

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CENTRE (IDC),
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, BOMBAY
PRESENTS

A FILM BY
ASHOKA MAHARAJ

బాలరం

B A L A R A M

Story, Screenplay, Direction, Editing : ASHOKA MAHARAJ, Guide: Prof. SUDESH BALAN, Sound Design & Mixing : SHANTANU YENNEMADI,

Cinematography: ASHOKA MAHARAJ, Music: RAMPRASAD, C.G. ASHOKA MAHARAJ, RAVINDER BAVANAM

Cast: VENKATESHAM, SAILU, SHASHIDHAR, KRISHNAMURTHY, NIKHIL

Balaram

Short Film

Project -3

Guided By

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by:

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Visual Communication

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Treasure hunt leads to jackpot in AP

J B S Umanadh

HYDERABAD, DHNS: Patancheru, classified as the most polluted industrial area in Asia, is in news for a very different reason this time. Unknown treasure hunters found a 13th century idol of deity Anantapadmanabha in black granite while digging a dried up Giddagunta tank in the industrial town on the outskirts of Hyderabad also known for its Jain heritage.

According to sources, some



treasure in the locality for some days during nights. Initially, we thought that some farmers were removing silt from the tank as monsoon is on the arrival. We got suspicious and found that the miscreants were digging for a treasure," the villagers said, who washed the idols of Anantapadmanabha and Lord Vishnu and started offering puja to the idols after setting them up on the banks.

A group of Archaeology Department officials that arrived in Patancheru on Monday

Along with the Padmanabha, an idol of Lord Vishnu with 'Shankha' and 'Chakra' was also found at the same place. It is about three foot length. Similarly, the remains of two pillars of a temple were also traced there. Brahmachari said that the department would be in a position to come to a conclusion only after further research on the idols and other material.

As independent kings, the Kakatiyas ruled the Deccan for nearly two hundred years

Introduction

In India most of the people believes treasures, which are in various forms. Some treasures are discovered accidentally by major constructions. And some other treasures discovered by archeology departments with some kind of treasure information through the maps and symbols.

Present days also we are listening and watching news about treasure hunts in old temples and old constructions. For example, Thiruvananthapuram "ananta padmanabha swamy" temple and recent treasure hunting by archeology department for Nizam kings treasure in Hyderabad beside Birla temple. There are different kinds of believes in the people about the treasures. Through the ages people are trying to discover the treasures. In the process of this treasure hunting so many old temples and old constructions have destroyed.

There are so many kinds of people (Babas) who are manipulating people by saying they now the treasure information. And they are surviving by these activities. Basically they catch peoples trust towards the treasures and then they play with their believes. There are some extreme cases in treasure hunting such as human sacrifice. People believe that some hidden treasures need a human sacrifice that would reveal the treasures. Still some people are doing these activities.

There are some other type of treasures are there in the forests like money dumps of Maoists or Naxalites. These kinds of treasures are there in the Naxalite areas. People tried for those money dumps. There are various kinds of believes about treasures in various forms.

Since I am from a small village called Shetpally, Niazamabad distric in Telangana. I have been listening and watching these kind of people their believes. Still these treasure hunting is continuing by some people.

There are all kinds of people like educated or un educated also are in to these treasure hunting process

I have developed this story based on my village experiences and behaviors of certain people.

Objectives

- Structuring the space and time.
- Learning how to mould a short story into a cinematic language.
- Knowing the art of film making in a systematic way.
- Exploring other aspects of film making like sound, music, production design and visual effects.
- Getting experience of working with the different people.
- Learning Technicality regarding film-making.
- Applying design principles like Unity, Balance, Visual Tension, Rhythm, Proportion, Contrast and Texture.

Brief Story

Once there was a village. "Balaram" is a 40 years old guy; he is a mechanic in that village. He is an alcoholic. He has 13 years old son "Nandu".

Balaram want to become rich by following other shortcut ways like treasure hunts. Basically he wants a drastic change shortly. Balaram always has an interest to know treasure related news. He has a friend "Satti". Daily both Balaram and Satti go to "Kallu" Shop for drinking. They also play cards there. Satti wants to go to Dubai but he could not go, because he already cheated by some other dubai broker so that he could not get the visa.

One day Balaram gets a call from unknown person (Satyam) who has same interest in treasure hunting. Then Balaram goes to Satyam. Satyam asks some places information, which Balaram knows those areas. Then

Satyam gives farther information to Balaram. And also he says that keep it is secret. And Satyam tells to Balaram that do not go there alone. Balaram says to satyam that I will take one person. Balaram asks to Satti to come with him to treasure hunting. Satti does not accept his request. Then Balaram convinces Satti to take with him. Satti says ok to Balaram due to his financial situations.

Balaram and Satti start their journey towards treasure hunting. They follow the information, which Satyam gives. While in their journey they stop at a place beside the road and have tea, at the same time they get to see a policeman coming at the same tea hut. Then they slowly move from there. That the policeman observes these guys and follows them. At one point of place policemen tries to catch those guys. Then they start escaping from policeman. Policeman thinks that these guys are Naxalites or informers

and starts firing towards them, finally Satti gets bullet and dies there itself, Balaram also gets injure, but he escapes from there. The policeman gets one treasure symbol from Satti's pocket; he takes that map and keeps in his pocket, the fact that the policeman is also interested in these treasure hunting. Then the very next day Balaram watches news in tv that Satti died in police encounter.

After a month, Balaram gets a call from Satyam and tells about the incident. Satyam again motivates to Balaram to go that place which they have discussed before, and again mentions that do not go there alone. Finally Balaram decides to take his son Nandu with him in to treasure hunting trap.

Script

FADE IN

EXT.VILLAGE - DAY/EVENING

Balaram walking through the huge trees and searching the way towards treasure

CUT TO

EXT.VILLAGE - NIGHT

Balaram is handling a fired stick and finding through the old temple construction for the treasure information.

CUT TO

INT.TREASURE - NIGHT

The complete under ground treasury is filled with gold.
Balaram astonishing, by watching that treasure.
Balaram listens the sound that some one is calling him like
Balaramm.... Balaramm....

CUT TO

INT.MECHANIC SHED - DAY

Mechanic shed of Balaram, that shed is filled with all the motorcycle parts. Balaram is sleeping. Nandu (son of Balaram) is also working beside the Balaram. One customer of Balaram is trying to wake up him from sleep by saying Balaramm... Balaramm..., Balaram wakes up from the dream and sees that person.the person puts 5 rupee coin in Balaram's hand.

Balaram

(by shaking his hand with the coin)

Such a miserable life, I have!

CUT TO

INT.MACHANIC SHED - DAY

Balaram is repairing the motorcycle.
Phone rings in his shed. He lifts the telephone.

BALARAM

Ok Setu, I was thinking of coming to you, probably next month, I will pay the whole amount along with interest.

Ok ok, Setu

(Nandu is working beside his father Balaram) again Telephone rings. Balaram lifts the telephone

BALARAM

Yes Anna, I am coming to you only, will meet you by evening.

again Telephone rings, Balaram gives a look towards his son Nandu and tells that see who is again.

Nandu gets up and picks up the phone. immediatly Balaram gives a sign to Nandu and tell them i am not here.

Nandu

My father is not here

after few seconds Balaram tells to Nandu that Hey Nandu, bring that 2 number Spanner.

Nandu gets up and and take that spanner. bisides that his mother's phone hanging at the wall.

Balaram is busy with the repairing; one bycile comes and rings the bell. Balaram watches towards that. The guy(Satti) friend of Balaram give a sign to start.

BALARAM

Give me a second.

CUT TO

INT.KALLUSHOP - DAY

Both Balaram and Satti are sitting on the kallu boxes. and Playing cards. they are having drink while they playing.

BALARAM

Hey Satti, I heard you are leaving for Dubai.

SATTI

What Dubai! I have sold my 2 buffaloes, and that was all what I had. I gave the money to the broker. Now neither Dubai is there nor money.

CUT TO

INT.MACHANIC SHED - DAY

Balaram is repairing the motorcycle. Again the bicycle bell rings out side. Balaram gives a look at that; Nandu also gives a look towards that bell with frustrated eyes.

CUT TO

INT.KALLUSHOP - DAY

Both Balaram and Satti are sitting on the kallu boxes. And busy with Playing cards. They are having drink while they playing.

CUT TO

INT.MACHANIC SHED - DAY

Balaram is rapairing the motorcycle. News is coming on Television. Suddenly he listens the treasure related news. He bends and raises the volume a little and keeps watching that news with interest.

The bicycle bell rings out side. Balaram gives a look at that

CUT TO

INT.KALLUSHOP - DAY

Both Balaram and Satti are busy with Playing cards. The Kallu bottles are lying besides them. Balaram is thinking about that news.

SATTI

Balram, What are you thinking?

BALARAM

Did you see today's news?

SATTI

What news?

BALARAM

Nothing much, but do you believe in treasures?

SATTI

Huh! Nobody believes in that, its all crap.

BALARAM

No no ! If that is crap, then all these people try for it so hard.
Something should be there.

SATTI

I have no clue what treasures!

CUT TO

INT.MACHANIC SHED - DAY

Balaram is busy in rapairing. The telephone rings. Balaram picks it up

SATYAM
Hello, Are you Balram?

BALARAM
Yes, Balram here. Who are you?

SATYAM
My name is Satyam.

BALARAM
Tell me? What

SATYAM
Are you Balram, the Mechanic?

BALARAM
Yes, I am.

SATYAM
I have the answer to all what you are finding. Lets meet to
talk more about it.

BALARAM
Where can we meet?

CUT TO

INT.SATYAMS HOME - EVENING

Satyam is sitting on a chair and writing some thing in a book.
His room is filled with some vastushastram related books.

BALARAM
Namaste Priest.

SATYAM
Come Balram, sit. I heard about you. Your friend Yadagiri gave
me your number. For 30 years, I have been trying this only.
I tried my level best. I missed that quite narrowly. My fate
didn't support me then. But, now is the time. I have got an
important clue. And this will lead you to the treasure. Do you
know about Kapilapuram?

BALARAM
No

SATYAM

What is your village?

BALARAM

Kanapuram.

SATYAM

Four hundred years back, your village Kanapuram was known as Kapilapuram. As per my information, the treasure belonging to the Kakatiya period is hidden there. Are there any hills to the northeast of your village?

BALARAM

Yes, there are.

SATYAM

Between the hills, is there any river?

BALARAM

Yes yes, there is.

SATYAM

And is there an old Shiva temple?

BALARAM

Shiva temple hmm hmm..Yes, there is an old temple. And beside that, there is a ghat too.

SATYAM

Yes, they're only. That enormous treasure lies there.

BALARAM

But, one thing Priest!

SATYAM

What, tell me?

BALARAM

Now, it is a big dense forest.

SATYAM

So?

BALARAM

Now, it lies in the zone of Naxalites.

SATYAM

Do it, anyhow. We have to! I will show you a symbol.
(Satyam is explaining the information about the symbol and some clues as per the book, which he has, Balaram is listening that carefully)

SATYAM

(With showing some symbol)

You have to spot this symbol, which is engraved on a rock in that ghat. And after that, we have to do the required things.

BALARAM

Why only me? We both can go and get it. Right!

SATYAM

Can we both bring that tunes of gold can we? In fact, its not a easy-at all to extract that treasure. We have to perform some rituals, do some offering to get that treasure. Balram, sometimes we even have to offer human blood to get that. I think you know all this, right! But don't go to that place alone.

BALARAM

Ok priest, I will take somebody along.

CUT TO

INT.KALLUSHOP - DAY

SATTI

I will choose to stay away from all this treasure-game. Already, I am in debt as I have sold my buffaloes; please don't pull me into this trap.

BALARAM

Hey Satti, how long will you suffer with all this misery? If we can get the treasure, we will become multi-millionaires. Satti is is listening what Balaram is saying

BALARAM

Don't worry; Priest has given me all the information. Think about it and let me know by tomorrow.

CUT TO

INT.SATTI HOME - NIGHT

Satti is laying on the bed. And thinking about Balarams words. He is re calling the treasure discussion. Satti gets up and lights the Bidi, waching outside from the window with thinking of treasure.

CUT TO

INT.BALARAM HOME - NIGHT

Balaram is watching the treasure map, which Satyma has given. He is smoking and observing the symbol, which is in the map. Nandu is sleeping on the same table. Balaram gets up and looks outside through window.

CUT TO

EXT.VILLAGE OUTSIDE- DAY

Balaram and Satti start towards the treasure. Both are observing the place, which they have started. Both are walking by watching around them.

CUT TO

EXT.ROAD SIDE - DAY

Balaram and Satti both are having tea at a place beside the road. One Policeman comes there on a motorcycle. Both Balaram and Satti give a look towards him and see each other. The policeman parks the bike there and comes towards the teashop by observing these guys. The policeman takes a cigarette in that shop. By that time Balaram and Satti slowly gets up and move from there. Police comes outside by having cigarette, and he sees Balaram and Satti going towards the same road.

CUT TO

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The policeman is on the road going by bike; He is following Balaram and Satti

CUT TO

EXT.FOREST - DAY

Balaram and Satti are walking through the forest. By different places.

CUT TO

EXT.VILLAGE OUTSKRITS - DAY

The policeman starts chasing Balaram and Satti. They start running to escape from him. Police fires towards them. Satti gets bullet and falls down, also Balaram gets bullet to his leg, but he escapes from there.

Policeman comes to Satti's dead body; he finds one treasure map from satti's pocket. He gives a look around that place, and keeps that treasure map in his pocket by feeling lucky.

CUT TO

INT.BALARAM HOME - MORNING

Balaram is laying on the bed with injured body. He listens a news saying that Yesterday evening, in the Adilabad forest, in a heavy firing between naxalites and police, Satti Babu alias Satti was encountered. Police is in search of the remaining people.

CUT TO

AFTER A MONTH

INT.MACHANIC SHED - DAY

Balaram is busy in repairing. The telephones rings, Balaram picks the phone.

SATYAM

Balram, I am Satyam. Did you do it?

BALARAM

Yes, I went there, but it didn't work out.

SATYAM

What happened?

BALARAM

I lost my friend in a police encounter.

SATYAM

Balram, I told you right! Sometimes we even have to offer human blood to get the treasure. Now, the route is clear. Definitely, it will happen now. Go search for it now! You have that artifact right!

BALARAM

No.

SATYAM

Now, what?

BALARAM

I remember everything.

SATYAM

Then, why are you wasting your time? Are you listening, Balram!

BALARAM

Yes, Priest.

SATYAM

This time, you will be able to find the treasure. But, don't go there alone.

CUT TO

INT.FOREST - NIGHT

Balaram and Nandu walking through the forest by handling the kerosene lanterns, and fire stick.

NANDU

Father! Will we get tones' of gold, Will we?

----- END -----

Work Steps

- Finalizing script from first draft
- Character building
- Casting
- Spot location
- Storyboard
- Shooting
- Capturing sound from location
- Rough Cut for sound
- Necessary voice Dubbing
- Sound effects
- Final edit
- Visual effects and color correction

Characters



Balaram is a 40 years old guy. He is a mechanic and he is an alcoholic. He believes Treasures and he wants to become very rich in other shortcuts ways.



Nandu is 13 years old son of Balaram. He helps his father in mechanic shed.



Satti is a 36 years old guy, Friend of Balaram. He does not believe treasures.



Satyam is a 48 years old guy. He is a Priest. He believes Treasures

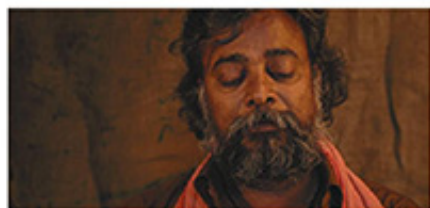
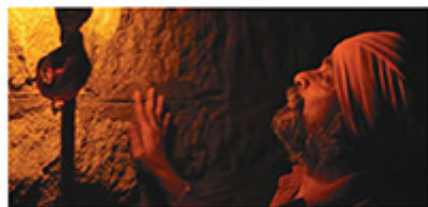
Storyboard



Scene 2



Screen shots





Proces

Pre Production

Characters

Initially I wanted to do with actors, and then I changed my decision to work with my own village people. Because since this story is completely based on rural background story. I thought the look of the people would be natural if I take them as characters in this story. Then I started to find the guys for acting. While I was thinking about the characters I wanted the guy with full of beard for the Balaram Character. I asked one of my cousin brother "Venkatesham" to do the Balaram role, but he don't know the acting. Finally I motivated him to act. As well as the other guys Sailu for "Satti role" sialu is my friend. He is a former. And the Krishna Murthy for "Policeman role" He is a friend of mine.,Nikhil for Nandu role, Shashi for "Satyam role" I wanted this character to look with full of beard. Since I know the places, which I wanted in my village, so that entire shoot was done in my village called Shetpally, in Telangana.



Venkatesham as Balaram



Nikhil as Nandu



Sailu as Satti



Shashi as Satyam



Krishna Murthy as Policeman

Pre Production

Art Direction

In this film the entire story based on a village background. So I wanted to look the film as it is. First the colors shouldn't dominate the visuals; it should look like muddy interiors. So I colored the interiors with the de-saturated color. Then there are 3 interiors, which are Balaram's home, Satti's home and Satyam home. All these were shot in a same room. By changing different props. And next is the costumes, Balaram and Satti as to look like pure village guys. So that, I have shown them with lungis, because in village, that is the common dress they weare. also lockets on their necks. In the scene of satyam and Balaram's discussion, the interior of that room I arranged with the Books shelf on the wall, and one photoframe. All those books and shelf were made by Thermocol. The Book, which Satyam shows to Balaram should look like a very old, for that I have prepared that with tea decoction. And wrote some old pattern of text with different treasure symbols. For the kallu shop pasted the film posters on the wall.



All these were shot in a same room

Production

Cinematography

in order to portray the visual language of this film; I had to concentrate on all aspects in cinematography such as compositions, exposures, lighting, magnifications and structuring the space and time.

Camera

I have used Canon 5D Mark III, and Nikon D7000 for this film.

Lens

I have used three old Nikkor Prime lenses (24mm, 50mm and 105mm)

Filters

I have used ND filter to compensate the exposures in heavy light.

Camera Rigs

I have used Steadicam merlin in following sequences and also used Monopod. I have prepared a slider with PVC pipes, but it didn't work smoothly.

Sound Recording

I have used Zoom H4N sound recorder to take ambience sound from the location.

Shooting

In this film all the exterior shots were shot without any lights. I have cut the light with ND filter to maintain the consistence exposure.

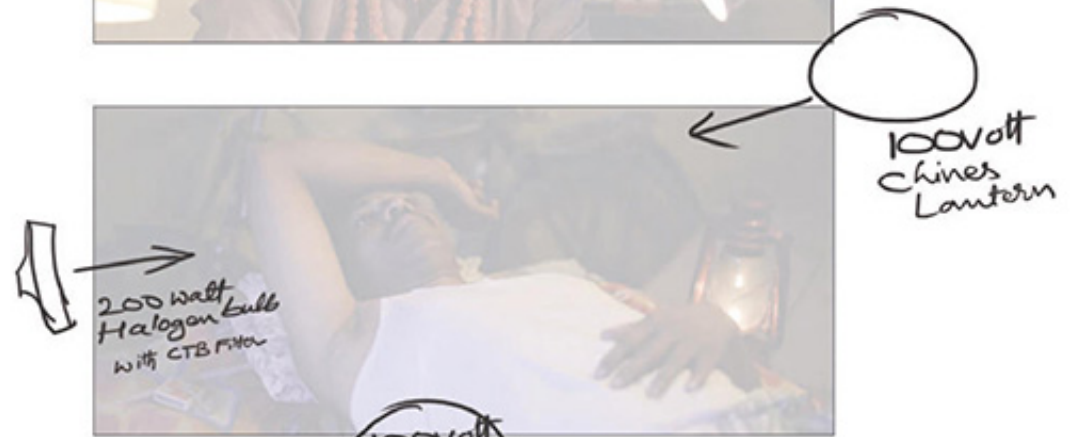
Lighting

there are three interior scenes in this film. I did lighting with available Tungsten lights; I have also prepared lighting board with 60 volt tungsten lights, Chines lantern and halogen lamp 200w. I used other practical lights such as Kerosene lamp, table lamp. Since I have all Tungsten light sources for the moon light effect I have shifted the color temperature with CTB filter.



For the Tungsten light source

Lighting



Post Production

Composting

There is a dream scene when balram gets to see the huge gold cave, for that I had to shoot huge gold which is impossible for me, in order to get that shot I have shot Balaram with Green background and then in the post I removed the green mat and added the gold image as background by using After effects and Fusion software's. The other compositing is the bullets which Satti and Balaram gets in the end. While I am shooting this scene I had prepared a blood color to pore on them, but I had to shoot the other sequence after that scene in the same day, then washing the cloths and shooting the next shots with the same dress was not possible on that day. So I thought to create that blood in the compositing. Then the Television shots, the Television, which I shot in the film was just a dummy. Then I had to show the news in that TV, I have added the news footage in that TV in compositing.



Editing

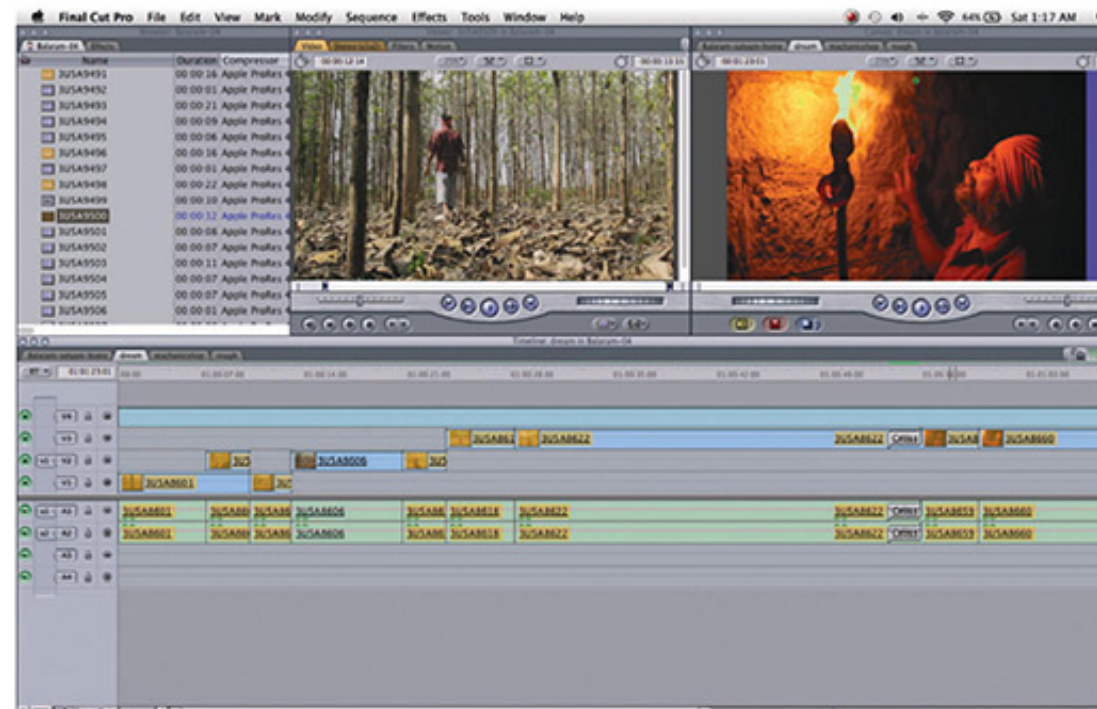
Since the Characters, which are in this film were not experienced actors, I had to shoot them by very different approach. Some times they even don't know what will be the final dialogue. In order to get the required visuals from them I had to shoot so many re-takes. Because of that I had so much footage. I have done the Editing in Final Cut Pro 7 Software.

Sound Dubbing

I didn't take the dialogues from the shooting. Whatever sound, which, recorded in my camera, was just a reference to me, more over all the Characters were not familiar with saying dialogues fluently. So I had to dub the voice for them in post. I did dubbing for all the characters in Sandya Studio Hyderabad.

Sound

I have recorded the ambience sound from the locations separately with the Zoom H4N, After added the sound effects and back-ground score in IDC Sound Studio.



Challenges and Learning's

I wanted to explore the film medium to tell the story through the visuals with all required film elements such as colors, magnifications, sound and continuity in the shots, Structuring the space and time.

In fact this is only my second fiction film. The first one also I shot in video communication module conducted by Prof. Sudesh Balan sir. My project 2 was documentary on Bangle making people in Hyderabad. I found the difference between shooting documentary and fiction film. Both have certain difficulties while shooting.

I found so many difficulties while shooting with non-actors. The fact is that until and unless we go to the actual location and meet the new people who are going to act, then we get to know what has to re think in terms of script and techniques of shooting them.

Since the Characters, which are in this film were not experienced actors, I had to shoot them by very different approach. Some times they even don't know what will be the final dialogue. In order to get the required visuals from them, I had to shoot in different approach, for example there are some dialogues which I wrote in the script, they are not able to tell those dialogues in one flow, but I needed those in single take, at that time I had told them some other words as the same emotion. Especially, maintaining the phase, continuity and gestures in the acting was difficult for them. That is why I had to take so many re-takes.

I got to observe and learn new things while shooting this film. I came to know that there are some good visuals, which will come when we reach the location. I have practiced the blocking, and camera angles while shooting the film.

The whole experience of making this film was the most challenging task to me. From the script to final out put I had to take care of everything. Handling the camera and pulling the focus was very challenging to me. Because I am the only person to do that. That is why I have reduced the dolly shots.

Balaram is an academic exercise to stretch the aspect of visual story telling and film-making. While in the Process of working on this film, I came to know the process of filmmaking and I have gained immense confidence in taking up such projects in the future.