

Films need to open space for a Gender discourse
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There was complete silence in the darkened auditorium as the end credits rolled up after the "Remembrances of things present" was screened at the LV Prasad Film & TV Academy. The questions asked of Chandra Siddan, The documentary filmmaker ranged from "how could you put your life on screen" to "it must have taken a lot of courage to make this film? The film touches on various issues such as corporal punishment, denying girl children education in preference to the boy in the family, child marriage, early pregnancy, female infanticide and disinheritance of female children all in a matter of fact manner yet moving and powerful presentation. The powerful analogy of dreams and continuing journeys made identification with the film easy and immediate. The audience made up of students of cinema from LV Prasad, Media studies and Visual communication of Loyola College, PSG College and MS University as also film buffs were participating at the film symposium and screening as part of the Prajnya 16 day campaign against gender violence.

Jointly organized by LV Prasad Academy, Alliance Francaise de Madras and Prajnya, began with a presentation by Mr. K. Hariharan, National award winning director of Ezavadhu Manidhan and the Director of LV Prasad academy on the feminization of the nation where he posits that cinema in India is marked by the female characters representing the country and the males being the state and nation vie for control over her. The state uses oppressive measures while the nation romances and loves her deeply. Using Mughal-e-Azam as his reference he outlined this point convincingly. Later Director Vasanth who was indisposed wanted to be apart of the proceedings and did so via teleconferencing. He responded to questions on his film Satham Podathey (after a screening of a sequence in the film) on domestic violence, sensitivity I handling gender based violence and the need to also look at all genders with certain sensibilities.

The debate centered around the need to articulate such gender violence in popular cinema not in a melodramatic manner alone and with gimmicks but with sensitivity and an understanding of such issues and the ramifications of the private experiences being shared in a public domain making it easier for people to talk about these incidents. This opens up opportunities for a discourse enabling women to come out and discuss their encounters with violence inside and outside the home. A lot of questions also explored the spectators role in meaning making and the notions of reality, represented and reproduced reality were also discussed at length.



Director Hariharan making his presentation gender violence and cinema



Uma Vangal, moderator and Hariharan teleconferencing with director vasanth



Chandra Siddan responding to questions on her film



Students at film symposium