

INTRODUCTION :

Like the first and second 20 Week Training Program, the 3rd 20 week got off to a start on the 15th of November, 1991.

THE COURSE STRUCTURE

Based on evaluation and review of the first two courses we brought about certain changes in the course structure. The past two courses were designed in segments of photography, audio, slide-tape and finally video, whereby the participants were expected to get a multi-media exposure. The idea then was to establish the importance of mediums which were much more low-cost, easy to produce and perhaps equally powerful, if used judiciously, compared to video; so that participants do not unconsciously develop a mental block towards these mediums and look forward to video as the supreme.

However, our experience of the first two courses suggested that most of the participants already had considerable exposure to photography as well as slide-tape and audio work as these were more accessible to them both in terms of cost as well as expertise. Although there was further scope to learn more about photography etc., they much rather preferred to spend more time learning a new medium.

So it was decided to concentrate all the 20 weeks on video but going in depth into certain elements which we might have been superficial with in the previous courses due to lack of time. The 3rd workshop included, apart from the regular curriculum,

- (a) an orientation program - to develop a general understanding of the context in which video as a medium could be used as an effective tool in education and social awareness.
- (b) a session on portrayal of women in media
- (c) film appreciation
- (d) a detailed exercise of script-writing and research
- (e) interaction with film makers and people associated with mass media as well as alternative media.

PARTICIPANTS

There were 11 participants this time. Four were from Delhi, two from Jharkhand, one each from Kerala, Patna and Manipur and two from Bangladesh (see list for details). Some of them had long association with their organisations but were completely new to the video medium. Some of course, were more exposed to media and technology but has little field experience, while some were new to both. So it was a mixed group to start with. And mixed in language too. 2 of them refused ORIENTATION To understand anything other than Hindi and 2 were strictly Bengali speaking. The course started off with the usual introductions and a general

orientation to the programme. Then the orientation course took over. For the next one week, various problems were discussed and a common thread was discovered to be running through all issues. Participants exchanged their experience in their local areas and an attempt was made to link up small local incidents to the larger social context. J. John of Delhi forum analysed various peoples' movements in India and concretised the context of the alternative.

MASS MEDIA & ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Avik Ghosh of.....shared his experience with media and urged the need to develop a "language" which is most effective in information dissemination.

Tapan Bose spoke about the control exercised by the establishment over mass media and control exercised by the establishment over mass media and how the true concerns of the people are never seen or heard of; hence how alternative media emerged all over the world and attained a significant role in society. Also the growth of alternative media in India and how, though plagued with problems of funding and lack of adequate network, more and more people are associating themselves with it.

WOMEN & MEDIA

A two-day session on the portrayal of women in media helped participants, especially the male, to come out of the usual conditioning and look at media more seriously and sensitively.

In this session, examples of how women were given stereotyped images in media and ingrained them in the minds of people's how women were used to sell certain products, be it razors or ball bearings, etc. were taken from advertisements, newspapers, films etc. In discussions, even some of the women participants expressed the acceptance of the "usual" image without questioning. This session transformed all except one or two rather arrogant males.

VIDEO TRAINING

The hands-on training was a mix of technology, specific skill upgradation with equipment and ideas and conceptualisation.

The theory of light and its function in photography as well as video was discussed in detail. After that the Video Camera was introduced and participants were asked to feel free with it. While evaluating the first day's experience, even the participants felt they were a little too free with it as they had swung the camera around too much.

Then the first check was put on - no camera movement at all. Yes, now it was more watchable but more input was necessary to actually transform the idea into the shot. Elements of composition was discussed at great length where, after the theoretical explanation, participants were asked to sketch and transform a 3 dimensional view to a 2 dimensional one. There were still mistakes as the sketches were more from the mind and

less of what actually existed. This was repeated and participants were asked to evaluate photographs from the view of composition. Also to determine the point of view from a photograph. Later examples were taken from films as well. More shooting exercises continued.

In the mean time sessions had been taken on basics of image processing in a video camera, principles of recording in a VCR, details of vertical and horizontal sync, its generation and function, also the niti-grities of frequency, transmission, television standards etc.

After participants were being able to take competent shots keeping in mind composition, lighting and movement (within a still frame), they were asked to shoot sequences. To start with, following a person problems cropped up again. So they were told about the axis of movement and why a story board was necessary. They did the next exercise competently.

FILM APPRECIATION

Time did not permit a film appreciation course in the true sense, but Partho Sarkar took a two-day session on different kinds of films and films of different era. We limited this exercise to documentaries films like NIGHT MAIL, COSMIC ZOOM, 23 SKIDDO, THE OTHER SIDE, GLASS, VOICES FROM BALIAPAL, NO PASARAN, etc. were shown and analysed purely in terms of their language and ability to evoke and communicate.

SCRIPT WRITING

Now that participants were in tune with basic technology, doing steady shooting and visualisation films of different kinds, they were now expected to concentrate on. However, camera movement were still banned.

Fareeda Mehta introduced the idea of a script with a simple exercise. She asked the participants to write about something as simple as asking up in the morning. However, what were written were essays and were least visual. So she explained what was visual by reading out passages from books both in English and Hindi. Then an exercise was set. Each one was required to write a script on a pre determined subject - short sequences like wasting time, waiting at a window, smoking the first cigarette etc. However, these scripts were to be shot by different people the following day. Obviously there was lot of confusion as the scripts were not detailed enough and there was a vast difference of what was shots from what was written.

So work continued on script writing as well as shooting.

FILM SCREENINGS

Several films were shown to participants with or without the film maker present. Among them K.P. Sasi screened VALLEY REFUSES TO DIE; IN THE NAME OF MEDICINE; and ROPE. Media storm presented, KISKA DESH KISKA DHARM, Meera Tanna screened. All these films generated good discussion between the film maker and the participants. A part from the content, there was more identification with the form and structure of the films. Also they provided lot of inspiration to the participants.

HANDS-ON TRAINING CONTINUES

The participants were now getting into complexities. The shooting was no more pure fun but lot of brains and physical work. Scripting was getting more and more complex and new elements like audio recording and editing were creating more problems than there was earlier.

By now they were able to shoot without story boards in live locations and yet maintain all the nitti-gritties of composition, frame size, lighting, axis of movement, comments, etc. Script writing had reached the stage of researching of an issue (after going through stages like going to a spot and writing a script about its environment,) and writing a script from an existing film sequence structuring the information. Each individual selected an issue and were working on it. But this was a long term project.

As a short exercise, they were asked to do a 15 minute program on two adjoining factories in Sahibabad. This was a group exercise. Three groups worked on three subjects concerning the two factories and their environment. They all went to do the research.

One group decided to work on a program on how RCC slabs are produced. The second group wanted to highlight the pollution that was created by a chemical factory manufacturing Hydrogen Floride. The third wanted to do a profile of an old worker in the RCC factory.

The finished programs were full of mistakes as was expected. For the first time they had worked on a multisequenced program and went through all the stages of production. However, through these mistakes more was learned about all the aspects of production. But editing took much longer than expected and had already eaten into the time kept for the final exercise.

So it was decided to do the final exercise in Delhi choosing subjects from the ongoing exercise on researching and scripting. This decision was not taken favourable by participants as they had already heard about the previous batches experience in Shimla or Madhupur and had been waiting for the day to come.

REVISIONS

Seeing the repetition of mistakes, it was decided to do more revision, especially in fields of shooting and structuring ideas. More shooting exercises were given and many more films shown. Among them were behind the barricades, BOMBAY HAMARA SHAHR; YATEEM LAHU; RAM KE NAAM; BECAUSE OF OUR RIGHTS; SHARK CALLERS OF KONTU; HALF LIFE; FAMINE 87; and many more and long discussions followed to highlight the importance of determining a focus, researching, structuring etc.

FINAL PROJECT

Soon there was just enough time to do the final exercise. Research was already over. Preliminary scripts were already written - as part of script writing exercise. So we evaluated all the scripts and selected 3 most viable scripts for the final

project. They were :-

- (a) Domestic Servants
- (b) Pollution by the Badarpur Power-plant
- (c) People in Delhi Slums

Although basic research was done, now that more people concentrated on each script, to add and improve, a few days had to be given for further research.

Groups (A) and (B) did more of a location research as their scripts were fairly detailed. Group (C) took a long time to reach the final stage.

By then groups (A) and (B) had finished shooting and were getting their editing scripts in order. They finished editing in time and got ready for the farewell party. But group c was still shooting. So the farewell happened with only 2 films complete. Group c finished their film in absence of one of their group members as he had to take the flight to Dhaka and for them it was a 24 week video Training program.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

We asked the participants to evaluate the course based on their expectations and its fulfilment. We have always considered feedback as an important aspect based on which the forthcoming course can be made even more effective. Some of the feedbacks are as follows:

"20 Weeks are not sufficient for a course like this though CENDIT has tried its best to provide training in all respects. I think that the duration should be of atleast 7 months. Stress should have been given to reading material so that a trainee could have a strong theoretical base regarding film-making with a right perspective".

"The process of learning/unlearning has indeed been very joyous for me. Coming from the (elitist) background that I do, I was very far from the reality of the man on the street. The course has erased a lot of my misconceptions. The one really good thing that the course has done for me is that it has aroused within me a realisation that I have to work for the betterment of Society, if not today, tomorrow. Its not easy to undo 22 years of elitist background, but the last 20 weeks at CENDIT have been a great beginning.

"The whole concept of 'Film' has changed and a new one has taken its place. With a marvellous group of 11, sharing was mostly fun. The attitude we had with respect to our own society changed dramatically".

"The course content should be re-structured taking into account the time and capacity of the participants to group and get the different aspects. And the given time should be used with utmost care and concern to the syllabus".

"The classes with film makers were interesting and helpful. They gave us more creative ideas and encouragement".

"I would like to make films in raising social consciousness, making people aware of their actual circumstances - sensitive not sensitising (sensational??)

CONCLUSION:

Enclosures:

- (a) List of Participants
- (b) List of Resource Persons

LIST OF RESOURCE PERSONS :

Ranjan De : Course design, overall coordination
& every thing.

Raju Sharma : Video Technology

Avinash Deshpande : Orientation

Farida Mehta : Script writing & visualisation

Partho Sarkar : Film appreciation

Radha Mishra : Women & media package
Manisha Chaudhary