

## **Bollywood Turns 100**

Hi again! Nice to have you with us here on As It Is.

We are celebrating this week. Here in the United States, Sunday is Mother’s Day. The Census Bureau reports that about 80 percent of American women are mothers. This is good news if you own a flower or perfume business. Flowers, perfume and jewelry are popular gifts for moms on Mother’s Day.

And if you are a woman in western India, you might get a very unusual gift this year. More iron in your diet!

## **Indian Farmers Fight “Hidden Hunger”**

Sunil Gandham of a company called Nirmal Seeds partnered with an American-based group to provide what he calls the new direction of agriculture.

“So this is the only way – a cheap way – with less cost, how to increase their vitamins, irons, all these micronutrients which are needed for the health of the body.”

His company is providing millet seeds that have extra iron. VOA reporter Aru Pande says that more than 60 percent of women in India do not have enough iron in their bodies. The lack of iron leads to problems in pregnancy, childbirth, and development in young children.

Parwath Pokharkar has seen the effects of low iron levels on women in her village. She says the women bleed a lot and are too tired to do their work.

She and others welcome the effort to add iron and vitamins to crops. In the case of millet, the grain is made into a flat bread, called roti, that some families eat every day. The extra-strength millet can provide 30 percent of the mean daily iron requirement for women and children.

## **Bollywood Turns 100**

We are also celebrating an anniversary in India. Bollywood celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday earlier this month. You probably know Bollywood films. The actors usually speak Hindi, and the movies often include a lot of singing and dancing. Many tell dramatic stories. But Bollywood is now developing new kinds of cinema. Christopher Cruise explains.

Ekta Kapoor is having a special day. She is getting ready to watch a new Bollywood movie, called Bombay Talkies. The movie celebrates 100 years of Bollywood. She says she can't think of life without Bollywood.

Bollywood is India's main movie industry. And that is saying something because India produces more than 1,000 movies and sells three billion movie tickets each year.

Bollywood began a century ago with a black and white film. It told a story about a king from Hindu mythology.

Today, Bollywood is known for its singing and dancing. The movies often tell similar stories. Many times, they are romantic stories that have a happy ending.

Anupama Chopra is a film critic in Mumbai.

“It is the sort of family values, the song and dance, the stars, the kind of un-ironical optimism, it is all very cheerful and it is very sort of sweetly optimistic and I think that that is something that travels very well.”

Anupama Chopra adds that Bollywood’s image is changing slowly. New stories are replacing more traditional ones. And a different generation of filmmakers is making a difference.

The new filmmakers are directors like Dibakar Banerjee, who tells one of the stories in Bombay Talkies.

Mr. Banerjee says Bollywood has space for new ideas. But he says it is not going to be easy to make a lot of untraditional films. Mr. Banerjee explains that rich or middle class people are the main reason for Bollywood’s success. He says new films increasingly challenge the old social order—and some audiences might not like the change.

But Bollywood films are popular not just in India. People in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia also love them. Dibakar Banerjee explains why people across Asia often connect with Bollywood movies. He says:

“The concerns of the average Indian people were the concerns of these people, which was one of the preservation of family, the preservation of tradition, a certain way of life, under the fearsome assault of Western values. These films told us, we are all right, we are all there.”

Movies are likely to remain popular in India -- even more popular than entertainment channels on television. The government has created measures to make it easier to raise money for film production. And, India has permitted foreign film studios, such as America’s Warner Brothers, to invest in the country.

But film critic Anupama Chopra says it is mainly the Indian love for movies that ensures the industry’s future.

“My longstanding belief is that films are a religion in this country. This is sort of the second golden age of Bollywood.”

People like Ekta Kapoor hope that the movie industry will continue to grow in India. They want Bollywood to try new ideas, but never lose its glamor.

I’m Christopher Cruise.

And I’m Kelly Jean Kelly.

We leave you with a few more facts about mothers in the United States from the Census Bureau. About 4 million women gave birth in the past 12 months. Almost 90 percent of children live with their mothers. And about 1 percent of children live with a step-mother.

The average age of a woman when she has her first baby is 25. And about a third of the women who had babies in the last year were not married.

Finally, what are women naming their children? In the past few years, Aiden and Jacob are popular names for boys; Sophia and Emma for girls.

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