

**Dilemma in Siraima Sindoor Aaha...**

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**Abstract:**

The song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* from the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar* surface a profound ethical and social dilemma implanted in the lyrics, music, performance and narrative background. The lyrics of the song presents the juxtaposition between the stigmatization of women who is accused of witchcraft with the cultural reverence for *Sindoor* (vermilion), signifying married fidelity and social decency. The paper intends to answer three basic questions:

What are the thematic concerns of *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...*, how does the song replicate the socio-cultural dilemma represented in *Boksi Ko Ghar*, and in what ways does the song challenge or reinforce traditional gender norms? To find answers to the mentioned questions the study employs a qualitative research methodology, encompassing textual investigations, interpreting the song, and cultural critique. Primary data consists of the lyrics and the performance of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* from the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar*. It is structured by feminist film theory and cultural studies. Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity and Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model are applied. It investigates the contradictory exemplifications of tradition and modernity, victimization and empowerment, justice, the gender roles and cultural paradoxes that are depicted in the lyrics of the song. It unravels the socio-political connotations embedded in the song, questioning their repercussions on contemporary gender discourse. The outcomes advocate that *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* symbolizes contradiction between social norms and personal agency, framing it as an influential cultural artifact. *Siraima Sindoor Aaha*, is crux of film *Boksi Ko Ghar* which replicates societal ambiguities.

**Keywords:** cultural conflict, gender roles, moral-social dilemma, stigma, witchcraft.

**Introduction**

Cinema and literature all over the globe replicate societal principles, confrontations and desires. In this condition Nepali cinema too reflect the society. There are many Nepali films that are based on social issues and *Boksi Ko Ghar* is one of them. The Nepali film *Boksi*

*Ko Ghar* is out of this box because it critically examines the issue of gender and justice. Songs and music in the films quite frequently operate as a channel for articulating multifarious socio-cultural concerns. The lyrics of the thematic song of *Boksi Ko Ghar - Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* encapsulates a deep-seated paradox in Nepali society- the concurrent veneration and vilification of women. *Siraima Sindoor Aaha* the thematic song from the Nepali film *Boksi* performs a pivotal role in boosting the film's themes, exhibiting internal as well as external conflicts encountered by the characters as well as the conflict going on in the Nepalese society. The paper investigates the dilemma weaved in the lyrics and its repercussions. This paper scrutinizes how the lyrics of the song reflect traditional and modern tensions in relation with gender identity, superstitious dogmas, and patriarchal configurations in Nepalese society.

### **Literature Review**

As the study is about the dilemma in the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* of the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar*, it demands an extensive review of existing literature in this area. Hence, the literature review is divided into three sectors and presented:

### **Gender and Media Representation**

Meena Acharya's *Women and the economy in Nepal* (1994) focuses on women's contribution in Nepal's economy both formal and informal along with the challenges women encounter due to the socio-political condition which creates conducive environment for gender disparities. It presents an analytical picture of economic condition of women and later propose some recommendations for more gender equal development strategies.

Prem Dahal in "Cinematic Expressions of Social Justice" (2018) investigates how Nepali films replicate the issues of justice, criticizing films for either fortifying or contesting disparities grounded on gender, class, caste and ethnicity. He has also examined whether films function as tools for societal change or are they mere for maintaining the status quo. Ram Acharya's *Gender and Identity in Nepali Cinema* (2019) studies how Nepali films project gender roles and identity specifically focusing on the representation and evolution of gender narratives and societal norms in Nepali film. He proposes an insight into how Nepali cinema represent and influence societal perspectives on gender.

Manish Bajracharya's "*Modernity and Tradition in Nepali Popular Music*" (2019) surveys the crossroads of tradition and modernity in Nepal's music industry. The paper studies how Nepali music has adopted folk, classical and indigenous musical traditions and the global trends as western pop, rock and other technologies. It also spotlights on the dynamic tussle between conserving heritage and embracing novelty in Nepali music.

Anjana Chhetri in "Gender and Power Dynamics in Nepali Film Songs" (2019) explore and analyze gender power dynamics in songs of Nepali film. It focuses on how the lyrics, composition and visual narration emphasize or contest gender stereotypes. The paper has also investigated that the audience's responses vary. The reasons behind the variation of responses are that they are grounded on gender and cultural orientation of the audience. Pratiksha Lama's "Gender and Power in Nepali Popular Culture" (2019) paper concentrates

on gender and power in Nepali popular culture. She explores how various media either maintain or topple down traditional gender roles. The paper also underlines that the upsurge of digital media as a stage for alternative feminist narratives.

Alisha Sharma in her “Cultural Representation of Women in Nepali Cinema: A Critical Review” (2020) analytically examines the advancement of female replication in Nepali cinema. She checks how filmmakers traverse conventional expectancies while amalgamating modern feminist perceptions.

Laxmi Gurung’s “Folk Influence on Nepali Film Songs” (2020) studies folk traditions in Nepali film songs examining how composers amalgamate traditional folk melodies, instruments and lyrical themes in the films. It also explores the commercialization of folk music and tradition in films.

Deepak Kumar in “Gender Discrimination in Nepali Media Representations” (2020) explores film television and news analyzing representation of gender. He emphasizes on how media reinforces patriarchal ideologies and exhibit evolving alternative narration as well.

Sita Bhandari’s paper “Feminism and Nepali Film Narratives” (2021) studies feminist issues replicated in films highlighting the modifications in gender representations over a period of time. It criticizes the sluggish advancement in replicating robust heroines and spotlights films that threaten traditional gender norms.

Deepak Malla’s paper “Nepali Cinema and Social Commentary” (2022) examines Nepali cinema as a stage for social commentary to comment on issues like inequalities, gender, corruption, etc. Malla climaxes cinemas which have ignited national discussions on the mentioned concerns.

Sarita Neupane’s *Women in Nepali Film: Representation and Reality* (2020) is a comparative study where Neupane compares women in reel and real examining the representation of women in Nepali films. She focuses on the inequalities between reel narratives and societal realities.

### **Music and cultural identity**

Sunil Karki’s research *The Sound of Change: Music as Resistance in South Asia* (2017) investigates how South Asian musicians have employed music like a tool of resistance, examining past and present instances where music functioned as a social change.

Krishna Rai in his “Lyrical Analysis of Nepali Film Songs” (2018) examines songs of Nepali cinema, focusing on general conceptual issues such as love, nationalism, and social values.

Prem Yadav in the paper “Music and Cultural Identity in Nepal” (2018) maps the function of music in framing Nepali cultural identity arguing past inspirations and present alterations.

Ramesh Thapa’s paper entitled “Modernization and Traditionalism in Nepali Music” (2019) argues how Nepali music embrace modernization while conserving conventional components, replicating wider societal renovations.

Ramesh Gautam’s “Folk Songs and Patriarchal Hegemony in Nepal” (2019) examines how patriarchy is inserted Nepali folk songs. It focuses on how themes,

performance and context boost and retain conventional gender disparities. It also exhibits efforts made by existing musicians to contest these norms.

Sabina Pokharel's paper entitled "Media Representation of Women in Nepali Folk Songs" (2020) criticizes the depiction of feminine gender in Nepali folk songs, debating lyrics of Nepali folk songs usually reinforce conventional gender roles confining the extent for woman empowerment.

Anil Chhetri in *Music and Politics in South Asia* (2020) studies the function of music in political activism across South Asia, exhibiting how songs function to threaten state oppressions, advocate human rights and resist against social injustices.

Madan Shrestha's work *Folk Traditions and Modern Nepali Music* (2020) studies the tussle between folk traditions and modern inspirations in Nepali music, advocating how artists set equilibrium between authenticity and market demands.

Shankar Poudel's paper on "Musical Narratives in Contemporary Nepali Cinema (2021) examines how music assists in narrating procedure in existing Nepali cinema, concentrating on its thematic and emotive value in various genres of Nepali film.

Sunita Yadav's "Narrative Soundscapes in Nepali films" (2022) investigates the function of sound design and music in Nepali cinema, focusing on the way they enrich narration and audiences' reception.

#### **Theoretical Frameworks and Social structures.**

Michel Foucault in *The archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) provides an idea of discourse as a medium to shape knowledge and power. It is relevant to study media representation of gender in Nepal.

Stuart Hall in his *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse* (1973) presents encoding and decoding model of media communication which is utilized to scrutinize how recipients construe and confer connotations of Nepali film and song.

Raymond Williams' *Marxism and Literature* (1977) frames a structure for the analysis of cultural production and power dynamics which is the major tool to examine Nepali films and music.

Judith Butler's seminal work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) advocates that gender is not an inherent identity rather a performative act framed by social norms. It is crucial for comprehending gender representation in Nepali cinema.

Rajendra Karki's *Patriarchy and Nepali Society* (2015) is basically about how patriarchy is framed in Nepali society and how it operates. He concentrates on the cultural and legal mechanisms that conserve gender disparities in Nepali society.

Deepa Shrestha's paper "Superstition and Social Stigma: Women Accused of Witchcraft in Nepal" (2021) studies the ways in which superstition and social stigma inexplicably affect women alleged of witchcraft in Nepal. It focuses on the legal and social consequences they encounter.

Thapa Bibek in *Nepali Cinema and the Politics of Representation* (2021) scrutinizes Nepali cinema to see how they shape political and social opinions. He emphasizes on the role of cinema in reinforcing or confronting prevailing dogmas.

Prevailing investigations on music and songs of Nepali film principally concentrates on the existing research on Nepali film's song and music largely focuses on its performance part, amid inadequate academic studies exploring its thematic penetration. According to Shrestha (2020) and Rai (2018) songs function as means for socio-political commentary as suggested in *Studies on South Asian music and film*. Various other studies have explored themes of superstition and gender-based discrimination in South Asian cultures. Scholars such as Sharma (2020) and Gautam (2019) discuss how Nepali folk songs have historically reinforced patriarchal norms. Meanwhile, research by Thapa (2021) highlights the role of film music in shaping public consciousness. However, little work has been done on thematic contradictions in Nepali film songs, particularly in *Boksi's- Siraima Sindoor Aaha ...* Nevertheless, the literature fails to address profound investigation on the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* marking a breach in the academic scholarship.

As earlier researches have investigated representation of gender in Nepali cinema, these investigations have not adequately explored the role of songs and music in the film to elaborate theme and purpose of the film. This paper investigates the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* to fill the gap by examining it as a narrative and ideological device.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The dominant subject matter attended in this paper is the dilemma surfaced in *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* from the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar*, which represent the paradox in between tradition/culture versus modernity existent in Nepali society. The thematic song advances acute interrogations about gender, social justice, and the expectations set for women, forming it a significant analysis. The lyrics of the song propose a paradox present in Nepali society. On the one hand it denounces the victimization of women accused of witchcraft and on the other it endorses cultural and traditional value system which in question presents a paradox: it simultaneously condemns the suffering of women accused of witchcraft while upholding traditional values that often contribute to their subjugation. This research analyzes this duality and understand how the song replicates women's dilemma present in Nepali society.

### **Research questions**

- a. What are the thematic concerns of *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...*?
- b. How does the song replicate the socio-cultural dilemma represented in *Boksi Ko Ghar*?
- c. In what ways does the song challenge or reinforce traditional gender norms?

### **Research Objectives**

- a. To find the thematic concerns in the *Siraima Sindoor Aaha....*
- d. To find out the replication of the socio-cultural dilemma represented in *Boksi Ko Ghar*.

- b. To find out the ways in which the song challenge or reinforce traditional gender norms.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, encompassing textual investigations, interpreting a song, and cultural critique. Primary data consists of the lyrics and the performance of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* from the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar*, whereas the scholarly articles and texts on film studies and cultural analyses are the secondary data.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is structured by feminist film theory and cultural studies. This research is grounded in feminist theory and cultural criticism. Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity will be used to analyze how the song reinforces or challenges traditional gender roles. Additionally, Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model will be applied to examine how audiences interpret the song. Feminist theories help in comprehending gender representations, while cultural studies investigate how song interacts with societal values.

### **Research Theory and Tools**

The paper is principally substantiated on semiotics and discourse analysis. Dissection, thematic mapping, and intertextual comparisons are the tools employed to deconstruct the connotations of the song. The primary theoretical approach combines feminist critical discourse analysis. The tools used include: Textual analysis of the song's lyrics *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* from the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar*.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited to a qualitative investigation of the lyrics and theme of the thematic song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* It is limited by its reliance on subjective interpretations of lyrics.

### **Lyrics of the thematic song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* of the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar*.**

*Sirayima sindoor aaha, (vermillion on head wow)*

*Galama pote aaha, (a necklace of pote wow)*

*Dhoti ra choli aaha, (cotton saree and blouse wow)*

*Ghumto ra doli aha, (a veil and a bridal palanquin)*

*Chcham chcham hatayika churale, (Jingling bangles on my hand)*

*Runchchan ratayika kurale (cry because of night talks)*

*Ma bandhiyeki hun ya sajiyeki hun (am I bound or am I decorated?)*

*Bujhina maile bujhayi deu kasayile (I don't understand-somebody explain me)*

*Akashayi bandhu, (the sky is my witness)*

*Patalayi bandhu (the underworld is my witness)*

*Bhoot pret bandhu (Ghosts and spirits are my witness)*

*Peer mashan bandhu (the cemetery and the funeral pyre are my witnesses)*

*Hey Dankini bandhu (oh! Witches are my witnesses)*

*Hey pichashayi bandhu (oh! Demons are my witnesses)*

*Hey khola bandhu (oh! Rivers are my witnesses)*

*Rukh bandhu (oh! Trees are my witnesses)*

*Charsurayi bandhu (oh! All four corners of four directions are my witnesses)*

*Juna jasti re* (like moon they say)

*Foola jasti re* (like flower they say)

*Kanchan khola jharanako mula jasti re* (like the origin of the golden stream of a cascading waterfall)

*Kere ...* (what!)

*Ma boksi* (Am I a witch?)

*Ma devi* (Am I a goddess?)

*Ma darling* (Am I a darling?)

*Ma baby* (Am I a baby?)

*Yo thari thari natale* (with all these different roles,)

*Yo sndarta ko gathale* (with this tale of beauty)

*Ma bandhiyeki hun ya sajiyeki hun* (Am I being bound, or am I being decorated?)

*Bujhina maile bujhayi deu kasayile* (I don't understand- somebody explain me)

### **Dilemma in *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...***

The song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* has earned a wide range of popularity because of its pulsating performance, heart rendering melody, and cultural interpretive presentation. Nevertheless, an intensive investigation from the lenses of feminist film theory, Judith Butler's view of gender performativity, and Encoding/Decoding model of Stuart Hall, expose fundamental philosophical configurations that frame its thematic concerns. This section critically investigates the lyrics and the presentation of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* within the mentioned frameworks to question replication of gender, cultural values, and audience reception. The detailed examination of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* from a socio-cultural perspective to comprehend thematic concerns, its bond to the socio-cultural dilemma represented in *Boksi* (witch hunting), and its role in challenging or reinforcing traditional gender norms is as following:

### **Thematic Concerns in *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...***

Feminist film theory is about critiquing the way media reinforces gender roles and ideologies. The lyrics of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* replicate conventional Nepali cultural values which value *sindoor* (vermillion) as a sign of a marital status for woman. Wearing/applying of *sindoor* in the middle of the partition of the hair signify the devotion to the husband and it is said that the longer the application is the longer will be the life of the husband. This perpetuates the view that a woman's identity is defined on the basis of her bond/relation to a man. In the song also the lyrics says *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* (**vermillion on head wow**) which is a matter of pride and celebration for a girl. On the one hand the reason of being proud and celebrate is that she is married and her husband is alive and on the other it is also used as a matter of decoration because wearing of *Sindoor* adds up the beauty of woman. In addition, it is also a kind of bond, devotion and chaining as the man has control over the woman who wears his *Sindoor*. *Galama pote aaha*, (a necklace of *pote* wow), *Dhoti ra choli aaha*, (cotton saree and blouse wow)

*Ghumto ra doli aha*, (a veil and a bridal palanquin) all replicate the joy of beautification which is juxtaposed with the sorrows of *Chcham chcham hatayika churale*, (Jingling bangles on my hand), *Runchchan ratayika kurale* (cry because of night talks), *Ma*

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*bandhiyeki hun ya sajiyeki hun* (am I bound or am I decorated?), *Bujhina maile bujhayi deu kasayile* (I don't understand-somebody explain me). This clarifies the ethical dilemma and cultural dilemma where women are confused whether they are decorated or they are shackled within the gender roles.

The third stanza of the song *Akashayi bandhu*, (the sky is my witness), *Patalayi bandhu* (the underworld is my witness), *Bhoot pret bandhu* (Ghosts and spirits are my witness), *Peer mashan bandhu* (the cemetery and the funeral pyre are my witnesses), *Hey Dankini bandhu* (oh! Witches are my witnesses), *Hey pichashayi bandhu* (oh! Demons are my witnesses), *Hey khola bandhu* (oh! Rivers are my witnesses), *Rukh bandhu* (oh! Trees are my witnesses), *Charsurayi bandhu* (oh! All four corners of four directions are my witnesses) is about the dialogue of Jhankri who is a male. He has been given the authority to control all entities as sky, earth, ghost and spirit, witches, demons, rivers, trees, four directions etc. which signify that male are so much superior that they can control even natural things.

In the fourth stanza the dialogue of woman goes like- *Foola jasti re* (like flower they say)

*Kanchan khola jharanako mula jasti re* (like the origin of the golden stream of a cascading waterfall), *Kere ...* (what!) which signifies the beauty of woman using the metaphors used by patriarchy. It also mocks at the metaphors used in this stanza because at last she says *Kere ...* (what!).

In the fifth stanza the woman expresses *Ma boksi* (Am I a witch?), *Ma devi* (Am I a goddess?), *Ma darling* (Am I a darling?), *Ma baby* (Am I a baby?) which replicates the names of woman by which the society calls her. This stanza mocks at the naming pattern of woman by the society.

In the sixth stanza the woman articulates *Yo thari thari natale* (with all these different roles.), *Yo sundarta ko gathale* (with this tale of beauty) she presents the dilemma through the juxtaposition of relation and the tale of beautification.

In the closure lines the woman says: *Ma bandhiyeki hun ya sajiyeki hun* (Am I being bound, or am I being decorated?), and *Bujhina maile bujhayi deu kasayile* (I don't understand- somebody explain me) which elucidates the contradiction and the ethical and social dilemma.

The presentation of the song on the screen, the performance, costume, choreography, music, lyrics, sound, lights, scene, actors and cinematography all promote and perpetuate gender norms. In the performance girls are beautified in conventional cultural costumes, emphasizing the ideals of patriarchal definition of a married woman whose inherent qualities are femininity and submissiveness. In opposition to this, men capture principal positions in the visual narration, exercising regulation over the romantic and emotional discourse and women as shown in the song the *Jhankri* regulates the control of *Boksi*. The control,



ownership, power and the narration all is in the hands of male whereas female are only there as subordinates who are often presented as objects to serve male this ideology affiliates with Laura Mulvey's male gaze theory which discusses that visual media usually presents women as objects of male desire. In the song too, *Jhankri* tries to control *Boksi* to prove his worth.

### **Judith Butler's Gender Performativity: Constructed Femininity and Masculinity**

Judith Butler's idea of gender performativity asserts that gender is not an inherent identity by birth rather it is constructed through repetitive performances designed by societal gender norms. The song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* instances this through its replication of femininity as intrinsically knotted to marital devoutness, humility, and beauty. The women's performance as wearing/decorating Sindoor, chura, pote, dhoti, choli, participating in rituals, or articulating their own desires all are presentations of culturally manufactured femininity. In the similar fashion, masculinity in the song is performed through assertive gesture posture and body language for instance the way *Jhankri* is presented in the song. *Jhankri* is tall, handsome man with attractive physique who is trying to control *Boksi* with the help of his mantras and ritualistic tantrick pooja. Similar performances by men are repeated which fortify male hegemony leading to gender binaries and all this looks like it is natural instead of socially fabricated. The song by scaffolding gender roles as inescapable, the song contributes to the prolongation of prescriptive anticipations instead of sabotaging the societal gender norms.

Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model: Audience's Reception and Cultural Interpretation Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model propose a lens to examine how various receptors may investigate *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* grounded on their cultural orientations. The song's inherent message is encoded by the fabricators of the film which are full of prevailing philosophical connotations that commemorate conventional gender norms and matrimonial ladder. Audience who affiliates with the projected cultural ideologies can participate in a hegemonic viewership where the audience consent the *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* as a romantic or festive depiction of adoration and fidelity. Where a widow is charged of being *Boksi* as she is caught red handed with her father-in-law who used to rape her daily. The woman has become the threat to the family hence the mother-in-law requests and bribes the *Jhankri* to prove her *Boksi*.

Nevertheless, receptors having feminist or analytical orientations might occupy themselves in a negotiated viewership valuing the creative components whereas identifying the areas that fortify conventional patriarchal rules and regulations. A counter-hegemonic viewership may encompass contradicting the song's implied code and criticizing its function of maintaining gender disparity. The song's lyrics, music, performance, costume all are heavily encoded with the codes that mock at the existing condition of women. The encoded message reveals the critical condition of the women who are in ethical and social dilemma. They are confused that thing like sindoor, chura pote, etc. are for the decorative purpose to enhance their beauty or they are the shackles to control them. It is now self-evident that there can be multiple types of analysis due to the multiplicity of connotations in cultural texts and the dominant role of the viewers is of manufacturing meanings decoding the encoded codes

and frame an understanding out of it. Filmmakers take a code and encode it; the viewers decode it and release new code as feedback which work as raw code to again encode. Thus, the cycle of code-encode-decode and reencode keeps on circling round and round.

Socio-Cultural Dilemma represented in *Siraima Sindoor Aaha* ...

The song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha*... presents sophisticated individual and socio-cultural dilemma that involve existent girl child birth, gender, marriage, and social expectations in Nepalese society. The song beautifully captures the essence of dilemma as it projects the lyrics in which convention and modernity are juxtaposed, replicating the battle of girls and women who are in tug of war of patriarchal gender rules and regulations and the quest of identity and empowerment. The present investigation explores the lyrics from the lenses of feminist film theory, gender performativity and cultural studies to unveil the fundamentals of patriarchal power structures and philosophical restrictions framing the characters' lives.

**Feminist Film Theory: Representation and the Male Gaze**

Feminist film theory especially established by Laura Mulvey investigates how women are represented in films, usually subjects to the 'male gaze' - a perception that objectifies and disregards female agency.

In *Siraima Sindoor Aaha*...the character's excursion is structured within the dichotomy of tradition and modernity, unmarried and married women, married and widow, woman and witch, etc., fortifying gender roles prescribed by patriarchal societal frames. The performance and the lyrics of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha*... are evidence of the fact that women are torn in between subject and object of societal anticipations, setting them as possessors of righteousness and responsibility instead of being self-sufficient personalities. The honor and the pride of maternal house and the house where she is married is labelled on the woman. Not only this, the whole family-parental as well as in laws' honor is resided in the hands of woman. The song also inquires the commodification of marriage in which a woman's worth is fundamentally tugged to her competence to adapt and adopt societal criterions. *Sindoor* in the parted hair of a woman signify the marital status of a woman which fortify the conventional anticipations that a woman's identity is demarcated by her husband, restricting her agency and autonomy. The protagonist is presented from the point of view of male gaze where she has become the prey in the hands of her father, husband, mother-in-law father-in-law, *Jhankri* and finally the whole society. In the song also they are projected as weak and vulnerable and the male counterpart are shown strong and intelligent. It is shown that women are mere objects who can be chained and kept under men's control.

**Gender Performativity: Constructing and Reinforcing Femininity**

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity posits that gender is not an innate attribute instead it is a socially fabricated enactment/performance, fortified because of repetitive performances/actions and societal/cultural rules and regulations. ***Siraima Sindoor Aaha*...** projects the heroine's tug of war and tussle between her quest of self-identity and the societal conditioning. Her endeavors to proclaim sovereignty usually collides with resistance,

indicating how prescriptive social rules and regulations dominate anticipated gender behavior.

In the whole song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...*, womanliness is acted out through ceremonials, costumes, and compliance to matrimonial and societal standards. The heroine's slow and steady alteration- whether through costumes, dialogues, or conduct- establishes the variability of gender responsibilities but also the results of conflicting from the conventional set standards. The protagonist's resistance threatens the essentialist perception of womanhood, exhibiting the performative attitude of gender individualities obligatory by convention.

**Cultural Studies: Intersection of Tradition and Modernity**

Cultural studies investigate how media and popular culture frame and replicate societal philosophies. The juxtaposition of cultural conventional principles and modern ambitions is in the core of the lyrics and performance of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* explaining the intricacies of societal alterations. The heroine of the song undergoes a conflict of circumnavigating between responsibilities prescribed by the traditional society and self-identity demanded by modernity, replicating the wider socio-cultural concerns concerning everchanging gender dynamics in Nepalese society.

The song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* revolves round the issues of honor, familial obligations, and personal aspirations, elucidating the innate paradoxes within the society that on the one hand applauds and on the other hand restricts agency of woman. The internal as well as the external conflict of the heroine is portrayed in the song where the song criticizes the strictness of the patriarchal traditions and admits the complexities of transforming the conventional Nepalese society.

**Siraima Sindoor Aaha...: Reinforce or Challenge Gender Norms**

The song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* is an important artifact that replicates an intricate depiction of gender rules and regulations within its narration, performance and presentation. Application of feminist film theory, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, cultural studies, this investigation searches whether the song fortify conventional gender rules or topples them down, employing in a critical discourse on its philosophical standpoint.

**Feminist Film Theory: Representation and the Male Gaze**

A perspective is framed by feminist film theory: representation and the male gaze, to examine whether the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* manufactures femininity. The song primarily objectifies female performers, portraying them as mere passive subjects in the patriarchal scaffoldings, it fortifies conventional gender rules. Conversely, the song presents the protagonist as sovereign personality with intricate aspirations which threatens prescriptive gender rules. A serious analysis of lyrics, music, costume, characters, background, choreography, performance, cinematography, narration expose that woman are subordinate and are mere signs of patriarchal honors.

**Gender Performativity: Constructing Femininity and Masculinity**

Gender performativity: constructing femininity and masculinity is a theory of Judith Butler

which proposes that gender is not innate rather it is acted out through recurring acts within socio-cultural framework. The song constructs femininity and masculinity through the lyrics, costume, characters, dialogues and performance in the song. It reinforces gender binaries, it is strictly guided by gender roles, it advocates traditional anticipations. The roles of women in marital status, family and in public life within the song clarifies that it conserves and maintains normative gender anticipations.

Cultural Studies: Social Context and Audience Reception

Cultural Studies investigates how cultural texts are analyzed by various types of receptors and how they respond or threaten the prevailing philosophies. *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* is deeply rooted a particular socio-cultural circumstance in which marital status, marriage, sindoor (vermilion) and honor are strongly knotted together to gender identity. The song elevates devotional womanhood and fortify women's roles as possessors of family integrity, it endorses conventional gender rules. Not only this, the song mocks and interrogates prevailing gender norms and proposes a substitute narration of woman empowerment which backs up advance gender discourse. The main part is the receptors response to comprehend the impact of the song among various genders of different generations.

*Siraima Sindoor Aaha* the song, condenses a continuous battle between duty and self-identity. The lyrics of this song propose a profound yearning for justice while simultaneously confirming to societal norms. The melody, music, instrumentation and vocal performance additionally intensify this divergency, arousing both resistance and resignation. An analytical dispute arises in how the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha* depicts a woman's predicament- whether she consents societal impositions or combats in contradiction of them. This dilemma echoes profound interrogations in the Nepali society specifically in relation to the role of women in preserving or rebelling convention socio political configurations. The thematic song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha* is utilized as a narrative device and a socio-political declaration in the Nepali film *Boksi Ko Ghar*. It replicates a deep-rooted battle between an individual (personal desires) and societal expectation. The music and the choreography fortify the thematic tensions, crafting the song an emotive and rational entity. The song spotlights on the issue of identity, societal expectations and the juxtaposition of being decorated/adorned and being bound/restricted/shackled.

### **Conclusion**

After examining the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* from the perspectives of feminist film theory, gender performativity, and cultural studies it is found that it is a cultural artifact which replicates and fortify set conventional gender rules and regulations. The songs' popularity lies in its aestheticist presentation and performance whereas its embedded themes provide strength to fortify components that maintain hegemonic gendered philosophy. An acute viewership inspires to interrogate these kinds of replications and contemplate on substituting set narratives that threaten prescriptive gender roles in Nepali films and society. Patriarchy, injustice and women's struggles in a conventional Nepali society are the major themes explored in the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha....* The song replicates on the domination

encountered by women at every step of her life. Especially the song highlights the oppression faced by women with regard to societal expectations, violence and discrimination. The emblematic function of *Sindoor* (vermilion) which represents marriage and a woman's identity in South Asian culture, emphasize how a woman's value is usually knotted to her marital status. The song criticizes the imbalanced power dynamics that lead to misery, framing it an influential interpretation on gender-based domination.

The song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* criticizes the societal pressures put on women through patriarchal anticipations in Nepalese society exhibiting the complex methods in which socio-cultural dilemma serve in framing personalities. If analyzed from the perspectives of feminist film theory, gender performativity, and cultural studies, it is found that the song exhibits the methodical hinderances enforced on women along with an account of confrontation and alteration. Finally, it threatens audiences to review on the growing role of women in society and the continues battle for gender equity in strict conventional circumstances. The tradition of labelling or branding women as *Boksi* (witches) is profoundly ingrained in patriarchal configurations which try to regulate and dominate women, particularly those women who are widow, single, poor, or opinionated. *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* resonates the socio-cultural dilemma portrayed in *Boksi Ko Ghar* by emphasizing maltreatment of women and the domination they face due to superstitions that substantiate all kinds of disparities they encounter. Women who confront societal set rules and regulations are turned into the scapegoat and are marginalized by the patriarchal structures that give the verdict if found guilty woman both the song and the film replicate this clearly. *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* is the outcome of a deep-rooted psychology within a specific traditional Nepalese society. From the standpoint of feminist film theory, gender performativity, and cultural studies, this examination of the song clarifies that it questions and threatens the set patriarchal gender norms. The song provides a room for female agency though through performance and lyrics to interrogate patriarchal frames, and it boosts gender flexibility, it also subverts conventional gender roles. The song primarily glamorizes sacrifices of women and stick to patriarchal principles which means it fortifies traditional gender anticipations keeping gender norms intact but later it mocks at it and questions the conventional gender norms set by patriarchy. The decisive investigation of the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* is grounded on not only its textual rudiments rather it depends on the receptor's comprehension and response in their wider socio-political circumstance. The song fundamentally threatens traditional gender norms by exhibiting the perilous actualities women encounter in the Nepalese society and interrogating societal configurations that propagate disparities. It climaxes how women are expected to shackle themselves with the strict gender roles prescribed by patriarchy, for instance as being an obeying daughter, devoted wives, or sacrificing mothers, meanwhile parallelly being prone to disparities and all sorts of violence. The song has surfaced and exhibited most of the injustices women encounter in patriarchal societies. It also emboldens confrontation against dominative conducts and practices. Although, the song replicates the agony of women as victims, without giving a solution or way out to empower women then it might risk of reinforcing patriarchy presenting the idea that suffering is an inescapable fragment of womanhood but

as it also proposes a vision to navigate through it, which is confrontation, the song is a threat. In nucleus, the song *Siraima Sindoor Aaha...* of the film *Boksi Ko Ghar* functions as an analytical interpretation on gender disparity, socio-cultural domination, and the never-ending battle of women, framing it an influential work of protest art for not only the Nepalese society rather to the whole world.

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