



Shrikrishna Kalamb's family.

At a time when Punjab's farmers, largely Sikhs, are caught in a cleftsick and government apathy knows no bounds, the suicide rate is touching one a day. A survey commissioned by the Akali Dal-BJP government and conducted by the Punjab Agricultural University has returned figures that will put any claims of politicians about development to shame. But such is the widespread disconnect of politicians and opinion makers from reality that neither Sukhbir Singh Badal nor senior Congress leaders refrain from the talk of turning one or the other region of Punjab into California.

For many weeks, thanks to a strike over revenue sharing issues between multi-plexes and film distributors, people in India remained deprived from new releases. That most such releases, emanating from Bollywood, are only further examples of a deprived form of entertainment is a separate point, but what a latest offering from Marathi cinema's tradition has shown is how a society, witnessing daily suicides of farmers caught in debt trap, can have such depravity served as entertainment and then wallow in it.

Meet Shrikrishna Kalamb. Poet-farmer. Sorry, you can't really meet him flesh and blood. He isn't any more. He died as a farmer, but he lived as a poet. He wanted to live as a farmer, but a debt of \$250 was too much to repay. Five unmarried daughters, poor rains and apathetic regime. In March of last year, Kalamb took his own life.

"My death will be like untimely rain/My death will probably be termed foolish/I have left here hanging myself as an exhibit...."

Kalamb wrote this poem two days before his death. Satish Manwar, a debutant film director, was scouting for a subject, but in his death, Kalamb chose him instead. The Damned Rain (Gabhricha Paus) is a stark film that not only shames those who were cursing multiplex owners for not ending the strike because they wanted to see some pelvic grinding on big screen but also those who talk of turning poverty stricken areas of countryside into California.

"My life is different; my death will be like untimely rain."

The film is very timely. As it garners great acclaim from Los to Durban to Rotterdam to Ruhelkhand, it is a slap on those politicians who for years failed to a crisis coming, and then tried to simply deny it. In Punjab, for years, the Badal government and earlier the Amarinder Singh regime, tried hard to deny that any of the suicides in Punjab's villages had anything to do with debt related problems.

The Damned Rain comes at a time when top politicians both in the Congress as well as the Akali Dal and the BJP are trying to torpedo a move to ensure direct payments for foodgrain bought by the government agencies to the farmers. Instead, they want all this money routed through the aarhtiyas who also double up as money lenders and have deep pockets to fund elections for political parties.

Kalamb lost his life in Vidarbha where a farmer commits suicide every eight hours, as per the data from the last one decade. More than one and a half lakh farmers have so far taken their lives. Unfortunately, suicides are not just statistics. There seems to be a tendency in India that one man's death is somehow less horrible than the death of a lakh and a half. The Damned Rain focuses on personal plights and predicaments. It is a window for us to focus on larger issues.

A review in Outlook magazine puts it succinctly: "The debts, loans, inadequate yields and insufficient compensations—these offer the backdrop against which two different viewpoints collide. There is the lazy, pragmatic, FM radio-obsessed Patil who has given up on farming, knowing that what his land produces won't add up to much. And then there is Kisna, who will continue to toil until death parts him from his farm....The narrative is built on the twin motifs of rain and death. The rain, capricious as ever, makes the farmers wait eternally and then wreaks havoc when it finally arrives. Death is the only certainty in this bleak landscape, with funeral processions winding matter-of-factly through the village's bylanes with alarming regularity. Manwar says he has tried to "look at the reality of death differently, examining its psychological impact."

A DEAD POET & SOCIETY

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Gabhricha Paus

About Kalamb's fight

KALAMB struggled for some time to eke out a living from his five acres of unproductive land. The plot brought in little money and 10 years ago he had been forced to sell off a section. His attempt to set up a threshing plant in his village also failed.

A decade later and owing more than 20,000 rupees (€250) to the bank and a minimum of 50,000 in private loans he was confronted by having to sell some of what little remained. That troubled him greatly. He was also upset that his eldest daughter had been forced to give up her education to find a job to help the family. He was contemplating selling remaining land. He had asthma and could not work hard in the fields.

It is time we temper our notions of entertainment and the use of cinema as a medium to focus on the psyche of those alive and struggling for survival. For those who are sold out on promises of turning Jalalabad into California, the one song in the film is enough of a lesson where a wretched village life is pitched against the "smooth roads and vulgar illuminated sky" of the big city.

What is more beautiful about the film is that it celebrates the little joys of life even in abject poverty though the climax still leaves one shaken out of a stupor.

Kalamb lost the struggle to eke out a living out of misery but his death has left his daughters even braver. "My father died as a farmer, in perpetual debt and worries. But he lived as a poet, and will remain immortal in his poems," the eldest daughter Usha says. Hers is a fight against hopelessness, worthlessness, helplessness.

Here's a poem that will give you a peep into Kalamb's mind.

Vasare (Calves)

*Amhi vasare vasare, muki upasi vasare
Gaya panhavato amhi, chor kalatat dhar
Tapa tapa gham unarato, unarato bhuivar
Moti pikavato amhi, tari upasi lekare."*

"We are calves, dumb hungry calves
We tend to the cows, thieves walk away with milk and cream
We sweat and sweat on the fields
We cultivate pearls, but our children remain hungry."

ਸੁੰਦਰ ਦਿਖੋ !!

ਹਰ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ

- ਫੇਸ਼ੀਅਲ, ਕਲੀਨਿਜਿੰਗ, ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਿਸ਼, ਸਿਰ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਿਸ਼, ਵੈਕਸਿੰਗ (ਲੱਤਾਂ, ਬਾਹਾਂ, ਕੱਛਾਂ, ਬਿਕਨੀ, ਪੇਟ, ਚਿਹਰਾ)
- ਪੈਡੀਕਿਊਰ-ਸਿਘਲ/ਡੀਲਕਸ/ਫਰੈਂਚ
- ਮੈਨੀਕਿਊਰ-ਸਿਘਲ/ਡੀਲਕਸ/ਫਰੈਂਚ
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- ਦੁਲਹਨ ਦਾ ਮੇਕਅਪ, ਵਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੈਟਿੰਗ, ਸਾੜੀ ਲਾਉਣਾ, ਸੂਟ/ਲਹਿੰਗਾ।



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