

OTT platforms should mentor the independent and creative cinema : Manoj Bajpayee

Consistent viewership is the biggest benefit of OTT platforms: Srikrishna Dayal

Master Class at 54th IFFI unveils the art of Crafting Compelling Web Series for OTT

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A Master Class session on **Crafting Compelling Web Series for OTT** was held at 54 IFFI, Goa today with luminaries of the silver screen - Manoj Bajpayee, Raj Nidimoru, Krishna D.K., Apoorva Bakshi, and Srikrishna Dayal.



From L to R: Naman Ramachandran, Apoorva Bakshi, Raj Nidimoru, Krishna D.K., Manoj Bajpayee, Srikrishna Dayal

Moderated by Naman Ramachandran, the session delved into the intricacies and nuances of creating impactful narratives for the digital audience on Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms.



Manoj Bajpayee, a beacon of excellence in the cinematic realm, unravelled the enigmatic journey of an actor. With his words painting the canvas of an actor's aspiration and dedication to breathe life into a character, he emphasized the paramount importance of preparation, consistency, character graph, and embracing the flow that challenges and elevates every actor's essence. "You have to prepare well for the role and then forget about it to keep your mind empty to be receptive to new ideas coming," he emphasised.

Speaking on the success, failures and the future of OTT, *The Family Man* actor said that OTT platforms should mentor independent creative cinema.

Sharing the saga of his acclaimed OTT masterpiece '*The Family Man*,' Manoj unveiled the essence of strength in preparation and the art of living the character's journey on screen. "Preparation is the key", he said. "It is equally important to unlearn and be open to new ideas so as to not become stiff in your performance," he shared. His words resonated with the essence of struggle, portraying it as the crucible that fortifies an actor's mettle.

Srikrishna Dayal, a theatre maestro and another key actor in *The Family Man* series, spoke of the symbiotic relationship between the stage and the digital canvas of OTT and remarked that consistent viewership is the biggest benefit of OTT platforms. He mentioned that the discipline imbibed from the theatre, enables nurturing the adaptability of actors across diverse forms of acting.

Raj Nidimoru, the co-director of the OTT Series *The Family Man* illuminated the profound impact of documentaries on the ever-evolving landscape of OTT, echoing the sentiments of a changing paradigm. He highlighted the significant impact these narratives have on the platform.

Krishna D.K., the co-director of the OTT Series *The Family Man*, painted a canvas of perpetual learning, unlearning and relearning that has helped to traverse the spectrum of independent movie-making, shows and series for the OTT platform.

Raj and D.K., the dynamic director duo, exalted their experience of independent movie-making as the springboard for their work on OTT and it uniquely shapes their craft on the OTT. They emphasised the significance of confidence in the story that pushes for impactful storytelling even while working within the constraints of budget.

Apoorva Bakshi, from her roots in banking to producing the renowned '*Delhi Crime*' series, emphasized the essence of faith in the script, outlining the essentials for story engineering in both fiction and non-fiction genres. Elaborating on the preparation of a pitch for a new series, called as *Bible* in the OTT ecosystem, illustrated the pivotal role of a clear concept note along with a well-crafted pilot in fiction, and the necessity of thorough research in non-fiction genres.



At the end of the session, the trailer for Manoj Bajpayee's upcoming opus *Joram* was also played, teasing audiences with promises of yet another cinematic marvel.

Notably, IFFI has introduced the Best Web Series (OTT) Award this year to honour the ingenuity and talent behind the flourishing content in the digital realm. This year, 32 entries have been received in 10 languages from 15 OTT platforms. Certificates and a cash prize of Rs.10 lakhs will be given as prize money to the winning series, which will be announced in the closing ceremony.

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