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## Research Article

# Cosmic Sex and the Role of Women in Practicing Celibacy (Brahmacharya) to Prevent Violence

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this film review is to investigate the nuanced portrayal of women who are practicing celibacy within the framework of the Indian Bengali film *Cosmic Sex*. The film explores the transformational role that women adopting celibacy as a spiritual practice might play, as well as the connection between celibacy and the prevention of violence. Through its investigation of cosmic consciousness and sexuality, the film offers a fresh viewpoint on the ways in which women, by adopting *Brahmacharya* (the concept of celibacy in Hinduism), contribute to the establishment of a harmonious social order. The cultural significance of the film is its ability to challenge conventions and promote a holistic approach to empowerment. In this approach, celibacy is portrayed as a tool for self-realization and a weapon for averting violence. The review sparkle illuminated on the junction of spirituality, female agency, and societal harmony within the film.

**Keywords:** Women's empowerment, Spiritual practice, Hindu celibacy, Violence prevention, *Cosmic Sex*, *Brahmacharya*.

### **Film Information**

Film Title: *Cosmic Sex*

Director: Amitabh Chakraborty

Year: 2013

Length: 97 minutes

Original Language: Bengali

Genre: Drama

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Cosmic Sex* is an Indian movie directed by Amitabh Chakraborty and featuring actors Rituporna Sen, Papia Ghoshal, Murari Mukherjee, Ayushman Mitra, Biplab Banerjee, and Riwik Jaiswal. Amitabh Chakraborty is credited with directing the first Bengali movie to include nude bodies. The film examines the relationship between sexuality and spirituality, as well as the concept of *Dehotatva* (Physiology), which refers to the act of worshiping via one's own body. Though this movie teaches realistic body and mind education, it is an adult movie that expands the world of ideas. On the other hand, there are some viewers who limit their enjoyment of the movie to sneaking in to watch sex or nude scenes. However, the movie *Cosmic Sex* has managed to entertain a diverse audience with its impeccable acting. The movie revolves around the story of Sadhana, Ruhul Fakir, and Kripa's celibacy. In the first scene of the movie, Kripa's mother is lying on the floor when Kripa, playing with a small toy car, wakes up when the umbilical cord passes over his mother's chest and passes through her vagina. After Kripa's mother dies, Kripa's father indulges in an affair with Sara, yet Kripa and his father always carry the memory of his mother. Kripa one day discusses celibacy with Sara while reading about it; later, when they are dancing together, he tries to kiss her out of sexual excitement. As his father screams, they get into a scuffle that results in his father falling to his death, and Kripa runs away from home. On the way, he meets a prostitute named Devi with whom he has sex. Jonaki, the transsexual pimp of the brothel, tries to kiss Kripa, causing Jonaki to fall from above and Kripa to run away from another death due to sexuality. Kripa then follows the character Sadhana from the banks of the Ganges to her home. She teaches him to practice celibacy by taking care of Kripa and seeking a cure for his troubles.

### **Practicing Celibacy: A History of Sacrifice**

*Brahmacharya Gandhi and his Women Associates*, a book written on celibacy by Giraj Kumar (Kumar 2006), encourage Kripa to learn about this subject. Kumar initially has doubts about the concepts of *Bapu* and *Brahmacharya* in the book and questions why the celibate Gandhi would sleep naked with women. The book mentions that Gandhi was very disappointed that, despite his strict celibacy, a few drops of his semen passed inside his partner's vagina. But not everyone has Gandhi's understanding of celibacy. Many people, including Sara in the film, think celibacy means abstaining from sex entirely. When Kripa is ostracized from society and took

refuge with Sadhana, he learns how Sadhana's celibacy education was gained. When Sadhana was young, her guru wanted her to marry Mansoor, but Sadhana did not agree to marry because her mind would not settle in the family and it would be a lot of trouble. The guru advised her to go to an *ashram* to seek *bhajan sadhana* (realization) under the tutelage of a guru. Sadhana does not agree to be under any guru other than Ruhul Baba because she desires him. Sadhana's guru Ruhul Baul Fakir practices body philosophy and believes that God resides within the body. According to the *fakir's* doctrine, humans are derived from the material that contained the universe at the time of creation, and thus humans can be said to be present from the original creation. But in the process of the continuous transformation of creation, humans forgot their original selves. Through union with the creator and original power within humans, they can again meet their forgotten being. The doctrine of *Dehattva* states that humans have a higher entity that is formless and a lower entity that is embodied. Humans are at once embodied and formless, surreptitious and explicit. Sexual desire is a big obstacle in the way of realization of our original humanity (Abramson and Pinkerton 2002). When worldly people fall into the trap of *kama* (lust), they cannot realize their original selves (Roopa 2022).

Among the six cholers of the human body<sup>1</sup>, *kama* is the main *ripu* (choler), as well as the main force of creation. *Kama*, being energy, cannot be destroyed but can be transformed. If sexual desire can be transformed into love, a person can reach the goal of realization. In this movie, *kama* is shown through nude scenes as Sadhana presses her nipples during intercourse with her guru and shouts, "Oh Baba!" which means father or teacher. The guru then advises Sadhana against falling into the trap of lust for the pleasures of the body. In *Deha Sadhana* (Organism Control), women are seen as teachers and men are women's disciples. With the help of women, men can achieve a higher realization, but men can become disoriented if women fall into lust. To avoid the trap of lust, one should practice breathing in through the right nostril and exhaling through the left nostril, because the biggest task in body practice is breath control. By practicing this, people can stop the decline of their bodily juices. Breath control is also adopted to purify the internal heat of the vagina by lowering the core temperature of the body but not allowing heat to come out with the breath. Through this practice, women will turn from *kamini* (sensual beings) into lovers. Moreover, they will meet God, the original lover within the body.

### Kripa's Celibacy Education and Violence Prevention

Although Kripa is interested in celibacy, he learns to more fully understand celibacy when he meets Sadhana. Kripa was born from his mother's womb and became a living being, but Sadhana teaches him celibacy to symbolically become a human being and to give birth to him again.

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<sup>1</sup> The six enemies of the mind, which are *alasya* (laziness), *kama* (desire or lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *mada* (ego), and *moha* (attachment). These six qualities are viewed in Hinduism as demerits that keep people from achieving *moksha*.



**Fig.1.** Kripa is practicing celibacy with Sadhana, but Kripa falls into lust and declines semen very quickly for physical excitement. Photo source: Upperstall

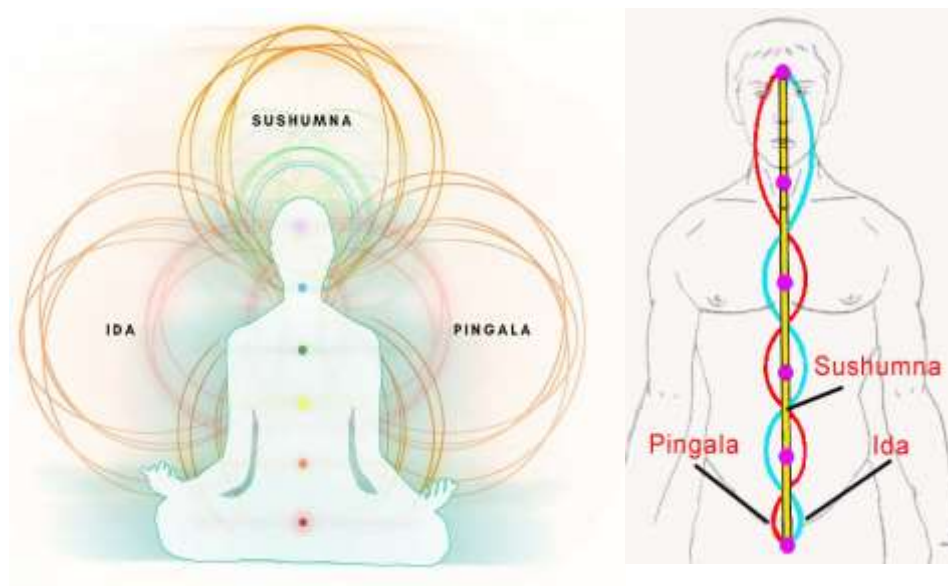
One day Kripa sees Sadhana naked and becomes lustful (Fig 1), but he cannot touch Sadhana due to shame. *Kama* arises first in the mind and then in the body. The film suggest that everyone is a slave to the desire of lust, and the chains of subjugation bind humans everywhere. Kripa learns that lust and desire are individually focused and thus can lead to murders, disappearances, and acts of violence. Kripa expresses his desire to escape from all this because he is tired of running away from violence and death. Then he was told the mystery of the *Dehattva* doctrine: *Brahmacharya* is the process of letting the body fall into lust and not bringing it out of the body (Ray 2022; Mahapatra et al. 2021; Lal 1999; Sivananda 1980).

Gandhi said that to understand and achieve non-violence, one needs to practice celibacy as they are both forms of self-control. *Brahmacharya* can never be achieved by abandoning the natural state of humankind (Haynes 2020; Bhar 2015; Bose 2014; Male 2001; Jordens 1998). Hindus believe that feminine energy wants to come in and masculine energy wants to come out. Heterosexual men have to learn celibacy by mastering the attractive power of women through the union of nature and man's body. If a man ejaculates a single drop, it means death—in other words, that the man has killed himself, which ushers in violence. There are 3 pathways (Fig 2) in female vaginas, namely *Ira*, *Pingala*, and *Sumshumna*<sup>2</sup>. In the songs of the *Baul* saints,

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<sup>2</sup> The female vagina contains three pathways named *Ira*, *Pingala*, and *Sushumna*, a conception based on ancient spiritual concepts. These terms originate from *yogic* philosophy and refer to energy channels within the subtle body, not the physical anatomy. *Ira*, *Pingala*, and *Sushumna* are believed to be channels (*nadis*) through which life force or *prana* flows, corresponding to different aspects of energy within the body. These concepts are symbolic and spiritual, with no direct correlation to physical anatomical structures in the vagina or reproductive system. The three paths are being compared to the river. On either side of the *Sushumna* River, there are two channels of energy that support a balanced physical and mental energy: *Ira* and *Pingala*. Running from the tailbone to the third eye or unconscious *chakra*, these channels carry masculine and feminine energy and are often stimulated through *pranayama* practice.

these three paths are compared to the rivers *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, and *Saraswati*. As rivers ebb and flow, women are also likened to *Ira* and *Pingala* (Fig 2). The duty of the male is to bring the semen down the *Ira* path during intercourse instead of the *Pingala* path. A *Sadhak* is the one who abandons these two paths and can lead the semen to the path of *Sumshumna*. Sadhana thus imparts all the teachings of celibacy to Kripa (Fig 1) and tests his celibacy by having sex with him.



**Fig.2.** The position of Ira, Pingala, and Sushamna in the human body. Source: Paramahansa Yogananda

There are various types of violence in this movie. For example, when Ruhul Fakir's wife died, the village people did not allow her to be buried in the village. With Sadhana's help, Ruhul Baba buries his wife. Later, Ruhul Baba issued an order that, after his death, his face should be placed towards his wife instead of facing west in the grave. It was his protest against the upper classes of society who do wrong and injustice to the poor in the society in the name of religion. The transsexual Jonaki forced Kripa to kiss and yearn for physical contact. Once, Sadhana and Kripa were going by boat. Suddenly came here Jonaki and her team for kidnapping Kripa, and then Kripa tried to protest them by a single part of wood. Sadhona told Jonaki why you are running for kidnapping Kripa to intercourse and take him in bed; he does not agree to go. In contrast, Sadhana was wound by a knife and her belly soppo by blood. Jonaki had also been wounded and taken to her hospital by her team, and Kripa took to Sadhana's on Boat. Then Sadhona had to lie down on Kripa's body on the boat and take three times her blood from her belly and emolliented over Kripa's body, pronouncing, showing and Indicating on body *Ira*, *Pingala*, and *Sushamna*, and then she died on the boat. To end violence and save Kripa, Sadhana dies by attacked with

a knife by Roton who was Jonaki's associate. Sadhana, as a woman in celibacy and life, has enriched and preserved Kripa's life with her body and life.

## CONCLUSION

In the circumstances of *Cosmic Sex*, an Indian Bengali film that investigates the complex dynamics of celibacy (*brahmacharya*) and its connection to the prevention of violence, the empowering role of women appears as a vital component in the process of societal development. In addition to highlighting the transformational power of self-control, the movie explores the spiritual and cosmic dimensions of sexuality. When it comes to supporting and practicing celibacy as a strategy to build unity and avert violence, women have a vital role. Women are frequently presented as custodians of tradition and catalysts for change. Through embracing celibacy, women are challenging the rules of society and contributing to a paradigm shift that regards sexuality not only as a physical act but also as a cosmic force. This transformation has the ability to reshape relationships, foster empathy, and eventually serve as a strong tool for reducing violence all at the same time.

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