



A FILM REVIEW OF THE MOVIE MASSAN THROUGH SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Masaan: A Mirror to India's Social Realities

Masaan (2015) by Neeraj Ghaywan isn't just a movie; it's a haunting look at the strict social systems that still shape Indian lives. The movie is set in Varanasi, a city that represents both culture and spiritual freedom. It tells two stories that show the harsh realities of caste, gender, and economic problems. Masaan will be a powerful statement about the deep-seated inequalities that still exist in India, even as the country moves forward.

Caste: The Unseen Chains of Society

Deepak Kumar (Vicky Kaushal), a younger man from the Dom caste, is at the center of the movie. In the past, this caste was in charge of painting cremation scenes. Even though he is working toward an engineering degree, his caste identity follows him like a shadow. His love for Shaalu, a woman from the highest caste, ends in heartbreak. This shows how caste-based discrimination still affects personal and social relationships. M.N. Srinivas's idea of caste hierarchy helps us understand why relationships between people of different castes are still frowned upon. Deepak wants a better future, but his caste roots keep him from getting there. This shows that moving up in the world isn't always just about getting more education; it's also about breaking down old prejudices.

Moral Policing and the Policing of Women

Deepak's story is about caste oppression, while Devi Pathak's (Richa Chadha) story is about how girls are brutally policed when they make choices. When the police blackmail her and treat her like a criminal instead of a victim, a moment of closeness with her boyfriend turns into a nightmare. It's clear that society is obsessed with controlling women's sexuality because even her father, who is very traditional, has trouble accepting that she is innocent. It fits with Louis Dumont's theory of purity and pollution, which says that a woman's honor is tied to the reputation of her family. Devi's conflict isn't always just personal; it's a symbol of the many girls who are silenced by moral policing and patriarchal expectations.

The Price of Poverty and the Myth of Social Mobility

In Masaan, caste and beauty come together to make a complicated picture of money problems. Vidyadhar Pathak, Devi's father, is a Brahmin by birth but not very good with money. His reputation doesn't protect him from being taken advantage of by the corrupt system, where a police officer takes money from him while pretending to protect his daughter's honor. Pathak has cultural capital (a Brahmin reputation), but he doesn't have any money, so he can't stand up to authority. On the other hand, Deepak tries to gain economic capital through education, hoping that it will free him from caste discrimination. But his heartbreak shows that real social mobility isn't just about making money; it's also about getting rid of deep-seated biases.

Varanasi: A Symbol of Tradition and Liberation

Varanasi's setting is more than just a place; it's a symbol of how strange Indian society is. The Ganges, which stands for every life and death, is like the main characters' struggles between their culture and their desire for freedom.

Émile Durkheim's idea of collective focus explains how cultural rituals, such as cremation rites, bring people together. But the movie asks if these customs help or hurt people. The city that promises spiritual salvation also enforces strict rules on society, making it hard for people like Deepak and Devi to break free.

Hope in the Face of Oppression Even though it has sad parts, Masaan ends on a note of quiet hope. In the last scene, Deepak and Devi's paths cross, hinting at the chance for new beginnings. Their strength shows that even though there are real problems in society, they are not impossible to solve.

Masaan makes its target audience face the uncomfortable truths about Indian society, which makes it one of the most socially relevant movies in modern Indian cinema. As India moves forward, Masaan reminds us that real progress isn't just about making more money; it's also about breaking down the

invisible walls that keep people apart based on caste, gender, and moral policing. The movie makes us think: Are we really free, or are we still tied to the traditions that make us who we are?