



## FILM FESTIVAL REPORT

The Centre of Demography of Gender (CDG), in collaboration with the Internal Committee (IC) of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and MAVA (Men Against Violence), organised two-day Film Festival SAMABHAV (Equity to all) on Gender. The event was conceived as an academic and cultural platform to encourage reflection on the structural construction of gender in society, and which create a space for dialogue on diversity, identity, and lived experiences of gender and intersectionality. Through film screenings, discussions, and interactions with filmmakers, actors, academicians, and activists, the festival aimed to expand understanding of participants about gender as a social process shaped by norms, power, and inequalities.

The festival witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, scholars, faculty, and staff. The presence of directors, actors, and subject experts enriched the conversations and deepened the engagement with the themes presented through the films.

# INAUGURAL AND SCREENING SESSIONS



The festival opened with introductory remarks by Prof. Archana K. Roy, who presented the mandate of CDG and IC and emphasized the importance of using creative mediums to advance gender awareness. Prof. Chandra Shekhar delivered the Director's Remarks, acknowledging the significance of films in shaping public understanding and encouraging critical thought on gender and social justice. A brief felicitation was followed by introductions of the invited speakers and filmmakers, including Mr. Harish Sadani and filmmaker Ria Dinesh. The session also included the release of the festival brochure.

Mr. Harish Sadani (Founder and Director of MAVA) has curated the selection of films to be screened over two days, including ***Bas Ab Bohot Ho Gaya, F for Freedom, Satu – Year of the Rabbit, Because, Veni, Project Priyo, We the Puffcorns of India, Night Queen, and All We Imagine as Light***. Each screening was followed by discussions with filmmakers, actors, academicians, and gender-rights advocates.

# INAUGURAL AND SCREENING SESSIONS

Across the two days, the films contributed to key thematic areas:

- 1 Gender Identity, Expression and Role Conflict, underlines the struggle of self-expression and acceptance. Films such as F for Freedom, Satu – Year of the Rabbit, Because, Project Priyo, We the Puffcorns of India, Night Queen, and All We Imagine as Light explored the internal and external struggles all individuals face when navigating their gender identity within restrictive social environments. The narratives highlighted emotional journeys, identity conflicts, and courage to assert oneself, and the negotiating for acceptance across family and community spaces.
- 2 Patriarchal Power and Gendered abuse, exploring control, verbal violence, and social expectations. Films including Bas Ab Bohot Ho Gaya, Gaali Kathon, and Veni underscored the pervasive influence of patriarchy in everyday life. These films revealed how verbal, emotional, symbolic, and structural forms of abuse reinforce male power and shape women's experiences within both private and public domains. The discussions highlighted how sexuality, behaviour, and social expectations become mechanisms of control. Even the elderly women abusing her daughter in- law was a glimpse of exercising patriarchal power in the film Veni.
- 3 Social conditioning and memory, showing how gender norms are ingrained and transmitted. Films such as Veni and Satu demonstrated how gender norms are ingrained through cultural memory, early socialisation, and generational expectations. It has captured those moments when a women treating her daughter as daughter in-law due to dementia. These stories illustrated how identities and emotional ties are shaped, sometimes persisting even when memory fades or circumstances change.
- 4 Aspirations and breaking stereotypes, reflecting the challenges of pursuing nontraditional roles. Films like Call Me Dancer emphasised the challenges faced by individuals pursuing nontraditional aspirations in a society constrained by gender expectations. The discussions illuminated the struggle to resist stereotypes and claim personal freedom in the face of societal barriers.



# THE IMPACT OF THESE TWO DAYS DETAIL DISCUSSION ON GENDER THROUGH THE LENS OF CAMERA

The impact of these two days detail discussion on gender through the lens of camera

The two-day **SAMABHAV** film festival created an immersive space for learning, dialogue, and reflection. The films collectively highlighted the structural arrangements that define gender in society, including the constraints of patriarchy, social stigma, inequalities, and the struggle for recognition. The enriching aspect of the festival was the participation of directors, actors, and academicians, who generously shared their personal stories and creative motivations. Their discussions illustrated how gender identity is negotiated in the everyday life through struggle, resilience, creativity, and community.

Participants actively engaged in discussions, their thirst of knowledge can be understood through their questions about . Students expressing that the festival enhanced their understanding of gender beyond binaries and encouraged critical reflection on norms, rights, and dignity. The event successfully created a space for dialogue, empathy-building, and collective responsibility toward gender equality.

The IC and CDG extend gratitude to the Director of IIPS, all speakers, filmmakers, staff, and volunteers whose efforts ensured the success of the programme.

