

‘In Conversation’ on Passion of storytelling; young Filmmakers deliberate on the challenges, at IFFI 54

Filmmakers have greater freedom in crafting content today:
Sagar Puranik

OTT platforms help filmmakers create small-budget films:
Jasmeet K Reen

Patience, a crucial trait for film making: Rajdeep Paul

Marathi films compete with Hindi and other regional films to
get screen space: Nikhil Mahajan

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Young filmmakers are breaking new grounds every day - making fresh, new cinema, deeply rooted and innovatively crafted. However, in their pursuit of redefining the language of cinema, the youngsters must surmount a series of formidable obstacles to ensure that their voices are heard. An In-Conversation session held at the 54th IFFI provided a platform for the young film makers to share the stories of their struggles, challenges and joys in making the films that we all admire.

Sagar Puranik, a two-time National award-winning filmmaker with a focus on Kannada cinema, revealed his journey from a child actor to a storyteller. Expressing the shift from waiting for desired roles to creating compelling narratives, the director emphasized the freedom today's filmmakers have in crafting content without external constraints.

"I always had multiple stories thinking about, all at once; they all come from my heart," shared Sagar Puranik, challenging the notion of having a single story in one's heart. He reflected on the responsibility that comes with accolades, deliberating the balance between financial considerations and the pursuit of quality films.



Jasmeet K. Reen, Director of *Darlings* talked about her transition into filmmaking from chartered accountancy and the unique challenges she faced during the production of her debut film. The film, starring Alia Bhatt, Shefali Shah, Vijay Verma and Roshan Mathew was released on *Netflix* and had the highest global opening for a non-English language Indian film. She discussed the changing landscape with the rise of OTT platforms, allowing more filmmakers to create small-budget films. She emphasized the importance of patience in the directorial journey, cautioning against cynicism and bitterness.

On the importance of character sketches, Jasmeet K. Reen said that characters are very important as they drive the story. "I need to know each and every character in the story even if they are appearing for five minutes in the film. I work a lot on psychology and background of characters", she added.

Rajdeep Paul, a two-time National Award-winning filmmaker-writer, delved into the unique challenges faced by Bengali cinema. "Conflicts between art house and commercial cinema harmed Bengali cinema," Paul noted. His film *Kalkokkho (House of Time)* shot during the COVID-19 pandemic, not only navigated challenges but achieved remarkable success. Rajdeep Paul also stressed on the importance of patience in filmmaking, highlighting the need for passion in storytelling. Acknowledging the role of film schools, he emphasized on practical, on-the-job learning over theoretical knowledge. Replying to questions on the importance of dubbing in films, Rajdeep Paul said that bigger films fare better with dubbing but small art house films need only good subtitles.

India, a timeless land of storytelling, has seamlessly embraced cinema for over a century, a new chapter in an ancient tradition. At #IFFI54, eminent panelists gathered at the Kala Academy to explore the "Passion of storytelling: Young filmmakers." pic.twitter.com/IYzIz4BEpQ

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Nikhil Mahajan, a writer, producer, and director renowned for *Godavari* which won him the prestigious Golden Lotus for Best Direction as well as the Filmfare award for Best Direction and Best Screenplay, shared challenges faced by Marathi cinema, including the competition

with Hindi movies and larger regional counterparts for screens. He highlighted the impact of films like *Sairat* in proving that there is substantial audience for Marathi cinema.

"Unless you love films, you cannot make one since it involves a time consuming and difficult process," Mahajan affirmed, addressing the question of many people expressing their wish to be a director. Reacting to whether he would like to make a Bollywood film, the filmmaker said that he has no specific fascination for Bollywood but emphasized that he would be willing to make a film in Hindi only if the subject demanded the use of that medium.

Mayank Shekhar, Entertainment Editor, Mid-day newspaper and Ramnath Goenka award winner moderated the session.

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