

# ‘IFFI offers Great Encouragement for Young and Aspiring Filmmakers to Showcase their Creative Thinking and Values to the World: Santosh Sivan

Awards render power to the filmmaker: Santosh Sivan

Young filmmakers should begin by questioning the master’s truth, questioning the past: Sekhar Das, Jury Member

Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film Jury interact with Media at 55th IFFI

#IFFIWood, 21 November 2024

With an aim to promote new and young talent in the country, the 55<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) has instituted a new award category: **‘Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film’** which will showcase five remarkable debut films that highlight new perspectives, diverse narratives, and innovative cinematic styles from across India.

Today, the Jury, tasked with selecting the top film from the five entries in this category, interacted with the media at the IFFI Media Centre in Panaji, Goa. During the interaction, the Jury members expressed their hope and conviction that Indian Cinema is safe and fast improving in all aspects of film-making with the multitude of creative talent and aspiring youth in the Sector. They also provided insights into the Award's criteria and the selection process.

In his opening remarks, Jury Chairman Shri Santosh Sivan, renowned cinematographer with numerous accolades, including 12 National Film Awards, highlighted that the jury had recommended expanding the category to include student films, particularly those created by film institute students. He emphasized that such initiatives are vital for shaping the future of Indian cinema, underscoring their importance in fostering "the tomorrow" of the industry. He also stated that Awards and recognitions will empower aspiring filmmakers and encourage them to come up with new ideas and improve their craft.

Shri Sekhar Das, Jury Member mentioned that the digital age might have made it a little bit easier for the first-time filmmakers to place their initiative before a larger number of audiences now. But he thanked and emphasized that even with the opportunities available in the digital era, this initiative from

IFFI will boost the morale of the aspiring minds and inspire them greatly. Shri Das also recollected how in his first film, which was based on tribal community, he dared to raise few questions in the portrayal of 'Agantuk', the last film by the Maestro Satyajit Ray, where the protagonist aspires to go back to the simplicity of tribal life. He emphasized on the importance of asking such critical questions on the masters' creations to pave the path for the future.

Shri. Suneel Puranik Jury Member wholeheartedly appreciated the capability and maturity of the first-time filmmakers in terms of choosing the subjects for their first ever experiment with the camera. He also congratulated NFDC and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for placing such organic and well-versed mechanism to identify the best of the creative efforts by instituting the Debut Director Award.

For Shri. M. V. Raghu, cinema means magic. He put importance on the understanding of the craft of making films through light, camera and action. He also deliberated on the requirement of quality film education to create wonderful new minds.

First-time Jury Member, Shri. Vinit Kanojiya explained the toughness of the task he felt to change side from filmmakers' one to become in the panel of the Jury.

All the Jury members shared their experience of being a debut director long back and said that youngsters today have ample opportunity in terms of platforms to showcase their talent. If there is no platform, they will create one, said Shri Shivan. Gone are the days when one required formal training in filmmaking to initiate in the field. These days, youngsters are exposed to the world of cameras very early.

The press conference was moderated by Rajith Chandran.

**The Debut Director Jury comprises of the following Members:**

1. Shri Santosh Sivan (Chairperson), Cinematographer and Director
2. Shri. Suneel Puranik, Actor, Director and Producer
3. Shri. Sekhar Das, Film director and Scriptwriter
4. Shri. M. V. Raghu, Cinematographer and Director
5. Shri. Vinit Kanojiya, Filmmaker, Writer and Editor

This Award aims to honour the creativity and potential of first-time directors, acknowledging their contribution to the evolution of Indian cinema. By spotlighting these newcomers, it shows IFFI's commitment to encouraging the next generation of cinematic storytellers. It is worthwhile mentioning that the Director of the award-winning film will be accorded with Certificate and Cash Prize of Rs. 5 lakhs for his/her creative vision, artistic storytelling merit, and overall impact.

**Watch the interaction here:**

**To know more about jury:** <https://iffigoa.org/debut-director-jury>

**To know more about Debut Director Films:** <https://iffigoa.org/debut-director-films/2024/debut-director-films>

**To know more about Debut Director Preview Committee:** <https://iffigoa.org/debut-directors-preview-committee-2024>

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