HOWARD JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATIONS
https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2026.2746978

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Rape, Invisible Disability, and Post-Traumatic Growth: Unwinding the Trauma of the Teen Survivor in the Film *Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai*

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the nuanced representations of teen rape in the film *Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai* (trans. as Only One Man is Enough, Karki, 2023). Emphasizing the emotional and legal complexities inherent in rape narratives, the film under study offers insights into the trauma that the teen survivor endures and the subsequent trauma responses. Through the lens of rape trauma syndrome (RTS) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), this study analyses the impact of rape on a teenager's body and mind. The article examines the socio-legal hurdles that the survivor encounters, particularly the complexities involved in articulating her experiences during legal proceedings. The study also unwinds the survivor's post-traumatic growth, decoding the visual motifs.

KEYWORDS

Acquaintance rape; rape trauma syndrome; post-traumatic stress disorder; trauma response; post-traumatic growth

Introduction

Trauma, originating from the Greek term for wound, transcends physical injury to encompass a psychological state that "fragments consciousness and prevents direct linguistic representation" (Balaev, 2018, p. 363). This inherent unspeakability renders survivors of rape invisibly disabled, as their internal turmoil often defies conventional narrative structures in both social and legal domains. Within the adolescent experience, such trauma is profoundly psychosomatic, manifesting as a chronic sense of being unsafe that disrupts a survivor's cognitive functioning and social participation. "These symptoms encompass not only the core symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) but also disruptions in affect regulation (e.g., emotional hyperreactivity) self perception (e.g., feelings of worthlessness and shame) and interpersonal relationships (e.g., difficulties forming close bonds with others)," giving rise to "Complex PTSD (CPTSD)" (Kong et al., 2026, p. 1). These psychological consequences are significant when examined through cinematic representation, where the invisible nature of trauma is made visible through dialogues, silence, music, visual imagery, and narration. While mainstream Hindi cinema has historically used rape as a mere narrative tool for male

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