

Sacred yet Silenced: Patriarchal Hypocrisy and Gendered Violence in *Devi*

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ABSTRACT

Devi (2020) is a short film directed by Priyanka Banerjee. It acts as a critique of the system that fails to protect women in a society, where women are objectified and violated. The strong symbolism in the film shows gender-based inequality and patriarchal hypocrisy in contemporary Indian culture. The film portrays women from diverse ages, religions, class, and social backgrounds sharing one confined room, representing their shared trauma. The title *Devi* (goddess) creates a contradiction, as the cultural worship of women does not reflect the lived realities of women. By the application of feminist theory, trauma theory, and the concept of gender and nation, this paper analyzes how silence, confinement, and visual symbolism construct the victims' trauma. Moreover, the various characters reveal the intersectional elements of oppression. The paper highlights how the film exposes systematic patriarchy and challenges the cultural traditions that worship women but are incompetent to ensure a safer environment for women, and how the film's symbolism shifts from individual grief to collective realization. Furthermore, the paper explores the film's limited dialogues and intense facial expressions, transforming the silence into resistance. It also highlights the symbol of 'confined room' that represents the Indian patriarchal society. Ultimately, the film

confronts patriarchal, cultural, and social norms on gender inequality. The film compels the audience to shatter societal customs, and demands ethical accountability from society.

Keywords: Devi, Feminism, Gender and nation, Intersectionality, Trauma theory.
