

ARTICLE

## Mother's Struggle: Fighting Over Child Custody in a Foreign Country in the Film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*

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### ABSTRACT ENGLISH:

This research uses descriptive qualitative research to analyse a mother's struggle to maintain custody of her child in a foreign country as depicted in the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*. This approach was chosen to explore and understand the narrative, themes, and values contained in the film in depth. In the film, the story revolves Debika Chatterjee's unwavering love and determination as a mother fighting against an unjust system to regain custody of her children. The struggle begins when Norwegian Child Protection Services takes her children, claiming her parenting practices, rooted in Indian culture, violate their norms. Despite facing cultural misunderstandings and a legal system that fails to grasp her traditions, Debika perseveres. Her challenges are compounded by the lack of support from her husband, Anirudh, who sides with the authorities, leaving her isolated in her battle. Debika also endures psychological and social pressure, including criticism from her family in India. Yet, her resolve strengthens as she gains support from a lawyer and the Indian government, which brings international attention to her case. After a long legal fight, Debika triumphs and reunites with her children, symbolizing the power of a mother's love and her fight against injustice. Debika Chatterjee's struggle in the film is a real-life example of a mother's unwavering love and her courage to fight against injustice for her children. Despite facing a foreign, unjust, and challenging legal system, Debika continues to fight without giving up, showing that a mother is willing to do anything to protect and restore her children's happiness. The film depicts that a mother's fight is about facing physical challenges and upholding cultural values and deep love for her children.

**Keywords:** Mother, Child, Custody, Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway, Film

### ABSTRACT INDONESIAN:

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif deskriptif untuk menganalisis perjuangan seorang ibu mempertahankan hak asuh anaknya di negara asing, sebagaimana digambarkan dalam film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*. Pendekatan ini dipilih untuk mengeksplorasi dan memahami narasi, tema, dan nilai-nilai yang terkandung dalam film secara mendalam. Dalam film ini, cerita berpusat pada cinta dan tekad yang tak tergoyahkan Debika Chatterjee sebagai seorang ibu yang berjuang melawan sistem yang tidak adil untuk mendapatkan kembali hak asuh anak-anaknya. Perjuangan ini dimulai ketika Layanan Perlindungan Anak Norwegia mengambil anak-anaknya, dengan alasan bahwa praktik pengasuhan yang didasarkan pada budaya India melanggar norma-norma mereka. Meskipun menghadapi kesalahpahaman budaya dan sistem hukum yang gagal memahami tradisinya, Debika tetap bertahan. Tantangannya semakin berat karena kurangnya dukungan dari suaminya, Anirudh, yang berpihak pada pihak berwenang, meninggalkan Debika sendirian dalam perjuangannya. Debika juga menghadapi tekanan psikologis dan sosial, termasuk kritik dari keluarganya di India. Namun, tekadnya semakin kuat ketika ia mendapatkan dukungan dari seorang pengacara dan pemerintah India, yang membawa perhatian internasional pada kasusnya. Setelah perjuangan hukum yang panjang, Debika menang dan bersatu kembali dengan anak-anaknya, simbol kekuatan cinta seorang ibu dan perjuangannya melawan ketidakadilan. Perjuangan Debika Chatterjee dalam film ini adalah contoh nyata cinta seorang ibu yang tak tergoyahkan dan keberaniannya untuk melawan ketidakadilan demi anak-anaknya. Meskipun menghadapi sistem hukum asing, tidak adil, dan menantang, Debika terus berjuang tanpa menyerah, menunjukkan bahwa seorang ibu siap melakukan apa saja untuk melindungi dan memulihkan kebahagiaan anak-anaknya. Film ini menggambarkan bahwa perjuangan seorang ibu adalah tentang menghadapi tantangan fisik dan mempertahankan nilai-nilai budaya serta cinta yang mendalam untuk anak-anaknya.

**Kata kunci:** Ibu, Anak, Hak Asuh, Nyonya Chatterjee vs Norwegia, Film

## Introduction

Film as a medium can reflect issues that develop in society (Jenab, 2017). While, the theme of a film is the main idea or message that the filmmaker wants to convey through the story, characters, and plot in the film. The theme serves as the basis for plot development and helps the audience understand the essence of the film being watched. Themes often describe the living conditions, moral values, or social conflicts faced by the characters in the film. The themes of films are very diverse and offer different experiences for the audience. One theme that is often raised is struggle and sacrifice, which depicts characters fighting for something bigger, such as family, justice, or dreams. The theme of love and friendship is also very universal, focusing on relationships between individuals, both in the form of romance and friendship. Life and death are themes that are often explored to explore questions about existence and how humans deal with it. Courage and the struggle against injustice are also themes that highlight characters who fight for truth and justice in difficult conditions (Rahman et al., 2024).

The theme of self-discovery and identity focuses on the character's journey to discover who they are, while the family theme describes relationships within the family, whether between parents and children, siblings, or an unusual family. Quests and adventures often follow a character's journey in search of something of value, be it physical or emotional. Several films have themes of social and political change, discussing major changes in society (McCormack et al., 2021; Powers, 2018; Rutsyamsun & Sakinah, 2023). Worlds of fantasy and imagination transport audiences to worlds far from reality, while themes of heroes and anti-heroes depict characters who do not necessarily fit the mold of traditional heroes, but who have compelling qualities. With so many themes, films can convey various messages that inspire, educate, or entertain the audience according to the story they tell.

The theme of a film is very important because first, the theme functions as the core or main message that the filmmaker wants to convey to the audience. Second, themes provide depth to the story, not just entertainment. A strong theme helps the audience to reflect and gain new insights into life, morals, or social values. Third, themes often influence the decisions and actions of characters in films. Characters develop or change according to the themes raised, such as the struggle against injustice, the search for identity, or sacrifice in the family. Fourth, universal and relevant themes allow audiences to connect with the story, even if their cultural or social background is different. Themes such as love, friendship, or struggle are often relatable to many people. Fifth, a strong theme can move the audience's feelings. For example, themes about loss or sacrifice can trigger empathy, while themes about victory or hope can inspire. Sixth, themes are not only conveyed through dialogue, but also through visuals, music, and symbols in the film. This creates a more complex and engaging experience for the audience. Seventh, many films use themes to convey messages or critique certain social, political, or cultural issues. This theme can trigger discussion and reflection about real-world conditions. Overall, a film's theme is a key element that makes a film's story more than just entertainment, but also a means of conveying ideas that can influence and inspire the audience.

The film's theme, which depicts a mother's struggle for her child, often touches the hearts of the audience, showing a mother's love, sacrifice, and fortitude in facing various life challenges. Films with this theme often show stories about a mother who fights for the welfare of her children, whether in the face of economic difficulties, family problems, or even a struggle against disease or injustice. The theme of a mother's struggle for her child is very strong and often appears in various films (Walters, 2023), including Indian films. This theme describes how much love and sacrifice a mother has to protect, support, and ensure the happiness and welfare of her children.

India is the largest film producer in the world. Bollywood is the world of Indian cinema that has skyrocketed because it has its characteristics of Indian culture (Muazaroh, 2019). India is one of the largest film-producing countries in the world. For ordinary people, Indian films may be synonymous with dime romance, songs, and dance. However, not many know that Indian films are much broader than that. Indian films that deal with the theme of mothers' struggles often reflect how great a mother's strength and sacrifice are in facing various obstacles. From the stories of mothers who protect their children from injustice to mothers who fight for their children's dreams and happiness, these films teach about resilience, unlimited love, and a mother's dedication. Film is one of the mass media used in society as a means of entertainment. Movie fans are not just teenagers but from children to adults. One of the movies that is much-loved by the public, namely Indian films or so-called Bollywood films. Bollywood is the world's largest film producer. Even the making of certain films takes a true story to become one Indian film that is published not only due to the large quantity but also the quality of the unification of film stories (Fathun, 2018).

The word Bollywood is an adaptation of Hollywood with the prefix B which comes from the word Bombay (which is now called Mumbai). The term Bollywood is an unofficial name that is shown for the Indian film industry which is popular in the Indian language. This term originated in the 1970s when India took over America's position as the largest film producer in the world. The term "Bollywood" originated in the 1970s, when India surpassed the United States as the world's largest film producer. The term "Bollywood" derives from Bombay (formerly known as Mumbai) and Hollywood, the capital of the American film industry (Rishi, 2012). As Bollywood entertainers begin to make impacts outside of India and introduce the rich tradition of Indian filmmaking to other parts of the world, it has become impossible to avoid hearing about or observing Bollywood's global influence. Bollywood is much more than the stereotypical musicals, cheesy dialogue, and over-the-top action films that are often associated with it (Ali et.al., 2021).

The development of the Bollywood industry from year to year has increased which is significant both from the theme of the story to the benefits obtained for India (Sari, 2016). Bollywood is the second largest film industry after Hollywood. The fundamental difference between Bollywood and Hollywood lies in nationalism built through stories that are packaged attractively while maintaining a culture of native Indians (Rajadhyaksha, 2015). As is known, India adheres to the culture and customs of Hinduism which was then implemented into the Bollywood film industry as one of the efforts to preserve existing values to continue to exist in this globalization era.

Genre is a common term used by the film industry (Ganti, 2004). At its most basic level, Genre refers to the systems of expectation and hypothesis that viewers have while watching a film (Thompson et al., 2021). Genre is a word we often use to classify films and works of literature into different kinds (Anjaria, 2021). Bollywood films are between two and three and a half to three and a half hours long, with an intermission in the middle; they feature a formulaic narrative broken up by several song-and-dance sequences in which the actors or guest performers lip-synch to songs written specifically for the film, frequently accompanied by a complex choreographed dance number. Other key elements of Bollywood films are song and dance sequences, elaborated costumes, convoluted storylines, lack of erotic display, and a narrative involving a mixture of genres including, drama, comedy, action, and romance (Dibeltulo & Barrett, 2018). The diversity of genres in Indian films always attracts attention (Fitria, 2022). There are action films, comedies, to inspirational films. There are several Indian (Bollywood) films inspired by true stories.

A mother's struggle to protect her children is often a strong theme in works of art, both in literature, film, and other media. One example that depicts a mother's extraordinary struggle is the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* (2023), which tells the story of Debika Chatterjee, an Indian mother who fights against the Norwegian legal system to get back her children who were taken by local authorities. This film depicts the struggle of a mother who faces social injustice and laws that do not understand the cultural context of the care in which she applies. A story about the struggle of an Indian immigrant mother against the legal system of upbringing in Norway to win custody of her children. *Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway* is a biographical drama film that has heart-wrenching scenes. This film follows an Indian family who lives happily in the country of Norway. Debika, goes with her husband, Chatterjee, to Norway with their two children, Shubh and Suchi because of a service placement. They live quite well, almost without any problems. Regarding culture and also, they still carry out routine. One day, the Norwegian government took Shubh and Suchi for several reasons, one of which was related to culture. Since then, Debika and Chatterjee have tried hard to reclaim custody of their child.

*Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway* is a film produced by Zee Studios and Emmay Entertainment and directed by Ashima Chibber. This film is an adaptation of the true story of Sagarika Chakraborty, in her book entitled *A Mother's Journey*. It started when the couple Anurup Bhattacharya and Sagarika Bhattacharya moved to Norway in 2007. This 144-minute film tells the story of an Indian woman whose children were taken from her by the Norwegian government. Sagarika made headlines in 2012 when she fought against the Norwegian authorities to regain custody of her children. The whole issue even led to a selling price between India and Norway (Karmakar & Pal, 2024).

*Mrs. Movie Chatterjee Vs Norway* tells the love story of two lovers in India who already have two children. Sagarika Chatterjee (Rani Mukerji) and her husband, Anup Chatterjee (Anirban Bhattacharya) moved to Norway to find work. While living there, they run into problems arising from misunderstandings. Their two children were brought in by Barnevernet (a child welfare service in Norway) based on inappropriate treatment of children. Mrs. Chatterjee, who had separated from her husband, felt unacceptable and tried to fight for her

rights by appealing to a Norwegian court. However, her efforts failed and were not accepted by the Norwegian courts, and custody of her children went to her ex-husband's brother.

This film tells the story of a couple in India who already have two children, Sagarika Chatterjee (played by Rani Mukerji) and her husband, Anup Chatterjee (played by Anirban Bhattacharya) who move to Norway in search of work. After settling in Norway, the couple ran into problems due to misunderstandings. This 144-minute film will be shown on March 17, 2023, in Indonesian cinemas. The film stars Rani Mukerji, Anirban Bhattacharya, Neena Gupta, and Jim Sarbh. The Synopsis of the film *Why Cheat India*, Reality of the Education System in India Mrs. Chatterjee, who had separated from her husband, felt unacceptable and tried to fight for her rights by appealing to a Norwegian court. However, her efforts failed and were not accepted by the Norwegian courts, and custody of her children went to her ex-husband's brother. Finally, he also asked for the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Indian government to intervene. With the intervention of the government, he also has hope to regain custody. How did Mrs. Chatterjee get custody of it? Mrs. Chatterjee finally asked for the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India to help solve this problem. Through government intervention, he feels hopeful about regaining custody of his children.

There are several studies related to mother's struggle in film. Hazazi (2020) explains the meaning of the mother's struggle in Film *Air Mata Terakhir Bunda* is the mother's love is willing to sacrifice anything to make children happy by continuing to educate her child by seeking knowledge as widely as possible so that later it can be a path of goodness for her child. Hasan et al. (2024) explains as many as six points of struggle values in film 'Air Mata di Ujung Sajadah': the value of willingness to sacrifice, unity, respect, patience, never give up spirit and cooperation using a qualitative approach and qualitative content analysis research method. Ghassani et al. (2025) discuss the value of a mother's struggle in the movie 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies'. There are seven scenes that depict the values associated with a mother's struggle, including two scenes focused on sacrifice, one on unity, one on resilience, one on patience, one on perseverance, and one on cooperation. Alfarizi (2024) explained that in the film *Kidnap*, there are 13 scenes that show the struggle of a mother to save her child with the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. Judging from Karla's character, it really depicts a mother's struggle for her child, and also illustrates how strong a mother is in facing every problem and obstacle she goes through in her life alone

The film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* explores the emotional and legal challenges faced by a mother, Mrs. Chatterjee, in her fight to regain custody of her children from the Norwegian welfare system. The narrative examines universal themes of a mother's struggle, such as sacrifice, patience, resilience, unity, and cooperation, which are common across various films, including *Air Mata Terakhir Bunda*, *Air Mata di Ujung Sajadah*, *How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies*, and *Kidnap* (Yanti, 2018; Nurdin, 2023; Ghassani et al., 2025; Tedjorahardjo, 2017). By analyzing these themes, the film underscores how Mrs. Chatterjee's journey is not just about legal battle but also a reflection of cultural identity and resilience, as she navigates the clash between her Indian cultural values and Norwegian societal norms. The study highlights how these stories in films shed light on the broader global issues of immigration, cultural integration, and the rights of mothers in foreign contexts. The portrayal

of a mother's fight in films serves to explore the intersections of gender, culture, and law, providing insights into the strength and determination inherent in motherhood.

The background of this research is also related to the importance of understanding the mother's role in maintaining the welfare of children and how external factors such as the legal system and culture can influence the relationship between mother and child. In this context, the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* provides an in-depth picture of the struggle of a mother who not only faces systematic obstacles but also has to fight against a lack of understanding of the culture of parenting that she does. This research aims to examine and analyze a mother's struggle in facing various challenges arising from cultural differences, an unfamiliar legal system, and the injustice that befell her in the film. Debika's story is very relevant to study, considering issues regarding child custody, cultural differences in parenting, and how the international legal system interacts with traditional values and local culture.

Through this research, it is hoped that a better understanding can be gained of the dynamics of mothers' struggles in a global context, as well as providing insight into the importance of child custody that takes into account cultural values and balanced justice. This film also gives a strong message about how much a mother loves and how she is ready to do anything to protect her children, even though she has to fight a system that doesn't seem to be on her side.

## Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods (Stanley, 2023), to analyse a mother's struggle to maintain custody of her child in a foreign country as depicted in the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*. This approach was chosen to explore and understand the narrative, themes, and values contained in the film in depth. Data collection was carried out using the documentation method in the form of an analysis of the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*. This film was analysed as the main data source to obtain information regarding the storyline, characters, dialogue, and scenes relevant to the theme of the struggle for child custody. Apart from that, direct observation of the film was carried out to note the visual elements, emotional expressions, and symbols that support the narrative.

Data analysis was carried out by describing the results of observations of the film. This process involves identifying key scenes, analysing dialogue, and interpreting the social and cultural context that influences the story. The results of the analysis are arranged in the form of a descriptive narrative that describes the main character's struggle, the conflict they face, and the moral message conveyed by the film. With this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the theme of a mother's struggle to maintain child custody in a foreign country as illustrated in the film.

## Result and Discussion

The following are descriptions of a mother's struggle to maintain custody of her child in a foreign country, illustrated through figures and discussions, as portrayed in the film.



Figure 1. Debika's Family

Debika Chatterjee (Rani Mukerji), a woman from India, lives in Norway with her husband, Anirudh, and their two small children, Shubh and Shuchi. They try to build a stable life in a foreign country while maintaining Indian traditions. The film begins by depicting the family life of Debika Chatterjee (played by Rani Mukerji) and her husband Anirudh who come from India and live in Norway. They have two small children, Shubh and Shuchi, and live a simple but happy life in a foreign country. Debika loves her children very much and tries to provide the best for them while maintaining Indian cultural values.

Things changed drastically when the Norwegian Child Protection Agency (Barnevernet) took Debika's two children. Problems arose when, one day, Barnevernet (the Norwegian Child Protection Agency) came to Debika's house. They considered that Debika's parenting method did not comply with Norwegian cultural standards. They consider Debika's parenting methods to be inconsistent with Norwegian standards, such as hand-feeding the child, sleeping with the child, and using cultural symbols such as "kajal" (eye shadow). All of this is considered a violation of "children's rights." Some things such as giving food by hand, children sleeping with parents, and Indian cultural customs such as the use of "kajal" (eye shadow) on children are considered a form of abuse or disregard for children's rights under Norwegian law. Debika's children, Shubh and Shuchi, were then forcibly taken by the Norwegian government and placed in an orphanage while awaiting legal proceedings.



Figure 2. Debika Chatterjee's Struggle in Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway

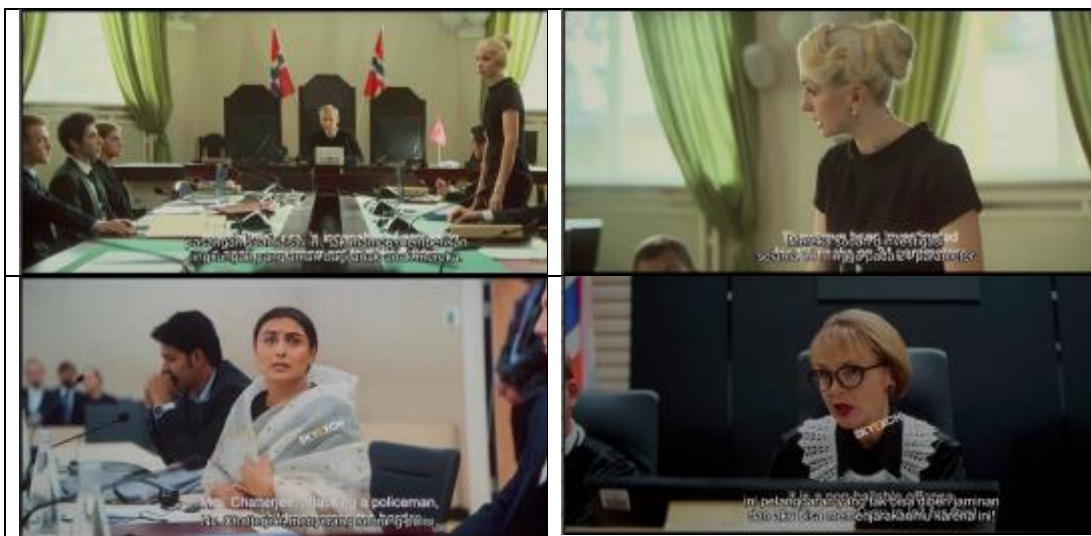


Figure 3. Debika Chatterjee's Struggle in Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway

Debika is devastated by the loss of her children and feels the Norwegian legal system does not understand Indian culture and traditions. Her husband, Anirudh, does not fully support her and is more concerned with his work, making Debika's struggle even harder. He fought tenaciously, appealing to the Norwegian courts, but faced cultural bias and strict legal procedures.



Figure 4. Debika Chatterjee’s Struggle in Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway

Debika continues her battle in court. In court, he tried to prove that the parenting culture he implemented was part of Indian tradition and was not harmful to the children. However, the Norwegian court rejected Debika's argument because such care was contrary to the child's rights under their country's law. Apart from that, Debika also found it difficult to explain Indian culture which was not understood by the Norwegian judges and authorities.



Figure 5. Debika Chatterjee’s Struggle in Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway

Debika was devastated by the incident, and she started fighting to get her children back. He tries to understand the reasons behind Barnevernet's decision and find out how he can bring his children home. On the other hand, her husband Anirudh shows indifference towards Debika's struggle. He seemed more focused on his work and did not fully support Debika's efforts. In the long and tiring legal process, Debika felt very isolated. Anirudh, her husband, tends to side with Norway's decision and prefers to accept the situation. Debika felt betrayed by her husband, who did not support her cause enough. Even her family in India doubted her abilities and began to think of her as a mother who failed to care for her children.



**Figure 6. Debika Chatterjee's Struggle in Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway**

Debika faced pressure from various parties, including her own family. She felt betrayed by her husband who did not support her struggle and instead accepted Norway's decision to adopt their children to another family. Debika finally succeeded in getting support from the Indian government. This intervention was key in changing the course of the case. After a long and tiring struggle, Debika managed to bring her children home to India, sending a powerful message about a mother's unwavering love.

When Debika feels increasingly depressed and hopeless, she gets support from a lawyer who believes in her. He also began to receive attention from the Indian government, which finally intervened in this case. The Indian government filed a petition in a Norwegian court, requesting that Debika's children be returned to their families. Debika took this case to an international court. He argued that childcare cannot be judged solely based on Western cultural standards, but must take into account the family's cultural background. After a long struggle, Debika finally succeeded in winning this case in a Norwegian court. Shubh and Shuchi are sent home to Debika, and the family is finally reunited in India. The film ends with Debika standing as a symbol of a mother's unwavering strength in fighting for the rights of her children and revealing that a mother's love and dedication can overcome all obstacles that come her way.



Figure 7. Debika Chatterjee's Struggle in Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway

Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway is a film centered on the struggles of an Indian mother, Debika Chatterjee (Rani Mukerji). He had to fight for custody of his children after being handed over to an orphanage by the Norwegian childcare service. This happened because he was deemed unfit to care for them. As her husband adapted to the Norwegian language and norms, he preferred to retain his Indian language and cultural roots. Her reluctance to clone the Norwegian way of life and her refusal to let go of the Indian persona catches the attention of several corrupt officers in the Norwegian childcare service. Indian customs such as eating with hands, feeding children with hands, and sleeping in the same bed with children are seen as bad parenting traits. This is used as an excuse for Barnevernet (a child welfare service in Norway), to separate children from their parents. Mrs. Chatterjee, who had separated from her husband, felt unacceptable and tried to fight for her rights by appealing to a Norwegian court. However, her efforts failed and were not accepted by the Norwegian courts, and custody of her children went to her ex-husband's brother. Finally, he also asked for the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Indian government to intervene. With the intervention of the government, he also has hope to regain custody.

The film Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway is based on the true story of an Indian family living in Norway, Sagarika Bhattacharya and her husband Anup Bhattacharya, whose child was "snatched" by a child protection agency (Norwegian Child Welfare Services). In this film, their real names are changed to the couple Debika Chatterjee (Rani Mukerji) and Mr. Chatterjee (Anirban Bhattacharya). With their two children, they moved to Norway in search of work.

In 2011, their children were taken in by Barnevarne (Norwegian Children's Society) on charges of child abuse. The case started with Debika's complaint about domestic violence committed by her husband, Mr. Chatterjee. Then came a counseling officer from a Norwegian child welfare agency. They rejected the decision of the children's institution and filed an appeal in a Norwegian court. But the appeal failed. Then they asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of India to intervene. Previously, Debika separated from her husband, and custody of the children was given to their father's brother. In 2013, after struggling through the legal process for two years, Debika was given custody by the Calcutta High Court, following the intervention of the Government of India to the Norwegian Court.

In the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, the struggle of Debika Chatterjee (played by Rani Mukerji) portrays the love and determination of a mother who fights against an unjust system to get her children back. Her long and emotional battle forms the core of this story. It revealed that the film *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway* has shown a strong representation of the struggles of an immigrant mother living in a foreign country (Radila & Shasrini, 2024). Below are the details of Debika's struggle in the film:

1. Sudden loss of her children. Debika's struggle begins when Barnevernet (Norwegian Child Protection Services) takes her children, Shubh and Shuchi, under the claim that her parenting style does not align with the norms in Norway. Some of her cultural practices, such as feeding her children with her hands, co-sleeping with them, and using "kajal" (eye makeup) for the children, are considered violations of children's rights according to Norwegian law. Debika is devastated when her children are taken away from her. However, she does not give up and begins fighting to get them back.
2. Battling a legal system that doesn't understand her culture. Debika feels trapped in a legal system that is vastly different from her cultural background and the parenting traditions she knows. In court, she tries to explain that the way she raises her children is part of Indian cultural traditions that have existed for centuries, not a form of abuse. However, Norwegian authorities continue to assert that her methods are not in line with their standards, and her children remain in state custody. Debika's struggle becomes even harder because the people involved, including the lawyers and judges, don't fully understand the cultural context she brings from India.
3. Isolation and lack of support from her husband. Debika faces much of this battle alone. Her husband, Anirudh, prefers to follow the rules and accept the decisions made by Norwegian authorities. He doesn't fully support Debika's fight and is more focused on his job. Debika feels extremely isolated and betrayed by her husband, who should have been her main source of support during this difficult time. This makes Debika's emotional state even worse, but she still decides to fight for her children's sake.
4. Psychological and social pressure. Debika faces immense psychological pressure, starting with the loss of her children whom she loves dearly, to the doubts from her family in India, who begin blaming her for her parenting methods. She feels that no one understands her struggle, and this pushes her further down. However, despite being in such a low state, she continues to search for a way to achieve justice.

5. Seeking support and justice. At a certain point, Debika starts receiving support from several parties, including a lawyer who believes in her and the Indian government, which intervenes in the case. Though she once felt very alone, she finds the strength to continue fighting. Debika finally manages to bring international attention to her case, and the Indian government provides diplomatic support to help restore her custody of her children.
6. Victory and reuniting with her children after a long and exhausting struggle, Debika finally gets her children back after a lengthy legal process. This victory is not just a triumph for Debika, but also a symbol of the strength of a mother who never gives up fighting for her children's happiness and safety. Being reunited with her children in India is the happy ending after a tough battle.

Debika Chatterjee's struggle in *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* is a real-life example of a mother's unwavering love and her courage to fight against injustice for her children. Despite facing a foreign, unjust, and challenging legal system, Debika continues to fight without giving up, showing that a mother is willing to do anything to protect and restore her children's happiness. The film depicts that a mother's fight is not only about facing physical challenges but also about upholding cultural values and deep love for her children.

In *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, Debika Chatterjee, portrayed by Rani Mukerji, embarks on a heart-wrenching struggle to get her children back after they are taken by the Norwegian Child Protection Services (Barnevernet). The authorities claim her parenting, based on Indian cultural practices like feeding her children with her hands and co-sleeping, violates children's rights according to Norwegian law. Despite feeling isolated, particularly from her unsupportive husband, Anirudh, and under immense psychological pressure from her family and society, Debika relentlessly fights the legal system. With support from a compassionate lawyer and the Indian government, Debika finally achieves victory and is reunited with her children. Her journey demonstrates the power of a mother's love, resilience in the face of cultural misunderstanding, and the importance of standing up for justice, even against a system that seems insurmountable. In *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, Debika Chatterjee demonstrates a mother's love through her relentless struggle to reunite with her children. She fights against the Norwegian legal system, which doesn't understand her cultural parenting, sacrificing her well-being for their safety. Her love is shown in her determination to protect her children from injustice and trauma, refusing to give up despite isolation and rejection. Debika's perseverance, courage, and unwavering commitment highlight the boundless nature of a mother's love.

In the movie *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, the love of Debika Chatterjee for her children is shown to be strong and deep, reflected in her relentless struggle to get her children back. A mother's love in *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* is not only about affection but also about perseverance, sacrifice, courage, and protection. Debika proves that a mother's love has no limits, no matter the obstacles faced. The film portrays various manifestations of maternal love through the character of Debika. First, her relentless struggle for her children is evident in her extraordinary dedication to fighting the Norwegian legal system for the sake of Shubh and Shuchi. Despite encountering a system that misunderstands Indian parenting, Debika

perseveres, refusing to give up even when faced with rejection, isolation, and emotional pressure. Second, her sacrifices highlight the depth of her love. She endures injustice and isolation, even without the full support of her husband, Anirudh, who prioritizes her children over her pain. Third, Debika's maternal love is evident in her fight against injustice for her children's well-being, as she seeks to bring them back to a loving and caring environment, despite the challenges of confronting an unfamiliar legal system. Fourth, her determination and courage shine through as she unwaveringly pursues her children's return, showcasing extraordinary bravery in the face of adversity. Finally, Debika's love is reflected in her efforts to protect her children from trauma. She fights to ensure they are reunited in an environment of love and security, far from a system that fails to understand their needs. These manifestations of maternal love underscore the profound and selfless bond between a mother and her children.

Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway contains several moral messages that can be taken as valuable lessons. Here are some moral messages that can be learned from the story of this film:

1. The power of a mother's love. The strongest message from this film is the power of a mother's love. Debika Chatterjee shows that a mother will do anything, including fighting an unjust system, for the happiness and safety of her children. A mother's sincere and unconditional love can overcome any obstacle, even if the world seems to be against it.
2. The importance of understanding cultural differences. This film reminds us of the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural differences. Debika has to fight hard against prejudice that arises from ignorance of Indian culture, especially when it comes to raising children. This film teaches us that different cultural values should not be a reason to judge or judge someone badly. Cultural diversity should be respected, and the legal system or society should not impose a worldview that ignores these differences.
3. Determination in seeking justice. This film teaches us that even though the struggle for justice can be very difficult and long, we must remain steadfast and not give up. Debika faced many challenges and rejections, but she never gave up. In this context, the film shows that to obtain justice, a person must be patient and fight tirelessly, even though they have to face a large and powerful system.
4. The role of the family in support. Even though Debika has to fight alone in this case, this film also reminds us about the importance of family support. In this film, Debika's husband Anirudh doesn't support her cause enough, which further makes her feel isolated. This film highlights that family support is very important in facing major life trials.
5. Justice is based on empathy. This film emphasizes that justice should not only be based on rigid laws and rules but should also be based on empathy and understanding of an individual's background and culture. Debika is fighting not only for her children but also to prove that her traditional way of parenting is not wrong, even though it differs from the standards in Norway.

6. Courage to face an unfair system. This film teaches about the courage to face injustice, especially when the legal system or large institutions seem to be against us. Debika shows that if we believe in the right principles, we must have the courage to speak out and fight against injustice, even if it means fighting against greater forces.

Overall, *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* is a film that teaches us about the importance of love, struggle, empathy, and understanding cultural differences. This is an inspiring story about how a mother can be a hero to her children, no matter how big the obstacles come her way.

*Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway* is a powerful film centered on the struggles of Debika Chatterjee (Rani Mukerji), an Indian mother fighting for custody of her children after they were taken by Norwegian childcare services. Inspired by the real-life story of Sagarika Chakraborty, the film highlights cultural clashes and the challenges of parenting in a foreign country. Debika's children were removed on the grounds of "incompetent parenting" due to cultural practices like hand-feeding and co-sleeping, which were misunderstood by Norway's strict childcare regulations. Debika's husband, a geophysicist, was often busy with work, leaving her to care for their two young children in an unfamiliar environment. When the Norwegian authorities deemed her unfit to care for her children, they were placed in foster care, sparking a legal battle that brought Debika to her breaking point. Despite the isolation and lack of support from her husband, Debika's relentless determination to reunite with her children forms the emotional core of the film.

The movie vividly portrays Debika's cultural identity and her refusal to conform to Norwegian norms, which drew the scrutiny of corrupt officers in the childcare service. Her struggle mirrors that of Sagarika Chakraborty, whose case escalated into an international dispute between India and Norway in 2012. After years of legal battles, diplomatic intervention by the Indian government, and support from the Ministry of External Affairs, Sagarika finally regained custody of her children through a landmark ruling by the Calcutta High Court in 2013. The film showcases Rani Mukerji's compelling performance as a mother navigating emotional, cultural, and legal challenges to protect her children, symbolizing the strength and resilience of maternal love in the face of injustice.

Indian customs such as eating with hands, feeding children with hands, and sleeping in the same bed with children are seen as bad parenting traits. This is used as an excuse for Norwegian childcare services to separate children from their parents. Debika can barely think straight since her children were taken from her. Undeterred by the consequences, she recklessly and relentlessly vows to use any means necessary to save her children. His reckless behavior becomes his worst enemy for helping to "justify" the kidnapping of his children under the guise of social work. Debika also made shocking confessions that moved audiences while pleading for justice in several courts in India and Norway. "I don't know if I am a good mother or a bad mother, but I am a mother."

For parents in Asia, it is common for a mother or father to feed their child with their hands or for young children to sleep in the same bed with their parents. However, in Norway, such cultural practices are not permissible and are often misunderstood. This cultural

difference led to Debika facing legal action in Norway and losing custody of her children. After moving to Norway with her husband, a geophysicist, Debika found herself raising their two young children alone while her husband was busy working. In 2011, the Norwegian Child Welfare Service accused Debika and her husband of violence against their children and deemed Debika mentally unfit to care for them. These accusations were based on parenting practices, such as hand-feeding and co-sleeping, which are normal in Asian and Indian cultures but were considered violations of childcare standards in Norway. The authorities took custody of Debika's children, placing them with an uncle on her husband's side, and the situation worsened as Debika and her husband divorced. Despite facing significant challenges, Debika relentlessly fought through legal battles and personal struggles to regain custody of her children. Her perseverance paid off in 2013 when she finally succeeded in reuniting with them.

For migrating from 'developing' countries, to relocate in the 'advanced West', a message that came through from the western society is clear: "Integrate." The Norwegian official in the movie 'Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway' says this unequivocally and with impact: "Be like us if you want to live here or go back to where you came from." The message of the western world – ever since they started colonizing the 'native' lands of Asia, Africa and the Americas – was that the natives had to be saved from themselves (Ramanathan, 2023). This message is strongly conveyed in the movie Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway by a Norwegian official, who bluntly says, "Be like us if you want to live here or go back to where you came from." The broader implication is that the Western world, since its colonial era, has consistently imposed the idea that the indigenous peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas needed to be "saved" from their own cultures and ways of life. Essentially, it reflects the historical and ongoing pressure for migrants to conform to Western norms and values if they wish to be accepted.

## Conclusion

Chatterjee vs Norway, the story revolves around Debika Chatterjee's unwavering love and determination as a mother fighting against an unjust system to regain custody of her children. The struggle begins when Norwegian Child Protection Services takes her children, claiming her parenting practices, rooted in Indian culture, violate their norms. Despite facing cultural misunderstandings and a legal system that fails to grasp her traditions, Debika perseveres. Her challenges are compounded by the lack of support from her husband, Anirudh, who sides with the authorities, leaving her isolated in her battle. Debika also endures psychological and social pressure, including criticism from her family in India. Yet, her resolve strengthens as she gains support from a lawyer and the Indian government, which brings international attention to her case. After a long legal fight, Debika triumphs and reunites with her children, symbolizing the power of a mother's love and her fight against injustice. Debika Chatterjee's struggle in Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway is a real-life example of a mother's unwavering love and her courage to fight against injustice for her children. Despite facing a foreign, unjust, and challenging legal system, Debika continues to fight without giving up, showing that a mother is willing to do anything to protect and restore her children's happiness. The film depicts that a mother's fight is not only about facing physical challenges but also about upholding cultural values and deep

love for her children. The film highlights her journey as not only a personal battle but also a testament to the strength of cultural values and a mother's deep commitment to her children's well-being.

The mother's struggle in the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* teaches some important lessons. First, determination and mental resilience are very necessary in facing great obstacles, especially when fighting for children's rights. Mothers must remain strong and not give up even though they face a system full of challenges. Additionally, it is important to understand and appreciate cultural differences and to be able to communicate our cultural values in a way that others can understand. Debika's struggle also shows how important support from family and community is in facing big problems. Struggling mothers need moral and emotional support. This film also reminds us that a mother's struggle must always focus on the welfare of her child, even when facing great pressure. Debika tries to ensure her children grow up in a loving and safe environment. Lastly, this film shows that mothers must have the courage to face injustice for the sake of justice for their children, even if they are faced with a larger system or do not understand their condition. All of this teaches that a mother's struggle involves determination, cultural understanding, support, child welfare, and courage to fight injustice for the sake of children's happiness.

*Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway* conveys a very strong moral message about the unlimited love of a mother, who is willing to face all obstacles for the sake of her children. Through Debika's struggle, we are taught about the importance of intercultural understanding, because cultural differences can give rise to serious misunderstandings. This film also teaches courage to fight injustice, reminding us that determination can bring change even against powerful forces such as the legal system. In addition, this film emphasizes the importance of family support in facing difficulties, as well as awareness of parental rights and applicable laws. Debika also shows the importance of maintaining cultural identity in the face of pressure to assimilate, which teaches us that maintaining personal values is a form of courage in an increasingly global world. Finally, the film also shows how international cooperation can help resolve problems involving more than one country, reminding us that diplomacy and mutual understanding are important in maintaining justice. These moral messages inspire us to reflect on the importance of love, courage, and mutual understanding, and show how strong a mother is in protecting her children.

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