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NFDC Film Bazaar: In Bitter Sweet, Ananth Narayan Mahadevan Shows a Horrific Practice in Sugar Cane Industry



A still from Bitter Sweet

Ananth Narayan Mahadevan's Bitter Sweet is a damning look at greed, avarice and singular lack of compassion. And with frightening social implications.

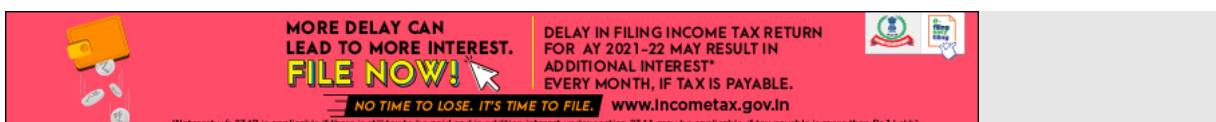
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GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

Writer-Director Ananth Narayan Mahadevan has often given us socially relevant films like, for instance, Rough Note about the importance of girls education. His latest, Bitter Sweet (Kadu God in Marathi), part of the ongoing Film Bazaar, organised by the National Film Development Corporation of India, is a damning look at greed, avarice and singular lack of compassion. And with frightening social implications.

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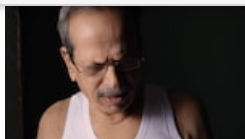
Mahadevan zeroes in on sugarcane cutters of Maharashtra, most of whom hail from Beed. They have a seasonal job of cutting cane for about six months a year. An evil nexus of cane mill-owners, contractors and even doctors, young women workers are cajoled and even threatened to have their uteruses removed so that they do not have to miss even a single day of work during their menstruation. If the women resist, the contractors tell them that they would be fined heavily, and having already taken an advance, the workers have no option but to fall in line. The contractors in turn are pressured by owners, who are racing to make [India](#) the number one sugar producer and exporter, beating Brazil. The mill-owners or contractors or doctors do not care if the women suffer hormonal imbalance, and also about the danger of wiping out an entire generation!



Mahadevan takes up the case of young Saguna (played with a lot of feeling by Akshaya Gaurav), who is not even married but, seeing a sick father, an overworked mother and a lazy brother, has her uterus removed, denying herself the joy of motherhood. There is a horrific scene in which the doctor and his wife (!) take up the scalpel to remove Saguna's womb. They seem to be doing this with calculated evil.

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'Withering' And 'Alpha Beta Gamma' Focus On Acceptance, Reconciliation

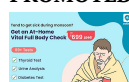


Anniversary' And 'Nikas' Talk About Disappointment, Pain

Mahadevan has certainly touched upon a very sensitive but mind-blowing incident, which I am told is very common in the rich State of Maharashtra. And all this for a minuscule amount of income that the mills would lose when women workers take a couple of days off every month.

If this sounds alarming to me in a country like India, which is racing in its 21st century with modern gadgets and thinking, it is even more so that hysterectomy should be so blatantly happening in the sugarcane fields of Maharashtra. What is even sadder is that the mainline media has seldom written about this horrendous greed for profit at the expense of the poor women's health and motherhood.

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By Outbrain

At 101 minutes, Bitter Sweet is a very important work that needs to be seen, but I wish Mahadevan could have made it less dark and grim. There is no relief, and the work lacks dramatic elements, which would have made Bitter Sweet somewhat more effective and perhaps more joyous to watch.

(Author, Commentator, Movie Critic Gautaman Bhaskaran has been covering the NFDC Film Bazaar for several years)

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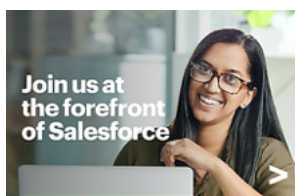
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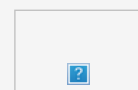
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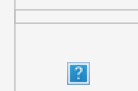
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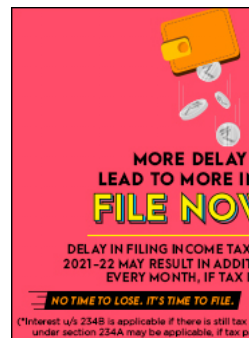
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