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Less trodden path

For this 10-yr-old, making films is no child's play

JBS Umanadh, Hyderabad, March 8, DH News Service:

Topics like conservation of biodiversity and food security hardly catch the attention of this video gaming generation. But, here an exceptional child tests the rule.

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Meet 10-year-old Masanagari Mayuri, whose interest lies in educating others about things that are close to her heart. Hailing from Pastapur village of backward semi-arid region of Medak district of Andhra Pradesh, this Dalit girl adorns the credit of making two documentaries on environment conservation.

Mayuri is daughter of Punyamma and Narsimhulu, and a 5th standard student in the local government school.

Mayuri's film "Dhanwarlo O'Avva" (Grand mom in Dhanwar) was first premiered in the Mobile Diversity Festival 2010, it was the inaugural film in VIBGYOR Film Festival at Thrissur in Kerala in 2010.

The film was screened in New Delhi in the Asian Film Festival for Women organised by the International Association for Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) on Monday. Mayuri's aunt Chinna Narsamma is a pioneer in film making with the Community Media Trust of the Pastapur based Deccan Development Society (DDS) run by Periapatnam Sateesh, a former Doordrashan employee. Her uncle Yesu, a school dropout, learned a few lessons in editing. Mayuri started experimenting with a small video camera provided by the DDS on weekends, and gradually she learnt the nuances of making video clips.

Her first film shot in 2009 is a profile of an 80-year-old woman Ratnavva of Dhanwar village, who in spite of her advanced age, is still robustly engaged in agriculture. She maintains vibrant biodiversity in her farm, keeping chemicals at bay. In the latest movie "Naa Chenu, Naa Chaduvu" (My Farm-My Classroom), she visits her grandparents' farm in Pastapur every week till the crop is harvested. She records every step and clarifies her doubts from her grandparents.

"She might be too young to deal with such topics, but her initiative is not childish," Sateesh said.

Mayuri, who dreams of becoming an agriculture journalist, said: "I grew up in this environment and I realised that no one takes serious effort to educate the poor. I want to make movies that create awareness about natural farming."



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