

For immediate release

Hindus ask India's new film censor chair Leela Samson to curb vulgarity & violence

Hindus have urged Leela Samson, the newly appointed chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) of India, to halt the unnecessary violence and vulgarity of Indian films.

Hindu statesman Rajan Zed, in a statement today, said that seeing the continuous increase in the vulgarity and violence in Indian films, it appeared that the Board of the largest filmmaking country had lost the sense of India's cultural milieu and was ignoring the directions given in the Cinematograph Act.

Zed, who is the president of Universal Society of Hinduism, said that they were fully supportive of the artistic freedom and expression and did not want any unnecessary censorship, but were highly concerned about the increasing presence of the immodest, explicit and risqué scenes in the movies which were there simply for "mercantile greed" having nothing to do with cinematic elements.

Rajan Zed appealed to Samson to view the films as a regular Indian mother who was struggling to raise her children to become moral and successful citizens of India of tomorrow and not as the mother whose children attended night-clubs and late-night parties and knew no moral boundaries.

Zed pointed out that CBFC certification team needed to be retrained in "what India stood for" and what were our moral perimeters.

Rajan Zed stresses that the country's Cinematograph Act lays down that a film has to be certified keeping "morality" in mind, besides other things. CBFC objectives of film certification reportedly include... "the medium of film remains responsible and sensitive to the values and standards of society", "the medium of film provides clean and healthy entertainment"...What happened to the CBFC "guidelines for certification" like "human sensibilities are not offended by vulgarity, obscenity or depravity", Zed asked.

Zed argued that cinema was a highly powerful medium and had the potential of impacting the audience and altering the psyche, especially the impressionable minds of younger generation.

CBFC (popularly known as Censor Board), whose vision is “to ensure the good and healthy entertainment”, is a statutory body under India’s Ministry of Information and Broadcasting regulating the public exhibition of films. Headquartered in Mumbai, it presently has 25 members. It has nine regional offices at Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Cuttack and Guwahati and certifies films in four categories of U, UA, A, and S. Pankaja Thakur is the Chief Executive Officer.

India has reportedly about 13,000 cinema halls and according to an estimate, every three months an audience as large as India’s entire population (about 1.17 billion) flock to the cinema halls.

Padmashri awardee Leela Samson, 59, is a well-known dancer-choreographer-writer and chairperson of Sangeet Natak Akademi. Previous CBFC chairpersons included Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Shakti Samanta, Asha Parekh, Vijay Anand, Anupam Kher, Sharmila Tagore, etc.