



OTT Platforms Expanding Opportunities for Documentary Filmmakers, Say Experts at 19th MIFF Open Forum

Documentaries Help Preserve History and Culture for Future Generations, Emphasises Ramesh Patange at 19th MIFF

Mumbai, 19 June 2026

As part of the Indian Documentary Producers' Association (IDPA) Open Forum at the 19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), a session on "Streaming Revolution: Documenting in the Age of OTT" brought together experts from the OTT, media and documentary sectors to discuss how streaming platforms are changing documentary filmmaking and creating new opportunities for filmmakers.

The panel featured Kinnari Dave, Business Head, Shemaroo; Sai Abishek, Head of Content, Warner Bros. Discovery South Asia; senior journalist, author and Padma Shri awardee Ramesh Patange; and veteran cinematographer and filmmaker Dharam Gulati. The session was moderated by filmcritic Lalit Rao.

The discussion focused on how OTT platforms have transformed documentary distribution by taking films beyond festivals, film societies and public broadcasters to wider audiences across India and the world. The panelists agreed that streaming platforms have created new opportunities for filmmakers to showcase their work and connect directly with viewers.



Sai Abishek said documentaries continue to be an important part of Warner Bros. Discovery's content strategy. He noted that genres such as history, mythology, adventure, biographies and true crime are attracting strong audience interest. He added that platforms are looking for original stories, unique access and fresh perspectives, particularly stories from India that can appeal to global audiences.

Kinnari Shah highlighted the importance of understanding changing audience preferences. She said viewers today expect engaging storytelling and that filmmakers must adapt to evolving viewing habits while retaining the authenticity of their stories. She also encouraged documentary makers to actively approach OTT platforms with innovative ideas.

Dharam Gulati stressed the need for greater visibility for documentaries. He observed that many acclaimed documentary films receive recognition at international festivals but often struggle to find wider distribution and audiences in India.

Speaking on the social role of documentaries, Ramesh Patange said they serve as an important medium for educating people about the lives and contributions of great personalities. He noted that documentaries help preserve history, promote social awareness and introduce younger generations to India's cultural heritage and national values.



The session concluded with an interactive discussion on storytelling, distribution, audience engagement and the future of documentary filmmaking in the OTT era.

Great films resonate through passionate voices. Share your love for cinema with #MIFF2026. Tag us @pibmumbai on X, and we'll help spread your passion! For journalists, bloggers, and vloggers wanting to connect with filmmakers for interviews/interactions, reach out to us at miff.mediadesk@pib.gov.in with the subject line: Take One with PIB.

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