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Documentary, audience gap must be bridged™

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MADURAI: There is a huge gap between documentary films and its audience, says Anjali Monteiro, professor and dean, School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Television channels are not giving much importance to parallel films or documentaries. There is no television channel in the country that broadcasts short films and documentaries, rued Monteiro, who was in Madurai to participate in the 14th International Madurai Film Festival, which kicked off on Thursday.

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"Except a national news channel, no other television has come forward to telecast the documentary films. Not even the regional televisions support documentary films. Documentary films get a chance to be screened only in film festivals. Awareness among the public about these films should be created. Public should be nurtured with the taste of documentary films so that they will tend to appreciate it," Monteiro told TOI.

Unlike other countries, where documentary films are produced with good financial support, in India such support is never found. If a larger audience for documentary films is created, then the films can be produced with good budget, she added. Anjali, who is currently working on a documentary film on the Mumbai 1992 riots along with K P Jayasankar, another film maker based at Mumbai noted that documentary films based on the theme of communal violence should be made for the purpose of creating awareness among the public. The films can be used to expose the instigators of such violence she said.

"Most of the instigators of the communal violence go unpunished by the law. They can be exposed to the public through documentary films. They instigate communal violence to divide the public in the name of community and religion and play politics out of it," she said.

Talking about the present situation of documentary filmmakers, Jayasankar said that "one cannot make living out of documentary filmmaking. The problem is the documentary films do not reach to the larger audience. Government is neither supporting the documentary films financially nor promoting it among the public. May be the government does not want to encourage the documentary films, which

may criticise it by focussing on the public issue," he said.

Talking about the response from the Madurai audience to the film festival, Monteiro said that students enjoyed the films, especially vernacular language ones.

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