



Top News

Lockdown in Karnataka? CM Basavaraj Bommai says THIS amid Omicron scare

Latest News

Explainers

India

Entertainment

Business

Cricket

Photos

World

Technology

Viral News

Lifestyle

Education

Health


Videos



Home > Lifestyle

# Delicately woven documentary about four musical journeys in Kutch

'A Delicate Weave', the documentary elucidates the true meaning of unity in diversity, discovers Yogesh Pawar

Reported By:  | Edited By: Yogesh Pawar |Source: DNA |Updated: Dec 05, 2017, 01:42 PM IST





Every time you feel this is the lowest, the Zeitgeist of hate, intolerance, bigotry, and exclusion plumbs newer depths. Even those not directly responsible or party to it find themselves frozen into inaction in the face daily onslaught. How one counters this, is beautifully elucidated in filmmakers Anjali Monteiro and KP Jayasankar's latest in the Kutch trilogy – following *A Two Day Fair (Do Din Ka Mela)* 2009 and *Like Here Like There (So Heddan So Hoddan)* 2011 – *A Delicate Weave (Jheeni Beeni Chadariya)*, which recently premiered in Mumbai.

Set in the Kutch region of Gujarat, the film traces four different musical journeys, all converging in ways they affirm religious diversity, syncretism, and love of the other. “We ended up going to Kutch purely by accident in 2008 with an almost touristy curiosity after seeing footage and music shot by a friend. But once we reached there and began to experience the region and its communities we were hooked,” recounts Jayasankar. “For ADW, we drew on the poetic and musical traditions of Kabir and Shah Bhitai, as well as the folk traditions of the region, these remarkable musicians and singers bear testimony to how these oral traditions of compassion are being passed down from one generation to the next.”

The film beautifully showcases how the voices of Bhakti/Sufi tradition of early 15th-17th-century mystic, saint-poets such as Kabir and Shah Abdul Latif which advocate love and compassion are the only salve for society bruised with hatred. Nomadic communities documented in this trilogy have lived in the region which has now become a border between the Rann of Kutch in India and Sindh in Pakistan and still speaks fondly of how easily they could migrate back and forth till even a generation ago. “Nation states often find the idea of nomadic communities a nuisance because they refuse to fit into set paradigms and notions of 'us' and 'them.' It then tries to pathologise them and views their movements with suspicion,” laments Anjali Monteiro. Underlining how this also makes their culture more porous and open she fondly mentions Lakhpat, a village where they shot ADW. “It has 24 temples, 24 dargahs, and 24 mosques even though all of only ten Hindu families live there. When they want to sing, they all head to the closest temple or gurdwara, even the Muslims.”

Incidentally, Lakhpat used to be a prosperous port town before an earthquake (1819) created a natural dam called Allahbund and the Indus river changed its course, flowing into the Arabian sea further north. It is believed that Sikhism's founder Guru Nanak left for a Haj pilgrimage to Mecca from here in the early 1490s.

Both filmmakers feel there are many takeaways for modern society from these pastoral communities on peaceful co-existence. Monteiro particularly highlights how this vortex of Sufism/Bhakti tradition, music and philosophy, has found expression despite the patriarchy among the communities. “Though it is chiefly the men of Bhujodi, who sing Kabir bhajans, Noor Mohammad Sodha who teaches and plays the double flute, and Jiant Khan's passionate love for Bhitai's poetry we found Lakhpat's Muslim women who have been taught Bhitai's poetry – largely transgressive love stories – by a progressive, Haji Ramzan Bhai, now sing all night at weddings. In fact, they asked us to organise a concert in Mumbai where they want to perform.”

She is quick to point out how like in any society, however metropolitan and modern, the claiming of such a space by women is at best a negotiation. “The acceptance needs to be seen keeping in mind the endorsement by Haji Ramzan Bhai. He's a family elder to many of these women who sing Bhitai's poetry which he has taught them.”

While the first in the Kutch trilogy looked at Meghwali traditions and culture, the second focussed on the relationship that Fakirani and Maldhari Jatt musicians have with Bhitai's poetry how they preserving an essentially oral tradition. ADW focusses more on the impact their music has had on the musicians' lives.

One needs to see this from the perspective of how the violence of 2002 did not touch Kutch. “But one can sense the growing anxiety of the changing times and how people choose to speak about identity,” Monteiro admits. “Kutch is also part of Gujarat, where discourse around nationalism is getting shriller.

Yet, these communities, with their Sufi/Bhakti traditions, are a wellspring of harmony. In today's times, when hard lines are being drawn across, they act as a bulwark with their music."

Both Monteiro and Jayasankar, who teach at Tata Institute of Social Sciences' School of Media and Cultural Studies in Mumbai, admit that they are aware of concerns about the power equation between filmmakers and subjects and have consciously avoided prodding and eliciting responses of a certain kind. "We ask open-ended questions and let them talk often recording far more than we can use in one film. Many of them can recite reams of poetry from memory in response to each other, interspersing it with what they are saying," explains Monteiro. Jayasankar adds, "We have made the communities we have shot with our first viewers of all the three films before taking it to other audiences."

Already screened at the Festival of South Asian Documentaries 2017 and the Signs Film Festival at Kochi, Kerala this one's a must-watch.


[A Delicate Weave](#)
[Film Festival](#)
[Sikhism](#)
[Pakistan](#)
[Kochi](#)
[Kerala](#)
[Gujarat](#)
[Anjali Monteiro](#)
[KP Jayasankar](#)
[Shah Abdul Latif](#)
[Meghwali traditions](#)
[Tata Institute of Social Sciences \(TISS\)](#)
[School of Media and Cultural Studies \(SMCS\)](#)
[Just Before Monday \(JBM\)](#)

# DNA

[INDIA](#)
[WORLD](#)
[BUSINESS](#)
[TECHNOLOGY](#)
[SPORTS](#)
[CRICKET](#)
[ENTERTAINMENT](#)

FOLLOW US ON

[ABOUT DNA](#)
[CONTACT US](#)
[INVESTORS](#)
[ADVERTISE](#)
[REPRINT RIGHTS](#)

PARTNER SITE

[ZEE NEWS](#)
[HINDI NEWS](#)
[MARATHI NEWS](#)
[BENGALI NEWS](#)
[TAMIL NEWS](#)
[MALAYALAM NEWS](#)
[ZEE BUSINESS](#)
[WION](#)

©2021 Diligent Media Corporation Ltd.