



Illness, Environment, and Resistance: Examining *Daman* and *Bhulan The Maze* through Medical Humanities

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Abstract

This paper explores the critical role of regional Indian cinema in portraying the intertwined realities of health, environment, and social resistance in marginalized rural communities. Focusing on two films, *Daman* (2022) and *Bhulan The Maze* (2019), the study employs an interdisciplinary framework grounded in medical humanities and eco-cinema to examine how these films challenge dominant narratives around illness, development, and ecological degradation. *Daman* portrays the spread of malaria in Odisha's tribal regions as a result of social neglect, poor infrastructure, and environmental conditions. The film reveals tensions between indigenous healing practices and modern biomedicine, while exposing broader socio-political issues such as displacement and health inequities. Meanwhile, *Bhulan The Maze* addresses caste-based oppression alongside environmental exploitation in Chhattisgarh, portraying how marginalized communities struggle against judicial injustice and medical neglect. Both films illustrate resistance through localized narratives, emphasizing community resilience and activism against structural violence. By situating these cinematic works within the intersection of health, environment, and culture, this paper emphasizes the importance of recognizing regional cinema as a form of artistic activism. It foregrounds indigenous knowledge, critiques urban-rural disparities, and highlights the socio-political dimensions often elided in mainstream discourse. The analysis demonstrates that such films not only enrich medical humanities scholarship but also serve as vital platforms for amplifying marginalized voices and fostering environmental and social consciousness. Ultimately, the study advocates for greater academic attention to regional films as essential contributors to understanding the complex dynamics of health, ecology, and resistance in India's rural landscapes.

Keywords: Regional Cinema, Medical Humanities, Eco-cinema, Indigenous Knowledge, Social Resistance.