

## WIP G I, Poppy



**REGION:** India

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:**

Documentary | Digital Format | Hindi | 75mins

**DIRECTOR:**

Vivek CHAUDHARY

**PRODUCER:**

Vivek CHAUDHARY

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds, Pre-sales

**BUDGET:** US\$ 247,258

**SECURED BUDGET:** US\$ 48,950

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

2014 *Goonga Pehelwan*

**ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS**

A mother, fearful of losing her ancestral opium-poppy field, is pitted against her idealist son who is leading a protest against the deeply corrupt Narcotics Department that controls opium-poppy licences.

## SYNOPSIS

Vardibai has been legally farming opium all her life. She comes from the lowest caste in the Hindu caste system. Farming opium poppies gave her the financial means to educate her son who became the first person in the entire family ever to get an education and became a school teacher. But then he started activism against the Narcotics Department that controls the mother's poppy license. This creates a rift between the mother and son. The film takes place over the course of a poppy season. Vardibai lovingly sows the poppy; it then blooms into beautiful white flowers. The flowers later fall away to form hard poppy pods that, when punctured, ooze out a dark red liquid, opium. The changing seasons and stages of the poppy mirror their relationship as a loving relationship develops cracks. Vardibai works in the field, mostly alone. Her son is fighting the system but progress is slow. They meet each other for a few hours, late night and early morning. Their story reflects the question that is faced by 70,000 poppy farming families in India — should they reap the benefits of a broken system or try to mend it? And at what cost?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Ever since I was a kid, I would see my grandfather, uncles and other elders of the village sit together and drink this brown liquid. We would go to weddings where they sang songs and served this brown liquid to each other in their palms. It was a sign of friendship and hospitality. Only when I grew up did I realise that this brown liquid, that I knew as tea, was actually opium and that my community has been living in harmony with it for about 400 years. This is the story of my people and their ways of living, which is now being controlled and exploited by the people who control the opium poppy. The real beneficiaries in a broken, corrupt system have become regulators who intimidate and extort. Prohibition has seldom worked. Films have addressed similar issues but this perspective is unique in the way that the opium poppy is deeply embedded in the culture of this very rural community. Also, not many such works come out of India, which has a deep historical association with various drugs.

## DIRECTOR

### **Vivek CHAUDHARY**

Vivek Chaudhary is a documentary filmmaker from Gujarat, India. He has been making documentaries for seven years now. His first documentary, a mid-length work entitled *Goonga Pehelwan* (The Mute Wrestler), won India's top film honour, the National Film Award, in 2015.

## **PRODUCER**

**Vivek CHAUDHARY**

(same as director)

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY**

**Unek Films**

Unek Films is a production company based out of Ahmedabad, India. It works on feature-length documentaries and fiction projects. We have a keen eye for stories that illuminate unknown issues set in previously under-explored areas. The company has a special interest in themes relating to society, justice and empowerment.