



Jai Bhim: A Critique to the Contemporary Society



Shweta Deepak Wagh

(M.A. English, NET, SET)

Research Scholar,

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University,
Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Abstract :

Cinema is the reflection of society both in positive and negative ways. It mirrors the revolutions, cultural tensions and new trends that are surfacing in society in an interesting way. Cinema in India is an entertainment medium that is interwoven into society and culture at large. It is clearly evident that continuous struggle and conflict at the personal as well as societal levels is depicted in cinema in India. *Jai Bhim*, a movie released in 2021, is a clear depiction of socio-political issues in contemporary Indian society. It is a courtroom drama which goes on unfolding the layers of the caste-based system. The film is a hard-hitting representation of the role of power domination unleashed over

the oppressed and marginalized sections of people. It portrays the system of social stratification and social exclusion associated with marginalized communities around us. It also represents power holders who enjoy exploiting, victimizing and dominance over the oppressed and downtrodden sections of people. This article presents the current scenario of caste-rotten society. The main theme of the movie is justice. It depicts the importance of law and order in the society. It also criticizes the ill practices in the society. It is a fight against the entire system.

Keywords : cinema, anti-caste discourse, Indian Constitution, society, injustice.



RESEARCH PAPER

INTRODUCTION

Movies have been a vital medium to communicate social insights and conditions while continuing to function as an important mode of entertainment to the masses. It is very intriguing to comprehend sometimes, whether it is the films that are shaping the society or vice versa. The chief concern of this study lies in tracing the anti-caste discourse and the related issues which are discussed in the movie, *Jai Bhim*.

Jai Bhim (2021) is an Indian Tamil-language legal drama film directed T. J. Gnanavel. Mainly, it deals with the subject of police bias and state violence against a marginalized community. It is a story of a pregnant woman from a primitive tribal community who searches desperately for her husband, who is missing from police custody. A High Court advocate rises in support to find her husband and seek justice for them.

Jai Bhim: A Critique of Society

The plot of this film revolves around tribal community-Irula. The story is based on an incident happened in 1995. The movie starts with the couple named Rajakannu and Sengini who belongs to a lower caste and works as labours in the nearby field. One day, Rajakannu is asked to come to the house of the upper caste wealthy man to find the snake inside his house. The next day theft of jewellery is reported in the same house suspicious raising towards Rajakannu. Police arrests Rajakannu and torture him to confess the crime that he did not commit. Mythra who teaches tribal village comes across Advocate Chandru who fights for tribal people. After hearing the story of Sengini, Advocate Chandru files a Habeas Corpus case in court. Police accuses that Rajakannu and his brothers eloped from the jail. They make the scenario and witnesses to support their false statement. As investigation progresses, Chandru finds the truth that Rajakannu died in the police custody due to police torture and extreme violence. Chandru fights for justice and proves that Rajakannu is not guilty for the crime.



The movie is legal drama and investigation thriller. It is about the atrocities committed against a tribal named 'Rajakannu' by implicating him in a false crime. This is the story of his wife Sengini's fight. It sounds like a straightforward and simple story, but as the story progresses, its burning sensation begins to be felt. The question is why a tribal got involved into this? Because for the upper-class people, such tribal people are 'Easy Targets'. This story shows that they have no voice at all. A society that denies the existence of tribals comes to the fore.

Although the story of *Jai Bhim* belongs to Tamil background, such incidents are happening all over India. But very few of those stories comes to us through different mediums like stories, novels and movies etc. *Jai Bhim* is one of those movies. Such films try to wreak havoc on those who believe that their life, their family and 'their society' is their world only. There is a strong commentary on the issue of 'casteism'. These people who consider themselves upper caste does not even consider as 'man' to lower caste. Animal like treatment is given to these tribals. Looking at the caste system of the 20th century, it seems that we are still living in the 12th century. Tribal are treated as slaves. Their basic human rights are violated. They have no right to their bodies; they are just animals for their masters. It cannot be said that there is a conflict between upper caste and lower caste. Because these tribes are not aware of the injustice done to them. They do not know that the Indian Constitution gives us the right to live with dignity and independence. In fact, they do not even know what a 'Constitution' is. What is the constitution and who is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar?

India became independent in 1947. Dr. Ambedkar drafted the constitution of independent India. The Constitution has given everyone the right to live as human beings. It has given the right to equality, freedom, suffrage but no one has told these tribals that they are citizens of this independent India. No one considers that tribals have the right to live. They are crushed like worms. The film manages to entertain as well as inform. Nowadays these tribals are facing difficulties in obtaining ST Certificate. Evidence of tribal origin is also denied. It is important to note that Dr. Ambedkar offered reservations 75 years ago to these victims. Today we see the chaos going on for reservations. After watching 'Jai Bhim', one understands that why this reservation is needed and who really needs it. These tribals are not given the right to vote in the film. Because the incumbents will have to bow before these tribals to get votes. These tribals are not educated. Because of education, one will get aware



of injustice. And if that happened then who would care for these elites? Who will clean the dirt in their house? Due to such pressure, they are excluded from education. Dr. Ambedkar chanted 'Learn, Organize and Struggle' but it did not reach to these tribal people.

In the movie, these innocent tribals are treated like thieves. Tribals are considered guilty of any crime that takes place in the vicinity. In the movie, Rajakannu is a self-respecting man who works hard to feed his family. Police trapped him in false crime and tortured him till death. But he was so firm on his pride. He endured all tortures but had not sold his self-esteem. And his wife, Sengini also seems to be confronting the authorities without compromising her integrity. It is shown in the movie that power holds both the marginalised and the wealthy. Lust for money and fear of power led witnesses to give false testimony. This made it difficult to trace the real criminals.

The Constitution of India has adopted the principle of independent judiciary. It is beautifully illustrated in 'Jai Bhim'. There is no mention of 'Jai Bhim' in the movie but the ideology of Dr Ambedkar is seen throughout the movie. Advocate Chandru is inspired by Dr Ambedkar. He goes beyond his professional limits to bring justice to the tribal community. Advocate Chandru stands by the truth and he clearly has a moral approach. He wants justice and equality for all. In his last argument at the courtroom, he awakens not only the judiciary system but also the whole society about the discrimination and oppression faced by the lower caste. The judiciary seems to be paying close attention to tribal issues by saying, "The law is blind, but not dumb". The court has ordered the government to provide shelter and relief amount the affected.

The society has to learn to see man as 'man' without looking at people through the lens of caste. The doors of education must be truly opened for these victims. We must take steps to create a non-caste, socially balanced society as intended by Dr. Ambedkar. If the light of knowledge reaches the grassroots of the society, then the path of opportunity and development will automatically open for each of these elements.

Conclusion

It is observed that socio-cultural issues and caste system are at the forefront of Indian society. The study demonstrates that a good cinema will educate, entertain and inspire people.



The impact of cinema is very broad, it makes us think and compassionate. It inspires people to help other and to do good for humanity. It is very impressive in today's world and it is very impactful. It can change someone mind, feelings and opinion. It affects and shapes the social norm and receives input from the same audience. It can create consciousness about the value of culture, education, arts and politics. It helps to accelerate unresolved justice. It inspires people to come forward to tackle social evils. Basically, it helps to make us more aware about situations and to understand the circumstances. It reflects our society and give us idea that how to deal with these things.

The present study is the exploration of social, economic, cultural and political background in order to study the anti-caste discourse with the help of the selected Indian regional cinema. The issue of caste is front and centre in the storyline, language and visual style of the movie. This movie clearly showcases the hollowness in Indian society. It is an eye-opener for anyone who is merely a bystander looking at the injustice. It is necessary to train our mind in such a way that it brings the desirable positive changes in the society. The awareness of socio-cultural aspects can lead man gradually towards self-discovery and further it adds moral values in the society.

References and Bibliography:

Primary Sources:

Gnanavel, TJ. *Jai Bhim*, 2021.

Secondary Sources:

Aiyappan, Ashameera. *Jai Bhim movie review: Suriya leads a decisively realistic courtroom drama that reflects contradictions Ambedkar spoke of*, 2021.

Chandra Geetanjali, Bhatia Sudha. *Social Impact of Indian Cinema – An Odyssey From Reel to Real*, Global Media Journal, 2019.

Deivendra Kumar A. *Jai Bhim: A Narrative od Downtrodden and the Voice of the Voiceless*, 2021.

Dr. KhattriNeeraj,SinghArshita. *Role of Bollywood Cinema in Shaping Youngsters for Social Awareness*,Psychology and Education, 2021.



Major Manivannan, P. *Jai Bhim is a Solid Fight against Caste. Will it Bring out the Chandru in us?*, Opinion, 2021.

Madan, T. N., *Non- Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture*, Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 1988.

Murthy, N. V. *Understanding Indian Cinema*. In New Quest, 1988.

Webliography:

www.academia.edu

www.britannica.com

www.cambridge.com

www.firstpost.com

www.hindustantimes.com

www.imbd.com

www.indianexpress.com

www.researchgate.com

www.scoopwhoop.com

www.thehindu.com

www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com

www.toppr.com

www.wikipedia.org



ISSN: 2395-6968

All the rights reserved.