

THE DIE IS CASTE

Dramatis Personae



Binod Paswan

Lakhsmanpur Bath: December 1, 1997: 61 people were massacred by the Ranvir Sena, including 16 children and 27 women.

Binod Paswan lost seven family members, including his mother, brother and sisters. His father Ram Chela Paswan fled into the paddy fields.

Today, Binod Paswan is employed in the Bihar Police and lives in fear of his life.



Dr. Vinayan

Dr. Vinayan set foot in Bihar in 1974 and was a close associate of Jaiprakash Narayan. He established the dreaded Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samiti in the '80's and featured on the list of India's "most wanted".

Today, he is a well respected social activist.



Ravinder Chaudhury

A school teacher and principal of the Girls' School in village Bellaur, spiritual home of the Ranvir Sena.

He is alleged to have been involved in a few massacres and is presently General Secretary of the Ranvir Kisan Mahasangh, political arm of the Ranvir Sena.



Shaibal Gupta

Shaibal Gurpta is an economist and Member-Secretary of the Asian Development Research Institute in Patna.



Bhola Singh

He is the most powerful landlord in village Ekwari and a founder member of the Ranvir Sena. Bhola has lost 6 male family members including his father and brothers in Naxalite reprisals. Today, he is the sole male member in a family with 11 unmarried girls and including five widows.



Ram Naresh Ram

Ram Naresh is a resident of Ekwari and MLA of Sahar bloc of Bhojpur district. He was a colleague of Jagdish Mahato and co-founder of Naxalism in Bihar. He is presently a member of the CPI(ML) politburo.



Dipankar Bhattacharya

He grew up near Naxalbari, home of the Naxalite movement and resisted Indira Gandhi's Emergency Rule. He studied to be a statistician but politics was his passion.

Dipankar is the youngest ever General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Marxist Leninist CPI (ML)



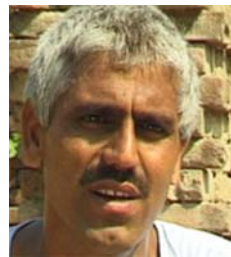
Mammen Matthew

Mammen is presently, Resident Editor of the Hindustan Times, Ranchi. He has grown up and studied in Bihar, with over two decades experience in Bihar politics.



Devinder Singh

Devinder is a poet and principal of the local college in village Trikaul, of Sahar district. He is founding father of the Ranvir Sena and is known to the media as "Shamsher Bahadur Singh", spokesperson of the Ranvir Sena.



Kaushal Kumar

Kaushal is a Bhumihar farmer and resident of Aiyara-Rampur in Arwal District. His father and three brothers were massacred by the People's War Group in 1998. he is the only surviving male in his family.



Usha Singh

Usha is daughter of Jagdish Mahato, father of Naxalism in Bihar. She grew up in village Ekwari with fond memories of the father she rarely saw. Usha is now married to an MLA of the Samata Party and lives in Patna.



Sunil Chaudhry

Sunil is a resident of village Bellaur. He runs a primary school in Ara where he also teaches. Sunil is a playwright and his dissident views have earned him the nickname of "Communist" in the village.



Surinder Ram

Surinder is a graduate of Ara Jain College and cadre member of the CPIML since 1989. He is an agricultural worker in Chakardah, who has survived Ranvir Sena bullets and police atrocities on numerous occasions.



Basant Chaudhury

Basant grew up in a powerful and prosperous zamindar family of north Bihar influenced by the politics of the Jan Sangh. After studying law at Delhi University he joined the JP Movement.

He is a practising lawyer at the Patna High Court, a member of People's Union for Civil Liberties and belongs to a faction of the CPI(ML).

Basant also works as legal counsel for the Maoist Communist Centre.



Manoj Srivastav

Manoj is a serving member of the Bihar cadre of the Indian Administrative Service. He is co-author of the report prepared by the London School of Economics titled "Enhancing Pro-Poor Governance in Eastern India".



THE FILM

'THE DIE IS CASTE' is an appraisal of three decades of the Naxalite (extreme-left) movement in the state of Bihar, in eastern India. It examines the role of Naxalites (i.e. Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, People's War Group and Maoist Communist Centre) as agents of socio-political change, employing violence.

Against the backdrop of Parliamentary and Legislative Assembly elections in Bihar, between 1999-2001, the film portrays the change -over 30 years - in social and political status of the Scheduled Castes (i.e. Dalits); the benefits accruing to the middle castes, engineered by the Mandal Commission and the emergence of Laloo Yadav and the consequent violent backlash from upper-caste landlord militias like the Ranvir Sena.

The Die Is Caste is thus an exploration of caste dynamics in Bihar and raises the question as to whether any benefit has accrued to the Scheduled Castes or, are they mere pawns on the political chessboard.

Details

Duration: Part 1: 45 minutes
Part 2: 38 minutes

Credits:

Edited, Photographed & Directed
Ranjan Kamath

Audiography & Graphics

Ashley Rodrigues

Produced by:

RKO Moving Media P. Ltd

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THE FILM MAKER



Born 1963 in Bangalore, India: began studying Speech & Drama while still at St. Xaviers' School, Calcutta and graduated as an Associate of the Trinity College of Music, London.

Soon after school, he started working in Calcutta's theatre and music world, as an actor, stage and lighting designer. He has worked with numerous theatre companies including: Royal Shakespeare Co., National Theatre, Cambridge Theatre Co., Watermill Theatre (UK) and Trinity Square Repertory Co (US).

Between 1980-85, he also managed major 'live' music concert tours of India including: Herbie Mann, Chico Freeman, Billy Taylor, Dizzy Gillespie and Shakti. After graduating in Political Science from St. Xaviers' College, Calcutta, he went on to work as an assistant director in Bombay on documentaries short and feature films. Ranjan has completed

his post-graduation from the London International Film School, with a Distinction in Cinematography. For nearly two decades he has been working both as producer and director/cinematographer on Indian features, international co-productions and short features for the BBC, Channel Four, National Geographic and Discovery Channel amongst others. He has been associated with a variety of major projects including City of Joy, WILD INDIA and Elections '98. Presently, Ranjan is producing and directing feature documentaries. The films he has produced and directed include 'Fishers of Men' and 'The Die Is Caste'

This film was made with a grant from the Soros Documentary Fund of the Open Society Institute, New York.