

Munna Bhai MBBS: A Parody of the Present Medical Practice **Ashaq Hussain Parray, M.A., M.Phil., NET**

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Munna Bhai MBBS

Munna Bhai MBBS has been a block buster movie, for it provides abundant comic relief and a critique of rules and conventions of the “superior” culture. The movie defies Bollywood’s generally followed conventions of plot and characters and climax, etc., and has a simple interesting and humanistic plot. The hero, who is considered to be inhuman as per worldly standards, turns out to be an epitome of humanity. Though a gangster, a failure as per civilized conventions, yet he wins the sympathy of almost everyone.

The Plot of *Munna Bhai MBBS*

The plot of *Munna Bhai MBBS* has, at its center, Munna - Murli Prasad Sharma (played by Sanjay Dutt), the son of simple village parents, who comes to the city to become something worthwhile in life. Unable to cope up with the atmosphere of the city, he turns into a 'bhai'. Circuit (played by Arshad Varsi) becomes his aide. When Munna's parents come to the city to see their son, he employs a make-shift hospital to convince his parents that he is a doctor.

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Dr Astana eventually unfolds the secret to Munna's parents, and then the plot becomes more complicated, as Munna enters into Astana's hospital as an MBBS entrance qualified topper by fraud.

The turns and twists of the narrative unfurl various arguments and counter arguments.

A photo journalist from the West is seen by Circuit taking photographs of some poor Indians, uttering words "poor Indians, naked Indians." This prompts Circuit to kill the journalist and take his body to Munna for dissection. Dr. Astana had asked Munna to fetch one of his own for dissection.

Critical and Sarcastic Views of Practices

Throughout the movie the rebuttals and interrogation by Munna provoke laughter. The unnecessary formalities that patients had to undergo before treatment is mocked at and ridiculed when Munna asks Astana repeatedly a rhetorical question "Form barna zaroori huh kya?" ("Is it mandatory to fill the form?" with a twist or tone of sarcasm)

'Form barna zarrori hai kya' seems to make fun of current medical culture. All nations demand their citizens that they fill various forms, right from the day of conception in the 'hidden dark womb of the mother' till the day of death. For instance, birth certificate, marriage certificate, death certificate, etc., are a few prominent examples.

A Parody of Methodology and Critique of Medical Practices

The movie presents a parody of the methodology of treatment given to the patients. For example, Munna asks Rustum's father to drink a cup of juice treating it as medicine, and other episodes also enormously bring into the limelight the capricious treatment modes.

Doctor Astana's teaching and treatment does not show any love or any sympathy for patients. How some doctors are bothered only about their own interests, not considering the miseries and helplessness and plight of patients at all is brought out in the movie. In addition, the movie also brings out the calumnious treatment of co-workers, especially the treatment meted out to the subordinates/low-ranking employees.

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Generational Contrasts – Focus on Wealth and Status

The contrast between father and son in terms of how they work and how they make friends and socialize is brought out clearly. Rustam's father socializes and enjoys the delights of life, whereas his unmarried son Rustam believes only in competition and individual identity.

Rustam's father is a confident man of wit and, above all, he is involved in his favorite game because of interest, while Astana, despite being an efficient doctor, expresses his helplessness in curing and giving medicine that could prolong and further his father's life.

Pitiable Case of Dr. Zaheer

Doctor Zaheer, who is detected positive for cancer, almost leaves no one without tears in his/her eyes, for the dreams of the doctor are yet to be realized and he has lived his fill of life so far under a regressive competitive spirit. He is a live example of misery. The very test for cancer has shattered his hopes. The doses of happiness that Munna is able to provide him are the only solution available before him. The cabaret dancer that is hired by Munna for providing Zaheer some moments of hope is in itself questionable, while the woman is reduced to a mere sexual commodity.

Dr. Chinky and Munna – Interesting Typical Movie Resolution

Doctor Chinky's imagination and idea regarding Munna is simplistic, although her understanding what "bhai" stands for may not be totally cancelled out. She believes being a 'bhai' means essentially being a person deeply interested in prostitution, or promiscuous girls, licentious men and killing people without any fear. She hires a cabaret dancer and asks her to give a culture shock to Munna. Note Munna himself hired a cabaret dancer to "give some hope" to Dr. Zaheer. Munna is horrified to see that his expectations of a simple, loving, decent Chinki have got transformed into a lively prostitute. But toward the end of the plot, Chinki has got familiar with the real Munna and makes her identity a hybrid. And at the end of the day, she feels there is something that needs to be recognized, and needs appreciation. Munna's wife, a symbol of modernity and western identity, is Indianized and localized; and so Munna has no problem with her, and both come to terms with each other.

Back to the Village, Right or Wrong

Circuit, who previously in the entire movie was depicted as an aide, a faithful friend of Munna, ironically returns to his native village and pursues agriculture, and there is the birth of “short circuit.” Does he think that his past trip to the City is of no consequence to him, his family and their future? What will be the future of short circuit is unknown.

To Conclude

Like any typical Bollywood movie, or for that matter any Indian movie, there is something for everyone in *Munna MBBS*. The audience leaves the theatre with great satisfaction of resolving life’s conflicts on the screen. Will this ever become a reality?

Works Cited

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