

# You don't need a fancy camera to talk about pertinent issues like this: Sujatro Ghosh

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"In that sense, the project is a public collaborative effort," adds Sujatro, who has photographed over 40 women till now, including two girls from Moscow and Boston. Interestingly, while shooting in public spaces, nobody questioned or stopped Sujatro from shooting. "Many didn't even understand what we were doing, while others just walked past, save for a few who were really concerned about the issue at large. It is really a reflection about how deep-rooted the apathy is," he says. But understandably so, Sujatro has received flak for his work. "Among all the backlash I've got, I've also been told that I should be lynched. But that's hardly a concern. The project isn't divided by barriers of religion, caste or creed, and I believe it is being talked about across the world because people identify the subject as a global issue," says Sujatro.

The series has gone viral, but Sujatro wants to now take the project across India and is currently crowdfunding for the same. He says, "I want to travel with the series along the Western coast, down to Kerala, and the North-East as well. My aim is to complete the project by the end of August." Till date, he has collected about 44 per cent of the total target amount.

While signing off, Sujatro says, "It's important for people to know that I started this project when I had no access to the media. It's a social media project and all pictures have been taken on a mobile phone. This is something all of us are capable of doing today. We all have access to decent phones, so it's really up to us to start a dialogue for change."

"I procured the latex cow mask from New York at a cost of \$40. The moment I laid my eyes on it, I knew how I was going to use it as a symbol to start a dialogue around the issue." — Sujatro



Sujatro Ghosh

EVERY WOMAN IN THE COUNTRY CAN RELATE TO THE STATEMENT THE SERIES MAKES. IT'S SAD THAT THOUSANDS OF WOMEN WHO SUFFER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, HONOUR KILLING, RAPE AND HARASSMENT DON'T HAVE A VOICE, WHILE KILLING A COW ATTRACTS A LOT OF ATTENTION. COWS ARE INDEED LUCKY.

— Dhanashree Heblkar, creative director at Swatantra Theatre and Films



One of Sujatro's recent posts from Mumbai

## Women take inspiration from the project

Interestingly, some women have taken cue from the series to assert their own identities or implement the subject into their own practices. Akanksha Shah, 17, though based in Moscow, participated in the project when she visited Mumbai. "I aspire to be a ballet dancer, and posing like one for the project, with a cow mask, was my way of defining myself. I truly feel women are somewhat limited as compared to men, wherever they might be," says Akanksha, one of the youngest women to participate in the project.

On the other hand, 25-year-old dance/movement therapy student Deepa Sai Avula has been inspired to collaborate with Sujatro on a couple of dance videos. "I recently started my own Instagram handle, @danceformentalhealth. When I came across Sujatro's work, I thought that collaborating with him would somewhere help contribute to the silent protest. I plan to use semi-classical Indian dance movements," says Deepa, who is studying mental health counselling in Boston.



## On a musical odyssey

Ameya Dabli and Dada JP Vaswani

Internationally acclaimed singer Ameya Dabli launched his music album *Ekam Satt - One Truth, One Humanity, World Music* at the hands of global humanitarian and spiritual leader Rev. Dada J P Vaswani as part of the latter's centenary birthday celebrations in Pune. The album is available on all digital platforms through Times Music. Inspired by respected Dada's message of selfless love and service for humanity, the album features the works of legendary poets and saints such as Kabirdas, Mirabai, Narsinh Mehta, Guru Nanak Dev, Khwaja Garib Nawaz, Buddha, Tukaram, Tulsidas, Gospels and others.

Given the continuous stress and turmoil that individuals across the globe face, there is an urgent need for each of us to pause, reflect and connect with each other, cutting across our religious, social and cultural beliefs. The album's songs focus on this precise theme that eventually it is a 'one world family' and showcases the best of sufi, folk and contemporary world music across different genres. The album has foot tapping numbers covering Indian and international musical forms to appeal to audiences across age

groups. With an aim to spread the message of love and unity across cultures and society globally, Ameya Dabli and his business partner Purvi Soali quit their successful corporate careers to become social entrepreneurs.

A versatile singer, Ameya has performed over 1,500 concerts across 15 countries. The music from the album is already a rage with live renditions by Ameya across 25 locations including for large corporates like Aditya Birla Group and at the Indian High Commission in London. He is currently touring India, US and Dubai for his other musical concept 'Heart 2 Heart' covering melodious ghazals and folk music.

His 10 city 'Heart 2 Heart' tour covering melodious ghazals kicked off in Mumbai yesterday and will further move to Bangalore, Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata and other cities.



The launch was attended by a large number of people

# Who is to blame for regressive content on Indian TV? The makers, actors or audience?

Small screen actors speak out about television showing regressive content in a bid to rake in the moolah

Don't sell stupidity in the name of content!" — actor Karan Wahi opened a Pandora's box recently, when he posted his views about a TV show on social media. It's an unprecedented move for a television actor to go public with his criticism of a show, considering the fraternity, in the past, often argued that they are showing what the audience wants and also, that it rakes in the moolah. Wahi's post further states: "...plz dont sell me stupidity in the name of content which gives trp because honestly no one is watching this (sic)." We spoke to celebs across the industry about their views on the issue. Read on...

— Tanvi.Trivedi@timesgroup.com



## SHOWS ARE REGRESSIVE TODAY, WE ARE DOING ANYTHING TO ACHIEVE RATINGS: NIA SHARMA

"It is important to credit the small screen for what we actors have achieved in life, but the fact remains that shows are turning outright regressive. In order to win the ratings game, the makers are making shows on concepts which are completely unheard of. People might argue that they are catering to smaller towns and villages in India, but if you keep showing such regressive content, how will they learn and educate themselves? This has affected the popularity of TV; people are moving to foreign channels and shows for entertainment. I also feel that we can't sell stupidity, we need to be part of shows that we can be proud of."



## NOBODY IS ADDRESSING THE REASON FOR SUCH CONTENT ON TV SHOWS: RIDHI DOGRA

"The content on television is mediocre. We are forgetting that we also have a social responsibility to put sensible content out there, which makes people think. If someone is willing to take a risk, people should stand by them. Content on TV is regressive for many reasons and that should be addressed. Drama is incorporated in every show as we are told that audiences like that. There are so many things in the shows that we don't agree with, but we have to do it. Audiences need to reject such regressive content."



## THE CONTENT IS REFLECTING THE MINDSET OF THE COUNTRY: ANKITA BHARGAVA

The content ranges from good to pathetic on various channels today. Maybe the channels are catering to the kind of response they get from various regions of this country? Or may be the content reflects the existing mindset of this country, I can't say!



## WE ARE SHOWING REGRESSIVE CONTENT IN THE NAME OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: BARKHA BISHT

A lot of shows on television are showing the same regressive stuff in the name of women empowerment. I don't watch a single TV show. It challenges my sensibilities as well, but I work in those same shows because that is what I am offered as an actor. And that is what brings in the TRPs.



## WE ARE STRUGGLING WITH FALLING TRPS ACROSS TELEVISION: NAKUUL MEHTA

I'd hate to generalise everything on Indian television as good or bad. I'd like to think that we are going through a phase of transition, where the attempt is to move towards finite content, get more grip on the quality of a product, whilst we are also struggling with falling TRPs on the whole for television consumption. In an environment like this, there are producers and channels trying different things to stand out and find an audience. I'm glad Karan Wahi came out and called the bluff. It takes courage for an actor to express his opinion. It is also heartening to see that we have a generation of actors who are willing to give the industry the respect it deserves, but not be subservient to it just because it gives us our bread and butter."



## 'VOTE AND REMOTE' ARE THE TWO POWERS THAT PEOPLE HAVE: GAURAV CHOPRA

Most of the shows on TV are regressive today. Few projects are conceived with a progressive thought. Being an actor, I would like to say that the power lies with the people. 'Vote and remote' are the two powers that they have; they should use it and stop endorsing such shows. Strangely, even when the show is dubbed regressive, people are still watching it."



## WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO SELL TO THE YOUTH WITH THE CONCEPTS OF OUR TV SHOWS?: SSSHARAD MALHOTRA

Television is a great tool for motivation, but the themes of our shows today have women fighting with other women, children falling in love with adults... What are we trying to sell to the youth and generation?"

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