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PAIN, TORTURE AND HUMILIATION IN VETRIMAARAN'S *VISARANAI*
(INTERROGATION)

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the Pain, Torture and Humiliation in Tamil versatile director Vetrimarar's film *Visaranai (Interrogation)* which is based on M. Chandra Kumar's autobiographical novel *Lock Up*. The film narrates bitter and painful experiences of the Tamils who work in Andhra Pradesh. How the immigrants are treated as aliens in other state even in the same country. The law maker should not be law breaker but it is true sometimes the law maker is a law breaker for their own concerns. The film is a cruelly honest portrayal of what goes on behind the closed doors of a police lock up under the guise of an interrogation. The arrogance of those in power and the utter helplessness of those caught in the web of the justice system is unthinkable. Once in custody, the nightmare never ends. What makes it truly terrifying is the knowledge that the plot is not the result of someone's imagination but is based on true incidents. It also brings out the torture and humiliation for four friends of low class people.

Key Words: Pain, Torture, Humiliation, Interrogation and Immigrants.

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INTRODUCTION

The film *Visaranai* begins in rural Andhra Pradesh, a Telugu speaking region of India, where a small group of Tamil speaking immigrants, considered foreigners, have migrated to find work. Pandi, the protagonist and some of his fellow Tamil migrants, Murugan, Afzal and Kumar are homeless, works at a corner shop in town. The incident of a robbery takes place at the Brindavan Colony, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh and the police officials are under a lot of pressure to close the high-profile case so their only clue to this crime is that the miscreants spoke Tamil fluently. Pandi and his three friends were arrested and taken into custody, and their only crime is speaking their mother tongue. What is unfortunate is that no one even translates the accusations that are being hurled at them in Telugu. No sooner do these clueless migrant workers appear in the station,

than the police inspectors begin ruthlessly beating them with lathis (canes) in an effort to make them admit to their crimes.

The only problem is that they've committed no crime, and more than just being innocent, they are completely ignorant of any crime having been committed in the first place, which compromises their ability to confess to anything.

As Wikipedia defines;

"Torture is the intentional infliction of severe mental or physical pain or suffering by or with the consent of the state authorities for a specific purpose... Torture is often used to punish, to obtain information or a confession...(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/torture)

Similarly Pandi and the others are tortured continuously and asked to confess to robbing a police officer's house and after repeatedly being beaten up they do so and are taken to court. While the police officer crushed them severely, they cried with intolerable pain. It is a far cry to the system of Law. No one can support them because they are suppressed people of non-native or neighbour state. Within the four walls everything is happened so they are helpless. While every one of them is crying to be set free, and they're being promised their freedom in exchange for acknowledgements, Pandi insists that they remain firm and stand upon their innocence.

It's ostensibly an interrogation, but we don't hear too many words. Instead, we hear the thwack of a lathi when it lands on bare flesh, the gasps and coughs when a man is water boarded, the crack of a tooth coming off, and most sickeningly, the fingernails-on-chalkboard rasp from a long stem being shaved and readied for a sustained thrashing. Suddenly, it's a game. If Pandi buckles and falls, then his friends will receive more punishment.

Hypnotic suggestion was given to the victims to accept the crime. Their life takes a turn for worse when they are caught, beaten and tortured for a theft they did not commit due to police's bureaucracy. They get help from another Tamil speaking policeman. An interesting twist occurs through the aid of a Tamil Nadu Police officer Muthuvel on duty to nab an eluding political whistleblower K.K, is white-collared victim. He is an auditor, who deals with Swiss bank accounts. He hobnobs with political bigwigs. Muthuvel asks Pandi and his friends help to nab K.K. and the grateful boys agree little knowing that they are headed towards a far worse fate than what they just experienced.

Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage. This is true and aptly fit for the four people. Their pain is not expressed by words, they become physically and mentally weak except Pandi. They don't have any chance to escape or relieve from the pain except accepting the undone crime. But the protagonist Pandi is the person who has realised the situation and gets a thread of confidence to overcome from it. But they get dragged into another bigger political scam and murder inside police custody where they are targeted because they overhear some higher police officials meeting. Everyone loses hope of escape from the corrupt system where they are scapegoats until Pandi tries to take things in his hand, but the movie ends with a police encounter and death of everyone who tries to correct the wrong.

Humiliation is the abasement of pride, which creates mortification or leads to a state of being humbled or reduced to lowliness or submission. It is vividly known in the life of these four. The ill treatment of victims is unimaginable, it is inhuman. The brutality of the policeman is contempt. Every moment of their pain, torture and humiliation has been perfectly captured by in this film.

Conclusion

Part of *Visaranai's* agenda is to show that the System is truly egalitarian. The gods can toy with anyone. But the film isn't a wail, it isn't melodramatic. The story is woven cleverly exposes how the higher powers use the police force and civilians as pawns for their own gains, whether it is an ordinary worker in an alien state or a man with influence in his own state can both be set up and killed with clinical perfection. The victims die without knowing the reasons for their deaths or the enemy behind it and that sure sends the chills down the spine. Police force is the responsible and powerful force in the society but it gives importance to

aristocratic family. Consequently lower class people cannot get Justice in this society. Mostly power is shown on the people who are unknown of the law, innocents, low class people and workers. Low and working class people whether immigrants or whoever all are human beings, they are living in the country without any economic and political support.

The physical and psychic violence in *Visaranai* is brutal, visceral, and unavoidable. Each blow from the lathi leaves a scar, each kick from a boot leaves teeth missing, and each slap leaves a soul depleted. The message is that no matter how powerful you are, no matter how much money you have, the system will find you, chew you up, and spit you out. So suppressed people are living unidentified and no one knows where they have buried after their death, is a fate.

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