

Filming for a cause!

Award-winning filmmaker, Nila Madhab Panda, describes his passion and inspiration to make films based on environmental issues.



How did the idea of making a film on climate change arrive?

The film talks about the emotional impact of climate change on people, which was something I discovered when I directed my first documentary on climate change in 2005. I received a fellowship from the UK High Commission to do a documentary for Discovery Channel. Part of the story was about a sea level rise, and I was to shoot the film in Odisha. Of the seven villages where I shot the film, three were submerged due to a rise in sea level. The rest of the villages also vanished during the four years I was shooting.

People are aware of the phenomenon of climate change but are not ready to accept that it is happening to them. For most people, climate change is a remote issue, but with my own experience observing stories and being close with people in India and many other countries where I've traveled, I see that it's happening, right here, right now.

Tell us something about the film *Kadvi Hawa*?

I created two characters for the film. One is from Odisha, and one is from Bundelkhand. Neither has contributed in any way to global climate change because in their day-to-day life, yet they are the ones suffering the most.

I give a little story of the blind old man who is fighting against global climate change in his village, Dholput, just ten kilometers from the town. There is no electricity, no water supply, and not even a single motor bike. The idea of the film was to create a sense of urgency for people like us who will take that forward and talk about it. Let's all talk about it to initiate some actions to control climate change.

What is the key message you want to give viewers of the film?

I want to share the message of adaptability, which means that we should save whatever resources we have and not damage the environment. The aim of the film is to create more support and reach out to the whole nation. We plan to go to every state capital and organize a series of campaigns and private screenings until two months before the release of the film in September 2017. My request to everyone is to help create that momentum for the film to reach out to the masses.



What is your view on climate change and global warming? Do you think we can overcome it?

There is an urgent need to address the issue of climate change and the need is increasing with every passing day.

The gravity of global warming was brought home to me when I saw low-lying islands in my home state of Odisha swallowed by rising sea levels. A cyclone hits Odisha and hundreds die; similarly when Delhi's pollution level increases, schools shut down. The challenge lies in overcoming the divergence of urban and rural interests and priorities. But to save the earth, everyone needs to look at the bigger picture. Our love for nature is very visible, even more so in the Hindu culture. Indians everywhere understand the importance of trees and rivers; per Indian culture, trees, and rivers represent gods.

If any country is capable of fighting climate change, it is India, because many here have an emotional attachment with the bionetwork. It is inside of us, inside our hearts and souls.

The interview was compiled from excerpts from the director's speech at the pre-release screening of the film at S M Sehgal Foundation on June 1, 2017, and an interview with The Times of India reporter. The entire news article can be viewed at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/gurgaon/indians-can-take-lead-in-fighting-global-warming/articleshow/58981006.cms>