

FIPRESCI India holds International Seminar on ‘Film Criticism and New Media’ at the Bengaluru International Film Festival

In between watching and judging films at the Bengaluru International Film Festival(BIFFes), some of our members engaged themselves in a seminar on the hot topic of Film Criticism and New Media, on February 25. The following members participated: Mr. Nachum Mochiach (Israel), Mr. Kaj Van Zoelen (The Netherlands), Mr. Siraj Syed (India), Mr. H.N. Narahari Rao (India) and Mr. Ashok Rane (India).The seminar was presided over by Mr. V.K. Joseph, President, FIPRESCI-India. Noted Kannada film-maker Mr. Girish Kasaravalli, and BIFFes Artistic Director and FIPRESCI-India member, Mr. N. Vidyashankar, also participated.

Due to severe time constraints, Mr. Joseph decided not to present his thoughts at all and advised other speakers to restrict their speeches/papers to five minutes only. Speakers lamented the emergence of cryptic reviews and isolated star ratings on the new media of the internet and mobile phones as pandering to the needs of impatient moviegoers, who lack the patience to go through regular, 1,000-1,500 word reviews. Mr. Kasaravalli confessed that he often made-up his mind to watch movies based only on the star ratings they had garnered, choosing only those that got four stars and more.

Mr. Vidyashankar pointed out that there were three stages of film appreciation: reaction, which was instantaneous; review, which was slightly delayed and somewhat considered; criticism, which was a really deep and well-considered analysis of the film. Narahari Rao emphasised that the power and importance of film critics should not be underestimated. Some great directors owed their initial success to the potential in their early works being foreseen and recorded by critics.

Mochiach, Van Zoelen and Syed were members of the FIPRESCI Jury for Indian Cinema at the festival, which was held in the city of Bengaluru, during February 21-28, 2019. This was the first time that the 11 year-old BIFFes had arranged for a FIPRESCI Jury.