

Mula Vimutti

Filmmakers: *Deepti Murali, Disha K R, Kshitij Katiyar, Nishajyoti Sharma*

Director's Note

The film Mula Vimutti deals with two first generation Dalit migrants who reminisce about their past sharing the implications of their caste identity as they moved to Mumbai – the city of their dreams. The film looks into their lives exploring their views about caste discrimination, religion, marriage, education and upward mobility; as they have transformed over the years. Juxtaposing their encounter with caste in village and the city. The narrative traces the subtleties with which caste gets manifested in the various aspects of their everyday lives.

The two protagonists of our film; Anita Pagare and Prakash Gaikwad share their past, present and future caste questions, caste experiences in the film and their negotiations with the urban space.

Their narratives confronts the argument that negates the presence of caste in the city and counters the denial of caste existences in our metropolitan cities. Throughout the making of the film, time and again our denial of caste existence was strongly countered and our ignorance towards certain caste questions in cities were mocked. The narratives helped us to learn, unlearn and relearn a lot. The whole process was a deconstruction of our perception of caste which was an important learning for us to comprehend the society better.

At first, as students and budding films makers we were really skeptical of doing our first films (for many of us it was the first film) on the issues of caste. It was scary for many since the ‘caste issues’ was made into a scare crow in social sciences. There were lot of heated discussions on - whether or not the films to be made on caste.

Many of us were completely blank; it was a less touched and less explored issue (thanks to our brahminical hegemony which excluded it from social sciences). Finally after much debate and deliberations all of our classmates decided to make our films on different issues of caste.

But many of us felt a need to first understand, at least some aspects of caste before jumping into making films on it. So we requested our faculty to bring few resource persons to orient us about caste issues.

So our theme was set; ‘caste in urban space (Mumbai)’. Before starting our films, along with two or three lectures on caste and urban spaces, the whole class went through few sessions of sharing of our own caste experiences at first. This rich experience of sharing helped us all, to a great extent, to look at the issues of caste, to know our fellow friends and to mainly reflect upon our own caste privileges.

With this reflection our group pondered on many issues like inter-caste marriage, Dalit Capitalism, caste discrimination in higher studies etc for the film. But we finally decided to focus

on first generation Dalit migrants to Mumbai city – their aspirations, experiences and negotiations with the space due to their caste identity.

Making of this film has given us an opportunity to hear and document first hand experiences of two assertive Dalits in Mumbai city. The film has helped us to understand different aspects of caste which plays in the everyday lives of people from marginalized sections especially from Dalit community. The journey of making this film has been remarkably great learning, self-reflective and awakening from our slumbers state of denial of caste.