The Pedagogic Paradox: Addressing Audiovisual Archiving Education in India

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Introduction

At The Cinema Resource Centre (TCRC), a privately owned film archive in Chennai, V. V. Prasad—the institution's sole archivist—is engrossed in the mundane routine of scanning, cataloguing, and digitizing vintage film magazines, along with lobby cards, song books, posters, and other film ephemera of the past century. Founded by filmmaker and collector Sruti Harihara Subramanian, TCRC is a nonprofit that enables research on the audiovisual cultural artifacts of Indian film history—especially the history of films in the regional languages of south India—and seeks to promote film culture from a historical, educational, and artistic perspective (The Cinema Resource Center [TCRC] n.d.). The archive grew out of Harihara Subramanian's curiosity about films and her efforts to salvage film materials, which now populate her collection and keep Prasad busy. Originally an electronics and telecommunications engineer, Prasad has made the shift from a secure engineering job as the head of research and development to a somewhat more precarious role archiving material artifacts of Indian cinema. By his own admission, he was interested in the technical aspects of filmmaking—especially how sound works in cinema—but was unable to pursue film production as a career due to financial constraints (Prasad, interview with authors). Taking up archiving as a profession in a society that is largely indifferent to archival practices required a leap of faith—and now that he is part of the esoteric tribe of audiovisual archivists, he understands why materials that may seem unimportant to a layman still need to be meticulously preserved.

Audiovisual materials are becoming increasingly important as objects of cultural memory. As Ravi Vasudevan (2023) points out, traces of cinema can be found in a wide range of media, from literary and leisure magazines, song books, advertisements, posters, and banners to radio broadcasts, gramophone records, audio cassettes

and discs, and television programs. Yet, film archiving is not a mainstream profession in India. Prasad's appointment at TCRC was a matter of chance: like most audiovisual archivists in India, he had no plans for a career in archives, and he only learned about the job through the grapevine rather than through a formal job posting. Like most audiovisual archivists in India, Prasad also lacks formal training as an archivist—apart from attending one film preservation and restoration workshop, which we discuss below—having entered the field driven by genuine passion and gained his skills through hands-on, on-the-job training.

This article sets out to examine the marginalized state of audiovisual archiving education in India, and why audiovisual archiving has not yet been recognized as a legitimate profession in the country. As part of our analysis, we have studied the workings and challenges of TCRC as a microcosm of other regional Indian film archives in order to comprehend the current state of film preservation training and propose a new educational framework. The not-for-profit, resourceful nature of TCRC is contrasted with the cutthroat business model of Annapurna Studios, a prominent regional film studio in Hyderabad, another metropolis in south India. As the company's chief technology officer bluntly explains, archiving content drains rather than creates profits (C. V. Rao, interview with authors), further eroding the perceived necessity of film archiving. As this analysis will show, a lack of awareness, institutional support, and professional structures have prevented the development of audiovisual archiving education in the country. With these shortcomings in mind, and Harihara Subramanian's lament that there is no ecosystem or network to support film archives and education in India (Harihara Subramanian, interview with authors), we suggest developing an "ecosystem" to give shape to audiovisual archiving education in India and provide a more nuanced awareness of the need for this profession. Responding to his own doubts raised in 1995, film preservationist Ray Edmondson (2018) concluded twenty years later that audiovisual archiving has undoubtedly become a profession—but while the film archiving profession has received recognition in the west, the state of the same needs to be examined in a global south framework, as our archival mission is the preservation of our shared cinematic heritage.

The Culture of Film Preservation in India

Today, India is the seventh largest international box office market, excluding the United States and Canada (Motion Picture Association 2022). With 1,500 to 2,000 films being produced every year in more than twenty languages, the Indian film industry is the largest in the world in terms of output (Jain, Soneja, and Ahluwalia 2016). The Hindi language film industry, popularly known as Bollywood, is headquartered in Mumbai in western India, and has been mistaken as being representative of Indian cinema at large. However, several major cities in the south—Chennai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Trivandrum, and Bangalore—and Kolkata in the east, are home to robust regional language film industries in their own right. As Rashmi Devi Sawhney has argued, this "has posed a great challenge in trying to establish what is India's 'national cinema,' which can only be seen as a combination of multiple 'regional cinemas'

coexisting with a relatively more pan-Indian Bombay cinema" (2023, 217). Despite the impressive legacy of Indian filmmaking, filmmakers themselves are generally unaware of the need to preserve their own films, audio recordings, and other materials; rather than safeguarding their work, the film studios have turned their backs to the preservation and guardianship of their archives in favour of the immediate financial gain of new productions. As a result, it is estimated that about 70 percent of Indian film titles produced before 1980 have either deteriorated beyond repair or may be considered permanently lost (Nair 2015).

The first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, keenly produced government-funded films that aided in the education of the largely subaltern masses, but preserving these films only became a concern for the Indian government much later. Several institutions for the administration of film, media, and broadcasting were established in post-colonial India: Films Division of India (FDI), Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Children's Film Society of India (CFSI), Central Board of Film Censors (CBFC), All India Radio (AIR), and Doordarshan (DD). While each of these bodies served a distinct purpose in disseminating information and entertainment, we briefly look at two pairs of institutions—FTII and NFAI, and AIR and DD—connected due to the workings of their audiovisual archives.

FTII was established in 1960 as a training institute for film and television production under the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in Pune, a city close to Mumbai, and it has since grown to offer eleven full-time and a host of short-term courses (Film and Television Institute of India n.d.). NFAI was established in 1964 as the national custodian of India's film heritage, dealing with acquisition, preservation, restoration, and dissemination of both film and non-film content, including celluloid films, still photographs, song books, posters, lobby cards, documentaries, and magnetic media (National Film Archive of India n.d., "Objectives"). The institute's founding director, Paramesh Krishnan Nair, was a key figure throughout the organization's history, and his tenure, which ended in 1991, prioritized acquisition and exhibition over preservation and restoration (Subramanian 2021, 76). NFAI was initially housed on FTII's campus, and its film collection partially stored at FTII until about 1991, when NFAI finally got its own specialized vaults (Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting 1992). As preservation was deprioritized and the archive lacked space and specialized facilities, NFAI developed weak archival strategies, further hampered by a shortage of staff (Subramanian 2021, 84).

Lack of funds, at times, has also led to the negligence of audiovisual material. A massive fire at the FTII storage space in 2003 destroyed 1,700 nitrate prints from the silent era, including the original print of *Raja Harishchandra* (Dadasaheb Phalke, 1913), which is considered India's first film (*Frontline* 2003). Missing film reels (Rashid 2017) and faulty air-conditioning leading to film decomposition (Rashid 2018) are among some of the other unfortunate incidents at India's central film archive, where higher standards of preservation and care should be expected. This prompted the Indian government to act in support of NFAI, which had long been ignored as the keeper of India's national cinema heritage. Launched in 2014,

with work officially starting in 2017, the National Film Heritage Mission (NFHM) initiative was intended to fast-track the preservation, digitization, and restoration of the country's cinematic heritage, with the goal of digitizing over 132,000 film reels and other film materials (Ahluwalia 2017). In 2024, the project was halfway to its target, as 64,000 reels had undergone conservation, with the preservation of about 65,000 film reels in progress. More than 5,600 films have been digitized, and the digital films are screened for local audiences as well as at international film festivals (Sultan 2024b).

In 2020, the government announced the merger of four distinct, publicly-funded film units—NFAI, FDI, CFSI, and the Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF)—into the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), citing synergy and better and more efficient utilization of infrastructure and labour (Joseph 2023). The change came into effect in 2022, and news of the merger was received with great skepticism and dismay among prominent members of the film community, who questioned the future of these institutes, the fate of the archives and their stakeholders, and whether they would eventually risk coming into private hands, restricting their access from the public. While some speculated whether the merger was required given the changing nature of the film business, the government justified its move by explaining that joining these bodies under one umbrella would help them work better for the welfare and development of the Indian film industry (Rawal 2023). The newly formed NFDC-NFAI recently announced a project to conserve various film artifacts, including scripts, disc records, movie posters, lobby cards, costumes, newspaper clippings, film magazines, and equipment. The project may also restore materials currently held by private individuals or institutions, such as prosthetics, costumes, and set models (Sultan 2024a). Slated to begin upon the conclusion of the ongoing NFHM in 2025, this new initiative of safeguarding cinema materials other than film reels is a welcome move.

All India Radio, India's national radio, was founded in 1936, and Doordarshan, India's national television, began production of television programs on an experimental basis in the early 1960s, before becoming a national broadcaster in 1982 and eventually evolving into a structured TV network. Prasar Bharati (PB), formed in 1997, is an autonomous statutory body established by an act of parliament, serving as India's public broadcaster (Prasar Bharati n.d.). AIR and DD now operate under the aegis of PB, covering domestic and international news along with other programming on entertainment, social subjects, education, agriculture, rural development, and science and technology. Kamalini Nagarajan Dutt, the founding director of the Doordarshan National Archive in 2004, was another key personality in the audiovisual archiving arena in India. With her motto, "Your trash is our treasure," Dutt took charge of the archives, which held tens of thousands of recordings of music, dance, drama, and literature legends of India on archival reel-to-reel and cassette tapes from the 1970s. She laboured relentlessly to retrieve, restore, digitize, and catalogue around 2,000 of them until she retired in 2010 (Nair 2022), and continued working on audiovisual archiving education after retirement by conducting workshops on media archiving strategies.

In 2007, DD was given the green light to begin digitizing over 150,000 hours of video footage for access to the general public. Prasar Bharati sought to monetize their media archives, arguing that speeches and music held by DD and AIR were a national resource that should either be made freely available or monetized (*The Economic Times* 2015). Both DD and AIR released DVDs and CDs of their archival material and turned a profit on their sale (Subramanian 2021, 124), and tech giant Google became PB's long-term partner in digitizing over two decades worth of content across twelve Indian languages (*MoneyControl* 2019). Though initially separate, the archival units of AIR and DD were combined into the Prasar Bharati Archives in 2018. While NFAI cares for films, Prasar Bharati maintains an archive of cultural recordings of national television and radio. These archives have also seen bad times, including tapes in extremely bad condition, broken equipment, and a lack of preservation policies.

In 2014, the Ministry of Culture sanctioned the National Cultural Audiovisual Archives (NCAA) project at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi, with the aim to digitize unpublished non-commercial audio and video recordings like dance and music performances to create a repository of India's cultural heritage by partnering with cultural bodies. Planned to last until 2019, the project's pilot phase was extended to 2021, and the project made 25,000 hours of recordings available in the public domain. The project was awarded ISO 16363:2012 certification in 2017 for three years and claimed to be the world's first Trustworthy Digital Repository (Government of India, Ministry of Culture n.d.).

Though these are encouraging developments of audiovisual archiving within India's national institutes, their histories have been marked by challenges, inconsistencies, and the significant loss of audiovisual material that, in some cases, cannot be recovered. Even new projects like NFHM had to be temporarily halted due to the "shortage of material" required for the work (Rashid 2017). In the process of looking for old celluloid films under NFHM, NFAI stumbled upon hundreds of unreleased films, directors' scripts, and footage dating back to World War II and the Indian freedom struggle (Subramanian 2018, 55). Their surprise at discovering these materials reflects significant gaps in existing recordkeeping practices. While the PB Archives present a more positive outlook today, without the efforts of Dutt, the broadcasting archives would have faced a similarly bleak fate. And though NCAA represented a promising initiative bringing together a diverse range of cultural and technical collaborators, engagement with the broader cultural community across the country seems limited. Publicly available data regarding its impact on cultural research is unavailable, plans for its evolution into a sustainable, independent entity capable of ongoing outreach and engagement are unclear, and whether the ISO 16363:2012 certification was renewed is uncertain.

The historically troubled state of government-owned audiovisual archives in India reflects the evolving nature of the country's archiving practices and priorities. The budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Culture has been very low—less than 0.075% of the total budget in 2022—and the minister of culture defended this low allocation saying that it might not be "tenable for a developing nation like India to

allocate a considerable proportion of its public fund to the promotion of art and culture" (*The Hindu* Bureau 2023). The lack of funding for audiovisual archiving and education stems from this broader lack of awareness about the importance of preserving cultural history. Raising awareness about film archiving requires integrating archival education more prominently into mainstream academic and professional frameworks.

Audiovisual Archiving Education in India

Based on our collective experience working with archives, many developing countries' governments do not fully understand, nor prioritize, the special challenges of preserving film and other audiovisual materials, and the expert skills and resources needed to carry out that work. Former NFAI Director Prakash Magdum expressed concern about the qualifications of people who were being recruited at the archive, as these hires needed to be made with a vision toward the kind of archive NFAI should be ten or fifteen years down the line (Subramanian 2018, 93). The qualifications of the staff determine the future of the institution—whether a well-appointed repository safeguarding cultural heritage or an unkempt storehouse of decaying material. Lack of qualified staff has often led to the mismanagement of archives, including poor recordkeeping and improper storage or treatment of audiovisual material. Some archivists who were soon due to retire worried about how they would manage the knowledge transfer process, as passing the baton required time and a rapport with the new hires. Magdum also said it was important for the archive to have a workforce that was not only properly trained, but also up to date with new technical and methodological developments in the archiving field. As such, new staff needed to understand new computer-based archiving technologies, formats, and software, and even take the initiative to regularly update their skillsets. This is a persistent issue, and technological complexity continues to be a formidable challenge for archives. Apart from basic introductory courses, we also need to establish a continuing education system that further develops management skills and technical expertise among professional archivists (Mkadmi, Shehata, and Elsawy 2024).

To understand the current state of audiovisual archiving education in India, it is worthwhile to explore the few avenues available to prospective students. Among them are the Film Preservation and Restoration Workshops conducted by the Film Heritage Foundation (FHF) in association with the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF). FHF is a nonprofit organization founded by Shivendra Singh Dungarpur in 2014. Having completed nine editions of workshops between 2015 and 2024 across various Indian cities in a travelling school format, FHF claims to have trained 400 participants, creating a movement for film preservation in India and the subcontinent (Film Heritage Foundation n.d.). The broad streams addressed in the workshop include digital management, digitization, photochemical technology, cataloguing and access, archive management, and film-related materials. Out of the nineteen instructors for the 2024 workshop, fifteen were international experts; the remaining four included three FHF staff and one employee of NFDC-NFAI (Film Heritage Foundation n.d.). International faculty dominated previous workshops,

too, confirming that there is a dearth of audiovisual archiving expertise within India to train future generations, and that those intent on studying in this field may have to look beyond India's shores. FHF's website lists a few other programs, like the ten-day Biennial Audio-Visual Archival Summer School, again featuring international faculty; a session on projecting films on celluloid by German film projectionist Florian Höehensteiger; and activities coordinated under the France-India-Sri Lanka Cinema Heritage (FISCH) program supported by the French Embassy in India.

Other educational options include a two-credit module—largely theory-based, with no practical training involved—on "Film Archiving and Curating" as part of a post-graduate diploma offered by the media department at Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), started in 2018 in collaboration with NFAI for the first five years, and a long-running "Film Appreciation" course offered by FTII and NFAI. However, the main aim of the Film Appreciation course is the theoretical study of the art and history of film and the development of cinema as an art form. NFAI also served as collaborator and host of the aforementioned FHF workshop's 2016 iteration, along with international associates FIAF, the George Eastman Museum, and L'Immagine Ritrovata. Their website states that "NFAI has envisaged a skill development program in film archiving" (National Film Archive of India n.d., "National Film Heritage Mission [NFHM]"), though there are no such actively running programs in film archiving to date at NFAI or FTII. This indicates a lack of initiative, or perhaps funds, on NFAI's part to start their own film archiving courses or workshops.

The School of Archival Studies under the National Archives of India offers certificate and diploma courses in archival education, but the focus is mainly on records management, reprography and care, and conservation of records, and not the preservation of audiovisual materials. Prominent museums like the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai and the National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology in New Delhi, and private institutions like Janapravaha in Mumbai, offer museology courses focused on the restoration and preservation of artifacts and documents. There are fewer archiving and recordkeeping courses compared to museology courses, and these courses do not cover the use of information technology, digital archiving, or digital preservation methods (Katre 2011). IGNCA offers year-long, part-time diploma courses in Cultural Informatics and Preventive Conservation, but they do not address film materials. Library and information science is an established and mainstream branch of study with a standard curriculum at universities, but they, too, generally steer clear of addressing the preservation of film and other audiovisual materials. While many university curricula touch upon archiving as a general subject as part of history or humanities courses, covering the theory of archiving and legacy of archiving institutes in a broad sense, they do not feature any hands-on instruction. And though there are several well-established, full-fledged courses in film studies, including at Jadavpur University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi, English and Foreign Languages University, and SPPU, they primarily focus on visual communication and media production.

Assessing the Challenges

The disparaging attitudes toward audiovisual archiving as a profession might be understood through Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) concept of "cultural capital." According to Bourdieu, cultural capital can be acquired—to varying degree, depending on the period, the society, and the social class—in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously. When professions accumulate cultural capital, they attract institutional support and public legitimacy. In India, audiovisual archiving holds little cultural capital, being perceived as non-essential, partly due to its sidelining by the film industry itself. Bourdieu further explains that economic capital can give immediate access to some goods and services, while others can be obtained only by virtue of the social capital of relationships or obligations. As we suggest, the dual absence of social and economic capital has also rendered audiovisual archiving an unattractive pursuit. With no definite career path, low economic value, and no associated prestige, the development of archival education and professional recognition has suffered. This seems to be borne out by our analysis of Annapurna Studios.

Big film studios like Annapurna are becoming increasingly corporatized in growing economies like India, where the competition for eyeballs between television, streaming services, and the cinema is fierce, as "content" is conceived, designed, and honed like a consumer product and less like a cultural one. Faced with this competition, managers are reluctant to invest money where it cannot grow exponentially, and studios like Annapurna are only interested in preserving their own content if it serves a commercial function, like the re-release of popular films to generate new profits or the use of old photographs on social media to attract viewers' attention (C. V. Rao, interview with authors). In most film studios today, server space is reserved for projects in progress, and past works are not even afforded shelf space, as they have outlived their value. These profit-first attitudes of studios—which could have been among the primary generators of archives and jobs—further underscore the dismal state of the profession in India.

For small, private, and nonprofit entities like TCRC, safeguarding, storing, and organizing their collections has been an uphill battle. These organizations face a plethora of challenges, including limited resources and a lack of trained audiovisual archivists, yet they persist in their efforts. Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* highlights the paradoxical desire to preserve memory amidst inevitable loss. He argues that humans archive because we are afraid of losing our memory, but the very act of archiving selects some memories and excludes others, so that "every archive is also an act of forgetting" (1995, 2). Smitten from a young age with a bad case of "archive fever," Harihara Subramanian would collect film-related newspaper articles, old film magazines, and other materials that production houses or individuals were discarding. In her own words, Harihara Subramanian became a "keeper of all these invaluable cinema materials" (interview with authors), trying to counter the act of forgetting in the best way she could. Prasad's move to TCRC similarly allowed him to follow his hidden passion after working in his trained profession, which gave him the financial stability to start archiving.

Yet, Prasad prefers to state that he is an engineer by profession—a successful

one—who happens to be interested in the mechanics of film. As Edmondson writes, working in a film archive "did not automatically mean that people . . . personally *identified* as film archivists . . . Many preferred to identify with the professions in which they happened to hold formal qualifications" (2018, 14). This holds true in India, where audiovisual archiving is not a recognized profession, and the work of preservation is not properly understood, valued, or supported professionally. As we argue, these problems stem not just from practical issues, but from deeper cultural and institutional failures. This is further exacerbated by film archives' association with the film industry. In Indian society, working in the film industry has traditionally been looked down upon due to its unregulated working conditions, unstable employment, and unreliable pay, prevalent gender inequality and objectification of female characters, the perceived low moral standards of its culture of fame, superficiality, and commercialism, and the general tendency to see creative work as risky fields within which to build a solid career. These conceptions have cast a long shadow on audiovisual archiving, too, as Harihara Subramanian refers to a "taboo" associated with the film industry and her travails running TCRC (interview with authors).

People often do not realize that they can build a career in preserving film and other media, and even if they get wind of this profession, there are few avenues to receive archival training in India. Harihara Subramanian discovered her own passion for film archiving when she took the Film Appreciation course at FTII in 2007. She was amazed to see NFAI's valuable film collection—coming from the south of the country, far from the archive's location, she was not even aware that such a place existed—and she wonders why FTII cannot offer audiovisual archiving courses when they have access to the country's film archives (interview with authors). Her question is astute and should remind film schools and the industry that they have the means to be part of the solution. These institutes, whether educational or professional, are the places best equipped to teach archiving, and it seems like a missed opportunity not to do so. Harihara Subramanian observes that filmmakers themselves often fail to take care of their old films because they are busy with new projects and clueless about digital obsolescence. Making archiving a part of the production curriculum would also helpfully address these oversights. It is worthwhile to mention that Annapurna Studios itself runs the Annapurna College of Film and Media, where the curriculum focuses exclusively on filmmaking training. Ironically, they hosted the fifth iteration of the Film Preservation and Restoration Workshop organized by FHF and FIAF in 2019. Despite this, Annapurna Studios has not awoken to the importance of archiving.

In a recent turn toward re-releases of older films that have garnered interest in India, film studios have scrambled to find distributor copies of their own films, which they themselves never bothered to archive. Annapurna Studios has also entered the race to find copies of its successful old films, which are being restored and exhibited again, catering to public demand (C. V. Rao, interview with authors). However, this move is motivated only by the prospect of milking residual profits from their own content, and not for the sake of the films themselves or their artistic value. In contrast, small private collectors ardently rescue, salvage, safeguard, archive,

and restore their audiovisual collections. Working against the lack of funds, expertise, and space, as well as state disinterest, these small collectors treat these materials as artistic, cultural, and historic resources to be preserved for future generations, not just as commodities of a capitalist marketplace.

In order to do this work, Prasad stresses the importance of interdisciplinary training, as a person qualified in museology may understand chemical reactions and deteriorations of materials, while librarians know the science of cataloguing. He struggles with his own lack of professional archival training and has no clear avenue locally to learn more in order to better serve the archive (interview with authors). This lack of opportunity highlights the need for audiovisual archiving education that covers a wider range of topics. Without engaging with the archives in technical, historical, and curatorial methods, students cannot get a complete feel for the job. In the interest of developing an affinity for audiovisual archiving, it is also important that students interact directly with the material. Yet, having untrained students work with rare material poses significant risks. How to provide access without compromising archival materials, and how to let students engage with the materials fruitfully, are some of the issues that TCRC is trying to resolve.

Harihara Subramanian's long-term struggle to find the right home for her collections is also not over, as the majority of her archive is still stored at another location and has yet to be catalogued or digitized. The lack of physical space limits the scope of the archive, as visitors and researchers cannot access the unprocessed parts of the collection, which may be useful to their research. In order to organize and make the archive more user-friendly, and to carry out other activities at the archive, the archive requires resources, especially money—"and money is always in short supply" for small and niche archives like TCRC (Harihara Subramanian, interview with authors). TCRC has an office and a working archivist only because Harihara Subramanian personally funds the archive through her primary profession as a filmmaker. There is no other avenue for funding the archive. Still, they do not charge researchers for using the archives, and Harihara Subramanian funds any training or workshop that Prasad wants to attend. Applying for government grants is difficult, and it is unclear if the selection is always based on merit. There are no federal funding initiatives in India like the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the United States. While the Endangered Archives Program of the British Library and the Media Archives Enrichment Program at the University of California, Los Angeles are global grants available for audiovisual and media archival projects, they require Indian institutions, especially nonprofits, to have Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010 (FCRA) clearances to apply. Writing a successful grant also typically requires a qualified, trained person, which in turn means that time and money must be invested in order just to apply. Without a clear roadmap, Harihara Subramanian prefers the "known devil" of using her own resources for digitization over the uncertainty of finding funds (interview with authors).

Building an Audiovisual Archiving Education Ecosystem

Harihara Subramanian emphatically states, "There is no ecosystem or network" to support film archives and archival education in India (interview with authors). In this section, we reflect on what this audiovisual archiving education ecosystem or network should look like. Several specific themes and concerns have surfaced through our interviews, and we believe responding to them is key to addressing these needs and developing this ecosystem. As we suggest, funding archival education and archives, creating greater awareness about the profession, balancing theory and practice while developing interdisciplinary approaches, building educational institutes within the archive, and emphasizing regional archives are some of the multiple aspects around which a stable ecosystem could form. We discuss each in turn below.

In order to develop this audiovisual archiving education ecosystem, it is pertinent to get the government to understand that archiving is a serious, capital-intensive, and time-sensitive business. The backing of state machinery in the form of funds for public archives and grants available to private archives will be necessary to run successful preservation and engagement programs. The government needs to invest in audiovisual archiving education at various levels of training across the country, working enterprisingly within the government's culture budget and with the support of both public and private archives. A tripartite framework proposed for the National Archives of Zimbabwe, whereby the archivist, the archive, and the government work as collaborators to improve audiovisual archives management, may offer a model for this kind of collaboration (Mutsagondo and Tholanah 2022).

In order to raise awareness about the importance of archiving, film preservation needs to be incorporated into production curricula to teach filmmakers how to preserve their own films. Harihara Subramanian suggests that awareness about archiving can be fostered starting already at the primary school level, as children are already exposed to all sorts of media, and may even be making their own films and videos on mobile devices (interview with authors). This could be done through workshops, discussions, or lectures. Institutes of higher education should also offer courses and programs in film archiving to help introduce film or history students to the idea of a career in archiving, which should be seen as on par with a career in library science, which is recognized as a serious profession in India.

Directing archival education programs to meet the needs of archiving institutions could ensure successful employment for archiving graduates. The Film Culture: Archiving, Programming, Presentation master's program offered by Goethe-Universität Frankfurt and the Deutsches Filminstitut, for instance, combines "state-of-the-art film studies with hands-on training in the field," aiming to "train scientific personnel for film and media archives and other institutions of film culture" (Campanini, Hediger, and Bayer 2018, 80). Building on the successes of this program and the FHF workshops, curricula should be modelled with a balance of theory and practice to ensure that students receive the practical skills and training necessary for the job market while expanding "the mental horizons of the narrow specialist" (Vatsayan 1972, 31). As Kapila Malik Vatsayan argues, the cultural content of education "must permeate the studies of the humanities" and "equip the educated to see the interrelationships

and interdependence of disciplines" (1972, 31). Therefore, designing a curriculum that gives precedence to interdisciplinarity over specialization may be key to a successful program. The Frankfurt master's program, for instance, includes training in film history and film historiography, museology, the institutional dynamics of film institutions, copyright and marketing, and the "technical, material and institutional aspects of film archiving, programming and presentation" (Campanini, Hediger, and Bayer 2018, 81). As this approach shows, a program would not have to be built from scratch, but could make use of convergence to expand upon, diversify, and consolidate course offerings within already existing programs: film studies, filmmaking, museology, library science, and history could all incorporate audiovisual archiving basics, which may eventually develop into full-fledged archival courses.

The 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) of India, enacted by the Union Cabinet of India, outlines the vision for a new education system for India and advocates for curricula that facilitate interdisciplinary learning experiences (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development 2020). This is an encouraging development for the cause of archival education, and we recommend that all courses in audiovisual production should have a module on audiovisual archiving practices. Furthermore, the NEP encourages the establishment of interdisciplinary research centres and collaborations between educational institutions and industry partners to address societal challenges and promote innovation. Education and research in this area must be promoted together, and this crossroads of academics and archiving requires archivists to acquire a wide range of skills, emphasizing the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to teaching.

India's premier film school, FTII, and archive, NFAI, should model a partnership based on the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation at the George Eastman Museum in Rochester, New York, to found a school to teach audiovisual archiving within the archive. The Selznick School represents a successful collaboration for education and training in the art and science of preserving cinema. Even more remarkable is that the entire museum's holdings of film, paper, and digital materials are at the disposal of the students (Yeager 2018). The physical proximity of FTII and NFAI in Pune, a city comfortably close to Mumbai and its film industry, would be agreeable to this partnership in every way. If the former directors of FTII and NFAI had paid more attention to film preservation, rather than their sometimes overzealous effort to just collect films, they could have already developed a strong partnership for the benefit of India's cinematic heritage—but it is not too late to do so. As a key part of our proposed ecosystem, this collaboration would be immensely beneficial, and it would be a great loss not to take advantage of this opportunity since there are already infrastructures in place, in addition to geographic proximity.

The south of India has distinct and acclaimed film industries in all four of its languages—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. The fact that Harihara Subramanian and Prasad are working at the regional level and safeguarding materials representing a subset of Indian cinema with a limited audience, which may otherwise receive less interest from those bodies or institutes that focus on Indian cinema as a whole, is itself remarkable. Given the immense cultural diversity of India,

supporting multiple regional film archives is a practical idea, if implemented well. Regional archives may have greater empathy, understanding, and affinity to materials maintained within and representing their own cultures. The diversity of languages and dialects also affects archiving practices. Managing collections at a local level is advantageous, while distribution could be supported by a central, national archive. Indian regional cinema gained recognition as the song "Naatu Naatu" from the hit Telugu language film *RRR* (S. S. Rajamouli, 2022) became the first Indian song to win Best Original Song at both the Academy Awards and Golden Globe Awards in 2023. This hints at Indian, and even western sensibilities recognizing prominent regional work coming out of India, and a growing demand for this work, which in turn could translate into greater interest in regional audiovisual archives.

As films and other media are now "born digital," digital preservation and restoration needs represent a big market for archiving jobs and opportunities, including outsourcing of restoration work from the West to India. This has allowed for the emergence of new private players in the Indian market. As early as 2007, film and media restoration companies like Prasad Corporation in Chennai, Deluxe Corporation in Bengaluru, and Prime Focus Technologies in Mumbai have been restoring Indian films as well as collaborating with Hollywood and other international audiovisual production companies and archives. As this market continues to grow, creating a vibrant employment market for audiovisual archiving professionals in India, trained professionals will be in even greater demand. Building the audiovisual archiving education ecosystem we have outlined in this article would ensure that India will be better prepared to meet it.

Conclusion

The future of audiovisual archiving education in India is promising, assuming the film industry and government make serious commitments and take the necessary initiative. In this article, we have examined some of the gaps in training and challenges to legitimizing the archival profession that stand in the way of Indian preservation efforts, and sketched a rudimentary roadmap for a robust archival education ecosystem in India. Realizing this ecosystem will require much care and love, along with heightened awareness, a clear vision and commitment, and, of course, funds to preserve our audiovisual heritage well for the future. Harihara Subramanian and Prasad imagine TCRC as a vibrant and dynamic resource centre, "almost like a museum where activities, screening, discussions happen" (Harihara Subramanian, interview with authors). Such a space, if fully realized, would be a boon for archiving education and the profession, a Mecca for regional Indian cinema resources, and probably the first of its kind in the country. But as Harihara Subramanian, the ardent collector and keeper of this ephemera, puts it, "these are big dreams. But, you know, it boils down to space, money, human resource, skills" (interview with authors). Collaborative efforts between stakeholders, including the state, educational institutions, corporate studios, and digitization and restoration companies, will be necessary to bolster the audiovisual archiving ecosystem and realize these dreams.

Disclosure
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