

Main Atal Hoon: Heart of Gold Man of Steel: A Movie Review

Reviewed by
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Kaal ke kapal par likhta mitata hoon, geet naya gata hoon...

In the complex world of politics, it is a rare achievement for a leader to generate adoration that crosses not just party lines but also sustains over time. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee stands out as a remarkable exception, a statesman whose accomplishments smoothly transcend the turbulent and frequently antagonistic seas of modern politics. His recognition is a lasting tribute to statesmanship, gaining esteem that elegantly rises above all political rivalry. Guided by the mantra "Desh Pahle," which was profoundly ingrained in his mind and spirit, he devoted his whole life to serving the country as an ethical politician. The magnum of his persona has been recreated this time on the



silver screen through the film *Main Atal Hoon*, released on January 19, 2024. It receives great critical acclaim throughout including an incredible 8.3 user rating on IMDB and 91% audience score on Rotten Tomatoes.

Main Atal Hoon, as the name suggests, is a biographical film, directed by Ravi Jadhav and written by Rishi Virmanu. Pankaj Tripathi, one of the most exceptionally talented contemporary actors, takes on the role of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The film is a collaboration between Bhanushali Studios Limited and Legend Studios, with Vinod Bhanushali, Sandeep Singh, and Kamlesh Bhanushali as producers. The film follows the incredible life and political journey of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, an iconic figure in Indian

politics. It dives into Vajpayee Ji's complex demeanour, capturing his essence as a poet, gentleman, and statesman. This cinematic masterpiece takes us back to the year 1999, a pivotal time etched in history, when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee called an emergency meeting with the tri-forces—Army, Navy, and Indian Air Force—to discuss Pakistan's transgressions, laying the groundwork for a strong reaction. The story progresses, bringing together connecting threads from Atal Ji's childhood days in a village, when he, as a hesitant young boy, fails to make his speech at a school event foreshadowing the sociopolitical journey ahead. From this evocative beginning, the film presents a vivid picture of Vajpayee Ji's evolution as a young member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), ardent nationalist, visionary poet, eloquent orator, and humanitarian. As the story progresses, it drives Atal Ji into the center of momentous national events, from the independence struggle to the National Independence Day celebration. With Nehru Ji taking over as Prime Minister and Atal Ji, quitting his academics to devote his all to RSS. Atal Ji's brimming 'Rashtraprem' has been depicted through the newspaper Rashtradharma, which brought him close to the 'Bharatiya Jana Sangh' and Deendayal Upadhyaya, who later on became his guiding force to active politics. His devotion to 'integral humanism,' which echoes through the corridors of the 'Bharatiya Jana Sangh' (BJS), is wonderfully mirrored in the pages of Rashtradharma. It, chronologically, becomes central to this cinematic excursion. The film depicts his active participation in national politics, boosted by the encouragement of Syama Prasad Mukherjee, the founder of 'Bhartiya Jana Sangh and a hard-core nationalist, who left the Congress Party to establish BJS. This political journey continues to Atal Ji's becoming a 'Member of Parliament' from Balrampur, rewarding his visionary skill, devotion, and tireless efforts. The silver screen has not only successfully depicted historical events, but also the spirit of a man destined for greatness, culminating in memorable moments like the victory over Pakistan in the Kargil War and the nuclear bomb test at Pokhran. Each frame depicts the words of then-Prime Minister Nehru, who predicted Atal Ji's future, saying, "Mark my words, He will become Prime Minister of India one day."

Indeed, cinema has the remarkable potential to bring biographies to life, making it a strong vehicle for sharing information that benefits both the country and mankind. It has an incredible power to go into the depths of our emotions and extract feelings that simple words cannot convey. As we go through the theme of the movie, we discover a special potency in the plot description, capable of hitting our thoughts. The plot is well-written and successfully presents the strong personality of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his unwavering determination. The

glimpse we have in his forceful reply on the nuclear threat given by Pakistan: “Yadi aisa hua to kal ka suryoday padosi mulk ka suryast hoga”. Nevertheless, screening the life narrative of a widely known public figure, recognised and revered throughout generations, is a difficult undertaking. In such conditions, successfully handling the plot and matching the audience's expectations is no easy task, however, the film *Main Atal Hoon* has tried a great deal to create an overall impact on direction, characters, and dialogue delivery. The finest aspect of the film was the attention it showed to our unsung heroes, such as Shri Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Shri Deendayal Upadhyaya, who built the groundwork for democracy in the newly independent India.

The dialogues spoken throughout this cinematic voyage are powerful and eloquent, adding to the story's overall effect. As: “Dalo ke daldal me ek kamal kihilana hoga”. “Hume jara bhi dukh nahi ki ek vote se humari sarkar gir gayi, Satta ka khel chalta rahega, sarkare ayegi partiya banegi bigdegi par ye Desh rahna chahiye”. Atal Ji's poetry dominates the film: “tute hue sapnon ki kaun sune siski; antar ki cheer wyatha palkon par thithki; haar nahin manunga, rar nahin thanunga”, while Pankaj Tripathi complements the delivery trying to maintain the same tone, depth, emotions, and intensity. When he appears on the screen, he brings a new vitality to even the most predictable scenes.

Through enthralling scenes and moving characters', *Main Atal Hoon* goes beyond the screen, reaching deep into the collective consciousness and leaving an unforgettable impact on the hearts and minds of its viewers. The actors who portray Advaniji, Pramod Mahajan, Sushma Swaraj, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, and Deendayal Upadhyay contribute extensively to the storyline, and their performances are remarkable, as is their resemblance. Even the role of Rajkumari Ji is also brief yet impactful.

To conclude, this literary review, this entire film, considering our prior knowledge of the subject, may look brisk, familiar, or slow at points. However, we find this two-and-a-half-hour film depicting every part of Atal Ji's life, from childhood years to the challenges of young age, from budding affection towards the Rajkumari to early political days, from brilliant party leader to an incredible Prime Minister leading the victory of Kargil, a nuclear power status. with a nuanced direction and screenplay, the film expertly navigates Indian political history, showing crucial periods in chronological sequence. The intricate depiction of freedom fighters' struggles, the exuberance of independence, economic upheaval, the tumultuous China war, the

era of emergency, the Golden Temple attack, the sentiments of the Ram Mandir issue, and the historic triumphs in Kargil and the Pokhran tests - each aspect is meticulously captured, resulting in a precise and spot-on portrayal of India's diverse journey. With its moving soundtrack that takes the story to new heights, this cinematic masterpiece is a true gem in the field of cinema. Perfectly constructed around an engrossing plot, its perfect storytelling harmonises with its deep philosophical foundation. The movie makes a lasting impression, proving its ability to inspire as well as amuse. It transcends the screen, evolving into an eternal symphony that will surely reverberate through the hearts of future generations, with its masterful telling of an engrossing story that perfectly complements its philosophical core: "main jee bhar jiya main man se maru".

Note: Dialogues used in this article are translated by the reviewer and the image is abstracted from Wikipedia

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Atal_Hoon#/media/File:Main_Atal_Hoon_poster.jpg/)