

the silent as well as sound cinemas. His cinema was the epitome of perfection with new and innovative film making techniques and ideas. His movie 'Citizen Kane' is a masterpiece, highly regarded for its cinematographic brilliance and innovative making. Akira Kurosawa, with his creative genius was also a prominent figure in world cinema.

He concluded the session explaining about two important cinema movements that played an essential role in making cinema a celebrated medium- Italian Neorealism and French new wave. Italian Neorealism is a national film movement characterized by stories set amongst the poor and the working class. They are filmed on location, frequently with non-professional actors. They primarily address the difficult economic and moral conditions of post-World War II Italy, representing changes in the Italian psyche and conditions of everyday life, including poverty, oppression, injustice and desperation. The 'French new wave' was primarily a movement against the studio system. New wave filmmakers explored new approaches to editing, visual style, and narrative, as well as engagement with the social and political upheavals of the era, often making use of irony or exploring existential themes.

Session 8- July 27- History of Indian Cinema, K B Venu



KERALA STATE CHALACHITHRA ACADEMY
&
MES ASMABI COLLEGE
 P. VEMBALLUR, KODUNGALLUR

SESSION II
HISTORY OF INDIAN CINEMA
 27 | JULY | 2021
 @ 4 PM - 6 PM
SRI. K.B. VENU
 FILM CRITIC, DIRECTOR AND ACTOR
 KERALA STATE FILM AWARD WINNER


SPEAKER

DEEP focus
 SERIES- 2
 WEBINAR SERIES ON
FILM MAKING & FILM APPRECIATION

Principal: Dr. A. Biju | Coordinators: Dr. N.P. Sajeesh, Deputy Director (Programmes), Kerala State Chalachithra Academy),
 Smt. Najma Noor (Assistant Professor, MES Asmabi College) | Conveners: Dr. T.R. Muralikrishnan (Hindi, English),
 Praseem T.R. (Hindi, Digital Film Production) Susaina M. Noor (Hindi, Mass Communication)

POWERED BY: DEPT. OF MASS COMMUNICATION, DEPT. OF DIGITAL FILM PRODUCTION
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In the session on 'History of Indian cinema,' Sri. K.B. Venu asserted the long and prestigious heritage and history of Indian cinema. The first movie projection in India was done by Lumiere brothers on 7th July 1896 in Watsons Hotel, just six months after it was projected in Paris. They projected the same six cinemas that they projected in Paris. This was a historic moment in Indian cinema. The Indian audience was already exposed to the screen through shadow plays and magic lantern shows. So they welcomed cinema with much enthusiasm. A heritage of unique storytelling methods assisted cinema to thrive in India.

He introduced some prominent figures of Indian cinema history. Sir Heera Lal Sen was the first person to project a movie in India in 1897. He was a photographer by profession and captured a portion of a musical opera named 'the flower of Persia.' He filmed about twelve feature cinemas, ten documentaries and three advertisements. In 1904 he filmed a two hour long cinema 'Alibaba and the thirty thieves', but none of his works survived as it was all destroyed in a fire in his godown. He was not celebrated or known as the father of cinema as his work lacked cinematic language and creative elements. Harishchandra Sakkaram Bahtwadekar made the first Indian documentary, which was about a wrestling match. It was shot in 1899 at Mumbai. The first Indian feature cinema was named 'Pundlik' and was only 23 minute long.

Sri Dadasaheb Phalke is considered as the father of Indian cinema. He took great efforts to study and understand the technical aspects of cinema. He was a real 'Auteur' with a refined view on technical and creative aspects of cinema. His movies were truly Indian, as he used only Indian artists and technicians. His first full length feature cinema 'Raja Harishchandra' was released on May 3rd 1913 at Mumbai coronation cinema. It was a huge success and encouraged other novice and young filmmakers.

Interestingly enough the heroine of the movie was actually a man named Anna Salunke, who later played a double role of Ram as well as Seetha in the movie 'Lanka Dahan'. The first male and female child artist of Indian cinema was Balachandra Phalke and Mandakini Phalke respectively who were the son and daughter of Dadasaheb Phalke. The first Indian female actor was Kamalabai Ghokale. In 1917 Phalke remade 'Raja

Harishchandra' and along with it he made a documentary 'how to prepare a film' which is still considered as a valuable contribution to the history of Indian cinema. He made about 95 feature length films and 27 short films. The Dadasaheb Phalke award, a life contribution award in the field of cinema is named after him.

He explained about the growth of cinema in other Indian languages. The first Tamil silent

movie is 'Keechaka Vadham' (1916) by K. Nadaraja Modaliyar. The first Bengali silent movie is 'Bilwamangal' (1919) by Rustomji Dhotiwala. Himanshu Rai is one of the most important figures of Indian cinema. He made films with classic dimensions during the Silent era. He established the 'Bombay Talkies Studio' in 1934. One of his cinemas 'Karma' is considered as a landmark to Indian cinema. The heroine of the movie was Rai's wife, Devika Rani, and her performance was highly appreciated by the viewers. The movie also challenged the conservative audience of India, as it featured a four minute long kissing scene between Rai and Devika.

Elaborating on the history of Malayalam cinema, Sri K B Venu cited legendary Malayalam filmmaker Kaattukkarana Vaarunni Joseph. He successfully conducted a bioscope show at the Thrissur pooram venue in 1907. He was the first person to project a movie in Kerala. He travelled all around south India with his bioscope and branded his show as Jose Electric Bioscope.

Malayalam cinema is grateful to Sri J.C Daniel. Hailed as the father of Malayalam cinema, he trained himself in all cinema techniques and established Kerala's first film studio, 'The Travancore National Picture' in Trivandrum. 'Vikathakumaran' (1928) directed and produced by J C Daniel was the first Malayalam silent movie. He himself was the hero of the movie, and P K Rosy was the heroine of the movie. 'Marthandavarma' of 1932 is another significant movie of Malayalam cinema history. It was an adaptation of a book of the same name and was a great movie. But the projection of the movie was confiscated on the first day itself due to copyright issues with the publishers of the novel. Later film makers like K P Kumaran, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Bharathan heralded the golden age of Malayalam cinema.

The first sound cinema of India that told the love story of a prince and a gypsy woman 'Alam Ara,' was released in 1931. It was the first film to incorporate songs. 'Kalidas' was the first Tamil sound film, 'Jamaai Shashti' was the first Bengali sound film and 'Balan' was the first Malayalam sound film. He cited PC Barua's 'Devdas' that brought a new trend in Indian film industry. The movie about a heartbroken lover was a huge success and was adapted to several other Indian languages. The first Indian colour cinema was 'Kisan Kanya' which came out in 1937.

The golden age of Indian cinema was from 1940 to 1960. It was the dawn of independence. India was a young nation filled with poverty and confusions due to partition and other socio-political situations of post-independence.

History of Indian cinema is incomplete without Sathyajit Ray. He is ranked among the most celebrated international filmmakers of 1950s. Ray made himself distinct by making films

with an uncompromising stand on maintaining artistic standard. The best example for his unique filmmaking is 'Pather Panchali' (1955). The movie bagged several national and international accolades and was an inevitable presence in film festivals worldwide. Ray was instrumental in establishing the first film society in India, The Calcutta Film Society. Ray was always fascinated by the art of cinema. He wrote about cinema in famous publications. The 'Apu Trilogy' was also a great contribution of Roy to Indian cinema.

V.S Shantaram is another prominent figure in Indian cinema history. He maintained supremacy in mainstream Indian cinema for six decades. He was a director, producer and actor. Shantaram led Indian cinema to greater technical excellence.

Bimal Roy, another important film maker was a Director, Producer, Cinematographer and Editor. Progressive ideology and adherence to realism mark Bimal Roy's films. At the same time he was particular about making his movies appealing to the common man. Melodious music and popular songs adorned Roy's films. Salil Chowdhuri and S D Berman were his favourite music directors. Bimal Roy's films influenced Indian cinema and World cinema profoundly. In Indian cinema, his influence extended to both mainstream commercial Hindi Cinema and the emerging Parallel cinema. 'Do Bigha

Zamin' (1953) was the first film to successfully straddle art and commercial cinema. It was a commercial and critical success, winning the International Prize at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival. The film in fact paved way for the Indian New Wave.

Sri K B Venu brought to attention the contributions of Mehaboob Khan, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, the anarchist film maker Ritwik Khatak and Mani Kaul. Kaul is considered as the torch bearer of Indian New Wave cinema. His celebrated work 'Uski Roti' came out in 1969. Kaul's mission was to make movies in pure cinematic language. Kaul believed in the power of cinematic visuals. Another important personality in new wave cinema is Kumar Sahani. He came under the influence of Ritwik Ghatak during his student days at FTTI. He was deeply interested in the epic narrative traditions of India. He studied at IDHEC in France and assisted the great Robert Bresson in his film 'Une Femme Douce' (A Gentle Woman). Sri Venu also talked about Mrunal Singh, Shyam Benagal and Ketan Mehta, who played major roles in the growth of new wave cinema.

In the concluding part of the lecture, Sri K B Venu gave an overview of important female figures in new wave cinema. Deepa Mehta is a bold filmmaker who provoked the conservative Indian society with her courageous portrayal of social issues. Along with Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair, and Aparna Singh also played major roles in the growth of new wave cinema.