

# Review: 'Selection Day' fails to capture the nuances of the novel



CHENNAI: Children are often pushed into fulfilling goals that their parents themselves failed to clinch, and this is the theme of a new film by British-Indian filmmaker Udayan Prasad, who made his name with *My Son the Fanatic* and *The Yellow Handkerchief*. A Netflix original, *Selection Day* plots the story through six episodes in season one, with the next slated to follow in March.

Based on Booker Prize winning Arvind Adiga's 2016 novel of the same name, Prasad's web outing lacks the nuances and subtlety of the source material. For instance, the frequent intrusion of a Hindu deity into the visual narrative jars, as do some of the other sequences that go overboard in a series whose half a dozen episodes seem inadequate to lead the plot to the next season.

Essentially a teenage cricket drama (a sport which is unbelievably popular in India), *Selection Day* underlines the almost cruel discipline imposed on Manju Kumar (Mohammad Samad) and his older brother, Radha Kumar (Yash Dholye), by their father

(Rajesh Tailang) to ensure that the boys get picked for the under-19 Mumbai cricket team. The father, driven by the ambition to turn his sons into stars, goes to an almost insane extent. The teenagers are uprooted from their village in central India and taken to Mumbai, their schooling is thrown into disarray and their own preferences are brushed aside. The younger son hates cricket, and is passionate about science, but the father will hear none of this, and his blind obstinacy gets him into a physical fight with a legendary coach, Tommy (Mahesh Manjrekar) – who had taken the boys under him.

Selection Day falters in the way relationships are scripted, especially between Manju and a spoilt brat, Javed Ansari (Karanvir Malhotra), but throws up first-class performances. Samad and Dholye are as impressive as the veteran Tailang, and make a striking pair both on and off the field. Selection Day works best when it focusses on the boys – the sub-plots that have been added in the web series could have been best avoided.

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