

## Film Festivals

Aman Trust has concluded three Film festivals in Lucknow, Patna and Alwar. The festivals were called Faasle... (the distances) and Aghaaz... (the beginning) and Alwar Film Samaroh. Fifteen documentary and feature films were screened during the events. Film directors, like MS Sathyu (Dir. Garam Hawa), Sonia Jabbar (Dir. Autumn's final country), Rahul Roy (Dir. When Four Friends Meet) and Lalit Vachani (Dir. The Salt Stories and Men in the Trees) were present during the festivals to introduce their films and interact with the audience and media persons. The festivals received a warm and encouraging response from the audiences.

The events were first of their kind for the two cities. A thematic selection of films from feature and documentary genres was the uniqueness of the festival. The theme of both the festivals was 'the role played cultures, symbols and identities in creating and mitigating conflict.' The media coverage for both the festivals was overwhelming. Almost all the leading newspapers and the local news channels gave detailed coverage to the festivals. (A few paper clippings are annexed as Annexure 1)

In Lucknow the festival, Faasle... was organised in collaboration with Sanatkada, Lucknow. The event was held from 18th to 24th January 2010. It was a huge success with public participation of over 2000 people from various fields. The festival was held at eleven different colleges and culminated at a central venue with twelve films being screened. One of the highlights of the festival was the interaction of leading intellectuals and activists from Lucknow like Prof Rooprekha Verma, Malini Manglik, Madhavi Kukreja, Shahira Naeem and Sahib Syed with students. The festival also saw film makers like Sonia Jabbar and Lalit Vachani interact with the public majority of them were students. Film actor and AMAN Trustee Farooque Sheikh also spoke about his debut film Garam Hawa, which was screened at the festival.

In Patna, AMAN collaborated with Nat Mandap, Patna. The group is one of the most reputed theatre groups of Bihar, and has leading theatre directors and actors such as Parvez Akhtar, Javed Akhtar, Vinod Kumar and Mona Jha as its members. The event was organised at two different venues from 18th to 21st February 2010. Every day two films were screened in Patna Museum Auditorium and plays and films were presented at Machaan, an improvised terrace theatre space. Ten films were screened during the festival and two plays were performed. Film critiques, activists and theatre personalities including Dr. Jaymangal Dev, Ms Kamayani, Ms Nivedita Jha, Ashish Ranjan, Dr. Javed Akhtar, Ms. Minati Chaklanavis, Sh. Aneesh Ankur and Vinod Kumar participated as the moderators for the discussions on the films.

In Alwar, AMAN collaborated with SAMANTAR. The event was held from 01 - 02 May 2010. Five documentary and feature film were screened over the two days followed by discussions with eminent personalities. The film festival was the first of its kind in Alwar and saw a participation of about 1000 people from across fields.

During the festivals we experienced that there is a huge demand for off-beat and good documentary films among the youth and activists. There was a consensus among the activists that there should be an archive of such films from where they could borrow films for screenings in the areas, mainly rural, they work. The response from the colleges and other institutions were also very encouraging as they offered to collaborate in organising such events in their premises for their students.

The next festival is scheduled to be organised in Jodhpur, Rajasthan and Murshidabad, West Bengal.

The event was widely reported by the print media in english and vernacular.

Media Reportage Clippings of Faasle

