



The Journey of a documentary is Full of 'Happy Accidents'. Experts at 19th MIFF discuss the Art of preserving memories through film

Documentaries preserve history, culture and human experiences for future generations

Mumbai, 17 June 2026

The Indian Documentary Producers Association (IDPA) organised an Open Forum on the theme, "*Documentary as a Means of Archiving Men, Moments and Memories*" was held during the 19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF). The session brought together filmmakers Suresh Sharma, Sanjit Narwekar, Roopa Barua and Amrish Roy Choudhury, along with radio presenter Yunus Khan to discuss the role of documentaries in preserving history, culture and collective memory.

The panelists reflected on the documentary-making process and emphasised that documentaries serve not only as records of events and individuals but also as important archives of social, cultural and historical experiences.



Suresh Sharma highlighted the importance of research, fact-checking and a strong narrative structure in documentary filmmaking. He noted that documentaries become memorable when they capture the struggles and sensitivities of their subjects and observed that new discoveries during research often reshape a film's narrative.

Sanjit Narwekar described documentaries as a series of "happy accidents", where the search for one story often leads to unexpected discoveries. He emphasised the need to find fresh perspectives and adapt stories based on new findings.



Roopa Barua shared that films made to tell stories of people and places often become valuable archival records over time. Referring to her films *Riders of the Mist* and *Daughters of the Polo God*, she stressed the importance of storytelling and maintaining audience engagement through careful pacing.

Yunus Khan spoke about the role of radio documentaries in preserving cultural heritage. He highlighted Vividh Bharati's efforts in documenting the journeys of artists and conserving folk music, literature and other cultural traditions from across India.

Amrisha Roy Choudhury underscored the importance of archival research in documentary filmmaking and highlighted the value of institutions such as the National Film Archive of India. He also stressed the need for factual accuracy and careful verification while documenting historical subjects.

What begins as a search for a story often evolves into an important archive of culture, memory and social change noted the panelists. By capturing memories, traditions and lived experiences, documentary films help ensure that history is preserved beyond written records alone. The session concluded with a lively interaction with the audience, focusing on documentary research, archival practices and the importance of preserving memories through film.

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