhat Studios' transition from a simple filmmaking studio to a more comprehensive company involved changes in personnel roles and a more structured infrastructure. Prabhat Film Company, founded by V Shantaram, expanded beyond film production to include distribution and exhibition. This expansion was characterised by creating the Central Film Exchange and constructing cinema houses in major urban centres such as Bombay, Pune, and Madras. Among the quintet of its founders, Shantaram was distinguished by his filmmaking versatility, having produced an array of films that spanned genres from devotional spectacles and social melodramas to fantastical historical narratives.

Prabhat Film Company's unique approach was its bilingual filmmaking<sup>2</sup>. It used the same scenarios for the films in Marathi and Hindi versions. It allowed Prabhat to cater to both regional and national audiences. The Prabhat pioneers were consistently followed; thus, their stories should be relevant to the historical genre of pre-independence India. Significantly, remarkable Prabhat movies were made when pre-Independence India questioned all its societal traditions, in all its multiple

societies, under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. That's why the stories of empowered women, the struggles of lower caste saints against caste-ridden societies, and the tragedy of marrying off young girls to older men were considered some of the remarkable themes of Prabhat movies.

Though Prabhat Film Company adopted the Swadeshi/National aspiration and embraced the contemporary socio-cultural component, mainstream cinema audiences, giant sets, song and dance sequences, and commercial success were the main forte of the Prabhat Film Company. During the celluloid era, filmmaking was itself a complicated process. Since the equipment was huge and somewhat cumbersome, it wasn't easy to remove from the studios. This was especially true for the sound equipment, where the recording was done on proper optical equipment. With such equipment, shooting was done mainly on shooting floors in India and cinema industries worldwide. *Kanku* (1937) (*Duniya Na Mane* in Hindi) and *Manoos* (1939) (*Aadmi* in Hindi) were two pioneer Indian films that followed the theory of Italian Neorealism and rebutted the hierarchy of the studio system.<sup>3</sup> Cinematographer V. Avadoot took out the camera on the street and instead of a studio, almost fifty percent of both films were shot in real locations. Though it was considered that Prabhat didn't produce experimental films like *Udayer Pathe* (1944) or *Kalpana* (1948), nonetheless it depicted the women's identity within patriarchal hegemony<sup>4</sup>. The 1939 film *Manoos* addresses the 'women question' within the context of national identity and control, positing that the governance of the nation—or the body politic—is inherently connected to the empowerment and representation of women, or the female body. This connection underscores the pivotal role that women's agency and representation play in the broader socio-political landscape. Additionally, the portrayal of women as 'others' in the film draws from a deep-seated cultural reservoir, suggesting that the representation of women is intrinsically linked to the embodiment of the nation itself. In the context of Indian cinema, these movements from anti-imperialist rhetoric to nationalist self-definition were premised on the Indian woman (*Bharatiya Nari*) as a passive subject, centrally relegated to the field of excess (nationalism) but excluded from the Arnoldian notion of culture, which by implication belonged to men. It seems then, as Partho Chatterjee has shown (1989), that 'tradition' became the closed realm of the woman, even as the field of modernity opened up for men. Consequently, encapsulated by an underlying agenda, each facet of a woman's existence was predicated upon the internationalisation of a purportedly exemplary form of nationalism. This constructed paradigm for women and the enduring belief that the bearing of valorous sons epitomised the pinnacle of a woman's life. Women's nationalist ideology co-opted this conventional constraint on women's autonomy, exalting it further. This shift in ideological legitimacy consequently exacerbated the downmansties for women in exercising their agency or autonomy.

It was one of the unique innovations of the Prabhat Film Company that, along with the simple objectives of storytelling, Prabhat led to technical inventions.<sup>5</sup> They made India's first colour film *Sairandhari* in 1933 (the prints were made in Germany, but all copies are unfortunately lost). This film did not do well commercially; hence, *Kisan Kanya* from 1937 is usually credited as India's first colour film. The technical determinations of Prabhat can be seen not just in this episode of *Sairandhari* (1933) but also in the well-known story from *Amrit Manthan* (1934). At the end of this film, the camera tracks onto the face of the villain and goes into his eye to show you the devilish look in his eye. This is 1934 when long lenses and special effects were primitive. So, what had Prabhat done to get this shot on screen: first, they got a longer lens from Germany, which was 100mm. Using this lens, the camera tracked the actor's face, from mid-shots to close-ups. Then, using a large human eye model (made by Fattelal's art department), a shot was taken using the same camera tracking speed as the earlier shot with the actor. The two shots were combined with a dissolve to create the desired effect. This is an early example of what we now call motion control technology, but another example of Prabhat arriving at innovation to tell their stories more interestingly.

From an early period, Prabhat Film Company upheld its secular, liberal, and non-hierarchical slants. It's apprenticeship schemes to train younger employees, especially about maintaining technical standards, simply by talking to the older support staff. Though the internship schemes in all the supporting crafts of cinema were mutual to all the studios in India of the early talkie days, nonetheless, in Prabhat, the technical standards were incredibly high - everything from projection in the theatres to the way of using wood by the carpenters in the art direction department workshops conformed to some internal standard. This was made possible by the fact that Prabhat was essentially owned and run by artisans and technicians: except for S Kulkarni, the financier, all the rest were craftspeople of cinema trained with the legendary Baburao Painter and his Hindustan Film Company of Kolhapur. The craftspeople on camera knew the value of his focus puller, his light men, and his electrician, and he gave them the respect they deserved. Shantaram had explicit creative control, directing actors, and resolving screen tensions. Damle focused on managerial aspects, overseeing the frame, providing necessary supplies, and managing production logistics. A typical day at Prabhat Studios involved Shantaram closely observing the camera, actors, and their movements. At the same time, Damle and Fattelal focused on practical aspects like filling the frame with attractive elements and creating blocks for the actors. Shantaram's workflow involved:

- Employing someone to narrate stories at night.
- Editing the dailies based on his daily scenario book.
- Returning home to write the scenario for the next day's shoot.

By extension, the camera person respected the work of the art director and the director, and so on. This notion of mutual respect for their fellow workers' art and craft extended to every filmmaking department. This resulted in Prabhat in its prime, functioning more like a cooperative filmmaking than a money-making enterprise. And the results are up on screen for the world to see. Of course, this idealism did not last forever, and Prabhat's dream team broke up when individuals became 'stars', more prominent than the system that had produced them. Another aspect of the Prabhat pioneers must be pointed out: They represented the various religions and castes that constituted India. S Fatehlal was a Muslim, VG Damle was a high-ranking Brahmin, and so on. The employees of Prabhat, too, came from multiple castes and religions.

Opposition to Shantaram's leadership was evident, as fellow partners requested his involvement in Prabhat without the pursuit of profit sharing. In 1942, Shantaram fired four contractual members of Prabhat without the consent of the other partners, triggering a conflict and leading to the reinstatement of the contracts. Shantaram faced two options: run the studio independently and pay off the other partners or resolve the ongoing disputes. The narrative explores the later years of Prabhat Studios, including its transformation from a partnership to a limited company and eventual dissolution. Key events and factors include Shantaram's departure in 1942, Baburao Pai's Famous Studio, and Damle's diaries from 1939-41. In June 1945, Prabhat was transformed into a limited company with two groups: Anant Damle-Baburao Pai and Fattelal - Kulkarni. This change eliminated the dimension of veto voting and eliminated the dimension of disagreements among partners.

In 1949, the Government of India initiated a comprehensive evaluation of the film industry by establishing the Film Enquiry Committee. This Committee was tasked with investigating the potential for expansion and better organization within the industry and to outline directions for future growth. Upon completing its assessment in 1951, the Committee identified a significant gap in the availability of professional training facilities across various filmmaking disciplines. Consequently, it advocated creating a Film Institute that offered comprehensive training in diverse aspects of film production. Endorsing the Committee's recommendations, the Government of India, in 1954, sanctioned the development of the technical facets of the film industry. This led to the formation of a working party in 1955, which was charged with devising a detailed plan for establishing the Film Institute. This plan encompassed the requirements for equipment, personnel, and financial investments needed to realize the proposal. In pursuit of this vision, the Cinematograph Bill of 1956 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in December 1956, proposing the establishment of a National Film Board, with the Film Institute as a critical component, aimed at enhancing technical training and research in film production to elevate technical and aesthetic standards. However, due to fiscal constraints, the government retracted the Bill from the Rajya Sabha on August 20, 1957, and abandoned the plan to establish the National Film Board. The then Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Dr B. V. Keskar, cited economic prudence as the rationale for this decision, emphasizing the lack of an immediate need for an expansive Board as initially envisaged. He proposed that the existing Board could continue its operations, thereby ensuring significant savings in recurrent expenditures, leading to the decision to forego the establishment of the National Film Board.

The government ratified the decision to establish the Film Institute as an independent entity following the approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee in March 1958. Though Prabhat had its historical legacy, it fell apart in the early 1950s. In 1949, the ownership changed. Baburao Painter was displaced as the head of the Prabhat Central Film Exchange and Prabhat Theatres, with Fattelal -Kulkarni assuming control. 1957 Kelkar Attarwale purchased the studio through an auction and produced *Gaj Gauri* in 1958. The acquisition of the erstwhile Prabhat Studios in April 1960 for Rs. 11.20 lakhs marked the establishment of the Film Institute of India. Choosing the report's premises was one of the suggestions from the film inquiry committee formed by the union government to suggest reforms for the film industry. S K Patil headed this committee, including veteran filmmaker V Shantaram. And B N Sarkar, among others, it was on the 20th of March 1960 that the Film Institute of India began functioning.

Film Institute of India ( Film and Television Institute of India, FTII at present) opened with the first batch of students in 1961. From the beginning, the Film Institute was expedited by a group of experts, like Prof. R.S. Pruthy in Screenplay writing, Prof. R. K. Ramachandran in film editing, Prof. L. P. Shah in production, Prof. Roshan Taneja in acting, Associate Professor G. B. Kulkarni in cinematography, Associate Professor S. B. Thakker in sound recording, etc. Jagat Murari was the principal. The years 1962 and 1963 were the turning points of the institute when Prof. Satish Bahadur joined as the head of the Film Appreciation, and Ritwik Ghatak was appointed as a professor of Film Direction. Prof. Bahadur and Ghatak introduced cinema as an interdisciplinary subject that combines the comparative understanding of expression, history, aesthetics, technological developments, and the structural analysis of film theatre literature. Students like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Mani Kaul, Kumar Shahani, John Abraham, Said Mirza, Jahnu Barua, Nirod Mahapatra, Manmohan Mahapatra, Sudarshan Nag, Monto, Jagjit Khurana, K. K. Mahajan, Narendra Singh, Kuldip Sood, Surendar Chawdhary, Kamal Swaroop, Kundan Shah, Ketan Mehta, Subhas Ghai, Shabana Azmi, Shatrughan Sinha, Naseer Uddin Shah, Ompuri, and others recognized as the pillars of modern Indian cinema later, unequivocally declared the real inspiration of Prof Satish Bahadur and Ritwik Ghatak as their mentors in their student lives. Simultaneously, stalwarts like Akira Kurosawa, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Gerge Sardul, Werner Herzog, Alexander Kluge, and others visited Film Institute

of India and opened new avenues for the students. Masterclasses by the stalwarts and personal interactions inspired the students to bring qualitative changes to the broader Indian cinema movement.

Initially, Satyajit Ray was requested to head the Film Institute of India, but he suggested Mr Gajanan Jaghirdar as the first principal of the Institute. As the first principal of the Institute, Gajanan Jaghirdar will always be remembered for his initiatives on which the Institute could build itself into an exceptional hub for studying cinema. Gajanan Saheb had a history of prolonged association with the Prabhat studio, from which the Film Institute of India came, and had a particular identity with the place. He was a talented actor and director from the 1930s to the 1970s. As an actor, he constantly checked out how the camera would see regarding angle and field of vision. Then, he worked out his physical movement with the camera to get the proper focus mark. And then, when all these were done, he would emote for the shot after carefully checking what had come before and what was to come after that shot with the director. As a prolific actor, he always places priorities on nuances and punctuation. He believed that an actor needs to have command over any language when working in a play or a film because that confidence reflects in the character they are performing. The campus already had two working film studios, one of which was the biggest in Asia then. The Institute received some equipment from the Prabhat era, and some became operational. Over time, the Institute started getting recognition as the Pune Film Institute in India and abroad. (Damle:2022)

The decision of the parliamentary statutory committee established that the Institute's governance structure would include a governing council, chaired by a distinguished individual. Additionally, the formulation of academic policies and plans was entrusted to the Academic Council, while financial oversight was allocated to the Standing Finance Committee. In alignment with the Government of India's strategic vision, there was an initiative to transition the Film Institute of India towards becoming a technical institution dedicated to educating students in film production and fostering research across various cinema disciplines. The core mandates of the Institute encompassed: (a) providing comprehensive training across multiple facets of film production and related disciplines, specifically in areas such as film direction, screenplay writing, film acting, motion picture photography, sound recording and engineering, film editing, film appreciation, film production, art direction, film processing, make-up, costume design, animation, film publicity and public relations, film distribution, and exhibition. Initially, the Institute focused on delivering training in the first six domains. (b) The issuance of diplomas and certificates to trainees upon successful completion of the designated courses was another critical function. (c) Additionally, the Institute played a pivotal role in coordinating the training of film technicians across India. (d) Maintaining a repository of significant films produced both domestically and internationally was integral to its mission, ensuring that a comprehensive library was accessible for educational and research purposes.

In the discourse on the evolution of film education in India, the appointment of Shri Jagat Murari as the principal of the Film Institute of India in 1962 marked a pivotal shift towards fostering aesthetic sensibilities within the institute while upholding the secular ethos inherited from the Prabhat Studio. Murari articulated his vision for the institute in a seminal article, positing that the Film Institute of India should not only persist as a premier academic entity dedicated to training film artists and technicians but also endeavour to cultivate filmmakers endowed with a distinctive background and perspective. He emphasised the dual objective of providing rigorous technical training facilitated by the academic environment and nurturing an appreciation for the film as an art form and a potent vehicle for mass communication. Central to Murari's philosophy was the belief that the cultivation of taste and an awareness of the artist's societal responsibilities are integral to the filmmaker's education. Moreover, he identified talent as a critical, albeit elusive, determinant of a filmmaker's success and underscored the institute's commitment to attracting and developing potential talent through its pedagogical strategies. By aspiring to produce technically adept and artistically informed filmmakers, Murari envisaged the Film Institute of India playing a decisive role in elevating the calibre of Indian cinema, thereby fulfilling its historical mandate as a cradle for the nation's cinematic luminaries. (Murari:1966:34)

Jagat Murari was the most energetic and efficient principal who embedded Film Institute of India as an institute of aesthetic excellence. In Film Institute of India, he introduced a vast space whose backbone was the legacy of the rich past of Prabhat, the dynamic value of the present, and a progressive visionary of the future. He admirably pursued an experimental course that added a vibrant language of expression and a new world of cinematic metaphor. He welcomed the institute's best film technicians, experts, and filmmakers as faculty members. During his time, Ritwik Ghatak was appointed as a Vice Principal, Satish Bahadur was appointed as a Professor of Film Appreciation, GB Kulkarni as a mentor in photography and motion picture, Prof. R.S. Pruthy in screenplay writing, Prof. R. K. Ramachandran in film editing, Prof. L. P. Shah in production, and Prof. Roshan Taneja in acting.

Initially, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting stipulated that the Film Institute of India primarily focused on Hindi cinema while providing instruction in various regional languages. Jagat Murari, alongside other faculty members, endeavoured to imbue both international and national values within the curriculum. Given the diverse origins of the student body, the institute's charter explicitly stated that English would serve as the primary medium of instruction, except for the Acting Course, which would utilize both English and Hindi to accommodate linguistic diversity. This policy underscored



a commitment to eliminating linguistic barriers in film production. Distinguished actor Satish Shah highlighted in an interview that the foundational acting techniques taught at the institute enabled actors to perform proficiently in their native languages. Notably, including students from South India in the acting course demonstrated their ability to deliver dialogues in Hindi adeptly. In a significant contribution to the New Wave cinema in India, the 1967 student production of *Yatrik* by Mani Kaul, involving the acting course's students, epitomised the ethos of integration. As an experimental film, *Yatrik* transcended mere storytelling, capturing a complex interplay of visuals and sound to evoke a particular mood and mental state, thus marking a notable achievement in cinematic expression. (Shah:2023)

Although the Ministry wanted to start a regional approach to filmmaking, a group of eminent faculty members of the Film Institute enhanced its international immersion. Professor Satish Bahadur, a renowned film historian, was appointed film appreciation professor. In Direction and Screenplay Writing, film appreciation was considered the basic pedagogy. Professor Satish Bahadur and Professor Jagat Murari have always believed that film appreciation is a crucial pathway that could help students improve their comprehensive abilities in vision, hearing, speaking, and writing. Film's distinctive traits create an experience that frequently transcends that of reality, and it also enhances communication power. The potential benefit is the ability to stimulate students' interest in learning, achieve context-oriented teaching, and incorporate language and culture learning. It allows students to conduct their studies according to their interests and characteristics. In the initial session on film appreciation, Professor Satish Bahadur always gave the example of Roland Barthes. He wanted to mention what film is and why cinema and its language are considered powerful mediums to influence audience vision. In his discourse, he elucidated the binary nature of cinema, which engenders an 'enthralled spectator' and lays the groundwork for the envisagement of a collective community, wherein cinematic portrayals reciprocally influence all individuals. This captivation with the moving image gestures towards a more nefarious dimension of cinema—its subtle capacity to manipulate and incline mass audiences towards the consumption of cinematic images and ideologies. Professor Bahadur initiated his career as the chair of the Department of Social Science at Agra College, during which he founded two film societies. Upon the inauguration of the Film Institute of India, the esteemed film critic, Ms. Marie Seton, recommended to Mrs. Indira Gandhi the establishment of an additional department dedicated to film appreciation, advocating for Professor Bahadur as the premier candidate for this role. With his distinctive personality and pedagogical methods, Professor Bahadur indelibly influenced generations of film students at the Film Institute. Professor Satish Bahadur's student, renowned film historian Mr Surendar Chaudhary, recollected that Professor Bahadur rationalised students' perception of cinema, enabling them to engage with films profoundly differently for the remainder of their lives. Individuals from diverse backgrounds, hailing from various regions of India, began to engage in the artistic appreciation of films through the courses he offered. Professor Satish Bahadur singularly established a distinct domain within film studies in India and cultivated the discipline of film appreciation as an independent art form. (Chaudhary:2010)

From the beginning, the Ministry of I & B (Information & Broadcasting) determined that eminent persons from the film industry, like directors, producers, actors, and film technicians, would be associated with the selection and admission process of the film institute. In that manner, an eminent non-conformist filmmaker, Ritwik Ghatak, was appointed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the Vice Principal of the institute. In the cultural sphere of Bengal, Ritwik Ghatak (1925–1976) was an exceptional person who evolved a distinct style of filmmaking. Kumar Shahani, an eminent new-wave filmmaker and disciple of Ritwik Ghatak, mentioned in his memoirs that during his lectures, Ghatak always talked about the social influence of cinema. He considered the medium of cinema an essential medium of mass communication. He wanted to project cinema as a powerful medium that would be a commentary on contemporary history and a document of human suffering instead of being a narrow window into the lives of people or the camera being a mere tool for taking photographs. As a professor of direction and screenplay writing, he referenced the film *Bicycle Thieves* during his lecture. Ritwik, too, considered *Bicycle Thieves* the best example of neo-realist cinema, which created a new idiom in world cinema, breaking away from the stereotypes of Italian cinema. What attracted him the most was De Sica's adopt and approach strategy and the portrayal of the helplessness of the unemployed lower middle class. Ritwik gave his opinion about the film; whenever he thinks of this film by Vittorio De Sica, he is reminded of what is called in English 'adopt and approach'. This strategy permeates the entire film. Upon viewing the film, one gets to realise to what extent cinema can do justice to reality. Here, a short story finds its absolute embodiment in the movie. It starts with an ordinary theme, which gradually unfolds in its scope and, in the end, illuminates the minds of the spectators with a sudden flash. And this resonance endures in their minds for a long time. This film finds form by englobing the reality of the urban lower middle class, battered by problems. The life of the metropolis is flowing, indifferent to the fate of an individual: a man getting a job for owning a bicycle, it's being stolen, is looking for it with his son, and stealing a bike after a fruitless search for his own—his whole helplessness being the inevitable outcome of his futile individual efforts. (Shahani: 2022).

In the academic years of 1964–1965, under the leadership of Principal Shri Jagat Murari and Vice Principal Ritwik Ghatak, it was proposed at the film institute to inaugurate screen Studies departments for the myriad disciplines being instructed. This initiative stemmed from recognising that filmmaking is an inherently dynamic art form characterised by its rapidly evolving techniques. To remain at the forefront of these advancements and to make significant contributions to the field, it was posited that both practical and emphasis on research frameworks needed to be established. Central to this endeavour was introducing the Production Dossier—a pre-shooting report on the direction and screenplay writing curriculum. Esteemed New Wave filmmaker and institute alumnus Jahnu Barua has articulated in an interview the pedagogical and

creative aspirations behind the dossier. He noted that compiling the dossier was not merely an experiment in alternative cinematic practices but a comprehensive approach to understanding filmmaking as a practice that extends beyond mere representation. The dossier encouraged an engagement with the social and cultural practices enveloping and emerging from film production, thus fostering a more profound connection with the realities and communal experiences of the creators. Barua highlighted that the dossier served as a vehicle for learning and reflection, wherein filmmakers and artists were encouraged to invest significant effort in the multifaceted dimensions of filmmaking. This encompassed activities such as education, community engagement, and cultural preservation, thereby nurturing a complex web of social interactions and contributing to collective existence's tangible and intangible infrastructure. (Barua :2023). In his student life at the film institute, he mentioned his understanding of Cinema in the dossier and why it is considered a unique art form. In his preface, he said, the subjects included in the thesis are discussed on the acceptance of Oinena as both fern and work of Art. Though the appreciation of Art cannot be taught, it is always possible to achieve the feeling of Art through any work such as painting, sculpture, theatre, etc. But many things can prepare the way for appreciation of what the creator, the artist, the painter or the filmmaker is trying to do, what he must work with and what should and should not be expected of him. There is always a difference between feeling and appreciation. To appreciate the creator's work, we must know the elements opposing it. Such elements can be made very prominent in Cinema. Also, the inclusion of such elements in Cinema is always of the highest number than in any other work of Art.

It was significant that, along with the alumnus of the direction and those who were prominent figures in the genre of Indian New Wave Cinema and graduated from the film institute, they were from the screen acting course. Actors like Naseer Uddin Shah, Om Puri, Shabana Azmi, Kanwaljeet, Satish Shah, Naveen Nischal, Rahena Sultana, Rita Bhaduri, Tom Alter, Vijay Arora, etc. were considered art film actors; they all graduated from Film Institute of India. In 1964, at the Parliament committee meeting, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting suggested that the film institute should have prioritized producing not only a group of trained actors but also a group of creative minds with strong moral values and human ethics. Along with all the others who were behind all the inspiration, he was the legendary professor, Roshan Taneja. Actor Shabana Azmi said in her interview that she firmly believes she would neither be a person nor an actor if she did not attend the film institute. Professor Roshan Taneja was there, who was their greatest inspiration and a student of Lee Strasberg's Acting Studio in the USA, taught us Stanislavski's method of acting. He believed that it is an actor's business to be able to prefix the words and that it doesn't matter what the character is; it may be a queen, a slum dweller, or a sex worker, but it's essential to make it believable. When Shabana was assigned to Shyam Benegal's *Ankur*, it was for the first time that she stepped into a village. She was playing a character completely different from the English-educated, westernized Bombay girl in 1973, and what rescued her then was only the pedagogical training, which only can come from the "*Guru and Gurukul*." (Azmi: 2023)<sup>6</sup>

**Conclusion:** Region' and its embodiments and 'regional cinema' assume an intersection between language, culture, and territory. In the mid-twentieth century, when India introduced itself as a language-based administrative unit in the field of cultural practice, including cinema, it self-expressed its newer identity in the thinking of the region in the sub-continent. The rise of regional cinema as a genre owes an incalculable debt to the film institute. In that case the notable alumni were carried the lineage of Prabhat Studio. A group of notable alumni from the film institute, pioneers of Indian New Cinema, introduced regional cinema as an iconic form that always maintained its distinct identity from mainstream Hindi cinema. They have denoted regional cinema as an extended form of cultural diversities in mid-sixties India. Through it, alums not only introduced innovative ideas and theoretical experiments in Indian regional cinema but also introduced a new direction or magic of craft, which made a bridge between the world and Indian regional cinema. Alums of the Film Institute Mani Kaul, Kumar Shahani, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, John Abraham, Girish Kasaravalli, Nirod Mahapatra, Manmohan Mahapatra, Balu Mahendra, Ketan Mehta, Jahnu Barua, Sayed Akhtar Mirza, etc. used society as the canvas and the camera as a weapon. They depicted the ethos of crisis in post-independence India. Through their individual, indigenous style of filmmaking, they have developed a different kind of audience—small but influential. Aside from what the institute endowed, its children had a rare tenacity of purpose and courage of conviction that was the fountainhead of Indian regional cinema. The Film Institute of India gifted the discipline of the institute to those who entered the new cinema movement, whose films were the pathways that established prerequisites of mass appeal. For them, Film Institute was not only an institution of high learning or a space for the depth of creation. It was all these and more. It was the institute with always heterogeneous collocations of space and time. Sometimes, it makes reality waver. Instead, they learned they made it as they walked under the wisdom tree, caressed a stone, and remembered. The institute had brought and encouraged them with the spectacular expanse between earth and sky, nature, and meaning.

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#### Interview:

- 16) Halder Debjani (2022), Interview With Kumar shahani, 23<sup>rd</sup> July.
- 17) Halder Debjani (2022), Telephonic Interview With Shabana Azmi, 15<sup>th</sup> August
- 18) Halder Debjani (2023), Interview With Jahanu Barua, 5<sup>th</sup> May
- 19) Halder Debjani (2023), Telephonic Interview With Satish Shah, 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

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- 20) Damle Vishnupant Govind, Fattelal S. (1936) *Sant Tukaram*, Pune, Prabhat Film Company
- 21) De Sica Vittorio (1948), *Bicycle Thieves*, Italy, Amato Giuseppe, De Sica Vittorio
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#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Film Sant Tukaram was directed by filmmaker Damle and Fattelal, it was one of the groundbreaking productions of Prabhat Film Company

<sup>2</sup> Prabhat Studios adopted bilingual filmmaking as a strategy, producing films in both Hindi and Marathi. However, what distinguished Prabhat was its unique approach to projecting regional Marathi content to a national, Hindustani-speaking audience. There were two distinct phases of this bilingual approach. The first phase, until about 1935, aimed to gain a national audience while using Marathi content. Films in this phase included *Maya Machindra*, which combined elements from mythological narratives, artistic set design, and cinematic spectacle. Language played a vital role in this phase, as Prabhat sought to appeal to a broader audience. The first three talkie films of Prabhat were produced in both Hindi and

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Marathi, conveying the regional Marathi identity through narratives drawn from earlier MFC films and a focus on language reflecting standard Marathi.

<sup>3</sup> The interesting thing with Prabhat's brand of realism is that they aren't thinking of specifically making films that are 'closer to life' or any such thing. The Prabhat pioneers simply wanted to tell stories in as interesting a manner as possible, without worrying unduly about where or how they would do the actual filming. That is what gave Prabhat the flexibility to switch between '*Sant Tukaram*' and '*Manoos*' and '*Amar Jyoti*', each film with a completely different use of 'reality' and 'realism'. The binding factor is that each story is narrated in as interesting and dramatic manner as possible, without worrying about definitions.

<sup>4</sup> In the context of Indian Nationalism, though ostensibly the debates touched upon every aspect of women's being, so the hidden agenda was always that of control. Behind this urge for a control lay a fear of the powerful forces that lay buried within women as well nation- sexuality in one case and the demand for the social justice in the other- forces that could easily become overwhelming

<sup>5</sup> The production culture of Prabhat Studios, arguing that film practice at Prabhat was embedded within these three determinants. The Indian studio system during this period did not conform to the classical Hollywood studio model, with many members of the cast and crew taking on multiple roles. The regional turn in Indian Cinema studies, which critiqued the centralizing and hegemonic tendencies of Bombay cinema. The economic dynamics during the Bombay Presidency were diverse due to the influence of princely states and feudal elites on the creative and cultural economy. Premakur Athorti's experience in Kolhapur studios highlights the influence of feudal elites on the creative and cultural economy. There is the relationship between national identity, economy, and region within the context of Prabhat Studios and Indian cinema during the specified period, highlighting the complex and dynamic nature of these concepts in shaping the film industry and regional economies.

Arvikar Hrishikesh (2019), '*Between the Shots, After the Cuts: The Political Economy of Prabhat Studio*', published in Wide Screen Vol. 8, No.1, January, Published by Subaltern Media UK

<sup>6</sup> The telephonic interview was taken by the author in 2022, during compiled the edited volume of Being FTII, which was published in commemoration of the diamond jubilee of FTII.