

#AWARENESS

All About Bombay Blood Group

A national repository would improve the recruitment, retention, and coordination of rare blood donors. Without it, efforts to maintain an adequate donor pool are fragmented and less effective.



What is the Bombay Blood Group all about?

Unlike other blood groups, BBG can only receive and donate to the same blood group. According to the National Institutes of Health, only one in 10,000 Indians has it, and four in a million people worldwide.

Challenges

Difficulty in locating compatible donors

Finding matching blood for BBG patients heavily relies on local blood banks, which may have limited supplies," said Dr Brunda M S, consultant, internal medicine, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore.

Delays in finding compatible blood can significantly impact patient outcomes. "In critical situations, every minute counts," said Brunda. Without a centralised database, identifying potential donors for rare blood groups, including BBG, is challenging. "Donors with rare blood types may be scattered across different regions, making it difficult to find a match quickly without a national repository," said Dixit. This delay can result in life-threatening complications for patients requiring urgent transfusions, increasing risks of adverse health outcomes or even mortality.

Shelf life

Any blood has a shelf life of a maximum of 35-42 days depending on the blood bank maintenance. Managing the supply and demand of

rare blood types is "inefficient, leading to potential wastage of donated blood and shortages when it is critically needed," noted Dixit.

Lack of a national registry of rare blood groups

Medical experts urge the creation of a national registry to connect donors across the country, significantly increasing the chance of a timely match. Dixit said that a national repository would improve the recruitment, retention, and coordination of rare blood donors. Without it, efforts to maintain an adequate donor pool are fragmented and less effective. Establishing a national repository for rare blood groups would provide a centralised, efficient, and reliable system for managing and locating rare blood donors, thereby improving patient outcomes and healthcare efficiency.



LOOKING BACK AT MANTHAN

Manthan was produced by the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, the research coming from the two earlier films on Operation Flood. Lal Bahadur Shastri was impressed with the functioning of the Milk Federation. Each of the 500,000 farmer-members of the Federation paid a sum of Rs. 2.00 and the film was made. When the film was released in Bombay, truckloads of farmers came to watch the film and it is still part of the history of Indian cinema.



Dr. Shoma A. Chatterji
Film scholar, journalist & author

#MOVIE

save the studio as well. They formed the *Bombay Talkies Workers' Industrial Society* to produce Baadbaan.

Bombay Talkies, after producing 102 films over nearly two decades, fell into a financial crisis from 1939, when World War II set in. Baadbaan was the last-minute attempt by the committed workers to save their jobs and the studio. But though, Baadbaan was a wonderfully made film and was declared a hit initially, it could not work the trick and Bombay Talkies had to pull down its shutters, no thanks to the infighting between the owners after the demise of Himanshu Rai. Sadly, there is no mention of this film in any book or writings on Hindi cinema as a path-breaking project on the cooperative movement.

Benegal's *Manthan* provides a textbook case study of how cooperation can bring about a classic film that never dates with time or in terms of topicality. It was motivated by the late Verghese Kurien, known as the 'father' of Operation Flood, in whose initiative Benegal had made two documentaries on Operation Flood. But after the films were made, Kurien expressed his concern about the public viewing of the documentaries and discussed the possibility of making a full-length feature film on the AMUL Cooperative Movement that Kurien had begun in Gujarat.

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and it is still part of the history of Indian cinema. Writes Dr. Ruta Dharmadhikari in her paper, "The film, through the lens of developmental politics shows how Benegal's film creates the space for a realism in cinema that moves beyond the state commissioned documentaries of post-Independence India, into the narrative of cinematic fiction, based on state policy."

Manthan is based on the *Operation Flood*, the highly successful milk revolution, occasioned by Bharat Ratna awardee, Dr. Verghese Kurien. Manthan was made and released during the Emergency, which lasted in India from 1975 to 1977. Moving from the

dark and pessimistic *Nishant*, (1975), the second in the trilogy, *Manthan* (1976) was made as a fiction feature. It was an original script again, written jointly by Vijay Tendulkar and Verghese Kurien, along with Benegal putting his findings, based on research of how the milk cooperatives were developing during this time.

The film won the 1977 National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi and National Film Award for Best Screenplay for Vijay Tendulkar, and was also India's submission for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for 1976. Preeti Sagar won the Best Female Playback Singer Award for the single song number, that she belted out in the film, from Filmfare.

In Manthan, Benegal's interest in power relations come to the fore. The four-cornered struggle, between the untouchables, the traditional middle-class, the rising rural capitalists and the new cooperatives led by middle-class agents of change, is traced with a degree of political consciousness evident in later films like *Aarohan* and *Mandi*. An erotic relationship is hinted at between the leader of the cooperative (Girish Karnad) and a married *Harijan* woman (Smita Patil), but Benegal leaves it at the suggestive level.

Manthan's protagonist, Dr.



Manohar Rao (Girish Karnad) is starkly forthright and raw narrative. We are witness to unpaved roads, huts with thatched roofs and actual farmers in the background. When Dr Manohar Rao reaches Sanganva village to build a dairy cooperative, the local businessman Ganga Prasad Mishra (Amrish Puri), who buys milk from villagers for his private dairy, crosses his path. Mishra is a strange man because he thinks he is offering the milkmen in the village a livelihood by buying their milk produce. He is fully aware that he is exploiting them till Rao and his team begin to educate the villagers to form their

World Kiswahili Language Day

Kiswahili Language Day respects the African continent's rich cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. This annual occasion is not just a celebration of a language but recognizes the key role of the Kiswahili language in fostering unity, peace, and multiculturalism worldwide. The formal recognition of Kiswahili Language Day began in November 2021 at the 41st Session of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) in Paris. This resolution marked Kiswahili as the first African language to receive such an honor from the United Nations.



own cooperative society and control the sale of milk, based on purity at prices determined by them. The villagers, steeped in debt, and very poor, most of them belonging to the untouchable castes, feel politically and financially pressurized and are initially afraid to begin a movement that may antagonize the local businessman on one hand, and the Panchayat head (Kulbhusan Kharbanda) on the other. It takes time for the villagers to be convinced by Dr Rao and his team to take on the outclogs against the two powerful men in the village, added to by the high-caste farmers, who force the low caste villagers to stand in a separate queue to sell their milk to be sent to the city cooperative.

The characters are finely etched and fleshed out to present a colourful collage, not only of characters and their images but also their moods and their personalities. The most difficult nut to crack is Bhola (Naseeruddin Shah) and low-caste man, delivered by a mother, left pregnant by a city man.

The characters are finely etched and fleshed out to present a colourful collage, not only of characters and their images but also their moods and their personalities. The most difficult nut to crack is Bhola (Naseeruddin Shah) and low-caste man, delivered by a mother, left pregnant by a city man who escaped. He is always simmering with anger and shows his distrust to Dr Rao and his team. His distrust is confirmed when Dr Chandavarkar (Anand Nag) from Dr Rao's team seduces her with false promises and she is beaten black and blue, when caught by her own father.

Bhola also hates the Panchayat head, who is desperate to hold on to

his power in the Panchayat elections, when this time, a poor milkman wins but is scared of accepting his victory, initially. But he is grateful to Dr Rao for having saved his dying son, though, Rao is a vet and not a physician. Bindu (Smita Patil) is a single mother, taking care of her cow and her little son, as her husband has left her, only to return to stop her activities with the milk cooperative team and her friendship with Dr Rao. Bhola changes his stance when he realizes that Dr Rao means well, there is a final scene showing Bhola rushing to inform Dr Rao that his dreams have been fulfilled, when Dr Rao is waiting with Shanta to catch the train back, and Bhola unable to reach him, is mesmerizing, mainly due to the sparkling performance of Naseeruddin Shah.

Shanta (Abha Dholia), Dr Rao's wife, who suddenly descends from the city, fails to fit into the small town scenario specially because she finds that her husband is forever away trying to build the milk cooperative with the help of his team and the villagers. Her performance, however, is a black mark on the entire film because she cannot act to save her life.

Govind Nihalani's camera takes in the stark, arid visuals of the landscape, with just the right dosage of ambers and browns to capture the aridness of the landscape, closing in on Bindu's dead cow, poisoned by her jealous husband, to cut into a slice of the *Harijan* girl, tied to a post after being beaten by her father for her affair with Dr Chandavarkar, who is sent packing back to the city right in the middle of the night by Dr Rao. Vanraj Bhatta's haunting musical score plays on the soundtrack, the musical notes of the only song '*Mero Gaam Katha Paray*,' belted out beautifully by Preeti Sagar is one of high points of the film. The screen drew loud applause at Cannes.

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#WARM WELCOME

The Chosen Family

Despite reaching the zenith of success, they were humble. The warmth and simplicity triggered a cord within.



Varnika Binani

The wind roared, and our stomachs rumbled and churned as our legs seemed to be shredded through the four hour car journey. Just as the taxi reached my husband's friends home at Delhi, his entire being came alive like Vin Diesel from Fast and Furious. A band of boys symmetrically stood beside each other as we got out of the car. The slangs, grins, hugs didn't stop until my children lept and almost forced themselves between the boys. They yanked my children on their shoulders like they were their own and made a lasting first impression as we moved towards the direction of the lift. We were enveloped with love and laughter at the entrance of their home.

The freshness in the air was subtle. I felt like a cat on hot bricks as this was my first time meeting my husband's set of close college friends. Watching the picturesque sunset from the balcony overlooking the gigantic green garden, I tugged the cup of hot masala tea hard as I hoped to be accepted by his chosen family. Brisk walking through the crystal clear floors where even a jet black ant could be spotted, I rushed to the washroom lambdofed at the sight of a Jacuzzi. Stepping out into the hallway and greeted by couple who owned the house, we engaged in a conversation and silently I bowed down to their inner selves as they lacked egos, and a sense of pride. Despite reaching the zenith of success, they were humble. The warmth and simplicity triggered a cord within. Soon one of the wives laid a wide spread for dinner and served my children in the same way as she served her son. Like a pack of hungry wolves, the children attacked the piping pakodas, the crispy cottage cheese and innumerable delectable vegetarian dishes all cooked with love oozing with every bite in their mouth. They savoured the desert and slept like logs with their hearts and stomachs full. It didn't seem like any of the women met my children or me for the first time. If there's love at first sight, this was it. It is then that the night



had begun and their walk down memory lane made me live a 'hostel life' for a few hours. The chatter grew louder, so did the cheer. Men with salt and pepper hair sat beside each other on the couch. Our ears were glued to my husband narrating the story of how we met. Each one of them spoke unabashedly assuming their better halves weren't around. The camaraderie was unreal and almost surreal; the wives laughed as mere spectators to their never ending conversation. Words didn't seem to upset anyone's apple cart as the night proceeded. The glee in their eyes, the wide smiles, and the censored language ushered me to roll back with laughter and applaud at their jokes.

As they turned back the clock, reminiscing about the good old days where the struggle was saving to treat oneself to an extra dish at a mess and working out solutions to ensure each enjoyed at a local diner. I was amazed how each other's room numbers with their peculiar habits were etched in their left brain. Five years of residential campus meant they knew each other more than we knew our own spouses. I would have thought seeing them as accomplished lawyers in leading firms much like Harvey Specter would be the highlight of their lives. However, they laid emphasis on the five years that shaped them and became the centre of their universe. Watching them together answered a lot of questions for me and it strengthened my belief that a man is indeed known by the company he keeps.

The bond the men shared had withered stormy nights, calm days and even turbulent personal lives. The dark secrets were conveyed through dignified gazes. As the beats of a popular Bollywood track

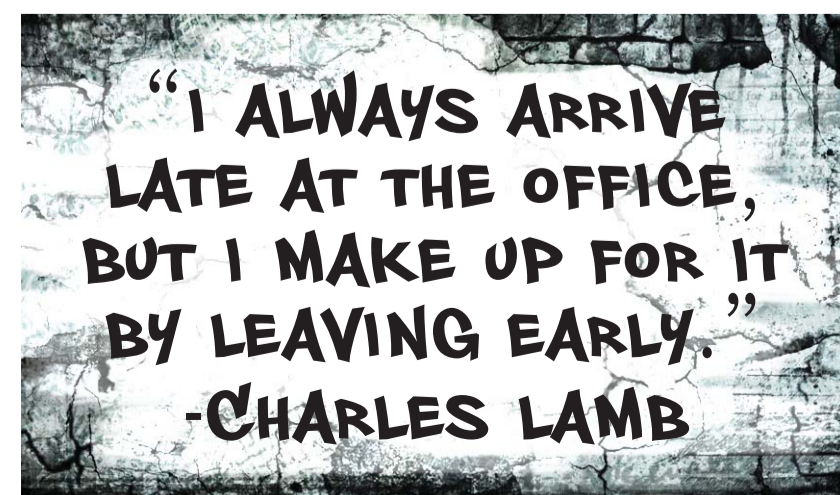
rew louder, all of them instantly pointed their glasses to my husband. At the blink of an eye, without twitching he jumped like Amitabh Bachan from the movie Hum. I was bewildered and astounded to be informed about his nick name. Their bodies moved with child-like enthusiasm. The over excitement and high energy could be felt in every breath. Shortly after they broke into multiple forms of dance, the women distanced themselves from them.

We briefly engaged about our professional lives and the cumbersome task of handling house help. The ice was broken and soon I found myself sharing my difficulties and holding back a flood of tears. Like a game of passing the parcel, each girl spoke and we all realised the true meaning of adulthood! Slowly but surely the girls were the wives I felt comfortable and confident around. A page out of Enid Blyton's Malory Tower, I didn't want the night to end. It seemed unreal to feel love, acceptance from people who were strangers (to me) a few hours ago.

With hearts aglow and spirits intertwined, the world seemed a little brighter, a little kinder, as the magic of Christmas lingered, casting its spell of unity far beyond the night. It was time for us to leave and pearls of sweat trickled down my forehead as my heart pounded heavily. They had opened their hearts and homes to their friend's wife and children. The world I came from, even friends didn't do so. As my husband and I drove back he reiterated a vital fact; it's not about your friends knowing that they have your back but you knowing that they have your back. I pondered on this profound thought until I reached home.



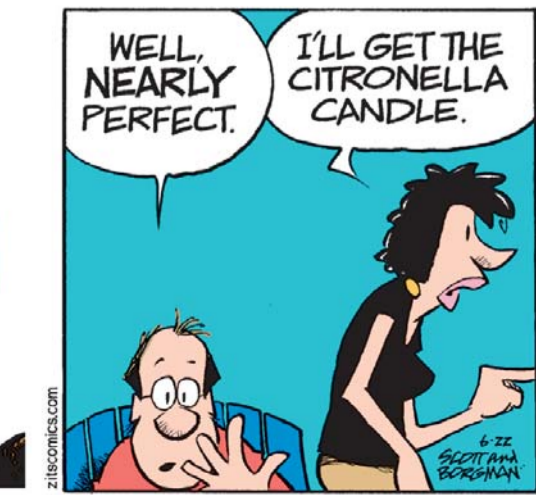
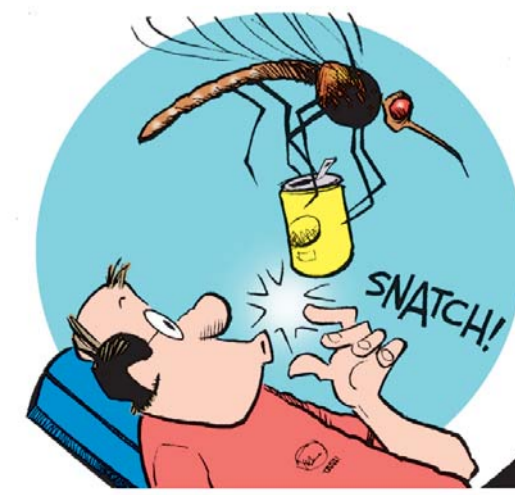
THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman