

Confetti Of Literary Thoughts

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Incarcerated Justice: An Analysis of the Movie *B Tech*

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“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”

- Martin Luther King

Justice is one of the most important ideals in our society. It's what we strive for in order to create a fair and equitable world. Justice is the principle of moral rightness and fairness, based on the idea of treating individuals fairly and impartially according to their actions and circumstances. It is a fundamental concept in law, ethics, and politics. But insufficiency of solidarity, stigmatization of Muslim and denied justice in our hierarchical society is turning as an incredible social problem. Discrimination is another massive problem that the society undergoing. Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, caste, religion, class, name, race and appearance. It means 'treating some people differently from others'. Muslim minorities are victims of injustice and discrimination. India is a diverse country with a significant Muslim population and there are many Muslim prisoners in India. Mostly they are accused of terrorism related offenses. Some innocent Muslims are falsely accused as terrorist by the legal authorities. “Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary”

-Reinhold Niebuhr

Justice is the right of every individual who deserves equality or fairness in economic, political and social opportunities irrespective of race, gender or caste differences. ‘Injustice’ is still growing in India even though it's a democratic country. So this injustice is mostly faced by Muslim minorities due to different reasons like their name, caste, appearance, dress, class, and also by religion. There is an insufficiency of solidarity and justice in our hierarchical society. Justice is denied towards Muslims by socio-political systems and legal authorities like police and court of justice etc. The purpose of this study is to expose the unfairness towards Muslims by analyzing a Movie named *B tech*. It is a 2018 Malayalam thriller movie directed by Mridul Nair. According to him, this film is inspired by several real incidents in India. So, the authenticity of series of events related to Muslim minority in this film is confirmed by the director's experience. They treated them as criminals and framed as terrorist for their personal satisfaction and also to follow social conventional norms and prejudice.

The film revolves around the B tech engineering students in Bengaluru, who have not completed the course with their academic year and trying to complete it. It portrays campus life, values of friendship, love and gang fights in the first half of the film. After the interval, suddenly it turns a drastic change by creating tension and emotion through political proceedings, religious bias and judgments. Reason for this twist is expressed in the second half. Actor Arjun Ashokan represents the core character named “Azad Mohammed” who is a simple and pure Muslim, grew up in a Muslim orphanage in rural ‘Payyanur’ in Kerala. He always tries to hide his hair with a cap as part of his religious belief. But all these became sharpened thorns and huddles in his life due to irrelevant or inappropriate rules and regulations of society especially the powerful majority classes. Azad joined the gang of engineering students with a leader called ‘Anand Subramaniam’ (Actor Asif Ali) and other gang members are Nizar Ahmmed, Jojo, Prashanth and Ananya Viswanath. Anand is a high caste Hindu. The first incident that bright out the prejudices of the society

When, Azad Mohammed and Nizar Ahammed were arrested by the police for traffic violation. A character named “Nayak” who is a Deputy Commissioner of Police is the representative of socio-political evil power.

The police officer treated them as criminals not for the traffic violation but for their name and appearance, the indication of the religion they followed. A character called ‘Said Ali’ also became a victim because he bought the scooter used by Azad. For them “Muslim identity” acts as a sword hanging over their head as a threat. Then the second incident involving Azad shakes the city of Bengaluru into its core. A ‘Bomb blast’ in front of Garuda Mall in Bengaluru. Azad was falsely branded as a terrorist. Here the relevance of ‘Justice’ is expressed. The denial of rights of Muslims to prove their innocence and the unwanted and unethical proceedings and conclusions of legal authorities are undoubtedly presented over here. The police authority conformed and declared that “this is a suicidal bomb attack by a B tech student named Azad Mohammed”(1:43:08 – 1:43:18). They tried to create fake evidence to substantiate their claims. The police officer Nayak has a dialogue that ‘we will produce it in court’ as the response to the media enquiry about true and strong evidence (1:45:32 – 1:45:35). The tone of this dialogue symbolizes the power of dynamics.

Azad's friends including Anand, Nizar Ahammad , Abdu, Said Ali, Jojo and Pranshanth, are arrested by the police for enquiry. But the ‘Muslim’ characters are framed as terrorist suspects and also imprised by police. Rest of them are released only because of their non-Muslim identity. Their names, appearances, social status, origin and background are not related to Muslim religion. The group of Muslim students turned into prisoners with

inexplicable experience of physical and mental torturing by police. They forcefully indoctrinated the character named 'Prashanth' to agree that "You have a suspicion that Azad is a terrorist" (1:48:26 – 1:48:29). But he rejected to become a false testimony or witness for the immoral proceedings from the side of police. He proves that friendship and love have no border like religion or caste. Every citizen in our country has certain rights and responsibilities. A very disgraceful incident occurred during this event is the significant sample for exposure of the hidden mask of hypocrisy on the side of police rulers. The incident is that the Deputy Commissioner Nayak uses an 'abominable word' for the death of Azad without considering he is also a human being and a citizen of India . They have broken the common sense of respect towards others only because of the influence of the power and dominance.

"If we are not free, No one will respect us" is a famous quote of Doctor A.P.J Abdul Kalam, which indicates the need of freedom and respect.

Riots and rebellions are broken out in city of Bengaluru for resisting the wrong conclusion of political-legal authorities. The voices of students for 'Azadi' is echoing among the walls of the city. All students have gathered irrespective of caste and religion for the justice of a Muslim guy 'Azad Mohammad'. But all their voice was suppressed by the police. They created wrong or fake evidence for branding Azad and his Muslim friends as terrorist. Azad made a nonverbal communication with his friend Ananya by making a sign of 'pray' just before bomb blast in front of Garuda Mall. Because it's the time for pray he wanted to go to 'Masjid' or 'Mosque'. But police twisted it as 'terrorist sign' having a dialogue that "This is a commonly seeing gesture by suicide bombers right before a blast"(2:06:36 – 2:06:39). 'Pray' and wearing cap for hiding hair all these related to Muslim culture and beliefs but it mistreated and framed as terrorism.

The second evidence for conforming Azad as a terrorist was the religious literature found from his room. It reveals the social conventional norms and also prejudices of legal authorities which means if anyone possesses religious literature especially Muslim literatures it became illegal, abnormal and terrorism related matter like that. This kind of pointless, disloyal and insensible evidence was put forward by the police. The third evidence is the electric capacitors and resistors found from his bag and police claimed that these are the equipment for making bomb. But in reality Azad and Nizar are B tech engineering students and all these for their project purpose. The public prosecutor and Deputy Commissioner want to brand them as terrorists and they continuously threaten that. But the truth came out later and the reason for the bomb blast is not the scooter of Azad but the Dustbin which was placed to where he was standing. So a relevant powerful question raised there addressing to the police

'Nayak' that more suitable to our current situation of India that "Why Azad, Said Ali, Nizar Ahammad and Abdhu and Why not Anand, JoJo, Prashanth and Ananya" (2:19:49 – 2:19:56). This question presents the importance of secularism in our country and the removal of caste and religion based discrimination or marginalization of a group of people especially Muslim minorities.

"How can you hold a whole community be responsible for misdeeds of a group of minority did"(2:20:34 – 2:20:37) is a question raised at the climax of this film *B tech*. The current situation of India is like that a group of people were branded as terrorist or criminals. Though India is a democratic country, still the view point of otherness is existing in the minds of society. But the shameful thing is, those who mistreated or misunderstood by the society facing more problems, it is not their mistake, they could not understand that they are exploited and they were denied freedom, rights and justice because of one and only considerable reason, 'the influence of the power or dominant high class socio-political and legal positions keeping 'rulers'. So, this Malayalam movie *B tech* by Mridul Nair is revealing the current status of Muslim minorities in India by illustrating the 'Azadi' crisis.

'Azadi' is an Urdu word which means 'freedom or liberty'. Authorities in India have adopted laws and policies that systematically discriminate against Muslims and stigmatize the critics of government. Prejudices embedded in the ruling government and society have infiltrated independent institutions, such as police and courts, empowering nationalist groups to threaten, harass and attack religious minorities with impunity. In 2021, over 30% of all detainees in Indian prisons were Muslims even though the community's share in the population is only 14.2% (as of 2011). Notably, in Assam, 61% of the convicts and 49% of the under trials are Muslims, while the population share of the community in the State was 34%. Among States with a relatively high number of detainees, the share of Muslim detainees was notably disproportionate to the population share in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. It is important to recognize that religious identity remains an important axis of discrimination in India. The crucial point here is that the exclusion and discrimination of Muslims is not episodic, it is both every day and institutional. The Indian Constitution guarantees minority rights like 'Article 29' which protects the interests of the minorities by making a provision that any citizen or section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture have the right to conserve the same and it mandates that no discrimination would be done on the ground of religion, race, caste, language or any of them. But the denial of rights and justice towards Muslim minorities are still existing at the peak point.

So in this film *B tech* tries to express the segregation faced by Muslims with current situation of India through a character 'Azad Mohammad' who became the hashtag of news as terrorist for inconceivable reasons like his Muslim background, name, appearance and the Muslim identity.

“There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.

There is only one religion, the religion of love.

There is only one language, the language of the heart.”

This is the famous words of Sathya Sai Baba about caste and religion which is more relatable to the segregation or discrimination and injustice faced by a group of minorities on the basis of caste and religion. Following a culture, tradition and beliefs is not a sin, each and every person has the right to protect their own culture and beliefs. So keeping a religious literature, wearing a religious cap and having a Muslim identity is not a sign of terrorism. The socio-political powers are working behind the aggressive proceedings of police, government or legal authorities on the minorities. So not only the character Azad is the victim of this kind of social prejudices and discrimination, but also there are many more Muslims facing same situation. By analyzing this movie *B tech* incarceration of justice faced by Muslim minorities and how religious bias and social judgments become relevant in Indian society are expressed.

By analyzing this film we will get the answer of this question “can caste, religion, name, class, gender and appearance define a personality?”. In this film the police officer and other legal authorities are confirmed Azad as a Muslim terrorist by its name, caste, his appearance, his Muslim institution orphan family background and his presence in blasted area. But unity is still stuck in minds of somewhere so his friends like Anand Subramanian, Nizar Ahmmed, Said Ali, Abu and Jojo are intensely tried for proving his innocence and to announce Azad is not a terrorist. Police are creating fake evidences and witnesses for framing he is the cause for that bomb blast and also the Muslim friends of Azad are the supporters of this operation. Though India is a democratic country 'justice' is getting those who deserved it is unpredictable. When we considering this movie as an illustration of, how judiciary and politics played their role for giving justice to deserved innocent persons and how social notions misrepresent minorities on the basis of hierarchy.

There is a program called Community Empowerment Organizing and healing (CEOH) which offers a comprehensive and holistic model for community members to engage with justice for Muslims, Collective that centers the humanity, sustainability and wellbeing of our people for attaining freedom and liberation. The mission of justice for Muslims Collective is to dismantle institutional and structural Islamophobia through raising political consciousness.

Justice for Muslims Collective (JMC) was born out of the organizing work of Darakshan Raja and Dr. Maja Hilal that challenged institutionalized Islamophobia. So by analyzing this film *B tech* how an innocent B tech Muslim student framed as terrorist by the socio-political and legal authorities on basis of caste. The share of Muslims in India's total prison population – comprising convicts, under trials and others – declined to 18.7% in 2021 from 20.2% in 2020, even though the percentage of Hindus rose to 73.6% from 72.8% over the same period, according to latest all-India prison statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) . Muslims account for 14.2% of India's population, but more than 19% of inmates across India's jails. A combination of factors has kept it that way for years: Lack of opportunity, poor education; police prejudices leading to false cases; low representation of Muslims in the police force; inadequate or absent legal aid.

This paper discussed Stigmatized Muslims and the denied of their justice and also the importance of solidarity and justice in our democratic country. Which are the two sides of a same coin which leads the country to its prosperity. By doing this project, I have analyzed the physical and mental tortures experienced by the victims of injustice especially they are pure innocent Muslim. I have highlighted the true experience of victims those who really undergo the brutalities from the side of police and other legal authorities without doing any crime. So it indicates the Indian scenario of the “injustice” faced by Muslim minorities.

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