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Dilemma of Indian children in modern-day slavery as depicted in Gregg Helvey's Hindi short film *Kavi*

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Background: Child labor and bonded labor are two forms of modern-day slavery that persist in India, despite the legal protections, rehabilitation, and attempts of the government and non-government organizations. Individuals of a family, including women and children, are compelled to work to repay a debt in bonded labor directly and indirectly, leading to generations getting trapped in servitude. Marginalized communities are the most affected by modern-day slavery. Bonded labor severely affects marginalized children in India, depriving them of education, health, and childhood. Gregg Helvey's Hindi short film *Kavi* (2009) illustrates the journey of a boy named 'Kavi' from agony to rescue from a brick kiln where he works as a bonded child laborer. This research examines how the dilemma between desire and suppression of Indian children caught in modern-day slavery is depicted in Gregg Helvey's Hindi short film *Kavi*. Its objectives are to identify the audio-visual elements that represent desire and suppression related to the events Kavi faces, and to examine how those incidents create dilemmas for him.

Method: This study utilized summative content analysis of the audio-visual elements of the entire short film.

Results: It was observed that dialogues, sound, props, and costumes were used to portray the suppression and disdain of bonded laborers as well as Kavi's desire for an education while enjoying a playful childhood. Moreover, the text displayed as final remarks provided quantified evidence about modern-day slaves. The dilemma between desire and suppression was depicted in the dialogues uttered by Kavi, his reactions and expressions, and the props such as the plant pot, chains, and bricks.

Conclusion: It was concluded that Gregg Helvey's Hindi short film *Kavi* effectively occupies all aspects of movies to depict the dilemma of Indian children in modern-day slavery. This research will be beneficial for studies done on modern-day slavery and the deprivation of child rights in suppressive settings.

Keywords: Bonded labor, child labor, Hindi Short Film, Indian children, modern-day slavery.