ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 7| July 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

JOURNEY FROM SLUMS TO SOCCER STARDOM WITH MEDIA IMPACT: REVIEW OF THE FILM *JHUND* (HORDE)

Ragula Devendar[1], Dr. Pradosh Kumar Rath[2]
[1]*Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Central University of Odisha, Koraput, Odisha, India. Orchid id: 0000-0002-4204-3389*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Central University of Odisha, Koraput, Odisha, India.*

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra17860
DOI No: 10.36713/epra17860

"You set fire to us, but we are made of hard metal"— this line from the song features at the end of the film excellently shows the struggle and amelioration of the slum youth. *Jhund* is an Indian Hindi-language film written and directed by Nagraj Popatrao Manjule (2022). It is grounded on the life of Vijay Barse, a teacher turned social activist and the founder of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) called slum soccer in India in 2001.

Set in Nagpur city (Maharashtra, India), *Jhund* revolves around slum youth and kids who indulge in drugs, weed selling, hooliganism, and crime and Vijay Borade (played by Amitabh Bachchan), a retired sports professor who rehabilitates slum youth and kids by bringing them into the sport of football. The film depicts how groups of individuals, commonly called criminals and criminals, may undergo a metamorphosis, evolving into a coherent and unified one. *Jhund* is not only a film but rather a docudrama that critiques entrenched socioeconomic disparities.

Jhund distinguishes itself from previous Hindi films with a football theme. While there is a lack of exceptional performers, Amitabh Bachchan stands out as an exception. The majority of Indian films have action sequences towards the conclusion of the film. Conversely, the picture has a more significant number of action sequences throughout the initial half compared to the latter half. In Bollywood mainstream films, distinctive dialects such as Nagpuri accents of indigenous languages in *Jhund* are seldom utilised. In Bollywood films, audiences have never heard or sensed Nagpuri's accent. The aforementioned characteristics of the film distinguish it from preceding Bollywood films with a football theme.

During his morning walk, Vijay Borade spots youngsters playing football with a plastic can in a sprawling slum located in Nagpur, and he realises that the youngsters in the slums are addicted to drugs, narcotics, and crimes because they have no other way to progress in life. As Vijay has seen the boys' interest in football, he thinks that football can be a means to shed their load of plight. Vijay's effort to make his idea a reality highlights the intriguing story that is riveting and jaw-dropping as it presents an inclusive portrayal of the slum and its inhabitants, particularly the grim lives of the slum children and their lifestyles.

Vijay transforms the hardscrabble life of youngsters and helps to rehabilitate those junkies by providing them with appropriate football training and a platform to showcase their hidden talents. He organises a national football tournament for the entire slum football fraternity from far-flung parts of India to bring meaning to their lives. He also teams up with upstanding players. Eventually, the team was invited to represent India in the international slum football tournament. The sport gradually weans them away from the criminal tendencies in their minds and gives them hope for a better tomorrow.

Apart from Vijay, the film also stars Ankush Masram (also known as 'Don'—the head of a crime family) as the second lead character after Vijay. Don is one of the street boys who appears to be Jhund's leader. In addition, the film casts Monika, a tribal girl portrayed by Rinku Raj Guru. By utilising Monika's character, the director illustrates how challenging it is for subaltern Indians to obtain address verification. Undoubtedly, it satirically emphasises the exclusive access to Indian bureaucracy by the privileged. Nevertheless, Manjule refrains from delving into the intricate details of the personal lives of numerous characters portrayed in the film. The interior workings of the subaltern remain concealed. There are no provided justifications for how they are.

Before *Jhund*, only a few films were created with football as their key theme. For instance, the 1984 Hindi sports drama *Hip Hip Hurray* was directed by Prakash Jha. The plot centres on the computer engineer Raj Kiran. After accepting a part-time position as a sports instructor at a school in the Indian state of Jharkhand's Ranchi, he guides the institution to an unprecedented victory in an interschool football tournament. Gul Bahar Singh helmed the 1999 film *The Goal*. The plot centres on a football coach whose football-obsessed friend requests that he coach a group of young men for a club tournament at the regional level. Poor children who, despite their insatiable passion for football, are unable to participate in a game because of their familial and socioeconomic circumstances are also touched upon in the film. In 2007, Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri directed the film *Dhan Dhana Dhan Goal* is

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 7| July 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

a sports drama in Hindi. In a thrilling climax, the narrative of a football-obsessed South Asian community in the United Kingdom (UK) ascends to victory over Europeans. Another film that depicts the fervour for football among schoolchildren is *Sikandar*. *Sikandar*, a poignant narrative helmed by Piyush Jha in 2009, follows the life of 14-year-old Sikandar Raza, an orphan whose parents were assassinated by militants. Raza is an ardent football enthusiast who aspires to dominate the sport. Several other films are inspired by the sport of football, including *Stand By* (2011) directed by Sanjay Surkar, *27 December 1987 Final Match* (2015) directed by Santosh Badal, *Tu Hai Mera Sunday* (2017) directed by Milind Dhaimade, *Penalty* (2019) directed by Shubham Singh, and *Maidan* (2021) directed by Amit Sharma.

The upbeat tale of Manjule is lengthy and sluggish. Although not all are receptive to the flirtatious romance between Don and the affluent student Bhavana (Sayli Patil), this aspect does not impede the development of the relationship.

Through this film, the director asks, "Is Indian society ready to treat slum youth with respect as Vijay did in the film?". To make all the characters in the film look natural and eye-catching, the director hired actors from Nagpur and the surrounding area to bring incredible authenticity to the film. The non-professional actors— slum boys who starred in the film, did not act; they lived. From struggling with substance abuse and criminal records to earning a spot on India's national slum football team, this film follows the lives of disadvantaged slum youngsters as they undergo remarkable transformations. Just a handful of the visuals in *Jhund* manage to captivate constantly. Investigating the lives of the poor in their humble houses utilising ground-based and aerial drone footage is an admirable effort. Furthermore, these graphics do a great job of drawing attention to the class gap.

The endearing sight of Vijay conversing with the impoverished slum youth in his room following their victory in a cordial match against his university team resonated deeply with many. Babu, a slum boy from the team, says, “This is the first time someone has taken an interest in his life.” He says with a soft heart, "*Kisee ne mujhe nahin poocha he ki tum kaiseho* (No one asked me how you are).”

The director overlooks some of the individual characters in the film, yet they are the ones who subsequently bring the film to life. For example, a man who attempts suicide on the railroad tracks subsequently changes his mind and becomes a member of the Indian squad in an international slum football competition. However, Manjule neglected to show the viewers why he attempted suicide. Ajay-Atul's pulsating music, especially the title track, Aayah Yeh Jhund Hai (The Horde Has Come), makes the film powerful in terms of musical sense. The film’s first half is entertaining and makes the audience laugh and cry. Nevertheless, the screenplay grapples with numerous character elements. *Jhund* experiences visual disorientation as specific individuals and situations start to develop. Manjule could not express all of his thoughts within the limited time available.

The film's duration of over 3 hours is insufficient to engage us in the events and emotions fully. For instance, a scene featuring a deceased individual is skillfully depicted, yet the storyline swiftly transitions to the subsequent scene. Occasionally, the audience perceives that the screenplay fails to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of the tragedy faced by the slum youth. An additional issue with the picture is that the writing fails to establish an emotional bond between the audiences and the youngsters residing in the slums, encompassing their challenges, personal growth, and eventual success.

The climax falls short of expectations. The culmination of this film with a football theme falls short of the anticipated football match or suspenseful last goal. The film concludes with a customary security inspection at the airport before embarking on the aircraft to reach the global football arena. In the film's conclusion, Manjule would have incorporated a football match sequence, enhancing the film's remarkable ending.

Upon viewing the film, one can get unique insights of the use and consumption of media. In this film, Vijay and his slum football squad made significant efforts to promote the national slum football competition across India. However, the mainstream media did not consider the competition to be remarkable. Coach Vijay and his slum football squad employ classic and contemporary media, such as wall posters, transit media, unbound booklets, and digital media tools, to distribute information about the national slum football competition instead of depending on the mainstream media. They were favoured due to their consistent utilisation of inexpensive and readily available alternative media to target specific populations. This exemplifies the prevailing belief among the general population that only mainstream media can attract a substantial audience. Furthermore, it exemplifies the extensive reach of alternative media in terms of its viewership.

At a particular moment, Vijay endeavours to persuade his colleague to organise a match between the college team and the slum boys. In this scene, the professor says to Vijay, “Your horde of junkies will not even last for ten minutes. Forget about winning over the college team.” Vijay replies, “Don't call it a horde, sir! call it a team.” It portrays the reality of society, beliefs, and the fixed mental sets individuals carry towards a subaltern community or an individual. This illustrates how our educated society perceives and values the culture of slum youth.

Although the film has several unnecessary elements, it effectively communicates a social message to a community that refrains from making judgements on impoverished slum children solely based on their language, personality, or criminal record. The combined efforts of individuals can have a transformative impact on the lives of others by assuming leadership roles and demonstrating respect and affection, akin to the real-life actions of Barse. Overall, *Jhund* accurately portrays Indian civilisation. It shows that each person can contribute towards improving India. I highly suggest this film to adolescents experiencing a lack of purpose. This film will walk you through recovering and remounting in life.

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 7| July 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

REFERENCES

1. *Agnihotri, V. R. (Director). (2007). Dhan dhana dhan goal [Film]. UTV Motion Pictures.*
2. *Badal, S. (Director). (2015). 27 December 1987 final match [Film]. Devkripa Entertainment.*
3. *Dhaimade, M.(Director). (2017). Tu hai mera Sunday [Film]. Golden Village Pictures.*
4. *Jha, P. (Director). (1984). Hip hip hurray [Film]. UTV Motion Pictures.*
5. *Jha, P. (Director). (2009). Sikandar [Film]. Reliance Entertainment Pvt Ltd.*
6. *Manjule, N. P. (Director). (2022). Jhund [Film]. T-Series; Tandav Films Entertainment Pvt Ltd; Aatpaat Films.*
7. *Sharma, A. (Director). (2022). Maidan [Film]. Bayview Projects; Zee Studios.*
8. *Singh, G. B. (Director). (1999). The goal [Film]. Children's Film Society India.*
9. *Singh, S. (Director). (2019). Penalty [Film]. Rudrakshh Films.*
10. *Surkar, S. (Director). (2011). Stand by [Film]. BRC Cine Productions.*