

Session 2- July 12 AN- Panel Discussion on ‘Gender Equality and inclusivity in Malayalam Cinema’ by Ms Maala Parvathy, Ms Vidhu Vincent & Ms Anumol K



Vidhu Vincent- Gender equality is a subject to be discussed with more focus and depth. The recent issues of women establish that what we were doing and discussing are not enough about the topic. More campaigns and discussions are needed in this regard. A film magazine is available with the title 'Deep Focus'. Deep focus is a cinematographic or photographic technique. Whenever an area is focused for photography the object attains greater significance. A subject is taken into account with much focus, hence the title of the webinar series is very meaningful. We are nearing 100 years of movies, what was cinema doing to women or what were women doing in movies, how patriarchal norms distort democratic atmosphere in the world should be analytical, and she mentioned J C Daniel and P K Rosy, the Dalit woman. Until recently women came to movies for acting only. The reason why ladies are not interested to work behind the screen should be enquired. In almost all other fields women have equal opportunity with men, but not in the cinema world. Whether the rights are not extracted, many women are going to Film Institutes, but not all of them reach the field. Patriarchal politics works in the world of cinema that the area is not at all women friendly. Some kinds of struggles were initiated, but we were not able to continue with them and get sufficient development. Even though sufficient movements were there for the uplift of people

in the field, women were not even marked or considered as a prominent category. There are various areas for women to work in the fields such as: Director, camera woman, editor, art director, makeup woman, hair artist, catering woman, driver, production executive, controller, production assistants, light girls etc. Changes are happening, but gradual, only with more interference major changes can be brought out. Women considered the field as less secured, but that situation has changed now. Even these girls who are listening would have interest to come to the field. But we do not have favourable circumstances to learn here. Parents are anxious about the safety of their daughters in the field. Five years before there were serious concerns in this regard. There are issues in the field, which can be solved through discussions and other deliberations. Cinema is an ideological tool, though it is not the case with commercial movies. As Lenin has rightly remarked, "Cinema is the art form of the century." Cinema is the platform to exhibit the ideologies of women. Women must not be mere passive listeners, but must have active involvement in order to showcase sisterhood. Women should come forward, not only to the acting field, but other areas as well in order to make this a democratic field. This is the 93rd year of Oscar award, but only one woman got the best director award. In the current year 2021, 17 women got awards in various fields. What made such a drastic change was enquired worldwide, Annbug University made an elaborate study on this earlier. Until recently, Korean movie 'Parasite', 'Moonlight' which addressed marginalisation got mentioned in the context of Oscar. The committee was ready to accept racial issues and marginalised sectors. It was a gradual process; committee had only men until recently, but now it includes various women as well. It was not an easy journey for her, which would have been for a man to take the second movie after making the first one 'Manhole' in 2016. Inclusivity should begin from home.

Anumol- Agreed with the previous speaker's opinions and added a few points. Definitely this is a male dominated field. Female perspective was not seen here. Only the perspectives which men considered as that of women were picturised. People should be educated through art works on what are the needs of women, how their emotions are. Female based cinema was not exhibited properly. To break the image imposed so far is the first task. Movies like 'Saras,' 'The Great Indian Kitchen' etc gave some space to women in the present age. We were glorifying many films which were not worthy to be praised it is good that such tendency is getting changed nowadays.

Maala Parvathy – she began her talk by mentioning that so far the discussion was on how women are portrayed in movies and what are the possibilities of work in cinema and the issues in connection with it. She said that she is going to focus upon the fact, what has cinema done to the consciousness of the public. Women are given stereotypic roles to play and behave. How a good woman

should behave, how one slap from the male character bring a huge transformation in a ruling mother in law or other women characters. There are movies that announce that a girl who became the victim of rape should not lead a normal life. In the movie like 'Kilichundan Mambazham' what is shown through comedy is how the married girl who is trying to elope with her lover is trying to preserve her chastity. Actually an art should make us freer and must liberate us from the narrow-mindedness; on the contrary, cinema is trying to cage our thoughts. She cited examples of women like Parvathy Thiruvoth, Anumol, Sameera etc. who successfully established themselves in the various fields of cinema. Even then the movie world is not very safe that depends on our minds. A woman should be capable of saying 'no' to a superior who behaves badly to her. Our life is not in the hands of any godfathers. If we have skill and talent, no one can defeat us, everyone in the world has suffered rejection sometime or other. We must work with perseverance, focus and attention in order to become successful. We must have knowledge about the position we need to reach and must work hard for achievement. How we are treated depends on our attitude. With the point that we must be fearless and wise, if so no one can defeat you, inclusivity and equality does not matter in that case, she winded up her talk for interaction.

- Is it necessary to prefix lady to women 'superstars'?

It is not that the affixing of 'lady' reduces inclusivity or gender equality. It can be taken in the positive sense that they are called as mere superstars and women have an extra 'lady' in the terminology. Earlier there were no women to be called so; today we have Manju Warriar, Nayanthara etc to assume that position. It is knowledge that makes us victorious, not arguments and disputes.

- The question posed to Ms Vidhu Vincent was, inclusivity often includes men and women, as a director how do you pursue lesbians, gays and their representation on screen?

We talk about 'he' and 'she' and often forget to address people who occupy the position between them. Recently the trend has changed in literature and films. She said she has never thought about picturising the third gender in cinema, because the issue of women itself remain unresolved. But many friends are thinking about their subject seriously and producers are also willing to make films based on such themes.

- Why LGBT categories have no space in movies?

Until recently they were not given any space in the society. Even now certain political parties and religion show displeasure to them. Only after getting their rights, they could think about such

opportunities. Our country is not able to fully accept them, they have to come forward to establish their space.

Meanwhile Ms Anumol asked the reason for not promoting films like 'Udalazham' when the character was played by Gauri Vasuki the viewership is lesser compared to 'Njan Marykutty' where Jayasurya played the lead role. The 'Udalazham' crew is thinking about another such project, but they are not getting a producer because of less audience support. Acting is a different field of activity that everyone cannot do. It is not necessary to be a murderer to perform the role of a murderer in cinema.

Women are not occupying the central position in cinema not because of lack of opportunity, but because of their less stability. They come to the limelight and go away quickly. On the other hand, men stay in the field for longer period.

Cinema cannot carry on without questioning discriminations based on class, colour or religion. That was a very productive panel discussion which concluded with a positive note that parents should invest their money to educate girls to make right choices in their lives rather than living according to the choices made by others.

Session 3- July 13- Bina Paul- Introduction to Visual Editing

The poster is for a webinar series titled 'DEEP focus WEBINAR SERIES ON Film Making & Film Appreciation'. It is for Session IV, 'INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL EDITING', held on 13 JULY 2021 from 4.00 PM to 6 PM. The speaker is Smt. Bina Paul, Film Editor & Vice Chairperson, Kerala State Chalachitra Academy. The event is organized by MES ASMABI COLLEGE, P. VEMBALLUR, KODUNGALLUR, in association with the KERALA STATE CHALACHITRA ACADEMY. The poster includes logos for the organizing institutions and a QR code in the top left corner.

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DEEP focus
WEBINAR SERIES ON
Film Making & Film Appreciation

**SESSION IV
INTRODUCTION TO
VISUAL EDITING**

**13 JULY 2021
4.00 PM - 6 PM**

Smt. Bina Paul
Film Editor &
Vice Chairperson, Kerala State Chalachitra Academy

President: Dr. A. Rijo | Coordinator: Dr. N.P. Suresh, Deputy Director (Programmes), Kerala State Chalachitra Academy;
Smt. Rajma Nasser (Assistant Professor, MES Asmabi College) | Convenors: Dr. T.R. Muralikrishnan (Inch. English),
Prasanna T.P. (Inch. Digital Film Production); Saranya M. Nasser (Inch. Mass Communication)

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