

# Prioritization Framework for Digitization and Restoration of Films under NFHM

## Background

National Film Heritage Mission (NFHM), a prestigious mission of Government of India project was set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The mission aims at preservation, conservation, digitization, and restoration of film heritage of India. Being the custodian for preservation of Indian filmic heritage and having holdings of more than 2 lakh celluloid reels, NFDC - National Film Archive of India (NFAI), has been tasked with the implementation of NFHM.

NFHM aims at digitizing more than 5000 films including features, documentaries, shorts and news reels. Post digitization, approximately 2000 films will be digitally restored. This Mission is critical for the benefit of society at large and aims to put into effect robust preservation practices and subsequently bring forth increased access.

## Prioritization of Films:

As India is the largest producer of films in the world, it was a challenging task to shortlist the films for digitization and restoration. An extensive consultation with more than 140 stakeholders was carried out across Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Trivandrum, Pune, Hyderabad, Guwahati, Kolkata and Delhi. Film historians, film critics, film journalists and academicians were invited for the meetings where the parameters for film selection and prioritization were discussed.

Stakeholders across the country resonated that while parameters could be decided for film selection and prioritization, no weightages may be assigned to each parameter. They suggested that the film selection be done via a committee which selects the films on an individual basis, and not on the basis of a fixed framework as all parameters, though important, cannot be quantified.

In light of the directions from the Ministry and basis the inputs received from various stakeholders, a draft of Prioritization framework and of selection committees was prepared. In concurrence with Ministry of I&B, two-tiered committee structure of Regional Film Selection Committees (RFSC) separate for each regional film industry, and Central Sub-Committee (CSC) was formed.

As per the framework, RFSCs recommended the films to be digitized and restored for their respective languages and then these lists were presented to the Central Sub-Committee for further approval. Film directors, film historians, documentary film makers and representatives from Producers Guild of India, State Film Development Corporation, Film Academy of respective state, Film Federation of India, Indian Documentary Producers Association (IDPA) were member of these committees.

**The selection parameters of prioritization framework on which basis RFSCs recommended films are mentioned below:**

<b>Awards</b>	Refers to films that have received any National / State Award such as Best Film, Best Director, and any other category within those awards
<b>Chronological periodization</b>	Refers to the production or release year of the film
<b>Commercial success</b>	Refers to the commercial success of a film at the time of its release including Box Office collection, number of tickets sold and allied parameters pertaining to film's commercial yield
<b>Critical acclaim</b>	A film that garnered or continues to garner critical acclaim i.e. showcased in Indian Panorama section, critical reviews in peer-to-peer research periodicals, appreciation by domestic and/or international critics. These films may/ may not have garnered commercial success but are considered momentous in film academia for promoting film scholarship.
<b>Cultural importance</b>	Refers to films that celebrate the cultural vibrancy of India; singularly or as a whole. Films about national integrity, mythological films may be part of this.
<b>Current level of access</b>	Availability of the film to the public at large through home-entertainment media such as DVDs, Blu-Rays, various Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms and other physical media. The films with next-to-none access should be considered by the Committee.
<b>Historical importance</b>	Films where history of the film is important may be considered by the committee. Additionally, the films are based on or touch upon the topics of India's historical events or moments. Films pertaining to India's struggle for Independence, Partition may be considered in this category.
<b>Preservation need</b>	Basis the overall (deteriorating) condition of the film reels of the tiles in consideration, whether the film needs preferential preservation for ensuring posterity owing to the deteriorating physical, chemical, biological elements
<b>Studios and banners</b>	Whether the film in consideration belongs to any eminent, well-established Indian production houses. These studios and banners; existing today or otherwise, has produced aesthetically, historically, or culturally significant films that Indians celebrate even today and continue to garner laurels.
<b>Technological experiments/ milestones</b>	A film with significant technical achievement in Indian context may be considered with the rationale stating the importance. The film exemplifies a significant development of certain technology such as, first Cinemascope film, first stereophonic sound film, first colour film, first 3D film etc.