

21 film-makers suggest ways to look beyond the obvious
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The Centre for Civil Society (CCS) is holding the South Asia Livelihood Documentary Festival from January 20-28 at the India Habitat Centre. It is an initiative "to usher in an intellectual revolution that encourages people to look beyond the obvious, think beyond good intentions, and act beyond activism".

President, CCS, Parth J. Shah says, "Though we got independence from the British on August 15, 1947 we still need to win economic and social independence from the Indian state. The CCS was started in August 1997 with the objective to fight for economic and social freedom for Indian people. Our goal is to create more space for people in civil society."

However, the struggle for people's rights has not been an easy task. "It has been a tough fight because we are up against a mindset which looks at the government as the *mai baap*. It is true not only for the poor but everybody. We see the government as a solution to all our problems without realising that it has nothing to give you unless it takes something from someone else. The government is a mechanism which transfers resources from one section to another section of the society," says Parth.

He informs that the CCS's activities are focused on four areas: education, livelihood, environment and governance.

"The documentaries and films are the most ideal medium for this purpose," he adds.

Through these films, says Parth, one can relate to a larger audience who would otherwise not have seen what happens to the ordinary people. Initially the festival started by focusing on India.

"This year, we have entries from countries Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Serbia," he adds.

The Jeevika festival has brought together 21 documentaries by students and professional filmmakers focusing on people's struggles to earn a living in their chosen field.