

Caste, Class and Gender Representation in Jai Bhim Film

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Abstract: *The research paper intends to provide detailed analysis about the caste, class and gender representation in the film – ‘Jai Bhim’. The study focuses about the various important insights from the film representing the role caste, class and gender in the society. The web surveys and online reviews are helped for the study. The storyline of the film is portrayed in an unbiased way by considering the perspective of each side. The film had shown many examples of discrimination penetrating in the society based on caste and class. But at the same time unbiased behaviour of many people from the society who believes in the equality is shown in the film. Also, the dark as well as bright side of police department is also described in the film. The entire film revolves around the people of Irula tribe whose life was full of misery and sufferings. The film had shown the power of law how to use it to build the best world. The film is not about the fight between higher and lower castes. Even not against the police officers, but it’s a fight against the entire system. Jai Bhim seeks for a better society, where all the humans must have human rights. The film is inspired from the true events happened in the year 1995 in the state Tamil Nadu which resulted as the filing of Habeas Corpus, and landmark- judgment by the Chennai High Court in 1995. The research paper aims to study and analyse the Caste, Class and Gender Representation in the Jai Bhim film.*

Keywords: Caste, Class, Gender and Humiliation

1. Introduction

Jai Bhim is the masterpiece released in November, 2021 about the discrimination in the society. The film had shown the power of the law and how it is important and dominant over any kind of government or non-government officials or organisations. The film is inspired from a true story occurred in 1995 in the state Tamilnadu. Then, the event resulted as the filing of **Habeas Corpus**, by the wife of victim (Senggeni), and it was historic in the Chennai High Court History. It’s the best and incredible film, directed by T.J. Gnanavel and Suriya (Chandru), Liijo Mol Jose (Senggeni) and Manikandan (Rajakannu) were the lead performers.

The film is about the trouble and resistance of the ‘Irula tribe’, a denotified tribe from Tamilnadu. The story of Jay Bhim revolves around the Irula tribe which are known as sons and daughters of the hills whose life was full of misery and sufferings, as they try to build a better life for themselves in a land that refuses to see beyond their caste identity. Rajakannu, one of the lead character, is accused of stealing money from the house of village president. Therefore, he is falsely detained by the police.

When he and his relatives found missing from the jail after being brutally beaten up by the police. Then his pregnant wife, (Sengani), tries to figure out where he has gone, and uncover the truth behind the disappearance of her husband. It is to be noted that the plot of the film is based on a real case, which resulted as a landmark- judgment by the Chennai High Court in 1995.

2. Caste Representation

The film exhibits the discrimination and injustice happened in 1995 with the people from Irula tribe is shown which was considered as a one of the lower castes during those days. The Irula community used to catch snakes and rats for the living. It was their main stream of earning. The film starts with description of the daily life of the village where the people from Irula caste were living. The first Rajakannu and his people i.e. people from Irula caste are shown catching the rats so that snakes can be far from the fields and also to stop the stealing of food from the locality by the rats. Then the simple and happy life of the Irula caste is described.



The Irula caste people used to catch snakes and rats
Image Source: Screenshot from the film

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Representation of the discrimination in the society

The life of the people from Irula caste wasn't that easy. Many times, they faced the discrimination from the people from other communities. In the film, it's shown that how even after catching all the rats from the field of a farmer from higher caste he used to humiliate the people from Irula tribe. Also, the community is not allowed to live in the village area. All the people of Irula tribe are living in the forest area near the village. Even the practice of untouchability was on its peak. The practice of untouchability is also represented in the film where, it is shown that the women from upper caste don't touch the Irula

tribe's people. Also, the president (Sarpanch) of the village humiliates the Senggeni (lead role from Irula caste) when she comes at the evening for help in front of his house. He repels her saying her presence is spoiling the environment or surrounding of his house. Another major example of the discrimination shown in the film in which the jailor of a jail is releasing the prisoners on the date of release but, in this case the jailor first asks the caste name of the prisoner and only allow to go home if he is from higher caste. If people are from lower caste, then he will not release them. He sent back to the jail and registers false cases of other criminals on them.



Image Source: Screenshot from film

Representation of the unbiased behaviour of few people towards lower castes

Most of the people who are shown opposing the discrimination are educated from the higher caste. These include a lady teacher from their village, advocate Chandru who help them in obtaining their rights in the society, rice

mill owner, IG Perumalswamy and many more. Such people help the Irula tribe in many miserable situations. The lady teacher from the village used to teach the basic English and Maths to the tribal community. Few people are shown who supported the Irula communities people while demanding for justice by joining the rally's.



Image Source: Screenshot from the film

Thus, the film represented the Irula caste's life by showcasing both bright as well as dark side of society. In which few people are practicing the discrimination which includes untouchability and humiliation of lower castes while on the other side the part of community believing in equality is also represented in the film.

Class Representation

The film also explains the pitiable state of the people from lower class. Here, lower class in terms of economic and social condition, educationally and even in terms of caste. The people from Irula tribal community are backward as compared to other society. The main reasons are lack of education; the discrimination they face in the community.

Representation of class discrimination by the Government Officials

The film also focuses on the how Irula tribal community was suffering through various problems being from backward class. Here, in the film, its shown that, the elder people from the Irula tribal community goes to the government office asking for caste certificate for educating their children but the officer drives them away by saying there is no need of education for people like you, tribes should live in forest and there will not be any impact on the country if tribes remain uneducated.

Another example of class discrimination is shown in which, the teacher from the village along with people of Irula tribal community visits the officer from election commission asking for adding their names in the voter list. But the politician refuses for this because if the tribes get voting power, then during elections, he has to request them for voting himself and he doesn't want to bow in front of lower-class people for a vote. Even the basic documents like address proof, ration card etc are not issued by the government.

The biased behaviour of the president (sarpanch) of the village also represented in the film. When the money from his house is stolen then without any proof or investigation,

he directly accuses the people from lower caste with allegations that their entire community is thief.

Representation of brutality of the Police Department with lower-class

The story of the film mainly revolves around the brutal behaviour of the police department with the people from lower caste. In the film the real incidence is portrayed showcasing the rude behaviour with the people from Irula tribe. When a thief steals the money from house of president of the village (Sarpanch) local police tries to find the real culprit. But after finding the real culprit they take bribe from him and in order to close the case. The police department arrests a person along with his family members from the Irula tribe and humiliates them brutally. They didn't even leave his pregnant wife. The police beat her without caring about her pregnancy and health. The situation becomes even worst when one of the policemen shamelessly pulls the sari of his sister in the presence of everyone. We can imagine the level of humiliation because the person on whom the allegations are made dies in the jail. Even after crossing the limits the police department never cares and throws his dead body in the forest side. Thus, there are several incidents shown in the film representing the harsh behaviour of police towards lower class.



Rude behaviour of the police department with lower-class

Image Source: Screen shot from the film

Gender Representation

Along with caste and class discrimination the film also highlights the gender inequality and rude behaviour with women penetrating in the society.

The police department arrests the pregnant wife of Rajakannu on whom the fake allegations are made. They beat her without even caring about her pregnancy. The SI of the department behaves too rudely with her. The policemen shamelessly pull the sari of Rajakannu's sister in the presence of everyone in the jail and pushes her without cloths in the corner. The sarpanch of the village also humiliates the ladies from tribal community.

But on the other side, the strong side of women is also shown in the film. The pregnant wife of Rajakannu fights till endagainst the system. Also when DGP offers her money for taking case back she refuses it even though she had the responsibility of two children. Here, the self-respect shown by her is portrayed in very nice manner. Along with her the

strong nature of teacher in the village is shown. She also fights and supports with the tribal community in every situation. The teacher always led the tribal community on various platforms in fighting for their human rights.

Thus, the film represents the injustice happened with women and also the encourageous behaviour of them.



The wife of victim fighting against system till the end



The courageous behaviour of the teacher by leading the tribal community for their rights

Image Source: Screen shot from the film

[4] Image Sources : All the images in the research paper are added by taking screenshots from the film. Screenshot of relative scenes to the subtopics in the reports are selected.

3. Conclusion

It concludes that the film had shown the each and every incidence by considering everyone's perspective. The representation of caste, class and gender is not done in biased way. The film portrayed the real incidence happened in 1995 in the state Tamilnadu. Then, the event produced the **Habeas Corpus**, filed by the wife of victim (Sengeni), and it was momentous in the Chennai High Court History.

The film has shown the power of the law and how to make its use to fight for the justice. The film focuses on the various issues of the society and how the entire system is responsible for the mess of the society. Jai Bhim looks for for a better society, where all the humans must have human rights and create the best world of equality.

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