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## **Critique to Capitalism in the Movie Super-30: A Marxist Approach**

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### **ABSTRACT :**

*This paper aims to analyze the Film Super-30 by using Marxist Approach. This film is directed by Vikas Bahl and was released in 2019. It is based on the real-life story of a genius Mathematician Anand Kumar from Patna, who helped the poor children to accomplish their dreams by educating them free of cost. It also*

*shows the problems faced by Anand himself due to lack of money. The film highlights the issues of capitalism. It shows how class disparity still exists in our society.*

### **KEY WORDS :**

*Super-30, Film, Marxist Approach, Capitalism, Class*

## RESEARCH PAPER

### Introduction

Movies have always been a great attraction for the average man because of their life-like quality. It has not only entertained us but also shown the dreams, aspirations and desires of the common man. It has become a powerful instrument for culture, education and propaganda. In a 1963 report for United Nations Educational Scientific and cultural organization, Mr. Baldoon Dhingra quoted a speech by Prime Minister Nehru,

“the influence in India of films is greater than newspapers and books combined.”

It can be utilized as an instrument to help people to get rid of social evils. Cinema guides to go along to the right path in our society. It also highlights the problems in our society such as poverty, illiteracy, corruption, caste-system etc. Mehboob Khan's '*Mother India*', Satyajit Ray's '*Pather Panchali*', Bimal Roy's '*Do Bigha Zameen*' shows the grime struggle for survival of the poor people living in rural India. '*Achutkanya*'(1936) deals with the social positions of dalit girls in Indian society and recent movies like '*3 Idiots*'(2009) addresses educational issues in India, including stress, parental expectations, suicide, etc. '*Pink*'(2016) addresses gender issues.

There are many movies which have elements of Marxism in them. The most common issue in Marxism is the class struggle. In the eyes of Marx, class struggle will never end, as Karl Marx said:

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guide-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.”

Class struggle is a universal phenomenon and therefore we find movies both in Bollywood and Hollywood based on this topic. For example, in Hollywood we have movies

like; *Titanic*, *A Bug's Life*, *Little Prince*, *Alien*, *Avatar* etc. In *Film Form*, Russian director Sergei Eisenstein wrote that:

“Production, art and literature reflect the capitalist scope and construction of the United States of America... American capitalism finds its sharpest and most expressive reflection in the American cinema.”

*My Fair Lady* is a 1964 American musical comedy-drama film adapted from the 1956 Lerner and Loewe stage musical based on George Bernard Shaw's 1913 stage play *Pygmalion*. In this classic film *My Fair Lady*, Professor Higgins (Rex Harrison) tests the hypothesis that social class position can be learned, particularly through the practice of “proper” English and comportment. To prove his point, he takes on the challenge of transforming Eliza Doolittle (Audrey Hepburn) into a lady. Eliza's father (Stanley Holloway) shows up, shocking Higgins by asking for compensation for the use of his daughter, explaining that poor people cannot afford morality, it is a luxury of the middle class.

Bollywood movie *The White Tiger* is based on Arvind Adiga's novel of the same name. It's a good example of class difference that is present in India. In India, English is considered as a language of elite class so the one who wants to succeed in life should learn English. The opening of the novel itself suggests the dominance and supremacy of English. Balam writes to Jiabo, “Neither you nor I speak English but, there are some things that can only be said in English”. As Balam belongs to a poor family, he was forced to take blame of hit and run case which legally belonged to Pinky Madam. At the end, we come to know that Balam, a driver became a successful-businessman. He had killed his employer and robbed his money to start a new business in Bangalore. Though he worked hard to become a successful person, he had to leave his morals to achieve this success. In an interview with Lee Thomas, Arvind Adiga expressed his anxiety that if the government does not recognize the rights of the underprivileged and their aspiration to succeed, and if it does not provide opportunities to those poor people to rise, then this can only lead to trouble.

Epic masterpiece *1900* (film) illustrates a Marxist perspective on the changing relationship between the ruling and working class in the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

To Marx, social class and in particular class conflict, is the engine that derives historical development. The conflict between classes is focused on control and use of the means of production with struggle between those who labour for wage and those who derive

benefit from the labour of others. As Joe Kenehan (Chirs Cooper), a labour organizer for the United Mine workers in the movie *Matewan*, explains to the miners and the would-be African American and Italian immigrant scabs brought by the mine company to break the strike, “there ain’t but two sides in this world- them that work and them that don’t.”

Bollywood movies like *Namak Haraam*, *Mazdoor*, *Deewar*, *Kaala Patthar*, *The Lift Boy*, *Gully Boy* and *Super-30* based on class struggle. The film *Super-30* (2019) was directed by Vikas Bahl and is based on the life of genius Mathematician Anand Kumar from Patna. It shows the problem faced by him due to poverty and how he helped the poor children to overcome the same problems. Anand Kumar belongs to a poor family, his father was a Postman and mother was a housewife. He was very studious and liked Mathematics subject so he used to travel to Varanasi to read foreign Mathematical Journal in the Central Library BHU but was denied access to it as he was an outsider. So later, he wrote an article for that Journal and it was an excellent article due to which he got the opportunity to study in Cambridge. But as his family was poor, they were not able to raise the money required for it. So his dream was shattered and after his father’s sudden death, he started selling Pappads (Wafers).

As Anand had himself lost the opportunity to study in Cambridge due to poverty, he was able to understand the same problems faced by many poor children today in our society. Anand’s father used to say,

“ *Absamaybadalgayahai, Ab Raja ka beta Raja nihotahai, wo hotahai jo haqdaarhotahai.* ”

But the reality is different, only rich people can get good education and can lead a successful life because the poor people can’t afford the fee that is required for quality education. Education has now become a business and only rich people can afford that. According to sociologist Adam Gamoran (2001), students from privileged backgrounds have more success in school and can translate their education into economic success in the marketplace. In this way, economic, cultural and social differences combine to preserve the position of the privileged from one generation to the next.

There is an important scene in the movie where Anand had a conversation with an auto-driver who explains to Anand how from ancient times it is the customs of our society that only rich and powerful can get the opportunity to study. He gives example of Ekalavya, a character from Indian epic Mahabharata, he was a tribal boy and was not given the

opportunity to study. But he studied through observation and considered Dronacharya as his guru and became a great archer. When Guru Dronacharya finds out this, he asks Ekalavya to cut off his right thumb as Guru Dakshina and Ekalavya did so. Dronacharya wanted to make sure that Arjun, the son of king remains the greater archer in the world. The auto-driver says,

*“ Aajbhiwahi ho rahahai, aagebhi Raja ka beta hi Raja banega, dekhiyega.”*

The children whom Anand started teaching in his class were the children of daily wages labourers so they had a very low self-confidence. In order to build their confidence Anand used to narrate them the fictional story of two boys- Rikki, the rich boy and Bholu, the poor boy. Although Bholu was poor, he was very intelligent and was able to solve the same problem using different methods. Another problem that children faced were fear of English language, they were afraid because they can't speak fluent English like the elite class. So in order to remove this fear, Anand asks them to perform in front of upper class students in English language only. So the children enact a scene from the movie 'Sholay'.

The children being poor have to face many problems in their daily life. Even getting a one time's meal isn't easy for them. So Anand tries to motivate them and explains them that because they have lots of obstacles on their way, they will learn to overcome them and gain success in their life. He says,

*“...Jabbhisamayayega to sabseuchi, sabsebadiaursabselambichalaang hum hi marenge.”*

Generally, we accept the reality of social classes and social inequality as legitimate and normal, and reflecting the underlying differences in ability and ambition among individuals. It is believed that success is achievable if one has merit, talent and virtue and the one who do not achieve success are one who lacks the requisite talent and skill. We often fail to recognise that there can be significant class barriers preventing individuals from achieving success. According to the U.S census Bureau (2014), individuals within the top income quartile are 8 times more likely to obtain a bachelor's degree by age 24 as compared to individuals from the lowest family income quartile. Diemer and Blustein (2007) found that racial, ethnic and socio-economic barriers generally hinder individual's vocational development. Career barriers are significantly higher for those from poor backgrounds, people of colour, women, those who are disabled, and LGBTIQ- identified individuals. So

the root cause is not the individual but the social structure in which the individual lives and that needs to be changed to create equal opportunities for all irrespective of his caste, class, gender etc.

Difficulties help one to know their real potential as rightly said by Vladimir Lenin,

“ Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will.”

### **Conclusion:**

In today's world where everyone is only thinking about how to earn more money, the people like Anand Kumar is an exception, who is helping the poor children to get higher education and become independent, successful and good human being. He has set a great example before the young generation who are blindly running after money and who fails to realize their social responsibilities.

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