

# INDIAN PANORAMA AT IFFI 2019

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## Abstract:

Indian Film Festival of India (IFFI) has celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> festival from November 20<sup>th</sup> to November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Indian Panorama is a flagship component of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). It was introduced in 1978 as part of the stupendous IFFI umbrella to promote Indian films along with India's rich culture and heritage with the help of cinematic art.

A maximum of 26 feature films, including the Best Feature Film of the National Film Awards of the respective year, distinguished by cinematic, thematic and aesthetic excellence, were selected in accordance with the conditions and procedure in the said regulations of Indian Panorama.

This paper attempts to explain the genres of films which were screened in Indian Panorama Section in Golden Jubilee of IFFI. It is a qualitative research. The descriptive writing has been used for this paper.

## Keywords:

**IFFI, Golden Jubilee, Indian Panorama, Film Screening, Genres.**

## Introduction:

The International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa aims at providing a common platform for filmmakers of the world to project their excellence in film art; contributing to the understanding and appreciation of film cultures of different nations in the context of their social and cultural ethos; and promoting friendship and co-operation among people of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The concept and theme of IFFI is rooted in “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, the phrase which exemplifies the Indian nation of non-violence and peaceful coexistence.

*‘Ayam bandhurayam neti ganana laghuchetasam, Udāracharitanām tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam’*

The above extract from the Vedic scripture Maha Upanishad says 'One is my brother and the other is not – is the thinking of a narrow-minded person. For those who are broad-minded, liberals, or noble people, the entire world is a one big family.'<sup>2</sup>

Srinivasa Santhanam, former Deputy Director, IFFI, shared the history of IFFI at an exclusive interview.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eoimadrid.gov.in/pdf/IFFI%20RULE%20&%20REGULATIONS.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iffigoa.org/the-festival-from-yesterday-to-tomorrow.html>

“Competition section for world cinema used to happen only in New Delhi and it was introduced only in the third edition (1965) and happened subsequently in 4<sup>th</sup> (1969) and 5<sup>th</sup> editions (1975). Alternatively, Filmotsav used to happen in State Capitals regularly and no competition was held in them. The competition was held till the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Film Festival in 1987. After that no competition section was included till 1996.

Interestingly, all the editions of both IFF and Filmotsav were merged in 1993 and it was named as 24<sup>th</sup> edition of IFFI. In 1996, the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of IFFI reintroduced the competition section only for Asian Women Directors.

There was no competition in 28<sup>th</sup> IFFI and in the 29<sup>th</sup> edition 1998, the competition was for Asian Directors as there were no quality films received from Asian Women Directors. The 30<sup>th</sup> edition was held in Hyderabad without competition in 1999. In 2000, the 31<sup>st</sup> edition was held in New Delhi along with the Asian Directors competition.

In 2001, the 32<sup>nd</sup> edition proposed for Bengaluru got cancelled. However, Indian Panorama films were screened in the Kolkata International Film Festival (IFF) as well as in Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI) Mumbai Film Festival (FF). In 2002 and 2003, the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> editions respectively, IFFI happened in New Delhi along with Asian Directors competition.

In 2004, the venue was shifted to Goa and it became the permanent venue from the 35<sup>th</sup> edition with the World Competition section.

Since 1952, India has hosted 49 International Film Festivals, both competitive and non-competitive. The 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the festival included a competition for feature films by directors from all continents.

In 2019, the Golden Jubilee or the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of IFFI brought to the shores of Goa the best of recent Indian Panorama and International Cinema, along with special sections such as Golden Peacock Retrospective, Debut Film Competition, Soul of Asia Retrospective, Master Filmmakers Collection, Festival Kaleidoscope, Accessible Films for Differently Abled, World Panorama 2019, Filmmaker in Focus, Restored Indian Classics, ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal Competition, Retrospective of Indian New Wave Cinema, Konkani Film Package and Dadasaheb Phalke Award. The 50<sup>th</sup> edition of IFFI also showcased 50 films of 50 women directors which reflected the contribution of women in cinema.

In order to celebrate the spirit of 50 Golden Years of the International Film Festival of India, the Films Division curated a package of 17 MIFF award-winning films made in the last 10 years. Movies that gained recognition internationally at various other film festivals like Cannes Film Festival, Venice Film Festival, Berlin International Film Festival, Mumbai International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival and Busan International Film Festival were featured as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> edition. The specially curated “Homage Section” paid tribute to 13 eminent individuals who had contributed to Indian cinema during their lifetime. Two-time Palme d’Or winner

Ken Loach had a Retrospective Section at the festival.<sup>3</sup>

## Indian Panorama:

Indian Panorama is a flagship component of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), under which the best of contemporary Indian films are selected for the promotion of film art. It was introduced in 1978 as part of the stupendous IFFI umbrella to promote Indian films along with India's rich culture and heritage with the help of cinematic art. Since its inception, the Indian Panorama has been completely devoted to showcasing the best Indian films of the year.

Organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the primary aim of Indian Panorama is to select feature and non-feature films of cinematic, thematic and aesthetic excellence for the promotion of film art through their non-profit screening under different categories such as:

- (1) International Film Festivals in India and abroad.
- (2) Indian Film Weeks held under Bilateral Cultural Exchange Programmes and Specialized Indian Film Festivals outside cultural exchange protocols.
- (3) Special Indian Panorama Festivals in India.

Indian Panorama is screened in two categories – Feature films and Non-feature films. In the golden jubilee of IFFI, 26 feature films and 15 non-feature films were screened.<sup>4</sup>

## Review of Literature:

*Marijke De Valck (2007), "Film Festivals from European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia"* book presented a comprehensive introduction to the film festival phenomenon, which includes both a historical overview of the development of film festivals and a cultural assessment of the workings of the present-day international film festival circuit<sup>5</sup>.

*Pooja Rangan (2010), article on "Some annotations on the film festival as an emerging medium in India"* inventoried a number of issues germane to future discussions of the film festival as an emerging exhibition venue in India. She examined some of the existing theoretical and critical models for analyzing film festivals and argued that the film festival should be considered as a 'medium' that behaved as a productive constraint on both film production and spectatorship. This article considered the unique relation between the spectatorial behaviors encouraged within festival settings and the narrative strategies of Indian popular films, so as to interrogate their impact on the cultivation of a critically-oriented Indian film audience. This paper concluded by evaluating the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.iffigoa.org/the-festival-from-yesterday-to-tomorrow.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://dff.gov.in/IndianPanorama.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> De Valck, M. (2007), "Film festivals: From European geopolitics to global cinephilia" (p. 280), Amsterdam University Press.

promises and challenges of the infrastructural limitations faced by Indian film festivals for the emergence of alternative cinema publics<sup>6</sup>.

This article on “*The rise of experimental film festivals in India. Studies in South Asian Film & Media*” by Gauri Nori (2019) examined the emergence of independent platforms to screen radical and alternative cinema in India by tracing two case-studies: Experimental, a biannual festival curated by Shai Heredia and The New Medium section curated by Shaina Anand. While Experimental has remained largely independent, relying on the support of established artists and cultural organizations, The New Medium section has managed to secure its place within the programme of the MAMI Mumbai Film Festival (MFF). Although their approach may differ, both curators were committed to promoting a culture of moving image experimentation in the country. This article aimed to identify the curatorial practices and strategies that have established these alternative film festivals both within the International film festival network and the larger film community in the country<sup>7</sup>.

Ratheesh Radhakrishnan (2018), expressed his opinion in his article, “*We need to talk about Indian Panorama: A report from the International Film Festival of India 2017*” that in 2017, even before the 48<sup>th</sup> edition of IFFI began, the anxiety around the sudden changes in the top organizational structure of the festival and the denial of screening permission to two films, including S Durga and Ravi Jadhav’s Marathi film *Nude*, hung in the air. For regular attendees, the announcement of a James Bond retrospective seemed to indicate the possibility that the festival was put together rather hurriedly<sup>8</sup>.

The number of research based on International Film Festival of India are less. And especially this paper focuses on Indian Panorama of the Golden Jubilee of IFFI.

### **Research Methodology:**

The Autoethnography research method is used for this qualitative study. The researchers have visited the International Film Festival of India, Goa at 2019, the Golden Jubilee Celebration of IFFI. There they have watched the movies and collected the secondary data like Peacock (IFFI Magazines), Indian Official Catalogue of Indian Cinema and International Cinema – 2019 and interpreted.

### **Indian Panorama - Feature Films:**

A maximum of 26 feature films, including the Best Feature Film of the National Film Awards of the respective year, distinguished by cinematic, thematic and aesthetic excellence, are selected in accordance with the conditions and procedure in the said regulations of Indian Panorama.

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<sup>6</sup> Rangan, P. (2010). Some annotations on the film festival as an emerging medium in India. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 8(2), 123-141.

<sup>7</sup> Nori, G. (2019). The rise of experimental film festivals in India. *Studies in South Asian Film & Media*, 10(1), 7-22.

<sup>8</sup> NECSUS (7) 1, Spring 2018: 263–271 URL: <https://necsus-ejms.org/we-need-to-talk-about-indian-panorama-a-report-from-the-international-film-festival-of-india-2017/>

At the 50<sup>th</sup> year of IFFI, the Feature Film Jury, comprising 13 members, was headed by acclaimed filmmaker and screenwriter Priyadarshan.

The Feature Jury constituted of the following members:

1. Sreelekha Mukherji, Actress & Director
2. Ahathian, Filmmaker, Writer, Director & Actor
3. Sabyasachi Mohapatra, Filmmaker
4. Vinod Ganatra, Filmmaker
5. Rajendra Prasad Choudhary, Cinematographer, Filmmaker and Film Producer
6. Kuukuu Kohli, Filmmaker and Film Producer
7. Jadu Moni Dutta, Film Actor and Director
8. Harish Bhimani, Narrator, Screenwriter and Filmmaker
9. Akashaditya Lama, Filmmaker
10. K Puttaswamy, Film Critic, Film Historian and Writer
11. Phunsukh Laddakhi, Film Actor and Educationist
12. Shri Girish Mohite, Filmmaker

The Feature Film Jury selected 21 feature films from the entries. The package included Best Feature Film of 66<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards 2018, titled “Hellaro” (Gujarati), by virtue of direct entry as per Indian Panorama 2019 Clause 8.6.

Five mainstream films were also selected under Indian Panorama Section of 50<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival of India, 2019, by an Internal Committee of Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF) based on the recommendations of Film Federation of India (FFI) and Producers’ Guild.

The jury chose the film, Hellaro (Gujarati), directed by Abhishek Shah, as the Opening Feature Film of Indian Panorama 2019.

The complete list of 26 feature films selected for the Indian Panorama section of the 50<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival of India 2019 is given below.

S.No.	Name of the Film	Director	Genre	Language	Duration in Mins	Year of Release
1.	Anandi Gopal	Sameer Sanjay Vidwans	Biopic	Marathi	134	2019
2.	Badhaai Ho	Amid Sharma	Family, Comedy, Drama	Hindi	123	2018
3.	Bahattar Hoorain	Sanjay Puran Singh Sauhan	Dark Comedy	Hindi	80	2019
4.	Bhonga	Shivaji Lotan Patil	Drama	Marathi	94	2018
5.	Ek Je Chhilo Raja	Srijit Mukherji	Drama, Mystery, Thriller	Bengali	147	2018
6.	F2 – Fun and Frustration	Anil Ravi Pudi	Comedy Drama	Telugu	150	2019
7.	Gully Boy	Zoya Akthar (F)	Drama, Music, Romance	Hindi	153	2019
8.	Hellaro	Abhishek Shah	Drama	Gujarati	123	2018
9.	House Owner	Lakshmi Ramakrishnan (F)	Family Drama	Tamil	109	2019
10.	Iewduh	Pradip Gurbah	Drama	Khasi, Garo	94	2019
11.	In the Land of Poison Women	Manju Borah (F)	Drama	Pangchenpa	105	2018
12.	Jallikattu	Lijo Jose Pallissery	Action, Crime, Thriller	Malayalam	91	2019
13.	Jyeshthoputro	Kaushik Ganguly	Drama	Bengali	126	2019
14.	Kenjira	Manoj Kana	Drama	Paniya	101	2019
15.	Kolambi	T.K. Rajeev Kumar	Drama	Malayalam	130	2019
16.	Mai Ghat: Crime No. 103 /2005	Ananth Narayan Mahadevan	Biography, Crime	Marathi	104	2019
17.	Netaji	Vijeesh Mani	Drama	Irula	82	2018
18.	Nirban	Goutham Halder		Bengali	107	2018
19.	Oththa Seruppu size 7	Radhakrishnan Parthiban	Drama, Thriller	Tamil	120	2019
20.	Pareeksha	Prakash Jha	Drama	Hindi	120	2019
21.	Photo Prem	Aditya Rathi & Gayathri Patil	Comedy	Marathi	89	2018
22.	Ranganayaki	Dayal Padmanabhan	Crime, Drama	Kannada	114	2019
23.	Super 30	Vikas bahl	Biography Drama	Hindi	155	2019
24.	Tujhya Aaila	Sujay S. Dahakey	Drama	Marathi	85	2019
25.	Uri.The Surgical Strike	Aditya Dhar	Action Drama History	Hindi	138	2019
26.	Uyare	Manu Ashokan	Drama	Malayalam	125	2019

### List of Indian Panorama – Feature Films

In the Indian Panorama Feature Films category, a total of 26 films were screened. Among them, six were from Hindi. It is the main language of India and the official language along with English and also the official language of Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.<sup>9</sup> So one fourth (25%) of the films from Hindi language were screened. Next to Hindi, four Marathi films, three Malayalam films and two Tamil films were screened. One film each was screened from Telugu, Gujarathi, Kashi,

<sup>9</sup> <http://linguistics.illinois.edu>

Garo, Pangchenpa, Paniya, Irula and Kannada. The Indian Panorama Feature Films section showcased films of four lesser spoken languages, like Khasi/Garo, Paniya, Irula and Pangchenpa.

The film 'Nethaji' is the first film in Irula language. It is a winner of a Guinness world record in 2018.

Pangchenpa language, locally known as Pangchen, is spoken in Zemithang in the easternmost part of the country on the Indo-China border. The film 'In the Land of Poison Women' is made in Pangchenpa.

The dialect in the film is spoken only by 5000 people. Assamese film director Manju Borah referred to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that "India has 700 different dialects. If filmmakers make films in these dialects it is anthropologically important. We come to know about places through cinema. People become curious and that's how our civilization grows". She said that she was so happy when films were made in dialects spoken by aboriginal people.<sup>10</sup>

Different genres were screened in the Golden Jubilee of IFFI in 2019. Half of the screened films were from the Drama genre. The other genres were Biopic, Family, Comedy, Dark Comedy, Mystery, Thriller, Music, Romance, Action, Crime and History. Out of the 26 films in the Indian Panorama category, three were directed by women.

It is clear from the synopsis that half of the films screened in the Indian Panorama Feature Film section had family and societal issues as their themes.

'Hellaro', a Gujarati film that opened the Indian Panorama section of golden jubilee of IFFI, is loosely inspired by folklore from Kutch district in Gujarat. The story is set in 1975 and revolves around a group of women struggling against patriarchal mandates by funding their freedom through dance.

Abhishek Shah, the director of the film, conceptualized the story of 'Hellaro' to portray what happened when dance itself became a tool to segregate women. "The women were proscribed from dancing and 'Garba' (Gujarati traditional dance) became a mode where they find a voice, a life and try to break their shackles. The 'Dholi' or drummer they find stranded in the desert offers them a jolt of an escape from their otherwise oppressive life".

The director of 'Hellaro', Shah, decided to make a film about the harsh reality of female oppression when he interacted with an ex-school mate on FB, and realised that she did not have a profile picture because her husband did not like it. This condition of an educated professional woman made him realise that in some way or other women are still subjected to male domination. The gender equality we see around is often a veil, hiding the truth of female subjugation<sup>11</sup>.

'Anandhi Gopal' is based on the real story of the titular character who became India's first female physician in 1886. The director of the Marathi film 'Anandhi Gopal' (2019) said, "When a man says he permits his wife to work or study further, it makes him wonder why she needs his permission?" So even if it is true that

<sup>10</sup> "The Peacock" (26 November 2019), P.No. 4, IFFI Magazine, Goa.

<sup>11</sup> "The Peacock" (21 November 2019), P.No. 4, IFFI Magazine, Goa.

the situation has improved for women as compared to earlier times, there is still discrimination in some form or other<sup>12</sup>.

Two films in Hindi and Telugu have talked about middle-aged mother's pregnancy and couple's family issues in a commercial, casual and jovial method.

'In the Land of Poison Women' multiple award-winning Assamese film director Manju Borah says that she wanted to bring the focus on aboriginal people, to show that their stories are universal and no different from those of people in any other part of the country<sup>13</sup>.

Some films talked about the problems faced in education and cultural changes and discipline changing tendency of the students at school level.

Though the Tamil film, 'House Owner', explains the love of the elderly couple, it shows how people in Chennai suffered at the time of floods in 2017. The film, 'Otha Seruppu Size No-7', directed by Radhakrishnan Parthiban, is a single shot film, a first attempt in Kollywood. This film also describes the inequality of the economic status by the single shot presentation by Parthiban, Director-cum-Actor.

The films screened in the Indian Panorama section expressed the regular life of many interior and unpopular villages. Some films recalled childhood memories and taught social harmony. 'Kenjira' and 'Renganayaki' spoke about the pain and struggle met by the girl due to sexual harassment. 'Nethaji', the first Irula language film, and 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' showcased patriotism and freedom struggle.

On the other hand, the festival films gave importance to religious issues and terrorism also. 'Bahattar Hoorain' and 'Bhonga' were based on Islam and its concepts and ideas whereas 'Ek je Chhilo Raja' dealt with Hinduism.

Some religious organisations opposed the screening of some films that had caste and communal issues and terrorism as their themes in the theatres of Tamil Nadu. These films are censored before screening and hence creativity and original ideas are not expressed fully in theatres. But film festivals provide the space to express the original ideas of the creators. Films screened at IFFI are either certified by the Central Board of Film Certification, India, or exempted certification under Section 9 of Cinematograph Act, 1952<sup>14</sup>.

'Jellikattu' reflected the communal problem through a bull. 'Kolambi' and 'Photo Prem' portrayed the realistic expectations of elderly people.

'Mai Ghat: Crime No. 103/2005' narrated the real-life story of a Kerala woman who won a 13-year-old legal battle for her son and dealt with human rights. The actor who played the lead character, Usha Jadhav, received Silver Peacock Award 2019 at the valedictory function of IFFI 2019.

<sup>12</sup> "The Peacock" (24 November 2019), P.No. 13, IFFI Magazine, Goa.

<sup>13</sup> "The Peacock" (26 November 2019), P.No. 4, IFFI Magazine, Goa.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.iffigoa.org/rules-and-regulations.php>



The Feature Film category also had a subsection on mainstream cinema, under which popular films like Gully Boy, Uri: The Surgical Strike, Super 30 and Badhaai Ho were screened. Telugu film F2 was also screened under this category.

### **Conclusion:**

In the Indian Panorama – Feature Film category films were selected on the basis of their discussion of social, economic, political, cultural, traditional and educational issues.

Jury Member Ashok Cashyap said that the aim of the members was to showcase India and the diversity of its language, culture, art and heritage. “The films showcase a mini- India at IFFI.,” he added<sup>15</sup>.



<sup>15</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1878177>