

American crew was impressed by our work: director Tanuja Chandra

With a half Indian and half American crew and all pre- and post-production work done through the internet, director Tanuja Chandra says her film 'Hope And A Little Sugar' was a bit like an arranged marriage.

'They (the Americans) were quite impressed by our talent and quality of work. Generally Americans think they are far better than anybody else across the globe. I told them 'why are you so surprised? you must have known that we (Indians) are very good', Chandra said about her English language film.

Set against the backdrop of 9/11, 'Hope and A Little Sugar', a poignant love story, examines the lives of a group of Indians living in New York in the weeks before and after the terror attack.

The film, which releases Friday, stars Anupam Kher, Mahima Chowdhury, Suhasini Mulay, Vikram Chatwal, Ranjit Chowdhury and Amit Sial.

'We shot the film in just 25 days in New York. With a half Indian and half a US crew, the experience was just amazing,' Chandra told IANS in a telephonic interview from Mumbai.

'We (the crew) are completely different people in habits, in culture... everything. The only thread that bound us was the same concept that we were working on. It was like an arranged marriage, where two completely strange and different people are thrown into an intimate relationship,' she added.

Incidentally, Chandra is the sister of US-based novelist Vikram Chandra and Bollywood scriptwriter Anupama Chopra. In the past, she has made films like 'Dushman', 'Sangharsh' and 'Sur', but without much success. But may be 'Hope...' will change all that.

When featured at Milan, London and Karachi, the movie earned much critical acclaim. It also bagged the best feature film award at the New York Film Festival and the California Film Festival.

However, the director says making the film was not easy.

'In the beginning I was approached by a New York-based Indian film producer to make the film. After the script got ready he pulled out of the project and none of the Bollywood producers was ready to put his money in it.

'It was heartbreaking but the project came to a standstill. Suddenly, one day I received a mail from two New York-based producers, who raised the money for the project, and it kicked off. Since I was here (Mumbai) we did all the pre-production work on the internet and met them for the first time in New York for shooting.

'Then again I came back and did the post production work on internet via a password protected site. The film is truly a global one and my mom is convinced that the producers are my past life brothers. It is interesting to see how cinema is evolving worldwide.'

Chandra also said that a masterpiece could only be crafted if one has faith in him and sheds all its preoccupations.

'My film was stuck but I never gave up. Moreover, I had no fixations; I never doubted that two new producers are strangers and how can I trust them. The bigger the risk is, the bigger the success you get.

'If a filmmaker does not think out of the box or is not ready to take risks, one cannot make something unique.'

The director currently has three scripts ready with her and would start shooting the first - romantic period film - by the end of the year.

Shweta Thakur (© IANS / India eNews)