

In Search of a Famine

Akaler Shandhaney

India/1980/Colour/Bengali

Direction, Screenplay: Mrinal Sen

Producer: Dhires Kumar Chakraborty

Cinematography: K. K. Mahajan

Editing: Gangadhar Naskar

Music: Salil Chowdhury

Cast: Satya Banerjee, Dhritiman Chatterjee, Smita Patil, Gita Sen, Rajen Tarafdar, Sreela Mazumder, Radhamohan Bhattachariya, Jayanta Chowdhury, Dipankar De, Jochhan Dastidar

Awards/Festivals

Berlin International Film Festival, Silver Bear, National Award, India, Best Film, Best Direction, Best Screenplay, Best Editing

Structured as a film within a film on a Calcutta-based film crew as they camp on the rural village of Hatui to shoot a film set during the Bengali Famine of 1943 (a wartime, man-made famine caused by the diversion of food supplies by the British colonial government to support the military campaign in Asia), this film is a trenchant examination into the universality - and perpetuation - of class division, ignorance, cultural arrogance, and economic polarization. After the Calcutta trilogy, Mrinal Sen once again brings the horrors of famine, exploitation, and poverty within the collective consciousness of contemporary society to create a haunting and introspective exposition into the nature of human suffering.