

From Oppression to Expression: Women's Voices in *Hellaro*

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Introduction

Hellaro is a 2019's Indian Gujarati film, revolves around thirteen married women living in the Rann of Kutch (1970s) village named Samarpura, women's lives are badly restricted around four walls of home and the order or rules of their husbands. This movie also got national film Award for best feature film. The debut director and co-writer, Abhishek Shah, said that the story was inspired by the folklore of the vrajvani village in Kutch and also present fact about patriarchy. In this film, village showed with ancient traditional houses. This film is one of the best examples of dark reality or deeply touching with rigid aspects of female oppression. The film uses Garba, an ancient Indian dance form, for freedom, self-emotion, and rejection against Patriarchy.

Oppression in the Patriarchal Setup

The women in the film of *Hellaro* live under the rigid restrictions of villagers and their husband which is set by tradition, they are bored with daily house hold work, silenced by tradition, and rejection even basic freedoms, including no rights to ask question, expressing opinion or wishes. Their existence portrayed the hopeless lives, by sacrificing of women. The societal rules not only subjugate them but also control them individuality, making them main object in a system that prioritized male authority.

Silenced Voices in Tradition

The patriarchal setup of the village implements strict social rules that

present women's roles to being submissive daughters, wives, and mothers. This suppression portrayed by their inability to speak freely or even feel joy openly. Their daily lives spent around repetitive, helpless labour, while their desires and individuality are systematically erased. Tradition become a main tool of control in *hellaro*. *Women* are restricted from engaging in Garba – a dance naturally tied to their cultural identity and joy. This forced muteness represents women whose voices are historically and culturally silenced. They are tasked with fetching water daily, carrying the weight of their responsibilities in silence, this collective oppression creates a suffocating environment, where women's silence becomes symbolic of their lack of agency.

Expression through Dance

Garba in *Hellaro* is more than a dance form; the participation of women in Indian dance form represents their unity and shared struggle against hard norms. While playing garba they feel free from the rejection by their husbands, women feel that they are human without it there is no joy, happiness in their lives. The finding of unconscious drummer in the desert become a main climax of this film; by helping of Manjhri, he paid for it by playing dhol. His music offers the women a rare chance to recover their voices through Garba. Dance become a true emotion of liberty and revolt, allowing them to take a break from the chains of rules, tradition, even its short moment. This transition from oppression to expression is such a deeply portrayed symbolic. The Garba circle represents unity, equality, and a space where women transcend caste, class and gender restriction. Their emotion speak louder than words.

The Turning Point: Encountering the Dholi

The film shifts to the turning point when the women discover the dholi in the desert, For the first time, the women dance. This act, seemingly simple, is revolutionary:

1. Breaking the Silence: The rhythm of the *dhol* gives the women a medium to express themselves, breaking their silence.

2. Reclaiming: Reclaiming from mentally and physically, emotional expression of freedom, recover from societal restriction.

Collective Defiance: The women, together, unity, break the barriers of isolation, finding solidarity in their shared experience.

Hellaro's Feminist Narrative

As its main part, *Hellaro* is a feminist tale that protect women in the systematic oppression. By juxtaposing their inner energy with the outer isolation of their environment, the film captures the universal struggle of women to find their voices in a patriarchal world. It is a celebration of unity, courage, and the invincible spirit of women who dare to dance against the tide. Maa goddess blessed them by giving energy and hope; as film portrayed that how the men of the village beat their wives badly even in nine months of pregnancy, puts her and she lost her child. This incident take a big face after it women decide to fight against all the villagers and their husbands; and they did, free themselves from the patriarchy and rigid traditional restriction with the help of Indian sacred Maa Goddess's Garba, reminding us that even in the hardest conditions, the human spirit seeks ways to express itself.

Conclusion (from silence to celebration)

The journey of the women in *Hellaro* display a powerful narrative transformation- from silent and suffering to the erythematic and liberty. Through the emotional form of Indian dance Garba, breaking free from patriarchal society, their strongly representation against villagers free themselves for generation. The Garba, more than a cultural tradition, become a revolutionary respectful act, build a bridge from separation to the unity of women empowerment, portrayed rural women's struggles and highlights the universal desire for self-expression and pride. The desert, initially a symbol of desolation, become a stage for liberation. This film is reminder for us that even in the most oppressive circumstance, art and strong actions have the power to challenge societal norms and change. Every time it is call of a women's voices in *Hellaro*.

Works Cited

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