

# **Erotic Abuse on Woman's Body: A Study on *Chapali Height***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The issue of the exploitation of female characters by male ones is a popular subject of filmy contents in different movies. In this regard, the paper examines the film Chapali Height in terms of how an innocent girl is sexually reified by two playboys and how she avenges after realizing the treachery. Bini, a young girl, spiritually and physically loves a boy named Amir and elopes with him, leaving her family behind, but Amir abandons her after sucking the sap of her romantic youth. After that, another mischievous boy, Raj creates a drama of love and exploits her sexually. However, the boys, who are the best friend from the past, already have consensus to romance on her body. The internalization of physical exploitation on her body crosses the limit of her aggression which leads the catastrophic end in the movie. In the study, the entire movie is selected as the text for general discussion where the data will be primarily taken from the erotic snapshots of the movie and the persuading dialogues there. Objectification theory of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) in relation to body politics is taken as the theoretical base. Besides, this study espouses a qualitative descriptive approach to dig out commodification on woman's body by man. The finding of this study shows that the extreme physical exploitation to the female ultimately leads the disastrous result. At the end, the commodified woman kills the men by burying them into the ditch.*

**Keywords:** *Aggression, commodification, exploitation, objectification, treachery, youth*

## INTRODUCTION

### Brief history of Nepali Film

While analyzing the history of Nepali film, it is found that Nepali film doesn't have the long history. Only after, 2008 B.S, the first movie in Nepali language Satya Harishchandra by D.B Pariyar got produced and released in Bhadra, 2008 B.S. (National Film Policy Drafting Committee, 2013). However, it was produced in Kolkata, India. The film *Aama* (Mother), directed by Hira Singh Khatri and starring Shiva Shankar Manandhar and Bhuwan Chand, was released in 2021 B.S. (Film Development Board, Nepal, n.d.). Adhiraj and Dixit (2020) in their research regarding women's representation in Nepali movie have noted the history of Nepali movie as, "Cinema in Nepal started from 1964 with *Aama* meaning 'Mother, directed by Hira Singh Khatri, the film was produced by the Department of information of the Government of Nepal" (p. 1). It means *Aama* was the first Nepali movie produced in Nepal. However, it was not produced with private banner. The then his majesty's government of Nepal, had taken the responsibility of producing the movie. In the initial phase, Nepali movie didn't have their own style in terms of narrative and song rather they would "use Bollywood-style songs and narrative" (Subedi, 2011) and this tendency remained for a long time because like other aspects, the film sector also remained dependent with other countries mainly India. About this, Adhikari (2018) in her research writes that as a small and developing country, Nepal has always relied on its neighbors, India and China, for business, trade, and imports, among other things, and has learned from their developmental activities. The same is true for Nepal's film industry. Nepali cinema is heavily influenced by Indian cinema. It means Nepali film industry also couldn't be untouchable from the effect of Bollywood. Sumonanjali Films Pvt. Ltd, in 1996, released the first private bannered movie named 'Maitighar' (National Film Policy Drafting Committee, 2013) in the direction of B.S Thapa. Many Indians had their contribution for the production of the movie and mainly Mala Shinha, Chidambar Prasad Lohani, Sunil Dutt and comedian Rajendra Nath were the leading characters.

From the very beginning to the present, the role of women in Nepali movies is not strong as compared to men. In the name of power, sex, gender, roles and responsibilities and politics, the women are considered as weak characters. They are commodified in different ways. For this regard, Adhikari (2018) in her research writes, "Women in Nepali movies continue to be portrayed in traditional stereotypical roles as housewives, caretakers of men, objects of desire and as the second sex while the men continue to dominate the family, workplaces and

public space". It shows that like in patriarchal society, even in movies too, there is not the dominant role of women rather they are badly dominated from diverse ways. However, in the past movies, there was huge social and familial confinement to the women but in the recent movies, much more sexual abuse to the women is seen.

Hence, the study examines the movie *Chapali Height* to analyze how a female character is erotically abused by two males. By analyzing the erotic commodification for a woman, the study adds to the current literature on woman's domination and their reaction regarding the use of objectification theory. Though there are some researches in other Nepali movie, no specific studies have been found upon the movie *Chapali Height*. Ultimately, the study makes me realize that there is the necessity to study on at least one issue of the movie. So, this study opts to analyze the erotic abuse on women's body by males which has resulted catastrophic result at the end of the movie.

### **Sexual Objectification Theory**

Sexual objectification theory is the act of treating the human being as commodity for sexual desire. This theory regards the people as the object. It mainly examines the behavior and the attitude of the people who want to dehumanize other people. Despite the sexual objectification of the male and female in society, the concept of this theory mainly emphasizes the sexual objectification particularly for woman. So, Szymanski et al. (2011) in their research present Bartky's view as "Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) postulates that many women are sexually objectified and treated as an object to be valued for its use by others. SO (Sexual Objectification) occurs when a woman's body or body parts are singled out and separated from her as a person and she is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire" (p. 8). It shows that women are merely taken as the means of sexual objectification. That's why, many feminists argue that sexualizing girls and women contributes to gender inequality. Fredrickson and Roberts first talked about sexual objectification theory in 1997 in their research 'Objectification Theory: Towards Understanding Women Lived Experiences and Mental Health Risks'. In their research, they state how objectification theory imparts the better understanding for the women of their being in the society as they write, "objectification theory is a framework for understanding the experimental consequences of being female in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body" (p. 173). It illustrates that sometime not only the males the women themselves are acculturated to adopt as viewer's perspective on their body. In the movie *Chapali Height* too, the female character Bini, in several scenes has tried to show her body intentionally in front of the male characters. Bini, in one scene presents

herself in erotic dress up in front of Raj and Amir and asks them, “How is my dress?” (Khanal, 2020) and Amir replies that she is sexy. (Khanal, 2012,). It shows that she herself wanted to be objectified.

Regarding sexual objectification theory Bartky in his book remarks that that female’s body is mainly used for the enjoyments of others rather than their own pleasure. When a woman’s body, body parts or sexual functions are separated from her person and reduced to the status of mere instruments, as if they were capable of representing her, this is referred as sexual objectification. (Bartky, 2015). So, women themselves are responsible for being reified erotically in sexual objectification theory.

Generally, majorities of the movies, portray the women characters as less domineering figure as compared to men. Socially, erotically, mentally and financially women are shown as the fragile characters. Regarding social and familial issue, it is seen that in making decisions too, they are shown to be dependent on males. Adhiraj and Dixit (2020) in their study write, “Women in films rely on men to make decisions. Their decision is questioned, and legitimacy undermined through prominent male presence in the films” (p. 8). As in real society, in movies too, the women are deprived to play the decisive role for any sort of tasks.

Not only in social and familial case, the women are treated badly physically. The reflection of the patriarchal society is clearly seen in the movies as well where women are physically exploited. To heighten male characters, women’s abuse is displayed in the movie as “Violence on women is used as a medium to support male character development. On average a woman is seen abused, even raped 5 times per film” (Adhiraj and Dixit, 2020, p. 8). It is understood that the major issues of the movies have been the women’s reification by the males. That’s why; Adhiraj and Dixit (2020) say “Part of the film’s success is its use of benign masochism as women were shown abused, gullible, beaten, and powerless” (p. 20). It is clear that masculine power and hegemony is supplanted in the majorities of the movies. The analysis of such hegemony is found in the narrative of a Bollywood movie *Kabir Singh*. Kharat and Gagare (2020) write that the movie, *Kabir Singh* “tries to glorify toxic and hegemonic masculinity in the narrative with a number of scenes which depicts physical violence” (p. 4). It shows that in Bollywood movie also, the tendency to objectify the women physically is prevalent. The role of the characters in the movies display the relationship between men and women. In comedy movie, rather than critical thinking, emotive attitude of the characters is highly granted than that of action movies. That’s why; You et al. (2019) in their research about characters’ classification in movie say, “The characters of romantic comedy deal with the

affection between men and women using a very high value of emotional tone than analytical thinking. The characters of action genre who need rational judgment to perform mission have much greater analytical thinking than emotional tone” (p. 49). It illustrates that the role of the characters in the movie vary according to the genres of the movie which is likely to display the personalities of the characters as well. For example, in funny and shocking movies, characters of various forms and traits are found. So, it is stated that “in the case of comedy and horror/thriller, they have many kinds of characters and that characters often change their personalities in the story” (You et al., 2019). It means different types of characters frequently change their traits as per the story and nature of the movie.

Not only from the story, but also from the music, the feeling and conviviality of the characters is known in the movie which reveal the emphatic concern of the characters. There is unattachable relationship between the songs and the artists of the movies. In this regard, Hoeckner and Decety (2011) in one of their research projects about relationship between music and characters write that “film music can influence character geniality and the certainty of knowing the character’s thoughts, which are antecedents of empathetic concern and emphatic accuracy. Thus, film music may be regarded as modulating antecedents of empathic concern and empathic accuracy” (p. 146). It shows that there is the close connection between the music and characters of the movie as these two factors are like two faces of the same coin.

The success of the films is related with resemblance of the real-life situation of the society and culture. So, Dahal (2021) in his research about the ethnographical analysis of contemporary Nepali movies says that Films are used to study society, culture, and anything else related to human life from an anthropological standpoint because films are a part of and product of a specific society and culture. What sort of societal and cultural issues are being existed in the society, the films also tend to show the same issues. It means there is the clear nexus between reel life and real life.

Many researchers focus on social, cultural, feminine, masculine and anthropological issues but in contrary the research of Ravid (1999) relates characters of the movies with their business. When popular actor and actress are there in the movie, automatically the business of the movie increases because the audiences don’t want to see unknown faces in the movie. So, he writes that “star studded films seem to have significantly higher revenues whereas films with unknown cast members seem to have significantly lower revenues” (Ravid, 1999). It assumes that there is a close connection between the roles of the star and the business of the movie.

As the shift in Nepali movie, the issues of liberty and the self-sufficiency of minorities have been started to be raised in the movies. So, Shrestha et al. (2021) in their research regarding subaltern consciousness in Nepali cinema have written that the Nepali film industry has provided some hope by producing films that celebrate art as an apparatus for subaltern freedom and autonomy. It indicates a positive transformation which benefits to those who are marginalized. The issues of liberation and self-autonomy in the movie help to subvert the traditional and outdated mode of thinking and help to give the new flavor to the producers, characters as well as the audiences.

In the review, the issues of subaltern, the relationship between the characters and business in the movie, the nexus of reel life and real life, influence of filmy music in terms of genres and the woman's objectification etc. are focused much. However, it is found that nobody has researched on erotic exploitation of woman in the most popular movie *Chapali Height*. Hence, the study examines the erotic abuse on women's body by males and its catastrophic result with the lens of sexual objectification theory.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study analyzed the erotic abuse on female's body in *Chapali Height*. In the study, the major source of the data for theoretical framework and literature review is google scholar. Likewise, the entire movie is chosen as the text for general discussion where the data has been primarily taken from the erotic snapshots of the movie and the dialogues there. The sexual Objectification theory of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) in relation to body politics is taken as the theoretical base. Two major lenses of objectification theory; sexual objectification by males to the female and the self-objectification of female to stimulate the males are taken as the major foundations for analysis. Besides, this study espouses a qualitative descriptive approach to dig out commodification on women's body by men.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the movie *Chapali Height*, one and only female character Bini is initially shown as meek, feeble and fragile character. Because of her such character, she gets easily entrapped with persuasive words of the male characters, Amir and Raj. She blindly trusts them even without assuming their treachery. But when she knows that they are playing upon her body and feelings, her meekness, fragility and feebleness automatically gets changed into courage and accumulating her strength and courage, she becomes successful to take the revenge to them by

killing and burying them into the ditch despite facing various perils. In the research it is found that extreme physical and erotic domination and deceitfulness imposed upon females by the males may lead the disastrous result at the end.



Figure 1: - Bini trying to kill Amir with long spade and stabbing on the belly of Raj as revenge (Source: - snapshot from *Chapali Height*, 2020)

Figure 1 from the movie *Chapali Height* makes clear that the extreme physical and erotic exploitation by the males to the females may lead the unimaginable result which is made further clear in the discussion below.

### **Erotic Objectification on Bini's Body/Discussion**

*Chapali Height* is an emotional thriller film produced by Arjun Kumar and directed by Dipendra Khanal in 2012. The movie was first released in March 16, 2012 which became the second blog buster movie of the year 2012 after *Loot*. Amir Gautam, Raj Ghimire and Binita Baral are the leading characters in the movie. The movie was set in different places of Pokhara and Chapali Height Kathmandu. The movie basically focuses the adult audiences because it has only focused on eroticism in terms of dialogues, narratives and scene. That's why; the movie got an adult certificate.

The entire movie is revolved only with three characters. Amir and Raj are the best friends from their childhood days. They share all sort of things (negative, positive) though other people try to hamper their relationship. So, when Bini knows about their treachery to play upon her body, Raj discloses the fact that he and his friend Amir were the best friend from their childhood. They didn't have any dispute and rows. They would share all sort of things either positive or negative or good or bad. The people would be jealous with their friendship. (Khanal, 2020). It is meant that they had the agreement even to share their sex partner to have the erotic bliss.





Figure 2: Amar and Raj disclosing the facts of their treachery and Bini's shocking expression (Source: - Snapshot from the movie *Chapali Height*, 2020)

In most of the places of the movie, there is the use of erotic scenes and dialogues as well. Basically, sexual objectification theory has been used to show the desire of the male characters to abuse the actress intentionally. The male characters Raj and Amir have treated Bini as an object and one by one they physically dominate her. At first, Amir does the drama of pure love and exploits her physically several time taking her in his friend Raj's inhabitant, Chapali Height but later on he breaks his relation with her in the issue of teaching love to Raj. While having party, suddenly, Amir departs from the room in aggression and goes to another room. Bini follows him to make sure that it is just acting. The conversation during that time goes like this:

Bini: - Amir, Raj is Alone, Come on.

Amir: - Why Do you need me? Go with Raj.

Bini: - Are suspecting me? You know, I left home for you?

Amir: - I also left. No bad has happened. You go to your home and I also will go.

Bini: - What? You are boy and that doesn't make any difference because the society has given discount to you. But I am girl. the society judges me negatively.

Amir: - So, what? By the way, don't worry, Raj is there for you. (Khanal, 2020, 00:50:15-00:51:34)(Own translation)

The above conversations make clear that Amir is regarding Bini as a commodity because to fulfil his desire, he abused her sexually but in the minor issue, he becomes aggressive and leaves her with Raj.





Figures 3: Bini, teaching the way of impressing a girl to Raj and Raj leaving Bini in that issue (Source: - Snapshots from *Chapali Height*, 2020)

Not only Amir, Raj also starts to abuse Bini sexually. When Amir leaves Raj's house, he (Raj) tries to impress her and expresses his desire to marry her. Bini, blindly trusts him and gives the positive signal of consent.

Raj: - Do you like me Bini?

Bini: - You are sweet heart.

Raj: - If so, will you marry me? (Khanal, 2020, 01:08:09-01:08:38)

(Own translation)

The intention of Raj also is not to love Bini spiritually rather to suck the sap her romantic youth because he along with his friend Amir had the previous consensus to share all kinds of things equally. To fulfil that desire, he entraps Bini in his love with the persuading dialogues such as, "wow! You are looking gorgeous" (Khanal, 2020, 01:03:50).



Figure 4: Raj persuading Bini to get married (Source: - Snapshot from *Chapali Height* 2020)

Raj's drama of artificial love to Bini is immediately disclosed with Amir's re-arrival

as per their agreement to share their sex partner. By trusting him, Bini openly gives Raj a consensus to have the physical affair but in Bini's surprise Raj is again appeared in the same bed which shocks Bini too much. Bini, in confusing state calls Raj as:

Bini: - Raj, Raj, Raj Amir!

Amir: - Surprise! Eh Raj, how is Bini? Did you enjoy with her? (Khanal, 2020, 01:14:40-01:15:03) (Own translation)

The detection of the treachery of Raj and Amir shatters Bini. However, she listens other reasons for playing on her body. Amir further clarifies the reason to use her as since they (he and Raj) have decided to follow the same path of the life, why to be departed for the society and a girl? (Khanal, 2020, 01:17:55-59). Moreover, they still express their desire to have the affair with her simultaneously. So, he further states that he and Raj still love her and want to lead rest of the life together by keeping her happy. (Khanal, 2020, 01:18:11-16). But Bini is not satisfied with their proposal and expresses her remarks that to fulfill their selfishness, they have played on her feeling, trust and body. (Khanal, 2020, 01:18:04-01:19:17). The aspiration of taking revenge comes into her mind and challenges them to take the action. She says that she is the girl of this generation and she will show them what she can do. (01:19:30). It is meant that when someone treats somebody crossing the boundary, there is the possibility of uncertain happenings. Even in this phase too, Raj and Amir don't fall back to persuade her. They try to convince by taking reference of satya yug as Amir inquires if Draupati can stay with Pandavas in Satya Yug, why not she? How much love Pandavs did Draupati, their love to her becomes more than that (Khanal, 2020). But Bini is not convinced with their persuading language and ultimately avenges them by killing them with digging tool because it was beyond the limit of tolerance.



Figure 5: Bini burying the dead bodies of Raj and Amir after killing them

(Source: Snapshot from *Chapali Height* 2020)

In most of the places in the movie, sexual objectification of male to the female is focused but, in some places, the self-objectification of female is also found. The actress, Bini, stimulates her partner to attract him towards her sexually. By wearing erotic attire, she uses stimulating languages and leaves her body to be used. She asks Amir about her figure and Amir replies that she is fully sensual. Then she demands further clarification regarding her sexy figure as “Really? How much Sexy?” Baby, tell me again who is looking sexy? (Khanal, 2020). It shows that she is provoking her male partners to exploit her erotically with her emotional figure. However, sexual objectification by male is much than self-objectification of woman in the movie *Chapali Height* unlike the study of Bleakley et al. (2012) who in their research regarding the trend of sexual and violent content in US films find that “female characters are twice likely as male characters to be involved in sex, with differences in more explicit sex growing over time.”. It is clear that in some movie, the females themselves aggravate the male partners to play on their body sexually.



Figures 6: Bini showing her stimulating body figure, and Raj taking the advantage of the figure (Source: - Snapshots from *Chapali Height* 2020)

Besides the erotic activities of the characters in the movie, there is the role of cinematography to show the objectification of the women. Although, cinematographic side of the movie is highly appreciated as Raunak (2012) in his post has stated, “Chapali Height’s strength is its cinematography. Thumbs up to cinematographer Niraj Kandel for impressive work in the movie”, it has boosted up the women’s physical exploitation by males. It is known that cinematographic aspect of the movie is just to enhance the business of the movie by presenting erotic scenes the audiences.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the conclusion of this research, it is found that the female character in *Chapali Height* is highly exploited erotically. From the beginning to the end of the movie, the female character is being persuaded to be involved in physical relationship with her male partners who previously have the consensus to suck the sap of the romantic youth of a girl equally. Along with the sexual objectification by the male characters to the female character, sometime the woman character is presented in her self-objectification due to her blind faith upon her so-called male partners. However, the internalization of physical exploitation on her body crosses the limit of her aggression which leads the catastrophic end in the movie. So, it is found that the extreme physical exploitation to the female ultimately leads the disastrous result that at the end, the commodified woman revenges those roguish boys by killing them with digging tools and burying their dead bodies into the ditch.

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