

# Great Disasters lead to Great Devotion, says Filmmaker Goutam Ghose

The echoes of displacement and devotion converge in Parikrama (The Journey), a cinematic tapestry woven by acclaimed Indian filmmaker Goutam Ghose. Screened at PIFF 2025, the film captures the delicate interplay of personal tragedies and broader societal beliefs, immersing audiences in the symbolic journey of a lost boy and an Italian filmmaker.

"Great disasters lead to great devotion," Ghose remarked, encapsulating the soul of his narrative. Through the lens of Alessandro, an Italian filmmaker documenting the journey of pilgrims, and Lala, a young Indian boy who has fled home seeking dignity for his displaced family, Parikrama blurs the lines between personal and political. The river Narmada, not just a backdrop but a living entity, flows through their intertwined destinies. "Rivers are true characters of any nation, and India, being a riverine civilization, finds its holy spirit in them," said Ghose.

The film's dichotomy is striking – it's not a battle of development versus anti-development, but rather an exploration of identity, displacement, and human resilience. Ghose chose Madhya Pradesh as his cinematic canvas, grounding the story in a culturally rich yet tumultuous setting. The Italian director's chance encounter with Lala shifts the film's core from being a pilgrimage documentary to a deeply moving portrait of a lost child – both literal and metaphorical.

One of the most powerful scenes features a man riding a horse as an announcement of land submergence echoes in the background. "It's symbolic of feudal power, which is a shadow looming over those resisting displacement," Ghose explained. Such layered storytelling, blending visual poetry with realism, is what makes Parikrama a visual triumph of the medium.

Aryan Badkul, reflecting on his journey as a young actor portraying Lala, expressed gratitude for Goutam Ghose's guidance and support. "He made me feel seen, heard, and part of something bigger than just a role. He supported me when I got scared of the camera, since it's my first film," he shared.

As for its international reception, Ghose believes the film will spark awareness. "People will be conscious of their surroundings," he said, hoping Parikrama

(The Journey) resonates beyond cultural borders.

Speaking about the Pune International Film Festival (PIFF), Ghose was full of praise: “I love this festival. My first visit was last year – good selection, well-organized, and the volunteers were great. Last year, I showcased Raahgir, and saw young cinephiles gather in droves. It’s a really good festival.”

With Parikrama, Goutam Ghose reaffirms his mastery of storytelling, where the confluence of loss, devotion, and the ever-flowing river creates a cinematic experience that remains long after the credits roll.