

A Beginner's Journey into Filmmaking in India

"Cinema is not made by people who know everything. It is made by people who are willing to learn everything."

So, you've decided to become a filmmaker.
Not tomorrow. Not "someday." Today.

You don't have an uncle in the industry.
You don't own a fancy camera.
You live in a small town, or maybe in a crowded flat in a big city.
Your family might want you to take up a stable job.
But still, deep down, you know — *this is what you want to do with your life.*

This chapter is for you — the dreamer with limited means but limitless imagination.
Let's break it down into a real, achievable, **3-year journey**.

YEAR 1: LEARN TO SEE

This is your foundation year. You're not making a feature film yet — you're building your eyes, ears, and instincts as a filmmaker.

Step 1: Study the Process

Before picking up a camera, understand what filmmaking is.
Watch behind-the-scenes videos. Take an offline/online course. Join the professional workshops not just an academic exercise but organized by a real production house with active projects.

Learn about:

- **Screenwriting** – The art of telling stories visually.
- **Direction** – How a director shapes the vision.
- **Cinematography** – How the camera becomes the storyteller.
- **Editing** – Where the film is truly made.
- **Sound Design** – The emotion between the lines.

Start making notes. Watch classics which are known for their filmmaking.
Watch world cinema. Break down scenes. Ask: *Why did the director do this?*

Pro Tip: Start a "filmmaker's journal." Write one observation daily.

Step 2: Make a Short Film

Don't wait for perfection. Use your phone. Shoot something. Anything.

- 2 friends.
- 1 location.
- 1 idea.

Maybe it's your mother making chai at dawn. Maybe it's a silent conversation between two lovers on a railway platform.

Edit it using free software like DaVinci Resolve or CapCut. Add background score. Upload it on YouTube. Share it — not for likes, but for learning.

This is your initiation into filmmaking.

YEAR 2: MASTER YOUR CRAFT

Now you know what filmmaking is. Time to figure out *what part of it you love the most*.

Step 3: Pick Your Strength

Ask yourself:

- Do I love writing stories?
- Do I love working with actors?
- Am I obsessed with light and frames?
- Do I love the editing room where magic happens?

Choose one area and go deep. Learn, practice, and repeat.

If you want to be a **director**, start directing scenes from your favorite films with friends.

If you're into **editing**, take raw footage (there are free sources online) and edit daily.

If you're a **writer**, start writing short scripts — one per week.

Pro Tip: Apply to assist someone. Even small wedding shoots or local ad films. Learn on set.

Step 4: Edit to Understand Everything

Editing teaches storytelling, pace, shot selection, and emotion.

Spend time on short projects - even if they're unpaid.

Start building your portfolio - 2 or 3 well-crafted pieces you can proudly show.

This is the year you move from passion to practice.

YEAR 3: CREATE YOUR FUTURE

Now, you've got a basic portfolio. You've shot short films. You've developed skills. Now, it's time to take the big leap: **your first feature film journey**.

Step 5: Write Your First Feature Film Script

Choose a story close to your heart. Something personal. Something real. Write a 90-minute screenplay. It may take months. That's okay. Get feedback. Rewrite. Polish.

This script is your passport to the next level.

Step 6: Pitch Your Film

You have two options:

Option A: Sell Your Script

- Find a Production house which will help you pitching.
- Email it to small production houses, indie filmmakers, or OTT platforms.
- Include a short synopsis, a logline, and your portfolio link.
- Expect rejections. But don't stop.

Option B: Make It Yourself

- Form a team: A passionate DOP, editor, 2-3 actors.
- Crowd source or take small funding.
- Shoot on a tight schedule. Use available locations.
- Submit to festivals. Screen it locally. Share it online.

Pro Tip: Look for state government film grants and student film festivals (NFDC, MAMI, IFFI, etc.).

Final Words: The Journey Begins

By the end of three years:

- You're no longer an outsider.
- You're not just a student.
- You're a **filmmaker** — with scars, stories, and soul.

And the best part? This isn't the end. It's the beginning of a lifelong relationship with cinema.

So if you're reading this, and your heart's beating faster...

Then, welcome.

Lights are ready. Sound is rolling. Camera is on you.

It's your story now.