Series review

**Title - Being Ethical to Millions.**

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**Abstract-**

The recent webseries ‘Laakhon Mein Ek, season 2’ is an engaging watch with rare and authentic depiction of trials and tribulations of a righteous young medical intern as she undergoes her tenure at rural posting and manages a cataract camp there only to be made responsible for the complications which she is not directly responsible for. The series touches various aspects of unethical transactions that prevail at remote healthcare centres and advocates the need for ethical tenacity for all stakeholders.

**Being Ethical to Millions**

**Laakhon Mein Ek, season 2, Producers: Biswa Kalyan Rath , Director: Abhishek Sengupta, Hindi, 2019. 8 episodes. Amazon Prime Video.**

There are very few entertainment drama series that portray doctors in their raw, unadulterated form working in the grass root level. The seemingly non-glamorous backdrop of an upright young intern, who gets posted in a primary health centre of a village called Sitlapur by chance, and how she survives her tenure there is made interesting as well as entertaining thanks to crisp script and commendable acting of all characters. The show opens with a medical committee investigating the botched up cataract surgery camp in a village trying to make final report and then the story is played in the retrospective. The protagonist Dr Shreya (superbly played by Shweta Tripathi) is finally given the task of organizing a cataract camp in the village following the whim of the local politician hoping to gain political mileage in coming elections. How the compulsion of the camp in the place where basic facilities are lacking, funds are scant and infrastructure is nonexistent is a bitter reality and how hard pressed are CMO, support staff and fellow doctors to help her achieve this feat against a restricting system is tactfully described. The journey of a fresh-out-of-college intern making the herculean task possible from the scratch amidst unsupportive colleagues and skeptic villagers makes for an interesting watch that is realistic yet engaging. How she slowly wins over the local hospital staff and people of the village overcoming all known obstacles is heartening and may be educative to young doctors regarding soft skills and empathy.

The forceful admission against will of doctor, violence at workplace, hospital supplies and medicines that are siphoned out of the system only to be made available for cash and blind faith of public for the local quack with demigod status who prescribes all sorts of medication without degree are well known facts to the doctors working at small centers in India and these are described in the entire series with sensitive manner. The hospital is even vandalized and the doctor is being forced to plead before the quack for complaining against him to local authorities by angry village crowd. These real life scenarios and challenges faced by doctors in the primary health centres are portrayed unapologetically and with laudable authenticity. The pertinent social issues that need fruitful solutions are depicted in detail over the entire series like angst of young doctors who do not wish to go to villages for want of basic amenities or hindered PG (post-graduate)preparations, the plight of CMOs to beg or borrow to run the dispensaries, the unfortunate nexus of local drug distributors and people with political clout to make the most of tenders and contracts only to resort to siphoning of medicines or in worst scenario, disposing of expired drugs with new labels. All these are bonafide problems in small places demanding systemic reforms as well as compassionate ears to the voice of doctors. One respected family of the village has no faith in government healthcare services as the family lost a kid to the system which they blame will take more lives if they avail their services. The younger grandchild of that family is being treated by the local quack with little improvement until he is taken to the hospital only too late to survive despite best efforts. Ultimately the family confides on the doctor only to be cheated again by the system as the grandfather becomes one of the victim of botched operation leading to loss of eyesight following the use of expired medicine during the camp. The protagonist doctor is asked to explain and made a scapegoat for the whole incident and it is also seen how bad is impact of an immediate media trail to blame the doctors as the culprits of the botched operations which in fact is caused by players other than doctors. The concluding parts end on positive notes with final fall from grace of all responsible bad players.

The producers and director has done great job to make the series high on well researched content with great cast and low on unnecessary jargon and preaching of righteousness or systemic cleansing. The intelligent viewer can derive their own set of meanings from the plot but being ethical in all dealings of a profession that requires ethical core values as the bedrock for its functioning can not be overlooked more. The series advocates that it is cool to go ethical as the positive impact over the society and the hope thus instilled in the heart of underprivileged section of society is worth the effort. The unconditional support for the welfare of humanity at large while clinging to the pillar of ethics is tougher job any given day. Series like this not only strikes all right chords and makes us introspect to believe that despite the odds, selfless service must go in tandem with ethical adherence for the greater common good.