



Ae Watan Mere Watan: A Cinematic Ode to Courage

Making of Ae Watan Mere Watan: “Drawing Inspiration from History to create an immersive cinematic experience for today's Audience”

If your heart is in the right place, it is miraculous how everything magically flows: Director Kannan Iyer

‘Ae Watan’ is a passionate narrative inspired by true events: Karan Johar

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In a captivating panel discussion at the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) here in Goa, creators of ‘Ae Watan Mere Watan,’ delved into the art of drawing inspiration from history to craft an immersive cinematic experience. The panel featured the film’s Director Kannan Iyer, Producer Karan Johar, lead Actress Sara Ali Khan, Head of Originals (India & South-East Asia) at Prime Video Aparna Purohit, and CEO of Dharma Productions Apoorva Mehta. The panel discussion was moderated by Rohini Ramnathan, in collaboration with Prime Video India.



A prominent Gandhian and freedom fighter, Usha Mehta (25 March 1920 – 11 August 2000) is renowned for her role in organizing Radio broadcasting during the Quit India Movement. Usha Mehta's commitment to justice and her role as an exemplary Gandhian make her an inspiring figure. In recognition of her valiant efforts in pursuit of freedom from colonial rule, the Government of India honoured her with the Padma Vibhushan in 1998, the country's second-highest civilian award. The movie brings to life the story of this extraordinary woman who played an instrumental role in India's struggle for freedom.

Talking to a packed audience, in the session, the makers of the movie shared their perspectives and inspiration behind the movie. Director Kannan Iyer shared his inspiration and vision for the movie, saying, "if your heart is in the right place... it is miraculous how everything magically flows. The key thing is to cultivate your heart with respect to a script." The unique feature of the film lies with its lead protagonist, Usha Mehta, spotlighting the often-overlooked women of the freedom struggle.

Sara Ali Khan, who plays Usha Mehta in the movie, emphasized the film's commitment to shedding light on the often-overlooked freedom fighters and their untold stories of sacrifice and bravery. She highlighted the mental fortitude required to fight for what one loves, particularly in the context of India's freedom struggle.

Sharing the infectious energy and enthusiasm of IFFI, Karan Johar described 'Ae Watan' as a passionate narrative inspired by true events, focusing on the resilient Usha Mehta. He underlined the film's depiction of true stories, emphasizing the obstacles faced by individuals passionately devoted to their nation.



Aparna Purohit stressed the importance of narrating stories of unsung heroes lost in history, showcasing the power of women in mobilizing the masses. Apoorva Mehta shared insights into recreating the 1940's South Bombay for a period film, ensuring authenticity in every frame.

Closing the session, the filmmakers collectively conveyed that *Ae Watan Mere Watan* is not just a commercial film but a soulful creative decision, urging India to listen to this powerful narrative that brings the untold stories of freedom fighters lost in the annals of history, to the forefront.

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