



Films Should Remain Beyond Contractual Confinements

-SUBORNA SENJUTEE

Filmmaker Suborna Senjutee won the hearts of countless audience and critiques across the world, as she embarked on her artistic journey of visual storytelling with short-film 'Meenalaap'. The director's debut attempt has brought about tremendous global recognition.

Star Showbiz: How has the year 2018 been for you?

Suborna Senjutee: The beginning half of the year 2018 had been rather stressful for me. I was not entirely sure of my plans and proceedings. I had a tough time finding an ideal audience for my film, who could perhaps give me some honest feedbacks. The latter half of the year, which means starting after July, had been amazing since I could find a proper rhythm with the success of *Meenalaap*. I went to numerous film festivals with this brainchild of mine, became friends with a lot of wonderful people and well-wishers. I received enormous appreciation, which helped reassuring my self-sufficiency.

Showbiz: What do you consider to be the biggest lesson of 2018 for you?

Senjutee: I learned how to become more productive and utilize my time better. Making the best use of our time gives us the opportunity to explore a lot. I also learned how to reach more people with my projects and attain better exposure. I

believe these lessons will be vital for my journey ahead.

Showbiz: How has the success of 'Meenalaap' reflected onto your life so far?

Senjutee: Due to some complications regarding the censorship policies, I could not manage to screen *Meenalaap* in Bangladesh. But the film had been an outcome of the collective effort of many talented people, so I could never support suppressing its exposure. We went on to visit many international film festivals across the globe. Films, by nature, should never be limited to any certain group or boundary. Films are supposed to be independent, and remain beyond contractual confinements. This very idea reflected in the phases of my life to a good extent. I felt empowered as I discovered that the simple and sublime plot of my film was equally understood and acknowledged by many different critiques, regardless of their cultural roots. Despite belonging to different cultural poles, the audience could find themselves all tied to one common string of emotion.

This brought a confidence in my life that I have been successful as a storyteller.

Showbiz: Do you wish to explore the realm of typical big budget commercial films as well?

Senjutee: I do not believe in creating tags for films. If *Jalaler Golpo* or *Komola Rocket* could be commercially successful, then I have no issue with making 'commercial' films myself either. But I hardly feel interested to make a film with a glamorous or super hit cast line. And since I do not have much control or influence over the powerful producers, I cannot make sure of doing big budget films. I do not think it is necessary to invest a huge sum to make a quality film. My focus remains on reaching the mass with the inner message of my films.

Showbiz: Let us know about your plans for the upcoming days.

Senjutee: *Meenalaap* is going to be screened in Nepal's biggest film festival *Nepal International Film Festival* in February 2019. Then it will go to *South Asian Film Festival* at Kolkata in March.

About my future projects, I have a docu-fiction project in Nateshwar of Bikrampur, where a Buddhist *bihar* has been discovered. It is in a place called Raghurampur, which is being considered to be Atish Dipankar's place of residence. Perhaps the thousand-year-old relic holds the roots of the genesis of Atish's enlightenment. I have been researching for seven-eight months, and prepared a team consisting of members from India too. There is no commercial aspect to this project. It could lead to a series of three episodes. Other than that, I have a script for a short film, which I submitted for Govt. funding. If I do not get the support, I have another idea of a short film, for which I have producers interested. I am also working on my own feature film. The skeleton for that film is prepared, but I am yet to finish the script. I shot *Meenalaap* in 2017, so it has been long since I worked behind the camera. I am feeling an urge to engage myself in that zone again (laughter)!

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Interviewed by Tasbir Iftekhar