



A Multidisciplinary Quarterly
International Refereed
Research Journal

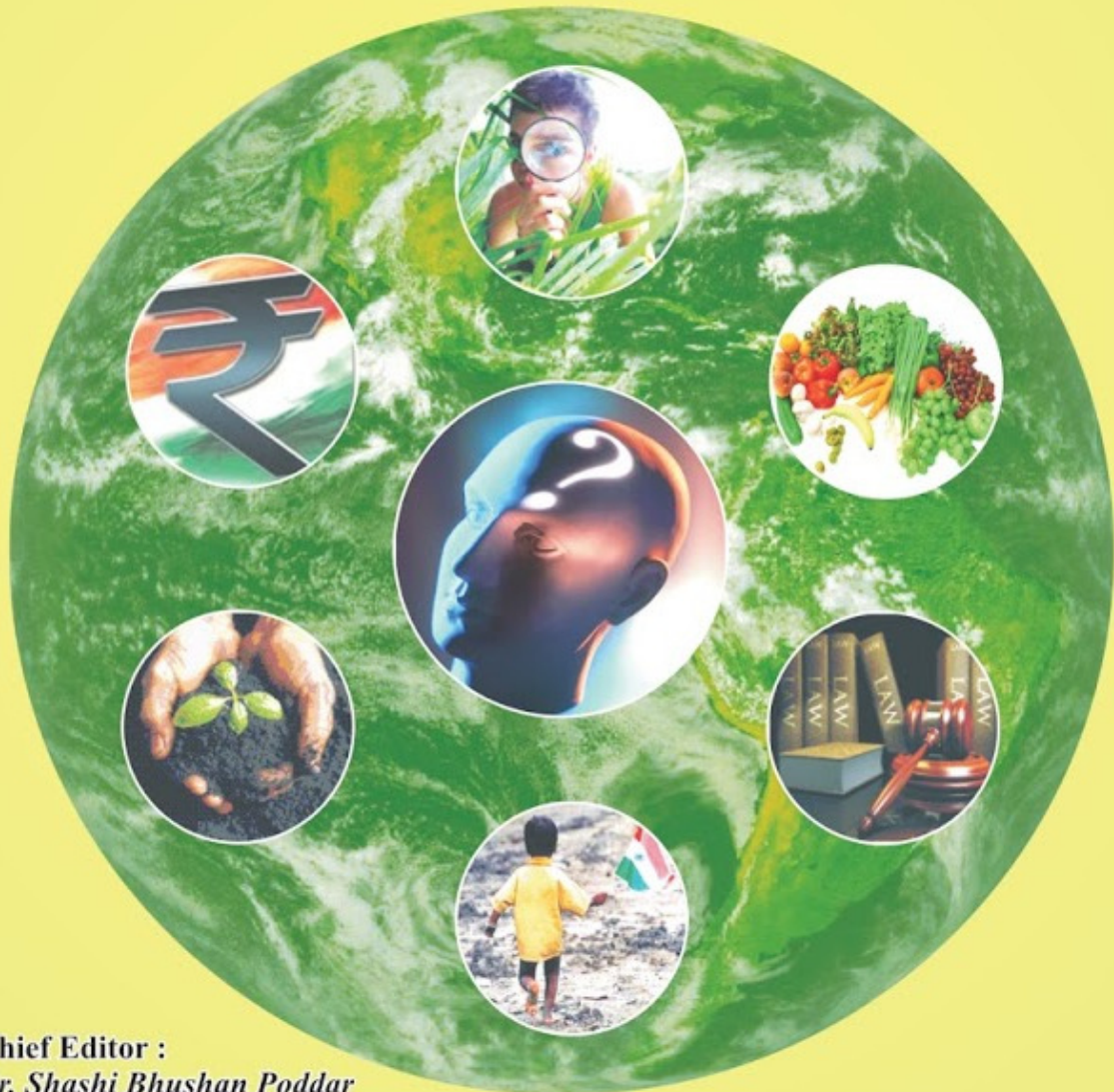
ISSN 2231 – 413X

SHODH PRERAK

A Multidisciplinary Quarterly International Refereed Research Journal
<http://shodhprerak.blogspot.com>

Vol. - V, Issue - 2, April 2015

SHODH PRERAK
Vol. - V, Issue - 2, April 2015



Chief Editor :
Dr. Shashi Bhushan Poddar

Editors :
Reeta Yadav
Pradeep Kumar

Dr. Rupa Rani Sonowal
Guest Lecturer
Department of Mass Communication & Journalism
The English and Foreign Languages University
Shillong Campus, Umshing – Mawkynroh,
Shillong - 793022, Meghalaya

Dr. Pawan Kumar Tiwari
Assistant Professor,
Doon Business School, Selaqui,
Dehradun

Exploration of Khasi Film: A Case Study

Abstract

A story in a series of recorded form that represent the human life or an incident is what we called film. These stories however may have different implication in different region of our country. In Meghalaya, the film is of recent origin which can be traced back in the 80's. Like all the new film industry around the country, the Khasi film also born with its problems, it had to face a veritable struggle against variety of odds, be it financial constraints or technological shortcomings. To understand the veracity of the film produced in Meghalaya, a case study of Carol production house (regional film production) and the findings of audience preference in the content of the film have also become part of the research. The study comprises of both primary research which includes questionnaire, interviews and secondary research like books, journals and websites.

Key Words: Audience Preference, Carol Production, Khasi Film, Industry.

I. Introduction

Indian Cinema had completed more than 100 years of its existence. Within these phase, many new evolution and changes had made the industry a far better than yester years. Great actors, film directors and producers were born who had not just contributed into the film industries but their works have also been appreciated worldwide. The current scenario is that the revenue generation from cinema has the turnover of more than Rs. 108 billion (source: boxofficeindia) annually which could able to employ a good number of people.

India is a country of many languages; hence have different regional film industries. Some of the popular regional film industries are Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Punjabi. Cinema in Northeast is of recent development that has seen in the region. Northeast is a land of diversified ethnic and culture which produces films in different languages - Assamese, Karbi, Manipuri, Kokborok, Bodo, Garo, Mishing etc. In fact the film industry in Northeast started in 1935 with the making of 'Joymoti' produced and directed by Rupkowner Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. From these regions many good and award winning films, documentaries have also been produced. The digital format has also evolved in the regions which help the film maker to pick its space and are produced in different language and dialect.

The films from the region are yet to make its stands to compete with the mainstream India. The hurdles which have been blocking the film from the northeast are the revenue.

Owing to this, it had created a chain result into its end product. The low budget film lacks standard quality picture and sound. Besides, the inefficient marketing had created lesser number of screens and distribution. Most of the time, these films were shown in community hall with the aid of LCD projectors. Even the insurgents, underdeveloped and other socio-political issues of the region had created a regular threat in its growth. Rohit Vats, film commentator, CNN-IBN said, *“The culture of cinema watching has been disturbed due to several socio-political reasons, insurgency is one of them. So, there is no reference to look up to, which in turn obstructs the path of localised filmmaking.”* (Panorama, 2013) The renowned film maker Jahnu Baruah, who had produced his award winning film ‘Bandhon’, was therefore produced by the Assam State Film Development Corporation. The funds and sponsors from the government sector are very irregular and good film maker like Baruah has to find an alternative ways to get things done. The region has quite a good and talented people who would rather seek out in metro cities where they can get better exposure. These are the drawbacks the industry is facing in Northeast which deficit in quality production in terms of marketing and the standardization.

II. Khasi Film

Khasi film is of recent origin which can be traced back in the 80’s with the introduction of first film called ‘*Synjuk Ka Ri Laiphew Syiem*’ under the direction of Dr.Hamlet Bareh Ngapkynta. The film had created an arenas that pave way for many enthused filmmaker in the state to produce film.

The nineties saw the growth of film industry in the state with many new directors, film producers which have come up to participate in the platform of film making with different ideas and concepts. It brings along artists from different corner of the state which entertain us with their diverse talents. During the period the films were more of Bollywood type of offering with lavish songs and dance. Thrilled with good action and romance it captured the heart of its audience. What it lacks is the original concept meaning the stories that has the local feel. Yet, with the increase production of the films in Meghalaya, the industry had created a new route for the unemployed youth.

Though, films in Meghalaya had developed with new theme, storyline, new actors/actress, directors and producers. Yet, like all the new film industry around the country, the Khasi film also born with its problems, it had to face a veritable struggle against variety of odds, be it financial constraints or technological shortcomings. Despite the drawbacks, few Khasi films hit the market and got its share of recognition, whereas some could not make their presence felt and the rest were unnoticed. The equipments for the production are being hired and brought from the neighbouring places. Those who work on the technical section, learned mostly in the field and some without much experience. Therefore, generally films those are in low budget come in trial and error method.

The other issues that had griped the development of the industry is the piracy. *“The entertainment industry is immense. However, here we have to face various problems ranging from the lack of proper theatres to absence of government support and to top it all, piracy,”* Pradip Kurbah (Telegraph, 2012). It had not only engaged many pirates who produce counterfeit DVDs on a large scale, it somehow destroyed the pleasure of watching film beside loss of sum for the producers. For the prevention of piracy of films, there was also an initiative from the pressure group to stop its manufacture of pirated copies but it did fail to work in a longer term.

The following are the description of few films that had created a milestone in the history of Khasi films in Meghalaya.

‘*Synjuk Ka Ri Laiphew Syiem*’ - the First Khasi Film

This is the first ever Khasi film that was released on 1981 on a 35mm silver screen titled '*Synjuk Ka Ri Laiphew Syiem*', directed by Dr Hamlet Bareh Ngapkynta. The film was based on the historical conflict between the British with the '*Laiphew Syiem*' (thirty chief) of the state. The film was made mostly to preserve the Khasis culture and traditions which was slowly fading away from the society. The film making was first of its kind in the state and those who worked in the film were not professionals who could understand the knowhow of production work. The actors had to train and the crew members were just ordinary people of the society. Therefore, the film took more than the required time for its production.

'U Manik Raitong' - the First Coloured Khasi Film

'*U Manik Raitong*' (Manik the Miserable) was produced in 1984 and it is the first coloured movie in Khasi. The duration of the film is 149 minutes and was produced under the banner of Neo Cine Production. From amongst 21 Indian Feature Films, '*U Manik Raitong*' also won the Indian Panorama 1984 Award. The director of the film was Ardhendu Bhattacharya and the storyline was from Rishan Rapsang. Kazu Matsui, a Japanese musician composes the music for the film. Skendrowell Syiemlieh rendered his voice for Manik Raitong and in 1991 he also received the '*U Tirot Sing Award*'. The lead actors in the film were William Rynjah, Sheba Diengdoh, Gilbert Synnah, Veronica Nongbet, Benjamin Kharkongor and Diamond Matthew and Assamese female actor Chetana Das. The story of the film was based on a love story where a young woman named as *Lieng Makaw* (Sheba Diengdoh) is forced into marriage with the tribal chief. She refuses for the marriage as her heart had fallen for another person. But she had no other choice then to marry the man. Later, she bears her lover's child. Her lover is killed because of this, and she chooses to die on his funeral pyre. This movie was also represented in the Indian Panorama at the Tokyo Film Festival and it also won the Apphira Award.

'Ka Mon Bajwat' – the Trend Setter

'*Ka Mon Bajwat*' was produced in the year 1998 and the film was directed by Pradip Kurbah. The film attains a refinement in overall presentation which lacked in the film from the region. This film had change the trend of Khasi film, as it was influence from the *Bollywood Movie Masala*. This drift was able to achieve by the director in the film, as he was also involve as a chief assistance in '*Raju Chacha*', bollywood production. Beside the crew members were also brought in for shooting of the film from Mumbai. Even the choreographer and the expensive HMI lights were also brought in for the production that made the ultimate Khasi blockbuster.

'Ri' – the National Award winning film

Pradip Kurbah recent film '*Ri*' got recognition across the country. The film got a National Award for 'Best Feature Film' in the 61st National Film Awards organised in New Delhi. The film fall under the language specified other than those listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution. Beside it also has been awarded the Rajat Kamal Award along with a cash prize of rupees one lakh. This film was the first from Meghalaya that screened at the International Film Festival of India 2014 and is one among the 26 feature films to feature at the gala event. The storyline of the film was based on the insurgency in the region and how youths get misguided and get gripped into militancy. However, the film has its turning point where the youth surrender himself to the police. The director had twisted the story in order to make aware of the situation where many youth fall into the trap of some vested interest and how with the indulgence of some concern citizen, they are brought into the right path.

Besides, there are many films that has its contribution in the creation of Khasi films are '*I Mei Jong Nga*', '*Ka Jingkieng Ksier*', '*Ka Jingiet*', '*Ka Jingiet bajanai*', '*Ki sur*

jingrwai, *Balei ia nga*, *Ka Sngi Kyntiew Khanshi*, *Ar ngut Shi tymmen*, *Ka Rimon*, *Ka Jingiet ba tang Shipor*, *Ka lynti sha ka Ianot*, *I Mei Jongnga*, *Haba don ka Mon*, *7 tylli ki Mawbyrsiew*, *Shilliang ka Duriaw*, *Nga lah Bakla*, *Ngam lah ban klet*, *Ka Banse ka thom ia ka Sang*, *U Lur Mangkara*, *Ka Mon Bajwat* *Jingkyrmen*, *Jingphohsniew*, *Ka Rimon*, *Mandy*, *Shaba lam ka nohsib*, *Iai shah*, *Adona, Balei?*, *Ka snam ka ud*, *Ka tyrud kynsha*, *Apot sepsngi*, *Synjat*, *Wad ha ban das hem*, *Lai ki mynsiem*, *Babe kylla*, *Khunswet shempa*, *Iskuin* *Hep*, *Mon* and many more.

III. Carol Production: A case study

Carol's production house was initially a theatrical club which was known as *Caroline Club*, initiated by Dr. J. S. Shangpliang in 1976. The club was formed in memory of one of the family member, named *Caroline Amore Lyngdoh*, who passed away in 1976. The Caroline club used to perform one-act-play in rural areas of Khasi hills, based on the issues on anti-social elements that influence the children. There major sponsored groups that help the club to carry out their dramatic and musical plays were AIR, Doordarshan Shillong, HTCWO and RTC (Rympei Theatrical Center), which was one of the popular organization for theatrical shows. Then in 1995 they shifted their arena from theatre to film under the banner of Carol Production. It took off with a humble beginning when it released a trial film titled *Ka Nongpateng*. Then in 2003 another film with a duration of 45 minutes titled *Silent Nacht* (silent night) was produced and telecast via cable network. In 2004, they have produced *Mandy* which was screened in the cinema hall at *Anjalee* and *Dreamland*. This film had become one of the successful films that brought name and fame to the firm. Carol's Production has made another digital film titled *Ka Pansngiat Bhabriew*, a Khasi musical film.

Carol Production, in the initial stages, like any other organization, had financial problems, as they have no sponsors and no financial support from any organization or from the government. So, they had to invest the money from their own savings. Film produced by the house are made and projected in the digital format. The production of films in this format is found to be cost-effective and has the prospect of a modest return. Many theatres in Manipur are projecting films in their theatres that are created in the digital format and the viewers are responding positively. The recent arrival of multiplex theatres projecting digital films with a digital projector is a culture that is promising a prospectus future for film made in digital format. Carol's Production intends to continue in its venture in making films in the digital format and thereby further the growth of digital cinema in the Khasi language here in the state.

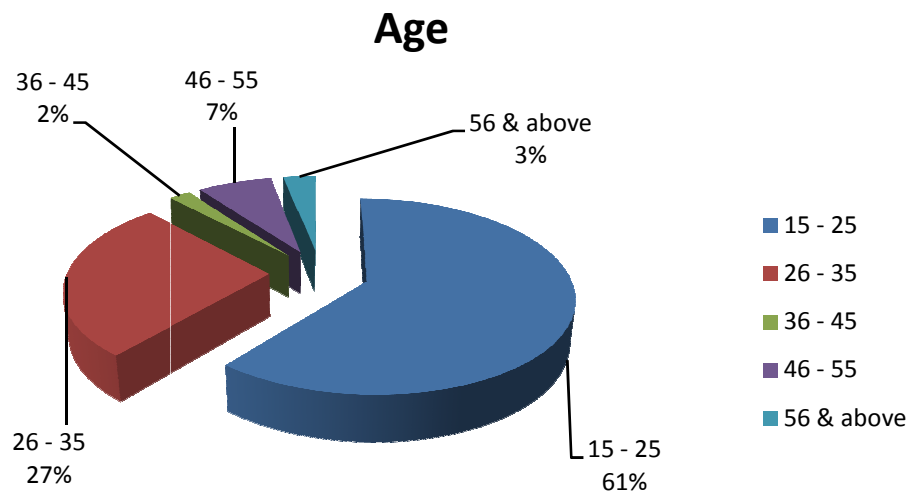
Beside the major problem faced by the production house is that the local theatres were not good enough to pull the greater number of audience. Due to such a negative atmosphere the urban people in general do not visit the hall. The audience who visits these theatres are only for the Bollywood and Hollywood films. Thus they had to compete with the mainstreams films. The financial return which they got from their films could just clear the expenditure with little profit margins, which prevented them to go for the big budget films. In fact this was the main reason for the local producers to opt for digital film rather than going for celluloid forms. Beside these, there are heavy government taxes on the films. Carol production together with MFEA (Meghalaya Films & Entertainment Academy) and other production house such as *Filmtel Production*, *Red Cherry production* and *Pradip Kurbah production* had approached to government for cutting down the taxes that they had to pay for the films. But the joint venture of the producers got no positive response from the government.

IV. Findings & Analysis

Following the problem and issues of film production, the content and audience choices constitute the next level of this study. The questionnaire was distributed to different respondent with different occupation, age amounts to hundred responds. The questions that are framed for the study are kept in view of the various aspects of production house, with special reference to Carol production, Shillong and the target audience is the age group starting from 15 to 50 and above.

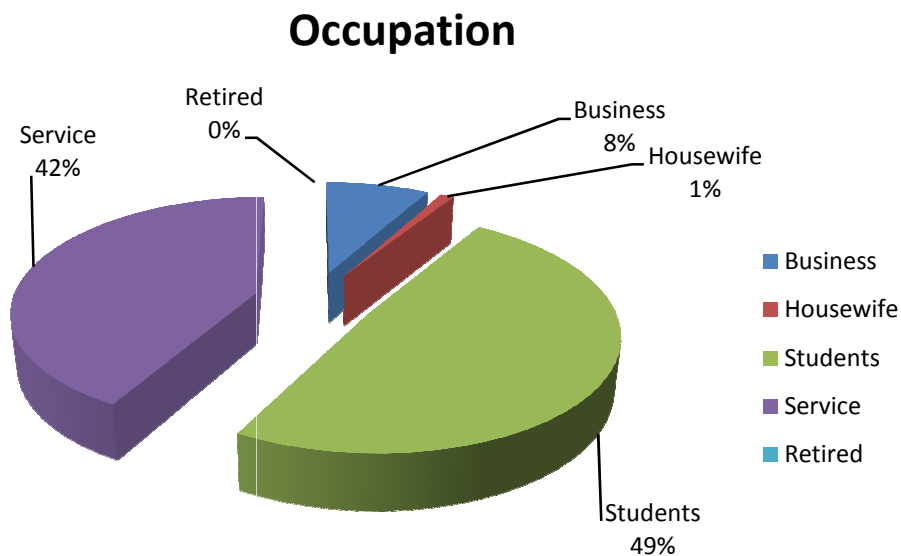
a. Age

Respondent starts from the age group of 15 to 56 and above. The highest number of respondents is from the age group of 15 to 25 yrs with 61% and the second highest is from 26 to 35 yrs with 27%. The maximum numbers of people who watch movie are from the age group of 15 to 35 years. Therefore, their views and opinion become an integral part of the study. The least number of percentages is from the age group of 36 to 45 with only 2%.



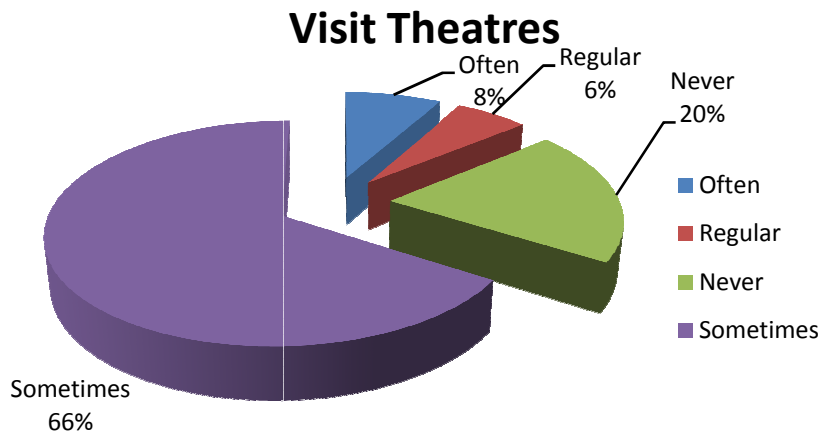
b. Occupation

The highest percentage of feedback received is from students with 49%. The second highest percentage is 42% service which include both private and public sector and the least number of percent is received from housewife with only 1%.



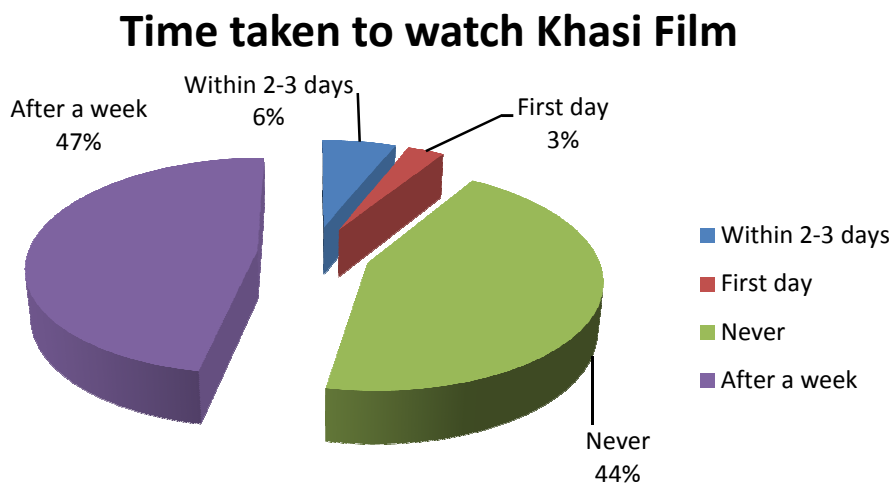
c. Visit Theatre

Even though Shillong have got few theatres, only 66% people visit the halls sometimes. While 20% of the respondents never visit the hall, 8% visit sometimes and 6% of the people visit the hall regularly.



d. Time taken to watch Khasi Film

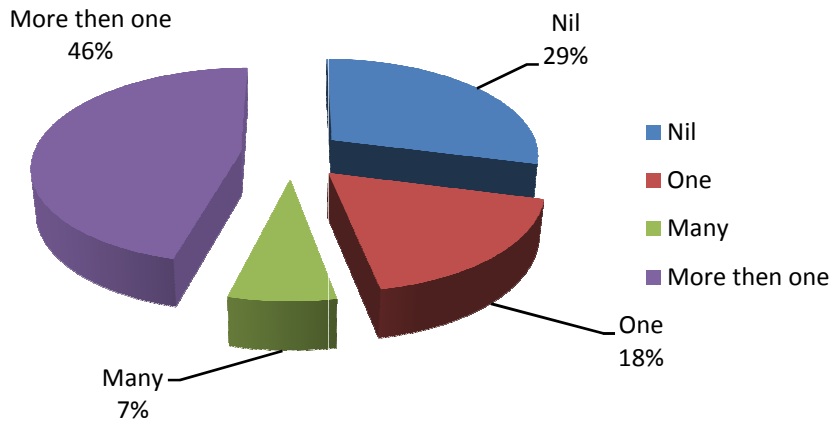
Khasi film has very limited audience; according to 47% respondent Khasi films are usually watched after a week, 44% have never watch films in hall. While 6% of the respondent take 2 to 3 days to watch Khasi films and only 3% watch the film on the 'first day, first show'.



e. Number of Khasi Film watch

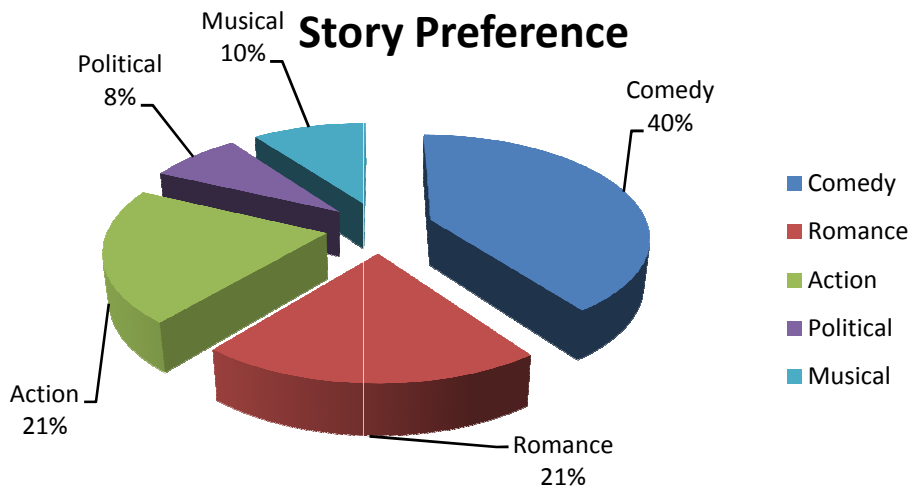
46% respondents said to have watched the Khasi films more than one, 29% have never watched Khasi film. 18% says that they have watched Khasi films only once and 7% says that they watch many Khasi films.

Number of Khasi film watch



f. Story Preference

Comedies, action, romantic and musical are the some of the genre of a film story. At this point, audience choice for story preference has been given the priority.



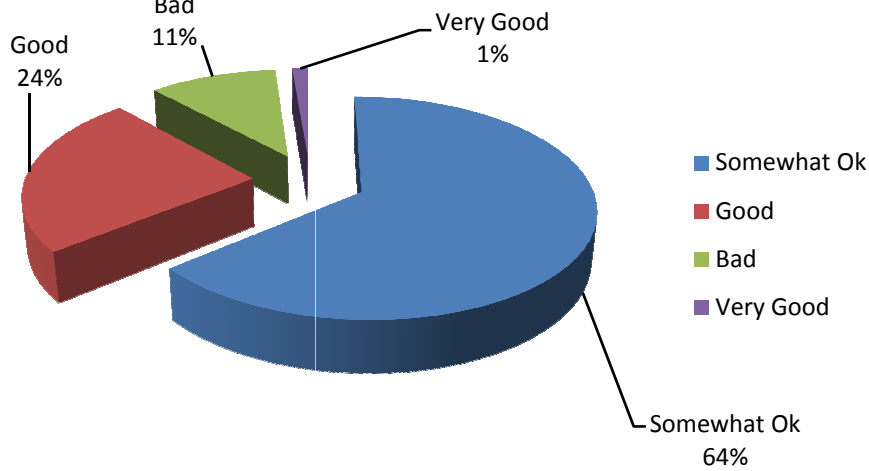
“Comedy” is one of the genres, which is rated highest with 40% that the audience likes to watch. After comedy the audience would like to watch Romantic with 21% and Action 21 % respectively.

Story of the film is considered as one of the key ingredient for the success of any film. The audience prefer originality in the script rather than something which has been copied. Films like ‘Sholay’, ‘Hera Pheri’, and ‘Life is beautiful’ and ‘Titanic’ are some of the high rated films that are regularly watched because of its drama, emotion, action, and special effects. Family dramas and films that have moral values and social message are other areas that the audience prefers to watch. Shillong is considered as the music lover state, so also the audience prefers to watch films which have musical content.

g. Ratings of Khasi Film

The rating of the film is what describes the viewership of the film. From the survey it is found that 64% people rated Khasi films as somewhat ok, whereas 24% says that it is good. 11 % of the people say that Khasi films are bad and only 1% says that they are very good.

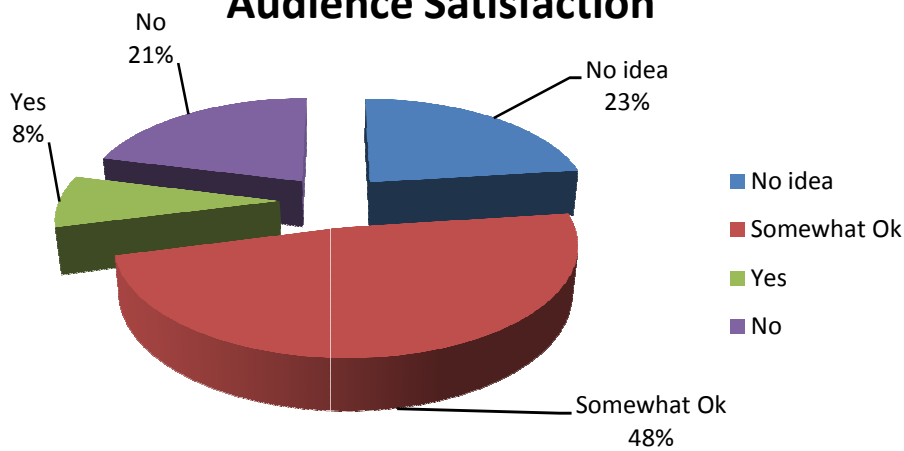
Ratings of Khasi Film



h. Audience Satisfaction

In relation to the rating of the film, the audience satisfactions are accounted for the success of a film. It is found that 48% of the viewers say that the films produced in Shillong are somewhat ok. Whereas 23% have no idea as whether they like the film or not. 21% says that they are not satisfied with the kind of films produced in Shillong, while only 8% says they are happy with the Khasi films.

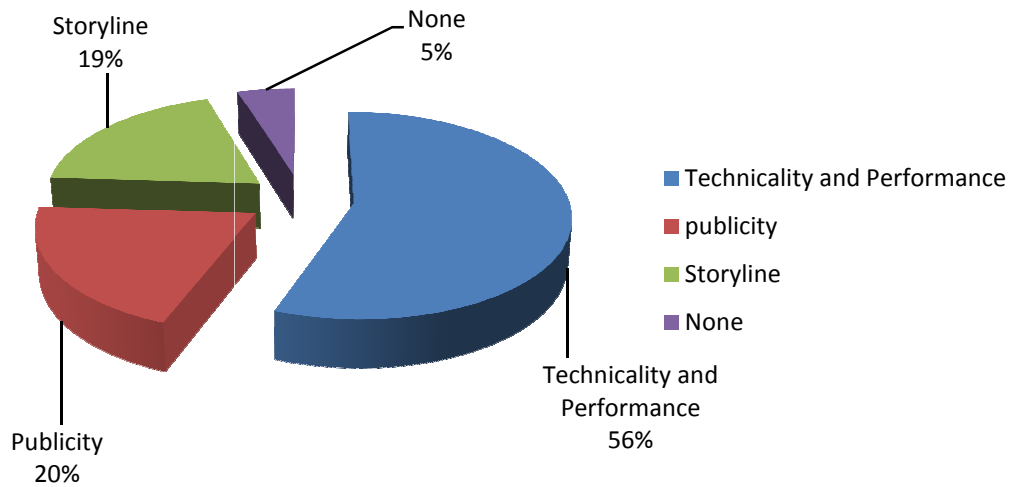
Audience Satisfaction



i. Requirements in Khasi Film Film in itself is associated with entertainment; therefore good performance and better technicalities in a film gets the viewer's

satisfaction.

Requirements in Khasi Film

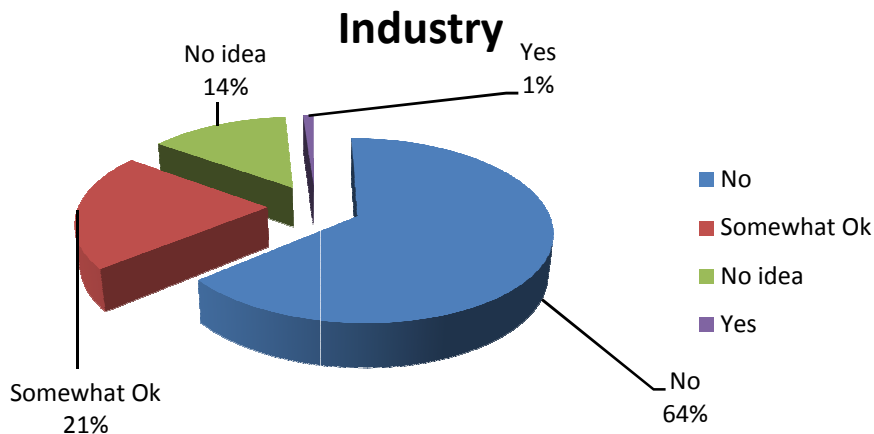


In Khasi Films, technicality and performance does play an important role in getting the larger viewer ship. So according to the sample gathered 56% of the people said that films produced from the region are lacking in technicality and performance. The viewers prefer realistic performance on part of the actors. Audience also mention about the well known Bollywood actor like Rajnikanth, who is known for his style of acting. After technicalities and performance comes storyline and publicity which is very close to each other with 19% and 20% respectively.

j. Comparable to Bollywood Film Industry

It is found that 64% of the respondents say that films produced in Shillong are not comparable with the films of Bollywood or Hollywood. As with 21% Khasi films produced in Shillong are somewhat ok as compared to the Bollywood or Hollywood. These will assist the organization to improve their production by emphasizing the areas where they are lacking. Not only that but by doing this they can reach to their target audience, which means they can expand their area of distribution resulting in good return of funds.

Comparable to Bollywood Film Industry



V. Conclusion:

To hit the Box Office, the film needs to have more than a good storyline, good artists and technical expertise. Khasi film in spite of being new in its field, it has come up with many new and good films with proficiency in terms of acting, direction, and special effects which could be contrasted with the premature film.

Films, that are produced in Meghalaya and particularly in Shillong has limited market. For this reason, film produced by the Carol's Production are made and projected in the digital format instead of celluloid forms as it found to be cost-effective. In northeast, places like Manipur films are shown in their theatres that are created in the digital format and the viewers are responding positively. Yet there are many issues that hampered the proper development of the Khasi industry in the state. One among them is the piracy that has almost captured the market of good movies all over the country and which is also seen in the state. The other concern is the negligence of government initiatives into the film industry. It is also observe that due to the quality and inapt publicity of the Khasi films, the local theatres also fail to pull good number of audience. Beside, these films were unsuccessful to compete with big budget movies from Bollywood and Hollywood which are regularly screen in the theatres.

As such the film industries here should be able to compete with the rest of the country starting with the talent improvement in body language, up gradation of equipment, story line, and taking the technically savvy people in all departments of the production house. After analysing the data it can be establish that the taste of the target audiences between the age group of 15 to 45 years starts with comedy to value based coupled with the true story on learning experience. At the same time not forgetting the traditionally motivated drama, action, emotion, comedy and special effects that we have been the spectator to the evergreen films like "*Sholay*" "*Titanic*" "*Hera Pheri*" and "*Life is beautiful*" etc.

However, development is approaching in every field of advance technology and this will also change the culture of the film industry of North-East and particularly the Khasi film industry too. What required in the present situation are the well trained people who can bring this development to a zenith of refinement.

VI. Reference

- Dick, Bernard F (1996), 'Anatomy of Film' (III edition), published by St. Martin Press, New York.
- DuttaGupta, Paulami (2014), 'Ri-Homeland of Uncertainty', Fablery Publication, Bangalore, India.

Website

'Boxoffice India's Premier Film Trade Magazine', (2015) Retrieved on February 2, 2015 from <http://www.boxofficeindia.co.in/state-of-art/>

'Eastern Panorama, Reporting North East As It Is', (2013) Retrieved on November 2014 from http://easternpanorama.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2377:cinema-in-north-eastindia&catid=103:april&Itemid=25

'45th International Film Festival of India', (2014) Retrieved on February 2, 2015 from <http://www.iffi.nic.in/writereaddata/IP%202014%20-%20Press%20Release.pdf>

'Telegraph', (2014) Retrieved on February 3 from http://www.telegraphindia.com/1121228/jsp/northeast/story_16370139.jsp#.VN8HF_mUca8