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[Back](#)

[Kerala](#) - [Thiruvananthapuram](#)

On the travails of a minor girl

Staff Reporter



MAKING A POINT: (From left) Filmmakers Rajnesh Domalpalli, Ramin Mohseni and Harikumar and actor Lekshmi Gopaldaswami at a face-to-face programme in the city on Wednesday. — Photo: S. Mahinsha

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Telugu filmmaker Rajnesh Domalpalli's 'Vanaja,' set in rural South India, deals with the rape of a minor. The movie, screened at the International Film Festival of Kerala, however, failed to get past the Andhra Pradesh censors who felt the movie was too 'vulgar.' But Domalpalli differs with their opinion.

At a face-to-face programme organised by the Thiruvananthapuram Press Club on Wednesday as part of the festival, Domalpalli said his film was an attempt to explore the chasm between classes as a young girl, Vanaja, struggled to come of age. "I have relied on non-actors drawn from streets, hutments, labour camps and the middle class for the movie," he said.

"Established actors have a tendency to lean towards the theatrical," said Domalpalli, who did his B.Tech. from the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai. He also worked as a computer engineer in California's Silicon Valley before deciding to take up a course in filmmaking at Columbia University.

'Vanaja' is not only his first feature film but also his thesis at Columbia.

The face-to-face programme was attended by Iranian filmmaker Ramin Mohseni, director and producer of 'From Afar,' Harikumar, director of the Suresh Gopi-starrer 'Paranjutheeratha Visheshangal' and Lekshmi Gopaldaswami, heroine of the film.

The film 'From Afar' has not yet been screened in Iran, said the director. "I am trying to find a theatre in Iran to screen the movie," he said. "There are only 300 theatres for the 70 million population of Iran."

Mohseni said of the 90-odd films released in Iran every year, only a few got the investment back. Indian films were watched mostly on DVDs and not in theatres, he said.

Harikumar's film focusses on the mental tension and agony caused by divorce. "Divorce is no longer a taboo. A lot of relationships have fallen apart for very flimsy reasons without giving them gestation time. There is a high-level of intolerance and impatience on the part of the partners. This is reflected in the film," said Lekshmi Gopaldaswami. The subject was "handled very subtly and sensitively by the filmmaker," she said.

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