



Who would have thought that a 30-minute animated film produced by Aseema Charitable Trust would bag the National Award for the Best Animation Film at the recently announced 52 nd National Film Awards!

The film is simply titled 'Raju and I' and has been directed by Gayatri Rao of Animagic. This 30-minute film on child rights focuses on the right of every child to education. It has been shown in several schools and colleges in the city and makes excellent viewing for both adults and children.

But this is not the first award the film has won. To date it has bagged eight others that include the Grand Jury Prize for the Best Animated Film at the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival in 2003, the Alan Fortunoff Foundation Humanitarian Film Award in 2004 and the Unicef Campania Regiona Prize, also in 2004.

A bit about the film. The film explores the issue of child rights in India today. The issue is an age old one in our country and widely ignored. "The film has been made with the hope that people will become aware of the unhappy state of millions of children in our country who cannot avail of education due to severe poverty, and are made to work to support their families," said Dilbur Parakh, the chairperson of the Trust.

In the film, we see how Atul, a young happy boy makes friends with Raju, who is from a poverty stricken home. Atul and Raju spend a happy summer together, but as the film progresses, Atul witnesses the harsh realities of Raju's life, so different from his own. It comes as a shock to him, as it would to any child. He realizes that there are thousands of 'Rajus' in our city alone, nameless, faceless children, and just tiny cogs in the monstrous machinery of child labour.

We suggest you see this film. Not only is it exceptionally well made, but it also drives home a point most of us tend to ignore.

By a Staff Reporter