

CIFFI 2020 concludes with award distribution in presence of Tigmanshu Dhulia

World's First 7-Day Hybrid International Film Festival by educational institutions – CIFFI 2020, organised by Delhi Metropolitan Education, Noida, India in association with School of Communications and Creative Arts, Deakin University, Australia, completed its journey with a Panel Discussion and a Valedictory & Awards Ceremony on December 21.

The Valedictory & Award Ceremony of CIFFI 2020 was graced with the presence of many eminent filmmakers and scholars. Festival Ambassador of CIFFI 2020 – Mr Tigmanshu Dhulia, Celebrated Filmmaker, Director, Actor & Screen Writer, enriched the final day of the film festival.

Mr Dhulia expressed his appreciation for CIFFI2020. “This is perhaps the first time people are experiencing film festival on virtual mode. Awards are a great encouragement for everyone. It will surely help aspiring filmmakers to do better”, he said.

The Valedictory session also witnessed the screening of the first look of the official Poster and Trailer of film - *'Bhaskar Bechain'* starring Raghubir Yadav. Director of the film, Mr Prince Shadwal, Independent Filmmaker, shared his thoughts regarding the film. He commented, “This film is about a person with a dream, who is struggling to reach his ambitions.”

Mr Raj Gupta, Producer of *Bhaskar Bechain*, talked about his experience of working on the film. “The film has been a 7-year-old project”, he said.

Being a part of the film, Mr Aman Sahni, Vice Chairman, Delhi Metropolitan Education, Noida and Patron, CIFFI 2020, commented on the challenges faced due to the pandemic. Adding his views on the film festival, he said, “It has exceeded the expectations we had at the beginning. I am sure that it will evolve even further in the future.”

Dr Susmita Bala, Professor and Head, DME Media School and Festival Associate Director, CIFFI 2020, presented the event report detailing the seven-day journey of the film festival. She expressed her delight over a well-conducted event and appreciated the efforts put in by all associated with CIFFI 2020.

Dr Ambrish Saxena added to the report with a note of appreciation for all dignitaries and student members who were a part of the film festival. He added, “We tried to create an inclusive film festival. We included children’s films and reached out to those associated with children’s cinema.” He also expressed his aim of having a greater and bigger film festival next year.

Dr Vikrant Kishore, Festival Director and Course Director-Film, Television & Animation, School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University, Melbourne emphasized on the role of students from Delhi Metropolitan Education and Deakin University in CIFFI 2020. “There has been incredible student participation from both the schools. Our aim for CIFFI was that it should not be just about staff exchange, but also student participation.” He praised the efforts put in by the faculty and student members who were part of the event.

Prof. Ujjwal Chowdhury gave his take on CIFFI 2020. “The second edition has been done in a blended manner, which has its own advantages”, he said. He also appreciated the participation of students in the event. “Students have been anchoring the sessions, which is sure to give them an idea of professional work”, he added.

Hon’ble Justice Bhanwar Singh, Director General, DME and Institutional Advisory Board Member, CIFFI 2020 appreciated the film festival while expressing the value of cinema. He said, “Cinema is the most democratic art as it uses the most accessible language. Festivals such as this have helped critical thinking.”

Prof KG Suresh, Vice Chancellor, Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal appreciated the efforts of the organising institutes of CIFFI 2020. He added, “DME has become a trend setter. They have taken a bold decision of conducting the event in hybrid mode, and managed it well. The kind of collaboration and synergy on display is setting an example.”

Dr Ravikant Swami, Director, DME and Institutional Advisory Board Member, CIFFI 2020, presented a note of appreciation for the event. He said, “This is perhaps the first time the film festival is coinciding with admissions process. The first-year students are also a part of the event.”

Mr Peter Dietze, a creative director with Turner & Dietze Creative, Melbourne, Australia, recognised the efforts put behind the film festival and mentioned his desire for future collaborations.

The winners of each competitive category of CIFFI 2020 were announced. A total of 110 films were received in CIFFI 2020.

The winners of the 'Documentary' category were 'Freedom on Wheels' by Shivam Sharma and 'Tahira' by Afzal Sofi. The winners of 'Fiction' category were 'Leave' by Danae Grief and Carlos Caminos and 'Her Name Was Grace' by Garden Sousa.

'Kand' by Karishma, Paridhi, Noor and Jasleen and 'Loop' by Harsh, Vanshika, Vagisha and Yashika were declared the winners of 'Short Films' category, while 'Brouhaha' by Gaurav Madan and 'Bird Song' by Anandana Kapur was awarded the best prize of 'COVID-19 Lockdown Diaries' category.

The best film awards of 'Animation' category were given to 'ArthamAnartham' by Harish Iyer and 'Meow Or Never' by Neeraja Rajkumar. The winners of 'Music Video' category were 'Light in Your Eyes' by Oscar Cousins, Marcus Galie, and James Peutril and 'JoogJoogPooji' by Sweta Dutta.

The filmmakers behind the films awarded during the session, presented their thoughts on their experience of being a part of CIFFI 2020.

Mr Tejas Vijay Deoskar, Distinguished Filmmaker, Writer and Director, talked about his experience of Directing films during the pandemic. He also shared his experience of working with renowned Indian Film Actress, Madhuri Dixit Nene.

Mr Praveen Nagda, Festival Director, KidzCINEMA2020 and Mr Aditya Seth, Award winning Filmmaker and Academic Consultant, University of South Wales, UK, presented notes of appreciation and encouragement for the organising members of CIFFI 2020.

Captain Divya Sharma, Communication Expert, Script Writer, Author and Voice Over Artist, talked about filmmaking. She said, "The key to filmmaking is capturing the real emotions without it appearing staged." She shared her three-stage mantra for filmmaking, "Read, research and rewrite till you get it right."

Ms Kajal Suri, Acclaimed Actor, Theatre Artist and Broadcaster, appreciated the film festival, remarking, "Initiatives such as this help nurture creativity and give artists positivity."

Student of DME Media School, Shriya Singh, hosted the session alongside Ms Manmeet Kaur, Assistant Professor, DME Media School. Mr Ritwik Ghosh, Assistant Professor, DME Media School, concluded the session with a vote of thanks.

Panel Discussion on ‘Impact of Covid-19 on Cinema and Entertainment’

Earlier in the day, a Panel Discussion on ‘Impact of Covid-19 on Cinema and Entertainment’ took place, which was moderated by Prof. Ujjwal K Chowdhury, Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean, School of Media, Communication & Fashion, Adamas University. Ms Sanchita Chakraborty, Assistant Professor, DME Media School, was the host for the session.

The panelists present during the session were - Mr Utpal Acharya, Head of Sales, Box Office & Programming, Gulf Entertainment LLC (Cinepolis Cinemas), Dubai, UAE, Mr Siddhant Puri, Deputy Manager, Movie Marketing, Saregama India, Mr Aftab Asghar, Independent filmmaker, Hollywood, Ms Monica Murthy, Multilingual anchor, singer, standup comedian and actor, Mr Abhishek Ray, Film composer, playback singer, instrumentalist and music arranger, and Dr Ambrish Saxena, Professor and Dean, DME Media School and Festival Director, CIIFFI 2020.

Prof. Chowdhury apprised the viewers about the session. “This session will look at what the entertainment industry will be like in the future”, he stated.

Adding her note to the discussion, Ms Murthy said, “You never know what strikes at what point in life. With the internet explosion, you are constantly under surveillance. You have to put your work out there; someone somewhere will definitely notice.”

She further added, “It is better to do work with less people than to not work at all.” She also presented a song in various Indian regional languages.

Talking about the impact of the pandemic on music industry, Mr Ray commented, “There are going to be major ramifications in the music industry. Today, artists are as good as they are online.” On the future trends in music, he added, “There are fewer songs in films. In such case, musicians switch to non-films. Good songs and good movies are going to exist, but their paths are not going to intertwine.”

Mr Acharya added a business perspective to the changing Indian cinema industry. Talking about the Indian scenario of theatrical industry, he said, “Throughout history, the nature of cinema viewing has changed many times, but cinema never died.” He also talked about the

global scenario, suggesting that there would be a rise of productions in year 2021, as conditions begin to normalise.

On the rise of content consumption on OTT platforms, Mr Puri remarked, “Content consumption is on the rise. There are many avenues for the new talents.” He also encouraged the student participants present in the session, by advising, “Focus on skills. I believe its not important to score in all subjects but maintain a consistency in your core strengths.”

Mr Asghar spoke on the condition of film industry at USA. Putting the major surge in COVID casualties affecting USA in context with the topic, he said, “There is a halt. Major film corporations are bringing their films to streaming platforms.” He also added, “There is a rise of niche OTT platforms. Audience are getting used to watching content on their personal devices.”

Dr Ambrish Saxena suggested, “In media everything is going to co-exist. As newer technology arrives, there would be changes in media, but all the media platforms will remain.” Speaking about the need to adopt to change, he commented, “In the changing times, there is a need for good content. This is the time for collaborations.”

Reflecting on the discussion during the session, Prof. Chowdhury said, “The pandemic has brought about new and unique ways of producing content. Film Festivals like CIFFI provide informative exchange and help with the advancement of media.”