

Love is for All: Navigating Taboos in a Multifaceted Tale

By Ankur Nikam

‘Love is something you feel, not understand’. This poignant dialogue from the Malayalam film *Kaadhal Enbadhu Podhu Udama (Love is for All)* speaks a profound truth about societal taboos. The film sheds light on the reluctance of society to accept forms of love considered unconventional. Despite the recent discourse surrounding the LGBTQIA+ community’s rights, their struggle persists as some individuals are still denied their basic humanity.

This film, screened on Day 2 of Pune International Film Festival, was directed by Jayaprakash Radhakrishnan. When asked about the genesis of the film’s premise, Radhakrishnan emphasised that the subject itself serves as the core idea. He highlighted the urgency of addressing topics deemed as natural yet labelled as taboo, and expressed the need to start discussions about these subjects.

The narrative unfolds with Lakshmi’s excitement upon learning about her daughter Samyukta’s romantic relationship. When Samyukta is reluctant to reveal details of her relationship, Lakshmi convinces her to invite her romantic interest home for lunch. Samyukta enlists the help of her male friend Ravindra to disclose to her mother that she is romantically interested in her partner Nandini. When lunch is served, the truth comes out: Nandini is Samyukta’s love interest, not Ravindra, as her mother had assumed. All hell breaks loose as Lakshmi throws Nandini out of the house. She calls her estranged husband Pandian home for support.

The ensuing conversations take a bitter turn, laying bare deep-seated divisions and prompting unexpected twists in relationships. The dramatic climax brings to the fore many social, ethical and legal questions about same-sex relationships. Viewed through multiple perspectives, including that of their domestic help Mary, the narrative explores the challenges of navigating evolving ideas about love and sexuality.

The story reaches a powerful crescendo in its climax, compelling both characters and viewers to confront the social, ethical, and legal questions surrounding same-sex relationships. The revelation sparks a transformative journey, challenging preconceived notions and prompting a profound re-evaluation of deeply ingrained beliefs.

This film goes beyond a mere exploration of same-sex relationships; it becomes a mirror reflecting the broader societal challenges faced by those who dare to defy established norms. It invites readers to question their own biases and preconceptions, fostering a dialogue on acceptance, understanding, and the evolving landscape of love in contemporary society.

Love is for All is, thus, a touching narrative that skilfully intertwines personal relationships, societal expectations, and the ongoing struggle for acceptance. Through its diverse perspectives, the story invites the audience to navigate the complex terrain of love, ultimately challenging them to reconsider their own beliefs and attitudes towards unconventional relationships.

