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Deconstructing Androcentrism in 'Dakhal:' A Feminist Intersectional Study of the Woman Protagonist 'Andi'

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	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Intersectional Feminism, Androcentrism, Marginalisation, Patriarchal Oppression, Rural Indian Contexts</p> 	<p>This paper examines the character of Andi in Gautam Ghose's film <i>Dakhal</i> through the lens of intersectional feminism, deconstructing the multiple layers of oppression she faces due to her gender, class, and tribal identity. Utilising Kimberlé Crenshaw's framework of intersectionality, the study highlights how these intersecting forms of discrimination compound Andi's marginalisation within an androcentric society. Andi's experiences are discussed against the backdrop of feminist theories from scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins, providing a comprehensive understanding of how gender, socioeconomic status, and tribal affiliations intersect to deepen oppression. The analysis reveals that androcentrism not only perpetuates gender inequality but also intersects with socioeconomic and cultural factors to intensify the oppression of marginalised women. The film's depiction of Andi's resilience and resistance against patriarchal norms underscores the significance of intersectional approaches in understanding and addressing social inequalities. By filling the gap in the existing literature on rural and tribal contexts, this study contributes to the broader discourse on intersectional feminism. It emphasises the need for nuanced strategies to combat the multifaceted nature of oppression faced by women in rural India. The findings suggest that policies and interventions must be intersectional in nature to address these complexities effectively.</p>

Introduction

The film *Dakhal*, directed by Gautam Ghose, provides a poignant depiction of the intersecting forms of oppression experienced by marginalised women in rural Indian contexts. This study aims to analyse the character of Andi, a resilient single mother from the Kagmara tribe, through the lens of intersectional feminism to unpack the layers of discrimination she faces due to her gender, class, and tribal identity. The primary research objective is to explore how intersectional oppression manifests in Andi's life and to understand the broader implications of addressing such inequalities in rural Indian contexts.

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, offers a critical framework for examining how various forms of discrimination, such as racism, sexism, and classism, intersect and impact individuals' lives in multifaceted ways (Crenshaw). This concept has been pivotal in feminist studies, emphasising the need to consider multiple aspects of identity rather than in isolation simultaneously. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge argue that intersectionality is essential for understanding social relations and power dynamics, as it highlights how overlapping social categories create unique experiences of oppression (Collins and Bilge).

Androcentrism, the practice of centring male experiences and perspectives in societal norms, has been extensively critiqued in feminist literature. Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work *The Second Sex* exposes how women have historically been marginalised and relegated to the status of "Other" (de Beauvoir). Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity and bell hooks' examination of systemic racism and sexism provides a broader context for understanding the persistent inequalities women character endures in films and other visual media (Butler; hooks). Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* delves into the intersecting oppressions faced by African American women, offering insights applicable to other marginalised groups, including the Kagmara tribe in *Dakhal*. This comparison underscores the compounded nature of Andi's marginalisation due to her intersecting identities of gender, class, and tribal affiliation. These theoretical frameworks help contextualise the androcentric practices that continue to shape modern societies and perpetuate gender inequalities.

Deconstruction, in the context of feminist theory, refers to the process of dismantling and critically analysing established norms, ideologies, and power structures that perpetuate inequality and oppression. Andi's character in *Dakhal* exemplifies this process by challenging and transforming the existing social order through her resilience and resistance against patriarchal norms.

Despite significant scholarly attention to androcentrism and intersectionality, there remains a gap in the literature concerning the intersectional experiences of marginalised women in rural Indian contexts. Research on Dalit women, for instance, reveals how caste and gender intersect to create severe social and economic exclusion (Rege). However, fewer studies focus on the intersection of tribal identity with gender and class oppression. Uma Narayan's exploration of third-world feminism and Nivedita Menon's critical analysis of feminist politics in India provide essential perspectives but still leave room for more focused studies on rural and tribal contexts (Narayan; Menon).

This paper seeks to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of Andi's character in *Dakhal*. By applying an intersectional feminist framework, this study aims to illustrate how androcentrism and intersecting forms of discrimination collectively oppress marginalised women and how these women navigate and resist such oppression. Through this analysis, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities of intersectional oppression and the need for nuanced approaches to addressing social inequalities. The critical research question guiding this study is: How does Andi's character in *Dakhal* illustrate the intersectional nature of oppression, and what are the broader implications for addressing such inequalities in rural Indian contexts?

Literature Review

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in the concepts of intersectionality, feminism, and androcentrism. Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, provides a lens through which we can examine how various forms of discrimination intersect and impact individuals differently (Crenshaw). This concept has been pivotal in feminist studies, emphasising the need to consider multiple aspects of identity, such as race, class, and gender, rather than isolating one dimension (Collins and Bilge).

Scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge have furthered the discussion on intersectionality, arguing that a multifaceted approach is crucial for understanding the complexities of social inequalities (Collins and Bilge). Their work highlights the limitations of single-axis frameworks that fail to address the overlapping and compounding nature of discrimination. Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* delves into the intricacies of intersecting oppressions faced by African American women, offering insights that are applicable to other marginalised groups (Collins).

Feminist theory has long critiqued androcentrism, which places male experiences and perspectives at the centre of cultural and societal norms. Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work, *The Second Sex*, exposes how women have historically been marginalised and relegated to the status of "Other" (de Beauvoir). This critique has been expanded upon by contemporary feminists who analyse how androcentric practices persist in modern societies and media (Butler; hooks). Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity and bell hooks' examination of systemic racism and sexism provides a broader context for understanding the persistent inequalities depicted in literary works and films (Butler; hooks).

However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the intersection of androcentrism and intersectionality, particularly in the context of marginalised communities in rural India. Existing studies have primarily focused on urban settings or have not sufficiently addressed the compounded nature of multiple forms of oppression (Narayan; Menon). Uma Narayan's exploration of 'third-world feminism' and Nivedita Menon's critical analysis of feminist politics in India offer essential perspectives but still leave room for more focused studies on rural and tribal contexts (Narayan; Menon).

This paper aims to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the character Andi from the film *Dakhal* through the lens of intersectional feminism. By doing so, it seeks to illustrate how androcentrism operates in conjunction with other forms of social inequality to

oppress marginalised women and how these women navigate and resist such oppression. Additionally, this study will consider how historical contexts and socio-political dynamics have shaped the experiences of marginalised communities, using Andi's character as a focal point to discuss broader systemic issues.

Analysis

The concept of intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*, provides a critical framework for analysing the complex layers of discrimination individuals face based on multiple aspects of their identity (Crenshaw). Traditional approaches to equality often address only one form of discrimination, such as racism or sexism, but intersectionality acknowledges that various forms of oppression are interconnected and cannot be examined in isolation (Collins and Bilge). Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, in their book *Intersectionality* (2016), argue that intersectionality is essential for understanding social relations and power dynamics because it highlights how overlapping social categories create unique experiences of oppression. Intersectionality examines how various forms of discrimination—such as race, gender, class, and ethnicity—intersect to shape the experiences of marginalised individuals. This framework helps reveal the complexities of social inequalities and the multifaceted nature of power relations.

In the context of the film *Dakhal*, the concept of intersectionality is crucial for understanding the character of Andi. Andi faces compounded oppression due to her intersecting identities as a woman, a member of the underprivileged class, and a tribal individual. These overlapping social categories create a unique and intensified experience of marginalisation for Andi, which cannot be fully understood through a single-axis analysis of gender, class, or tribal identity alone. The patriarchal and feudal structures in the village exploit these intersecting identities, reflecting the power dynamics that Collins and Bilge describe. By employing an intersectional approach, we gain a deeper understanding of Andi's struggles and the broader implications of intersectional oppression in rural Indian contexts, highlighting the necessity of addressing all dimensions of discrimination to develop effective strategies for social justice. This multidimensional overlapping perspective is essential for understanding marginalised individuals' experiences on several fronts simultaneously.

Intersectionality in *Dakhal*

In the context of the film *Dakhal*, the protagonist Andi's life exemplifies the intersectional nature of oppression. She faces discrimination not only as a woman but also as a member of the underprivileged class and the marginalised Kagmara tribe. The Kagmara are subjected to severe socioeconomic exclusion and dehumanisation, often viewed through a lens of prejudice and stereotype by both privileged and underprivileged classes.

Gender Oppression

As a woman, Andi endures constant verbal and physical misogyny. Her resilience and self-sufficiency challenge the patriarchal norms that expect women, especially those without male support, to be dependent and submissive. A poignant moment in the film captures this defiance. When her late husband's friend asked her, "Aren't you scared alone? Living without a man?" Andi responded with resilience and determination, "I know men. I am not afraid."

The kids and I are fine” (Dakhal). This statement reflects her strength and self-reliance, challenging the societal norms that dictate a woman’s dependency on a man for security and survival.

Class Oppression

As part of the underprivileged class, Andi is deprived of basic amenities, education, and economic opportunities. This further entrenches her subordinate status and exacerbates her marginalisation. Her lack of access to literacy and economic resources limits her ability to improve her circumstances and reinforces her oppression. This socioeconomic dimension of her oppression illustrates how poverty and lack of education can amplify the impact of gender-based discrimination.

Tribal Oppression

Andi’s tribal identity as a member of the Kagmara tribe adds another layer of marginalisation. The Kagmara are dehumanised and stereotyped, and Andi’s marriage to Joga initially serves as a means to escape this stigma. However, after Joga’s death, Andi realises that her inherent identity and the associated stereotypes cannot be erased. She must navigate these challenges with courage and resilience, embodying women’s intersectional struggles in similar circumstances. The tribal aspect of her identity subjects her to additional layers of exclusion and prejudice, further complicating her struggle for survival and dignity.

Androcentrism and Patriarchal Hierarchies

The film *Dakhal* portrays a patriarchal hierarchy that systematically disenfranchises the underprivileged and marginalised communities. Privileged men, such as the gentry class and government officials, exploit the illiteracy and destitution of the underprivileged to maintain their power and control. This exploitation is vividly depicted through characters like the landowner and the Tehsildar, who manipulate legal loopholes and deceive the Kagmara tribe into dispossessing Andi of her land.

Exploitation by Privileged Men

The landowner and the Tehsildar represent the gentry class and government officials who manipulate the system to their advantage. They exploit the villagers’ lack of education and resources to maintain control over them. The judge’s naivety and urban biases further illustrate the systemic nature of patriarchal oppression as he fails to understand the villagers’ plight and falls prey to the Tehsildar’s deception. This manipulation showcases the deep-rooted corruption and exploitation within the system, highlighting how androcentric power structures perpetuate inequality.

Courtroom Struggle

On the day of the trial, inside the courthouse, Andi’s battle against patriarchal oppression becomes even more pronounced. The Tehsildar, after several attempts at discarding Andi’s marriage as invalid, denigrating her children as illegitimate bastards, and continually disparaging her as a “gipsy bitch” and a “gipsy whore,” resorted to bribing a random man to testify against her virtue, claiming he had been sleeping with her since Joga, her ‘husband,’ died (Dakhal). These baseless accusations were intended to undermine her credibility and strip her of her rights to the land. However, Andi’s unwavering resolve to fight back highlights her resistance to patriarchal norms and her determination to protect her

dignity and her children's future. This courtroom drama underscores the lengths to which patriarchal systems will go to maintain their control and suppress women who challenge their authority.

Resistance and Resilience

Despite the pervasive androcentrism and systematic oppression, Andi stands out as an exceptional character. Her individuality and strength contrast sharply with the men relying on group identity for power. Andi's ability to live independently and raise her children without male support challenges the androcentric worldview that women are inherently weak and dependent.

Defiance and Independence

Andi's defiance in the face of verbal and physical attacks underscores her resilience and determination to fight for her rights and dignity. Her refusal to succumb to these attacks and her willingness to physically and verbally defend herself highlights her resistance to patriarchal norms. Her statement, "I know men. I am not afraid. The kids and I are fine," (Dakhal) exemplifies her courage and independence in the face of societal pressure to conform to traditional gender roles.

Extreme Measures of Oppression

The burning of Andi's hut and the destruction of her livelihood represent the extreme measures taken by the patriarchal system to suppress women who challenge its authority. Andi's unwavering resolve to continue fighting for her rights despite the tremendous personal loss exemplifies the strength and resilience required to dismantle androcentric oppression. These acts of violence against Andi demonstrate the harsh realities faced by women who resist patriarchal control and the lengths to which the system will go to silence them.

Thus, Andi's character in *Dakhal* deconstructs androcentrism by embodying marginalised women's intersectional struggles. Her fight against patriarchal oppression and her refusal to conform to societal expectations demonstrate the need for a nuanced understanding of how intersecting forms of discrimination impact individuals' lives. Through an intersectional feminist lens, Andi's story highlights the importance of addressing multiple dimensions of oppression to achieve true equality and justice. This analysis underscores the significance of intersectionality in understanding and addressing the compounded nature of oppression faced by marginalised women and the critical role of resilience and resistance in challenging and transforming patriarchal systems.

Discussion

Intersectional Feminism Framework

Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, in their book *Intersectionality* (2016), argue that intersectionality is essential for understanding social relations and power dynamics because it highlights how overlapping social categories create unique experiences of oppression. This concept builds on Kimberlé Crenshaw's foundational work on intersectionality, which

emphasises that traditional approaches to equality often overlook the compounded nature of discrimination when multiple social categories intersect. Crenshaw introduced the idea that examining single axes of identity, such as race or gender alone, is insufficient for understanding the full scope of marginalisation experienced by individuals who belong to multiple disadvantaged groups.

In the film *Dakhal*, the character of Andi vividly illustrates the importance of an intersectional approach. Andi's oppression is multifaceted, stemming from her gender, class, and tribal identity. As a woman from the marginalised Kagmara tribe and an underprivileged socioeconomic background, Andi's experiences cannot be fully understood through an analysis focusing solely on gender or class. The intersection of these identities compounds her marginalisation, creating a unique and intensified form of oppression.

Crenshaw's framework helps us understand how Andi's intersecting identities exacerbate her vulnerabilities. The patriarchal and feudal structures in her village exploit her gender and socioeconomic status, while her tribal identity subjects her to additional layers of discrimination and dehumanisation. It aligns with Collins and Bilge's argument that understanding the complexities of social inequalities requires an intersectional perspective. Their work expands on Crenshaw's by providing a broader context for analysing how various forms of oppression interlock and sustain systemic inequalities.

By comparing Crenshaw's and Collins and Bilge's perspectives, we can see that both frameworks are crucial for analysing Andi's character. Crenshaw's foundational concept of intersectionality lays the groundwork for understanding the compounded nature of discrimination, while Collins and Bilge emphasise the intricate power dynamics and social relations that arise from these intersecting identities. In *Dakhal*, this approach reveals the depth of Andi's struggle against the entrenched patriarchal and socioeconomic systems that oppress her. Contextualising these theories within the film underscores the necessity of intersectional analysis for developing effective strategies to combat social inequalities. Andi's character demonstrates that addressing only one dimension of her oppression – such as gender – would be insufficient to alleviate her overall marginalisation. Thus, policies and interventions aimed at promoting social justice must consider the full spectrum of intersecting identities to address the root causes of oppression effectively. This comprehensive approach is vital for understanding and dismantling the complex web of discrimination faced by marginalised individuals in various contexts. Comparing these findings with other studies on marginalised women in androcentric societies further underscores the importance of intersectionality. bell hooks' work on feminist theory emphasises the interconnectedness of race, gender, and class in the experiences of African American women. In her seminal works, such as *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, hooks explores how these intersecting identities create unique and compounded forms of oppression. She argues that the experiences of African American women cannot be understood solely through the lens of gender or race alone but must be analysed in the context of their combined impact. This interconnectedness reveals the complexity of their oppression and the inadequacies of frameworks that consider these aspects in isolation. By emphasising this intersectionality, hooks provide a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of discrimination and marginalisation.

Similarly, Patricia Hill Collins' concept of the matrix of domination further elaborates on the simultaneous functioning of intersecting oppressions. In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Collins introduces the idea that social inequalities are maintained through multiple, interlocking systems of oppression. These systems include race, gender, class, and other social categories that intersect to produce complex and overlapping forms of discrimination. Collins argues that understanding oppression requires an analysis that considers all these dimensions together, as they collectively shape the experiences of marginalised groups. The matrix of domination framework demonstrates how power and privilege operate across different axes to sustain systemic inequalities. These studies by hooks and Collins are particularly relevant to the analysis of Andi's character in *Dakhal*. Similar to the experiences of African American women discussed by hooks and Collins, Andi's oppression cannot be fully understood through a one-dimensional approach. As a woman from the Kagmara tribe and part of the underprivileged class, Andi faces multiple intersecting forms of discrimination. Her gender, class, and tribal identity collectively contribute to her marginalisation. Analysing her experiences requires an intersectional approach, considering how these social categories interact and amplify her oppression.

The insights from hooks and Collins highlight the insufficiency of a single-axis framework for understanding the complexities of oppression. Andi's character demonstrates that gender discrimination is intertwined with class and tribal oppression, creating a compounded effect that exacerbates her marginalisation. This intersectional analysis reveals the necessity of addressing all these dimensions to develop effective strategies for combating social inequalities.

By drawing parallels between the theoretical frameworks of hooks and Collins and the experiences of Andi, this study underscores the universal relevance of intersectional analysis. It shows that understanding and addressing oppression in diverse contexts requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the interconnected nature of various forms of discrimination. This perspective is crucial for developing nuanced and effective interventions to promote social justice and equality.

Androcentrism and Patriarchal Hierarchies

Androcentrism, the practice of centring male experiences and perspectives in societal norms, is a critical theme in the film *Dakhal*. This concept, extensively critiqued in feminist literature, is highly relevant to the film, the character of Andi, and the broader implications for understanding and addressing gender inequalities.

In *Dakhal*, androcentrism is vividly depicted through the societal structures and norms that prioritise male experiences and perspectives, thereby marginalising women. The film portrays a patriarchal village where power is concentrated in the hands of men, such as the gentry class and government officials, who manipulate the system to maintain their dominance. This male-centred worldview permeates every aspect of life in the village, from legal proceedings to social interactions, systematically disenfranchising women.

Andi, the film's protagonist, embodies the struggle against androcentric oppression. As a single mother from the marginalised Kagmara tribe, she faces compounded discrimination due to her gender, class, and tribal identity. Andi's resilience and defiance against patriarchal norms challenge the androcentric expectations that women should be dependent and submissive. Her character highlights the impact of androcentrism on marginalised women as she confronts verbal and physical misogyny, systemic exploitation, and efforts to undermine her credibility and rights.

The film *Dakhal* uses Andi's character to explore the broader implications of androcentrism and intersectional oppression. By centring Andi's story, the film critiques the pervasive androcentric practices that continue to shape modern societies and perpetuate gender inequalities.

Theoretical frameworks from de Beauvoir, Butler, and hooks help contextualise these practices within the film. Simone de Beauvoir's concept of the "Other" is fundamental in her seminal work, *The Second Sex* (1949). In this book, de Beauvoir argues that women have historically been defined as the "Other" in relation to men. It means that men are considered the default or the norm, while women are seen as deviations from this norm. According to de Beauvoir, this dichotomy establishes a hierarchy where men are the essential subjects, and women are the inessential objects. This process of othering relegates women to a secondary status, marginalising their experiences and identities in a male-dominated society. The concept of the "Other" is vividly illustrated in the film *Dakhal* through the experiences of Andi, the protagonist. As a woman from the marginalised Kagmara tribe, Andi's identity and existence are continuously shaped and constrained by the male-dominated societal structures that view her as the "Other." In the film, Andi's marginalisation is multifaceted, stemming from her gender, class, and tribal identity. She is continually perceived and treated as an outsider by the dominant male figures in the village, such as the landowner and the Tehsildar. These men embody the patriarchal and androcentric norms that de Beauvoir critiques, where women are relegated to a subordinate status. For instance, the derogatory remarks and accusations directed at Andi, such as calling her a "gipsy bitch" and a "gipsy whore," are manifestations of this othering process. These labels not only dehumanise Andi but also reinforce her position as the "Other" in the eyes of the village's patriarchal society. The systemic efforts to undermine her credibility and rights further illustrate how the male-dominated society seeks to maintain its control by relegating women like Andi to the periphery. Despite being othered, Andi's character also embodies resistance and resilience against the societal norms that seek to define her. Her refusal to conform to traditional gender roles and her determination to provide for her children without male support challenge the oppressive structures that seek to marginalise her. When Andi asserts, "I know men. I am not afraid. The kids and I are fine" (*Dakhal*), she rejects the role of the submissive, dependent woman that the patriarchal society expects her to play. Andi's actions can be seen as an attempt to redefine herself beyond the constraints of the "Other" imposed by the male-dominated society. By resisting these constraints, she seeks to assert her identity and agency, challenging the essentialist definitions of gender that de Beauvoir critiques.

Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity, introduced in her seminal work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), posits that gender is not an inherent identity or a fixed trait but rather a set of repeated behaviours, actions, and

performances that society expects individuals to enact. Butler argues that these performances are governed by societal norms and expectations, which dictate appropriate gender behaviour. According to Butler, gender is constructed through these repeated acts, meaning it is performative rather than innate. This theory challenges the traditional binary understanding of gender, highlighting that gender identity is fluid and shaped by social interactions and cultural norms. In the film *Dakhla*, the concept of gender performativity is vividly illustrated through the character of Andi. As a single mother from the marginalised Kagmara tribe, Andi's experiences underscore the societal expectations placed on women and how these expectations shape their identities and behaviours. Andi's character challenges the traditional gender roles imposed on her by the patriarchal society in the village. According to the societal norms depicted in the film, women are expected to be submissive, dependent on men, and confined to domestic roles. However, Andi defies these expectations through her resilience, independence, and determination to provide for her children without male support. This defiance can be seen as a form of gender performativity, where Andi enacts her gender identity in ways that subvert and challenge patriarchal norms. The film also explores how the societal structure enforces gender performativity through systemic oppression. Andi's struggle against the Tehsildar and the landowner illustrates how the male-dominated power structures attempt to control and subjugate women. These societal pressures are part of the performative acts that reinforce gender norms. By challenging these acts and refusing to conform, Andi disrupts the performative cycle that sustains patriarchal control. Her resistance highlights the potential for subversion and change within the performative framework of gender.

Comparative Studies and Broader Implications

Research on Dalit women in India provides essential context for understanding the intersectional nature of oppression. Sharmila Rege's seminal work, *Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios* (2006), delves into the compounded discrimination faced by Dalit women, who suffer marginalisation not only based on their gender but also due to their caste. Rege emphasises that the experiences of Dalit women cannot be fully understood through a single lens of gender or caste alone. Their marginalisation is compounded by the intersection of these social categories, subjecting them to severe social and economic exclusion.

In the film *Dakhla*, the character of Andi can be contextualised within the framework provided by Rege's research. Andi, much like Dalit women, faces multifaceted oppression due to her gender, class, and tribal identity. This intersectional oppression mirrors the experiences of Dalit women, who are marginalised both because of their gender and their caste. Andi's struggles in the film highlight how intersecting social categories intensify her marginalisation. As a woman, Andi is subjected to verbal and physical abuse, exemplified by derogatory terms such as "gypsy bitch" and "gypsy whore," which aim to undermine her dignity and agency. Additionally, Andi belongs to the underprivileged class, which exacerbates her marginalisation due to a lack of access to basic amenities, education, and economic opportunities. Furthermore, as a member of the Kagmara tribe, Andi faces additional discrimination and dehumanisation, which further complicates her social standing and amplifies her exclusion from mainstream society.

The intersectional oppression faced by Andi in *Dakhal* parallels the experiences of Dalit women as described by Rege. For instance, Andi experiences severe social and economic exclusion, much like Dalit women, who are marginalised within their communities. The village's patriarchal and feudal structures exploit her vulnerability, reflecting the systemic discrimination highlighted in Rege's work. Andi's marginalisation is compounded by her intersecting identities, which is a core theme in Rege's analysis of Dalit women's experiences. The film portrays how these overlapping oppressions intensify Andi's struggles, demonstrating that single-axis analyses are insufficient for understanding the full scope of oppression.

By applying Rege's insights to the character of Andi in *Dakhal*, we gain a deeper understanding of how intersectional oppression operates in different cultural and social settings. Andi's experiences in the film vividly illustrate the compounded nature of marginalisation due to intersecting identities, emphasising the need for a nuanced and comprehensive approach to addressing social inequalities. This contextualisation underscores the universal relevance of intersectional analysis for understanding and combating systemic oppression in various contexts.

This intersectional oppression is mirrored in Andi's experiences, where her tribal identity exacerbates the marginalisation she faces as a woman and a member of the underprivileged class. Uma Narayan's exploration of third-world feminism is extensively discussed in her book *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism* (1997). Narayan critiques the Western-centric approach to feminism, which often fails to consider third-world countries' unique cultural, social, and political contexts. She argues that third-world feminism must address issues specific to these contexts, such as colonial histories, local traditions, and socioeconomic conditions. Narayan emphasises the need for a nuanced understanding of feminism sensitive to women's experiences and struggles in third-world countries rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all model. In the film *Dakhal*, the experiences of Andi, a woman from the marginalised Kagmara tribe, can be understood through the lens of third-world feminism explored by Narayan. Andi's struggles are deeply rooted in rural India's cultural and socioeconomic context. Her oppression is not only due to gender but also intricately linked to her class and tribal identity. Narayan's framework helps to contextualise how Andi's gender oppression is compounded by her social and economic status. As a single mother from an underprivileged and marginalised tribe, Andi faces multiple layers of discrimination that intersect to create a unique experience of oppression. The patriarchal and feudal structures in the village, represented by characters like the landowner and the Tehsildar, exploit her illiteracy and socioeconomic vulnerability. This exploitation is a direct reflection of the intersectional challenges highlighted by third-world feminism, where women's oppression is multifaceted and context-specific.

Nivedita Menon's critical analysis of feminist politics in India is articulated in her book *Seeing Like a Feminist* (2012). Menon examines the diverse and often conflicting strands within Indian feminism, highlighting how feminist politics in India must navigate complex issues of caste, class, religion, and region. She argues for a feminism that is inclusive and capable of addressing the specific needs and realities of Indian women. Menon critiques mainstream feminist movements for sometimes overlooking the intersecting oppressions that different groups of women face, advocating for a more intersectional and context-sensitive approach.

Menon's insights into Indian feminist politics are crucial for understanding the socio-political dynamics at play in *Dakhal*. Andi's character embodies the intersectional struggles that Menon discusses, where her gender oppression is inextricably linked to her caste and tribal identity. In *Dakhal*, the patriarchal and feudal structures perpetuate gender inequalities by exploiting the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of marginalised communities. The landowner and the Tehsildar manipulate the legal and social systems to maintain their dominance, reflecting the deep-rooted patriarchal hierarchies that Menon critiques. Andi's battle against these oppressive structures highlights the need for feminist politics that can address the specific challenges faced by women in rural India, including issues of land rights, economic exploitation, and social stigma.

Both Narayan and Menon advocate for localised and context-specific approaches to feminism, which are essential for addressing the unique forms of oppression women like Andi face. The film *Dakhal* illustrates the importance of these approaches by showing how Andi's resistance is shaped by her socio-cultural context. Her struggle is not only against gender-based oppression but also against the intersecting oppressions of caste and class. Andi's struggles as a member of the Kagmara tribe parallel the experiences of indigenous women in other parts of the world, highlighting the universal relevance of the intersectional analysis.

Policy Implications and Interventions

The broader implications of these findings suggest that policies and interventions aimed at addressing inequality in rural Indian contexts must be intersectional in nature. Efforts to promote gender equality must also consider the impacts of class, caste, and tribal affiliations. Programs that provide education and economic opportunities for women must be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of marginalised communities.

Uma Narayan's exploration of third-world feminism and Nivedita Menon's critical analysis of feminist politics in India emphasises the need for localised and context-specific approaches to addressing intersectional oppression (Narayan; Menon). Policies should aim to dismantle the patriarchal hierarchies that perpetuate gender inequalities and exploit the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of marginalised communities.

Programs that provide education and economic opportunities for women are crucial for empowering marginalised communities. However, these programs must be tailored to meet these communities' specific needs and challenges. For instance, educational initiatives should focus on general literacy and include elements that address the socioeconomic realities and cultural contexts of the women they aim to help. Similarly, economic programs should provide opportunities that are accessible and relevant to women from different socioeconomic backgrounds, including those from lower castes and tribal groups.

Policies should aim to dismantle the patriarchal hierarchies that perpetuate gender inequalities and exploit the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of marginalised communities. It involves challenging and changing the power structures that maintain these inequalities. For example, legal reforms should protect women's rights from lower castes and tribes, and economic policies should ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. Additionally, efforts should be made to raise awareness and change societal attitudes

perpetuating discrimination and marginalisation.

By incorporating intersectional analysis into policy-making, we can develop more effective strategies to combat the multifaceted nature of oppression faced by marginalised women in rural India. This approach ensures that these women's specific experiences and challenges are acknowledged and addressed, leading to more inclusive and equitable outcomes.

Empowerment and Resilience

Moreover, the resistance and resilience demonstrated by Andi offer valuable lessons for empowering marginalised women. Her determination to fight against patriarchal oppression, despite immense personal loss and adversity, underscores the importance of fostering agency and self-sufficiency among women. Empowerment initiatives should focus on building the capacities of women to advocate for their rights and challenge oppressive structures.

Deconstruction, in the context of feminist theory, refers to the process of dismantling and critically analysing established norms, ideologies, and power structures that perpetuate inequality and oppression. Andi's character exemplifies this process by challenging and transforming the existing social order. Her defiance in the face of verbal and physical attacks and her willingness to defend herself and her children highlights the importance of resilience and resistance in combating intersectional oppression.

Future Directions

Future research should consider comparative studies to explore the experiences of marginalised women in different rural contexts within India and globally. Investigating the impact of access to education and economic opportunities on the lives of marginalised women can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of various intervention strategies. Additionally, analysing existing policies and their implementation at local and national levels can identify gaps and areas for improvement in addressing intersectional oppression. Longitudinal studies tracking the lives of marginalised women over time would offer a deeper understanding of how intersectional oppression evolves and the long-term impacts of various forms of discrimination and empowerment initiatives.

Conclusion

The analysis of Andi's character in the film *Dakhal* through the lenses of intersectional feminism and androcentrism provides profound insights into the multifaceted nature of oppression faced by marginalised women in rural India. By employing Kimberlé Crenshaw's framework of intersectionality, this study highlights how various forms of discrimination, including gender, class, and tribal identity, intersect to compound the marginalisation and oppression of women like Andi. This intersectional approach is crucial for understanding the complexities of social inequalities and developing effective strategies to combat them.

The theoretical frameworks of Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Uma Narayan, and Nivedita Menon offer valuable perspectives that enrich our understanding of the systemic nature of gender oppression. De Beauvoir's concept of the "Other" and Butler's idea of gender performativity contextualise Andi's resistance to traditional gender roles and societal expectations. Hooks and Collins' exploration of the interconnectedness of race, gender, and class underscores the necessity of an intersectional approach to understanding oppression. Narayan's third-world feminism and Menon's critical analysis of feminist politics in India emphasise the importance of localised and context-specific strategies to address intersectional oppression.

The film *Dakhal* vividly portrays how patriarchal and androcentric norms perpetuate gender inequalities by exploiting the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of marginalised communities. Andi's character embodies resilience and defiance against these oppressive structures, highlighting the importance of empowerment and agency for marginalised women. Her story serves as a powerful example of how women can challenge and transform patriarchal systems through resistance and resilience.

The broader implications of these findings suggest that policies and interventions aimed at addressing inequality in rural Indian contexts must be intersectional in nature. Promoting gender equality must consider the overlapping impacts of class, caste, and tribal affiliations. Programs providing education and economic opportunities for women must be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of marginalised communities. By incorporating intersectional analysis into policy-making, more effective strategies can be developed to combat the multifaceted nature of oppression faced by marginalised women in rural India.

Future research should continue to explore the experiences of marginalised women in diverse contexts, examining the impact of access to education and economic opportunities on their lives. Comparative studies and longitudinal research can provide valuable insights into the evolution of intersectional oppression and the long-term impacts of various forms of discrimination and empowerment initiatives.

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