

Film City Road: long, winding, full of pot holes, broken concrete and in parts simply mud-covered, connecting the Western Express Highway with the sprawling green compound of the state-run studio in Goregaon. In the 1970s, as the old studio system died but the market for commercial cinema boomed with multi-starrer blockbusters, there was a rise in demand for rental facilities for film shooting in Bombay. The government carved out a large patch of forested land dotted with adivasi villages, to provide outdoor shooting locations and indoor studio floors. But it did not make provision for in-house facilities such as set construction, prop rentals, tailoring, colouring, etc. Thus shanties of service providers came up on the deserted land on either side of the road leading to Film City, making the studio appear like a fort, serviced by an unorganized bazaar outside its boundary walls.

From the 1990s, as the city expanded northwards, the land at the edge of the forest got converted into residential areas and marketplaces. But within this typical emerging suburban cityscape, the assorted service providers of cinema adamantly stayed put. The artisan–labourers – carpenters, tailors, painters, weavers, potters, sculptors and so on – work as casual labourers for not only Film City, but also other private studios in the vicinity, prominent among them being Chandivali and Kamalistan.

These artisan-labourers from all corners of the country with assorted skills and lineages create the hybrid texture of popular cinema by periodically constructing—furnishing—demolishing—reconstructing the set templates of romance—rebellion—revenge—penance et al.



































