



Assamese cinema of India : birth, development and role & trend

Debasis Gogoi¹ and Haren Kumar Hazarika²

¹ CMJ University, Meghalaya, India

² Department of Education (Secondary), Government of Assam, India

Abstract

This paper is an exploration on the birth, development and the changing trends of Assamese cinema. It discusses the role played by Assamese cinema in the society in various aspects be it social development, cultural preservation and promotion, entertainment and motivation for economic progress. The study has been done taking into account both primary research like film analysis, questionnaire, interviews, government data and secondary research like study of books, journals and websites. Over the years Assamese cinema has achieved many a national and international awards. But despite its rich history, and its artistic success, Assamese cinema has failed to make a lasting impression in the national and international level. Interesting facts such as the number of Cinema halls which more than 300 a decade earlier has reduced to 49 in 2012. Moreover detailed list of all award winning movies of Assam has been found during the research. Therefore the study also attempts to find the reasons behind the downward curve of the film industry of Assam. Many of the found reasons are militancy problem, lack of trained persons in the medium, VCD culture, Piracy. The role of government in the process to overcome the obstacles of the industry has been studied.

Keywords : Assamese cinema, development, role and trend.

1. Introduction

Films are considered to be the highest Art form. It is an amalgamation of six Art forms namely the Spatial Arts- architecture, sculpture and painting and the temporal arts-music, poetry and dance. In India film making started as early as the early part of 20th century and since then there has been no look back. It has evolved and developed itself by leaps and bounds and has graduated numerous styles of film-making. Its style of story-telling has always been very much liked by its audiences. The power of its dialogues, music and songs has always captivated the minds of its listeners. Films reflect society and society is reflected in films. It's a two way process.

The first footage ever to be recorded by the Lumiere Brothers was recorded on March 19,

1895. They went on tour with the cinematography in 1896, visiting Bombay, London, Montreal, New York and Buenos Aires. The first film made in India Raja Harishchandra made in 1913 a silent Indian film directed and produced by Dadasaheb Phalke is the first full-length Indian feature film. It was in the year 1935 that Assamese cinema made its entry into the world of entertainment with its first landmark movie 'Jyomoti' by Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. Till 2011, three hundred and thirty three Assamese movies have been made since then. And some of them have won national and international awards too for its unique and rich

styles of story-telling and cinematic expression in acting, cinematography, music and editing.

But despite its rich history, and its artistic success, Assamese cinema has failed to make a lasting impression in the national level. The 1960's was a period of box office hits and also good was the result of 70's, 80's and late 90's.

But in the present times the Assamese cinema is in a miserable condition where hardly there is hardly one good movie a year. The Assamese film industry is fraught with innumerable bottlenecks be it financial constraints, technological shortcomings or competition with other states.

Films play a positive and educative role and inculcate in the young generation a love and respect for our culture and history of harmonious existence. Cinema provides people as a major means of entertainment, education, information and motivation. The Cinemas of Assam of greats like Padum Barua, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Jahnu Barua and many more have reflected problems and issues in society which were and are existent. The Cinema makes the people aware and teaches us or gives us moral education apart from entertainment. For example, the recent movie directed by Chandra Mudoi, "Bakor Putek" (2012) is about Superstition. The movie 'Mon Jai' (2006) is about the unemployment problem of Assam and the frustration in youths.

Arun Lochan Das in his book 'Shooting Report' (2011) has mentioned about various shooting reports of Assamese Films over the years which provide interesting facts about how shooting used to be in the earlier days. This book shows the growth of Assamese film industry and its present trend. Moreover, total data of films made upto 2011 are made available for the first time.

In 'Perspectives on Cinema of Assam' (Borpujari and Kalita) have traced the evolution of Assamese Cinema from its birth to the contemporary stage including Documentary and the growth of the film industry. The book contains Assamese Film history from 1935 to 2007.

In the book 'Axomiys Solochitrar Etihakh' (A history of Assamese films) by ArunLochan Das mentioned the struggling period in Assamese Film industry. This book have talked about directors such as Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Jahnu Barua and the films which have been a part of the glorious past.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha in his book 'Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema' Covered the full range of Indian cinema, from Hindi musicals to the impressive diversity of regional Indian Art Cinemas, this edition includes expanded coverage of mainstream productions from the 1970s to the 1990s. There is also additional material on the stars that have made their mark in the 1990s, and a comprehensive index of names.

In the book 'Movies and Mass Culture' edited by John Belton examines the two-way process of action and reaction by which films shape the identity of a society, its culture and its sense of nationhood; and, in turn, how films are themselves shaped by these forces and matrices. Films both effect and reflect changes in the national self-image, the transformation from one kind of nation to another: from an agrarian to an industrial economy; from a nation of producers to one of consumers; from a community of individuals to a mass society.

'How to Read a Film?' by James Monaco. This hugely popular book has become the definitive source on film and media. Monaco looks at film from many vantage points, as both art and craft, sensibility and science, tradition and technology. *The Film discusses about Film as Art; Its Technology : Imagine and Sound; The Language of Films : Signs and Syntax; The Shape of Film History; Film Theory : Form and Function; Media : In the Middle of Things; And also about Multimedia : The Digital Revolution.*

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Objectives of the Study

The Research work has the following aims and objectives :

- i. To depict the history of Assamese cinema.

- ii. To find out the impact of Assamese cinema on society and societies impact on Assamese cinema.
- iii. To find out the various genres or trends of Assamese films over the years.
- iv. To find out in detail the reasons behind the downfall of many this industry
- v. To find out ways steps by researchers, governmental organisations, film makers and others that can bring back the glory and success of Assamese cinema.

2.2. Research Design

The researcher used content analysis, and primary research namely interview, questionnaire, and government records which is defined as a research technique for the objective, systematic quantitative and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication.

The data would be analysing both qualitatively by in-depth researching about the growth, development and trend and quantitatively through questionnaires and interviews to observe the Assamese films from its birth in 1935 till date.

Content analysis shall be applied to examine and study films of different period specially those which have got national and international recognition and also at the same time those films which have been gained considerable commercial success. Extensive library research has been done to find out, books, researches, magazines, articles and features of Assamese cinema over the ages which can be useful for the proper factual findings and interesting facts and incidents of the past.

Questionnaires and interviews method shall be used to find out the reasons for various queries such as- What are the reasons of Assamese film industry's downfall though having a glorious past? What are the major reasons of setback of this industry? Has Present day Actors and film Directors not been able to meet the expectations of the complex growing audiences? Is Lack of trained professionals in the medium the most major cause of failure of Assamese cinema? Do you think Assamese cinema has a major role in the socio-cultural and economic development of the state?

2.3 Sampling

The researcher have analysed the various films since its birth and the role played by them in society. Films of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Jahnu Baruah, Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Manju Bora and many other films which are available and a few others which have played an important role in Society and also brought fame to this region by winning national and international awards. Also questionnaires has been distributed in various film festivals, film makers and other eminent people to help find factual data about the industry.

2.4 Operational definition

The film critic Christian Metz has written "A film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand." A film is constructed of visual, aural, and linguistic components that are manipulated in numerous ways; it is a challenge to take apart the totality of the film experience and to interpret how that experience was assembled.

Reviewing Film is an acquired skill. Concentrate at first on a few things that seem to offer the most opportunity for critical reading. If viewing the film only once, try to take notes in shorthand while watching the film. Arrows can be used to note camera angle and camera movement; quick sketches can be used to note shot composition and elements of mise-en-scene. As soon as possible after viewing the film, write out your impressions of the film, noting the most important elements. When analysing a film as a historical document, keep in mind the film's contemporary audiences or authors. Your own personal reaction to the film may serve as a starting point, but you need to convert these impressions into historical analysis.

2.5 Data collection design

The data is to be collected from both the primary and secondary sources. Primary source of data is films, governmental records interviews and questionnaires. The secondary data includes books, journals, magazines and periodicals.

Need of the study

The need of the study lies in the question that what role Assamese films have been playing in the society. Apart from its role of entertainment has it been able to raise political, social and economic consciousness among the people. Has it been able to promote subjects like National Unity, environment protection, cultural safeguard and cultural exchange? Being one of the most important means of Mass communication has it been utilized upto its potential in Assam.

Moreover there has been not enough researches and books published on Assamese Films. As we all know that India is the largest film producing country in the world which accounts for 700 to 900 films per year. But Assamese film industry has not been able to make even 10 movies a year on an average. Over the years Assamese film industry have made films that have drawn international attention too, bringing in National and International Awards. So what are the reasons of this industry not flourishing well? So, definitely to study and analyze the reasons behind it and also to study its changing trends and its impact on society on a constant basis is of very prime importance as also because it is a very important and powerful medium of moulding Public Opinion.

2.7 Hypothesis

- i. It is hypothesized that Assamese film industry's growth is on the downward curve both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- ii. Cinema halls reducing.
- iii. Cinema as the highest Art form has not got the same status in Assam

3. History, growth and trend

In 1934 three years after the first Indian Talkie Alam Ara was made began the making of 'Joymoti' the first Assamese film which was to be released on March 10, 1935 in Calcutta at the 'Raonak talkies' to be precise. The brain child of playwright, poet, lyricist Jyoti Prasad Agarwala the film was shot entirely at locations and at improvised studio called the 'Chitralkha Movietone' at the Bholaguri tea estate, Jyoti

Prasad's ancestral property with equipment's and technicians from distant Lahore. 'Joymoti' wasn't only an attempt on story-telling; it was an attempt at cinematic story-telling and thus rich in cinematic elements. Unfortunately the film did not generate good business but that was not to deter Jyoti Prasad who planned to return with his second film 'Indramalati' in 1939. Incidentally it was in Indramalati that the legendary artist Dr. Bhupen Hazarika made his debut in Celluloid. After him a tea planter Rohini Baruah came forward to make the third Assamese film 'Manumoti', in 1941 based on a successful novel. This film unlike Joymoti was a commercial success. Planter Parbati Prasad Baruah known better to his society as a poet was the next to be drawn into cinema. His 'Rupahi' in 1942 is the fourth Assamese film. The next successful film was Kamal Narayan Choudhury's 'Badan Barphukan' in 1947. The next noteworthy effort saw the emergence of the dramatist Phani Sharma and the legendary Bishnu Prasad Rabha in the making of 'Siraj' (1948) a tale which highlighted the harmony among the Hindu and Muslims of Assam. The film was a huge commercial success at the Box office. Following that till the 60's were films like Parghat, Biplabi, Runumi, Sati Beula, Nimila Onko, Piyoli Phukan, Smritir Paras, Sorapat(1956) which saw the light of the day. In between 1956 was released the film 'Era Bator Sur'(1956) which heralded the arrival of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika as a film maker. The film had many interesting elements to offer. Phani Sharma's 'Piyoli Phukan' made in 1955 earned the first national level recognition for Assamese Cinema as the President's certificate of Merit. Nip Baruah who made his debut in 1956 with his film 'Smritir Paras' went on to win the same honour with his film 'Mak Aru Maram' released in 1957. In 1958 his 'Ronga Police' won the President's Silver medal again. Prabhat Mukherjee a successful Bengali filmmaker did come over to Assam in 1959 to make 'Puberon' which earned laurels for the state. Popular actress Yanuda Kakati's memorable performance in this film was not only acclaimed here in Assam but also at the Berlin Film Festival to which the film was invited.

The 60's was a decade of Box Office hits. Khargeswar Chakraborty's 'Maniram Dewan' (1964), Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's 'Sakuntala' (1961), 'Loti Ghoti', 'Chikmik Bijulee' (1969), 'Pratiddhwani', Abdul Mazid's 'Maram Trishna' (1968) were among those which made good business. This was also the time which saw the emergence of box office boom by the films made by Brajen Baruah –His first film 'Dr. BezBaruah', (1969) was a thriller which reflected the society's rural ambience and the emerging urban milieu. Another feature was Brajen Baruah decision to stay away from the established studio circuit shooting in local and real places training local people to perform technical tasks leading to the emergence of an Assamese film fraternity.

Other Notable box office hits include Mukuta, Manab aru Danab, Jug Biyug, Upaga Humar Mati, Bhaiti (the first coloured Assamese Film), Huntora, Chameli Memsahab, Ratanlal, Morom, Rangdhali, Ajoli Nobou, Buwari, Hendur, Bohaag, Bor Duporiya, Pita Putra, Bhai Bhai. Among the commercially successful Assamese films Buwari (1982) by Shiva Thakur stands out. Thakur's contribution to commercially successful films is immense. There were also other films like Uparajeya, Aranya, Mamata, Dristi, Khoj, Putala Ghor, Kallol, Pratham Ragini which though made in the traditional commercial format sought to explore serious aspects of life.

The 70's saw a landmark decade for Assamese cinema for serious film making. Padum Baruah's 'Ganga Chilonir Pakhi' which told the tale of a young widow on the realm of realistic cinema incorporating cinematic use of acting, music and editing. And camera work was a brilliant masterpiece. This was in a way continuation of Jyoti Prasad's dream. Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia also followed Jyoti Prasad's footsteps making his first film 'Sandhya Raag' in 1977. He went on to make seven more films earning many national and international laurels in the process.

The process of Assamese films making its way into the international arena began with the arrival of FTII trained Jahnu Baruah. He made his debut with the film 'Aparoopaa' with Papor.

'Halodhiya Choriya Bao Dhan Khai' (1987), which was the first Assamese film to win the Golden Lotus Award and Best Actor's prize to Indra Bania at the Locarno film festival, Switzerland is a milestone in Assamese Cinema. Moloya Goswami was adjudged the Best Actress in another film 'Firingoti' (1991).

The eighties also witnessed another trend of films being made in various dialects of the State. A few of them won awards and accolades too. Gautam Bora's 'Wosobipo' (1991) won the best Debut Film and the Best music director award for Syed Choudhury. Returning from Germany after studying Film making Gautam Bora introduced a new lease of life into Assamese Cinema visible in Wosobipo.

In 1992, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika cinematic effort was recognised by awarding him the Dada Saheb Phalke Lifetime Award, the most prestigious lifetime Award for Cinema in India. The legendary singer, composer had also won the national award for his music in 'Chameli Memsahab' (1975).

The 1990's witnessed the making of a mere 64 films only. These were a mix of serious and commercial films; however none of the successful commercial films of the decade could business as the hits like the previous decades. Hemen Das, Gautam Bora, Sanjib Hazarika, Santwana Bordoloi, Bidyut Chakraborty and Manju Bora joined the band of serious film makers in this decade. A graduate in cinematography from the prestigious IIFT, Mrinal Kanti Das won the National Award for best Cinematography in 1996 for 'Odasyo'. 'Joubone Aamoni Kore' by Ashok Kumar Bisaya made in 1998 was a trend setter. The unprecedented success of films brought in fresh financiers to a string of similar film makers, 'Maharathi' by Bani Das, 'Hiya Diya Niya' by Munin Baruah and 'Suren Surar Putek' by Chandra Mudoj and 'Koina Mur Dhuniya' by Suman Oripriya. In 2003, Tarali Sharma won the National Award as Best Singer for the film 'Akashitorar Kothare'. There are more than a hundred Assamese Films which have been made in this decade.

4. Results and Discussion

From 1939 to 2011, three hundred and thirty three movies have been made in Assam which has been registered in the Central Board of Film Certification. Among them the list of Award winning movies are listed below.

Table - 1 : List of Movies winning National Award, Regional Awards & Achievements

Sl. No.	Year	Movie Award	
1.	1955	'Piyali Phukan' Directed by Phani Sharma	Certificate of Merit (First Assamese movie to receive this award).
2.	1957	'Mak aru Morom' Directed by Nip Baruah	Certificate of Merit.
3.	1958	'Ronga Police' Directed by Nip Baruah	President award – Silver Medal – First Assamese Movie.
4.	1959	'Puberon' Directed by Prabhat Mukherjee	President award – Silver Medal – First Assamese movie to be screened in an international Film Festival at Berlin, Germany.
5.	1961	'Shakuntala' Directed by Dr. Bhupen Hazarika	President award – Silver Medal- First Assamese movie in colour in parts of the film.
6.	1963	'Tejimola' Directed by Anwar Hussain	Certificate of Merit
7.	1963	'Maniram Dewan' Directed by Sarweswar Chakraborty	President award – Silver Medal
8.	1964	'Pratidhwani' Directed by Dr. Bhupen Hazarika	President award – Silver Medal
9.	1966	'Lotighoti' Directed by Dr. Bhupen Hazarika	President award – Silver Medal
10.	1969	'Dr. BezBaruah Directed by Brajen Baruah	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
11.	1971	'Aranya' Directed by Samarendra Narayan Dev	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
12.	1972	'Upoja Hunar Mati' Directed by Brajen Baruah	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
13.	1973	'Mamata' Directed by Nalin Dwarah	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
14.	1975	'Chameli Mem Saheb' Directed by Abdul Majid	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award Best Music Director(National Award) – Dr. Bhupen Hazarika

15.	1976	'Putola Ghar' Directed by Samarendra Narayan Dev	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
16.	1977	'Sandhya Rag' Directed by Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award First Assamese film to be screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival
17.	1981	'Anirban' Directed by Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
18.	1982	'Aparupa' Directed by Jahnu Baruah	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award Screened at Indian Panorama.
19.	1983	'Alukor Aahban' Directed by Charukamal Hazarika	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
20.	1985	'Agnisnan' Directed by Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia	First Assamese film to receive National Award for Best Screenplay. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival
21.	1986	'Baan' Directed by Charu Kamal Hazarika	Best regional film – Rajat Kamal Award
22.	1987	'Halodhiya Soraye Bau Dhan Khai' Directed by Jahnu Baruah	Best film – National Award–Swarna Kamal Award, Screened at Indian Panorama. Best Actor– 'Indra Bania' at Locarno International Film Festival, Switzerland. Locarno Citizen Award for Excellence in Direction. International ecumenical Award.
23.	1987	'Prothom Ragini' Directed by Dhiru Bhuyan	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award.
24.	1988	'Kulahol' Directed by Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
25.	1990	'Bonani' Directed by Jahnu Baruah	National Award for Best Film in the Subject of Environment. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
26.	1990	'Juz' Directed by Hamen Das	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award.
27.	1991	'Firingoti' Directed by Jahnu Baruah	Second Best Film at National Level, Best Actress Award to Malaya Goswami at National Level. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
28.	1991	'Harothi' Directed by Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival
29.	1993	'Railor Aalir Dubori Bon' Directed by Pulok Gogoi	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award.
30.	1993	'Holdhor' Directed by Sanjib Hazarika	Best Debut Director National Award – Indira Gandhi Award. Screened at Indian Panorama

31.	1993	'Aaborton' Directed by Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia	Best Regional Film- Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
32.	1995	'Hagoroloi Bahu Dur' Directed by Jahnu Barua	National Award – Best Director. Special Mention by Jury to Bishnu Khargoria. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival. Best Actor- 'Bishnu Khargoria' at Singapore International Film Festival. World Peace Award at 31st Chicago International Film Festival. Best Film (Pri Do Public) at Nantes (France) Film Festival and Best Music Director to Satya Baruah.
33.	1996	'Itihaas' Directed by Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival
34.	1996	'Rag-Birag' Directed by Bidyut Chakraborty	First Assamese Film that received the inauguration regard in 1996 at the Indian Panorama and the National Award for Best Editor to 'Srikor Prasad'. National Award for Best Cinematography to 'Mrinal Kanti Das'.
35.	1996	'Odasyo' Directed by Dr. Santana Bordoloi	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. National Award for Best Cinematography to 'Mrinal Kanti Das'. Special Mention by Jury to 'Bhagirothi'. Jury Award among Asian Directors Film, India International Film Festival, 1998. Best Film – Trivandrum Film Society's 'Arabindan Award'. Outstanding Film of the Festival Certificate at Istanbul International Film Festival. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
36.	1998	'Kukhol' Directed by Jahnu Baruah	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
37.	1999	'Vaibhav' Directed by Manju Bora	Special Mention by Jury at National Level Film Competition. Best Film at 6th Dhaka International Film Festival. Golapuri Srinivas Award, (Chennai) for Best Debut Director.
38.	2000	'Pokhi' Directed by Jahnu Barua	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
39.	2002	'Konikar Ramdhenu' Directed by Jahnu Barua	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
40.	2003	'Aakakhitorar Kothare' Directed by Manju Bora	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. National Award for Best Solo Singer to 'Torali Sharma'. Audience Award at Dhaka International Film Festival.

41.	2003	'Tora' Directed by Jahnu Barua	National Award – Best Children Film
42.	2004	'Laj' Directed by Manju Bora	Special Mention by Jury in 2nd International Film Festival, Bangladesh. Screened at Indian Panorama film Festival.
43.	2004	'Juiye Pura Hun' Directed by Sanjib Sabhapandit	National Award for Best Film in the category of Environment Preservation. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
44.	2004	'Dinobondhu' Directed by Munin Barua	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award.
45.	2007	'Ahir Vairabh' Directed by Shiva Prasad Thakur	Best Director – New York International Film and Video festival.
46.	2008	'Mon Jai' Directed by M Moniram	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at Indian Panorama Film Festival.
47.	2009	'Aideu' Directed by Arup Manna	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award. Screened at various International Film Festival, Overseas.
48.	2009	'Ai Kot Nai' Directed by Manju Bora	Nargis Dutt National Award in the Category of Best Film Promoting National Unity.
49.	2010	'Bashundhara – The Earth' Directed by Hiren Bora	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award.
50.	2011	'Jetuka Pator Dore' Directed by Jadumoni Dutta	Best Regional Film – Rajat Kamal Award.

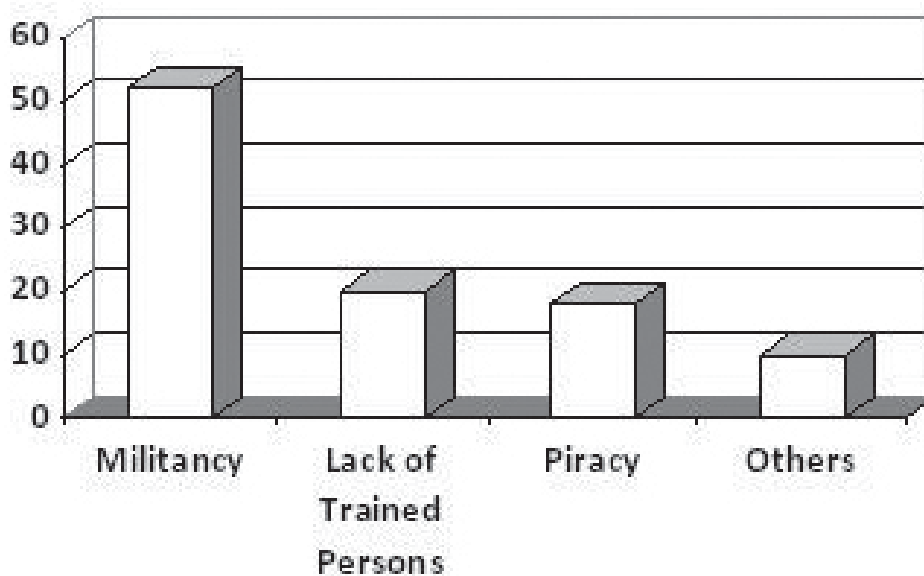


Fig. 1 : The findings of the questionnaire on the causes of downfall of Assamese cinema.

But despite its rich history, and its artistic success, Assamese cinema has failed to make a lasting impression in the national and international level. Though the beginning of the 21st century saw a new trend emerging in this genre, a trend that emphasised on the commercial success of films by toeing the style of Bollywood blockbusters. But the results were short lived as it couldn't stand a chance with its other Hindi, Tamil, Telegu and Bengali counterparts.

The Role of Cinema in development is immense because it motivates the audiences to a cause. Most of the time Cinema shows Good wins over evil. Thus, Cinema keeps the people encouraged, active and provides them with lots of information too. Movies like Halodhiya Choraye Bao Dhan Khai, Hagoroloi Bohu dur, Firingoti, Agnisnaan, Kulahol, Mon Jai, Maniram Dewan, Matshyagandha among Assamese Cinema have dealt with social issues over the period.

The diagram reveals that the first and primary cause of downfall of Assamese cinema which is about 52 % is militancy problem. In the year 2004 when militants caused serial bomb blast in cinema halls to stop screening of Hindi cinema it had actually affected the local cinema industry more than the other. Since then majority of the cinema halls have been closed down. This has again caused problems in the quantity and quality of films since to earn profits from the limited halls is nearly impossible.

The second main cause which is about 20 % is lack of trained professionals in the medium. With the coming of VCD culture and lack of big budget movies small scale VCD movies started to be produced by mainly unprofessional people which resulted in poor quality and lowered the status of the Art form.

The third main cause which is about 18 % is Piracy since digital technology like CD, DVD digital formats in Pen drive, memory card is easy to be copied and within a very short time.

The other reasons which are about 10 % are like less government support, lack of consciousness among the people of the state, not effective Non governmental organisations or film societies that can make a good and powerful impact regularly.

The Assam government have been doing its bit for the industry for quite sometime. The state owned film studio named Jyoti Chitranban after the legendary film maker Jyoti Prasad Agarwala was established in 1968 and today has sufficient infrastructure for shooting and editing films and video productions. The Assam State Film Finance and Development Corporation was established in the year 1974 to finance Assamese films. Last year this corporation gave an amount to noted film maker Jahnu Barua a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs to produce a film named 'Bandhan.' Similarly this year 2012 the corporation has called in producers to finance films with a 60:40 ratio where 60 percent would be borne by the corporation and remaining 40 percent by the film producers for the production of Assamese films. Today the corporation has also taken up steps to preserve and promote Assamese films within Assam and outside by opening a film archive. But the state archive which should have been opened long before. As a consequence of it many movies of earlier times have been destroyed, damaged and lost.

Till the 1990's there were about 350 cinema halls and 100 plus touring centers which used to showcase movies in Tea Gardens, villages and remote areas. Till 2003 there were about 240 registered cinema halls. But today there are only 49 cinema halls in good condition and with satellite connection. And among them 41 are with UFO connection. UFO Moviez India Ltd is the world's largest satellite networked digital cinema chain. UFO's path breaking initiative has revolutionized the way films are distributed & exhibited in India through its pioneering technology and infrastructure. Thus we have seen the decline of cinema halls in Assam. The reasons for this decline are series of bomb blast in cinema halls in the year 2004 by militants, lack of trained professional in the medium, digitalization leading to VCD culture which also gave rise to piracy and low quality products. And overall these factors compelled the film producers to stop producing films gradually. Moreover these have severely affected both the quantity and quality of films being made.

Hence, the researcher has proved all the above mentioned three hypothesis with these facts and findings.

6. Conclusion

The study had been an attempt at finding about the birth, growth and changing trends of Assamese cinema over the year. Moreover it also attempted to find the roles it plays in society in various aspects. The study shows that since 2004 after the serial bomb blast at cinema halls of Assam by militants, majority of cinema halls have been shut down as audiences fear to go to hall

which in due course of time affected the film industry of the state severely.

The journey of Assamese Cinema is on, troubled at many a times but yet the contribution and the roles it has made in the society both socially and culturally is what it makes it dear to the hearts of many. The love and passion of the Assamese people towards Art has always been noteworthy which just recently was showcased when more than a million people came over to the funeral of the Dada Saheb Phalke winner Dr. Bhupen Hazarika in 2011.

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