

Film Review **Meghachandra Kongbam**

Ee. Maa. Yove: A Protest in the System



Ee. Maa. Yove

In this world where the value system has been crumbling and the natural law thrown in the wind by those in position, the survival of common man with dignity is questionable. The Indian film in Malayalam - *Ee. Maa. Yove* speaks aloud to smash the corrupt system prevailing in the society. Director- Lizo Jose Pellissery narrates through the film in a realistic approach blending the ethos of the people in the particular region.

Ee. Maa. Yove is one of the favourites of the critics and cinephiles of the 23rd International Film Festival of Kerala 2018. The film has deservedly earned its place in three competition sections - International Competition, Best Asian Film of Network for Promotion of Films in Asian Countries (NETPAC) and Malayalam Cinema Today of the festival; it has bagged the Best Asian Film Award of NETPAC and the Silver Crow Pheasant Award for the Best Director in the International Competition. The film received double honours at the 49th International Film Festival of India 2018, Goa where filmmaker Lijo Jose Pellissery won the Silver Peacock Award for Best Director and Actor Chemban Vinod, the main protagonist in the role of Eeshi won the Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor.

A dark humour by writer PF Mathews, *Ee. Maa. Yove* is set in Chellanam beach, a fishing village in Ernakulam, Kerala. The title *Ee. Maa. Yove* is the abbreviation of Easo Mariyam Yauseppe (Jesus Mary Joseph). In certain Christian communities, these words are whispered into the ears of the dying person. The film revolves around the death of Vavachan, a master mason who returns home after several months. On arriving home, his wife Pennamma asks him to stop going around and to settle down. When his son Eeshi returns home, Vavachan drinks and shares with his son the memories about the grand burial of his father and in turn, his own desire to be buried in a grandeur style. Eeshi readily promises him a befitting burial. Vavachan is very happy and sings a song, but suddenly falls to the ground and dies.



Ee. Maa. Yove

Eeshi earnestly arranges for his father's burial in the most splendid way with all the usual rituals, colorful paraphernalia and celebrations that go with it. But his simple gesture of love and respect for a father meets with unpredictable obstacles and inappropriate reactions from different quarters. The subsequent events bring to the fore the dilemmas and conflicts within the family and the deep ethical crisis simmering in the community, the despair of the earnest and the chilling indifference of the powers-that-be, social, spiritual, political or economic- that loom large over everything. With this intense and emotional core at the centre of narrative, the film transcends the complex web of human relationships, customary rituals and beliefs that express and mark the life and death of a person.

The film opens with a colourful scene of a funeral procession with the beach as the backdrop on a bright sunny day. It is apparently the funeral procession of Vavachan's father.

The film ends with an awesome scene. Eeshi digs a grave in his courtyard and forcefully makes everyone move-out from the courtyard, locks his family inside his home. Finally he asks his father's forgiveness for not being able to fulfill his wishes and buries him. Everyone who came for the funeral stands in the heavy rain and looks at him with remorse and reverence. The reverberating sound of the requiem moves the audience through the realm of life.

Achieving a perfect merger of nearly all cinematic elements and making an accomplished piece of art, Lijo Jose Pellissery delivers his message to give it the deepest penetration possible into the minds of his audience.

Meghachandra Kongbam is a Member of the Fipresci-India. He is based in Imphal.