

# Assam Times

assamtimes.org

---

## Slumdog Reality



[Chinmay Chakravarty](#) · 18:52, 17 Jan 2009 · 9381 views · 3 min read



*Slumdog Millionaire* is yet to be released in India (set for 23rd January) and the controversy is already razing. Its sweep in the Golden Globe Awards including the one for A R Rahman, the first Indian to win one, had set the stage for its grand release. But, thanks to Amitabh Bachahan, the old ancient Indian debate on 'reality' has already begun and *Slumdog Millionaire* is basking in pre-release publicity windfall.

Reality portrayal in a film depends on the subject chosen and reality can be beautiful, stark, ugly, pugnacious, gut-wrenching and revealing in all societies of all countries, not only India, the so called third world developing nation. Nationalists and patriots of India know poverty exists. So why should they be hurt by its portrayal? Or is it that filmmakers will have to take their

prior permission in selecting reality subjects and how to show it? You can debate whether the film has portrayed the reality correctly or not, but not on the 'reality' of the reality.

And who is the west? Are the people in the west are always thinking of India and that they always hail the coming of its reality packages since the days of Satyajit Ray? People there too are as flesh-n-blood like us, they are too as hungry or as greedy as us and they also appreciate good things and hate bad things like we do. This is our die hard colonial slavish mentality that we still look upon them as superior and decisive human beings.

Once you admit it's a good film, it's a good film. The matter ends there. People like good films and so good films become commercial successes. You enjoy it; and do not cry hoarse why or how should it be so good. And film is only a creative interpretation of reality. So, dramatic elements are a must to make it well paced and effective. If it's good enjoy it and if it's bad forget it. It does not matter which part of the globe you view it from—east, west, north or south.

Add some more reality. More than sixty percent of Mumbai's inhabitants live in slums and all of them are not exactly poverty stricken. They are a very active, hard working and happy lot having access to all basic amenities like water, electricity and telephony. A slum hutment or 'jhopda' sells for lakhs of rupees in certain areas. They are also the most powerful vote bank in Maharashtra elections. Yes, contrasting pictures exist in slums too—some of slum dwellers do live in extreme and stinking poverty. But these people are the surplus population from the villages where they have no alternative but to die of starvation. So, if you want 'real' reality go to the interior villages even in relatively richer state of Maharashtra where hapless farmers still commit suicide for unpaid debts of just 15000/20000 rupees. Even after the implementation of PM Relief Package and loan waiver schemes of both central and state governments.

Any buyers? Oh sorry, any sellers?



**Chinmay Chakravarty**

---

Original URL: <https://assamtimes.org/article/slumdog-reality-2477> | Published: 17 January 2009 | © 2026 Assam Times