

The Assamese film industry is ailing



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Rituparna Goswami Pande 8 September 2007 32041 views

It was in the year 1935 that Assamese cinema made its entry into the world of entertainment with its first landmark movie Joymoti by Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. Assamese cinema continued its journey in a slow-paced sensitive style, especially with the movies of Bhabendra Nath Saikia and Jahnu Baruah.

But despite its rich history, and its artistic successes, Assamese cinema has failed to make a lasting impression in the national 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 could'nt stand a chance with its other Bollywood and Tollywood counterparts.

The Assamese film industry is fraught with innumerable bottlenecks be it financial constraints, technological shortcomings or competition with other states.

The concept of establishing mini cinema halls in the State in order to boost the crisis-ridden Assamese film industry has failed to show any positive results. The statement made by the State Cultural Affairs Minister recently that the mini cinema hall concept is yet to take off with only one such hall established and only a single application currently pending with the Government was, in fact, a revelation in itself. We have been witness to the cries of help by many Assamese film personalities over the years who have been demanding steps from the State government to let interested parties establish mini cinema halls. These halls, in turn, would be able to bring in both audiences as well as commercial benefits to the owner of the halls, exhibitors and producers of Assamese films – that was their contention. However, all pleas fell on deaf ears. Unfortunately the idea of boosting the industry by establishing mini cinema halls has failed to take off.

Inaugurating the State Film Award Festival 2007 on Friday asserted that films should play a positive and educative role and inculcate in the young generation a love and respect for our culture and history of harmonious existence. He further added that the government was keen to revive the dwindling film industry. He also announced to set up an archive to preserve the old Assamese films and expressed that the archive would fulfill a long standing need of the fraternity. He also urged the film makers to help the government revive the industry.

Hopefully other positive steps and initiatives by the government and film fraternity will soon overcome the dry spell and rekindle its flame among the common people.

Picture: Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and noted film personalty George Baker. Photo by Pitamber Newar

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BY RITUPARNA GOSWAMI PANDE

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