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Subversion of Conventional Gender Role in Krishna Dharabasi's *Radha*

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Letter of Approval

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Abstract

The present research is a study of Krishna Dharabasi's novel Radha from the perspective of feminism in which eight character, incident and plot are used in feministic way by showing female character's bravery, courage and seniority while battle. In a male dominated society, females are presented as weak, emotional, submissive and followers of men and men are presented as strong, bold, rational and warrior. But Dharabasi's novel challenges and subverts those traditional notions and presents female character: Radha, Shushila and other female characters as strong and bold who possess the so-called masculinity to take up challenges. In the same way, I have used gender insights envisioned by Judith Butler, Simon De Beauvoir as theoretical parameters to analyze the primary text. For this purpose, the primary text is interpreted as supporting a feminist reading. The feminist reading and comparative methodology are to analyze problems of this study. The situations of Nepali women have been presented in a conventional way. The culture and values are adopted by men are indirectly presented as myth. Here, I found character Radha and other female characters are not like mythical rather they are a brave, courageous. They are known as masculinity by their work rather than femininity by their physical body. Therefore, this research seems to be significant for studying past events and their regulations in the society.

Key Words: *Subversion, Femininity, Gender role, Convention, Allegory*

The present research is an inquiry into Krishna Dharabasi's novel *Radha*, where the situation of the characters, setting, and incidents in the novel parallels the situation of women in Nepal. Dharabasi presents the story by including the mythical characters, setting and incident of Mahabharata. In this novel, Dharabasi shows the scene of war where Radha, Shushila and other females involve in Kurukshetra; such scene and characteristics are there in the novel to subvert the conventional gender roles of women in general in the context of Nepal during the age of Maoist insurgency in Nepal.

The novel have more facts than fiction as it revolves around guerilla war where female involve in attacks, taxes collection, martyrdom and army integration and their struggle as a warrior of Maoists against contemporary government of Nepal for bringing some changes through a decade long war as Nepal faces such a crucial plight in real too. So, novel is subversion of the myth that moves from contemporary Nepal to the past to the period of Mahabharata because female sacrifice their desire, family and birth place for objectives they are carrying with for the betterment of all female in general. They leave their home for better nation, and most of the female lose their parents, lose themselves physically yet their psychology seems to go higher and stronger, for example, In Kurukshetra; Shushila is one of them, she is martyred for the state. Her participation in the battle proves that females can also do what males can. Finally she does what she is no more. Krishna Dharabasi not only presents this novel as a blend facts and fiction but also of political and feminist subject matter in Nepal and that comes through the portrayal of the Maoist insurgency.

The research explores how Krishna Dharabasi redefines the idea of femininity in the novel. It is also an award winning novel in the same year. In the beginning of the novel character Radha seems to be as an innocent lover of Krishna but later on at

the time of Kurukhetra she not only confines herself as a lover rather as a strong, courageous, brave, warrior, bold and rational lady.

My argument is that the conventional gender roles are constructions of patriarchy and they are constructed through fear of cultural norms, values, and regulation forces. But in the novel, female characters for instance, Radha; dismantles all rules and regulations of the society. She is a revolting character to bring positive change, better change as being a phenomenon of her time and this is how she happens to subvert existing patriarchy hierarchy.

The novel contains the characters, setting and incidents that are taken from the Hindu mythical story of *Mahabharata*. In most of the writings of Dharabasi, the protagonist is female for example Jhola, in *Radha* also the main character around whom the story moves. Radha, Krishna, Balaram, Shushila, Yashoda, Nanda Rai, Devaki, Vishakha, Rukmini, and many more characters, places like Braja, Hastinapur, Dwarika, Mathura, etc and events of Krishna's birth, all females are captivated by their parents when they spend the whole night in forest. Likewise participation of female; Radha in collecting money from people to send Kansa as well as Krishna to help in the battleshow that although our society is male dominant yet there are emergences of new women who are playing vital role in subverting it because of Maoist insurgency.

Similar things are presented in the novel *Radha*. In the novel we can find methods of collecting taxes from women and involve women in the warfare where Radha collected taxes from the people and sent to Kansa as well as Krishna to help in their battle. Her father used to collect earlier but after her father's death all responsibility comes upon her shoulder. She collects tax and sends to Krishna and others who plan for war against Kansa and live an underground life.

Dharabasi's novel *Jhola* presents a situation of women in Sati tradition of Nepal where young or old women married with old husband. When her husband dies, women are kept to be burned alive with the dead body of their husband as their wish or not, they were only followed the society's culture and norms. They never can thought about they can refused social values and regulations which is unbearable for women. Even they cannot come outside from the four walls of home. They were not done any job outside; they were not familiar with outdoor environment. Male were thought of catalyst way. But at the end of novel, woman revolt so-called Sati tradition, where women should die with their husband when husband die. For breaking Sati tradition women started escape from the grave of their husband. Gradually, women started to dismantle social norms and values. Similarly, in *Radha*, character Radha and other female character passed their life in this way, they are captivated in their own home because they lived jungle whole night with Krishna. Not only that the people thought that females only limited themselves within the house work. The very notion of traditional gender representation has been dismantled by Radha and her friend, who participated in the Kurukshetra and they won battle. Radha and her friends are not involved in the battlefield Radha collects taxes from Braja and sends money for helped to Kurukshetra for help. It is also proved that women can do everything when they get a chance. If they are not courageous, strong then how they can do everything for battle.

In the same way, many of traditional and contemporary fiction writers present women as a submissive, loyal in their writings. They try to show the dictatorship of masculinity over femininity by presenting women in inferior role. The contemporary society was really dominating nature by valorizing the role of men. Comparing with novel *Radha* Devkota's Muna Madan also show the female sacrifices without her

husband. In this way, the great writer like Laxmi Prasad Devkota in his renowned novel “Muna Madan” presents the female character Muna as very submissive, loyal, and emotional. In this novel, newly married bride Muna is compelled to live alone at home with her mother-in-law because of her husband leaving home to earn some money from Lhasa (a Tibetan state). During her loneliness at home without her husband, she is compelled to bear so many obstacles and difficulties by hoping for the return of her husband but she couldn't do any bold decision against her willingness. She passed many years for waiting her husband. Because she is a loyal traditional Hindu woman, she should follow the decision of her husband and the rules, regulations, and norms of society. She represents the society of that time where women were bound to be confined themselves in the male-made boundary. In contrast, some of the contemporary writers like Krishna Dharabasi in his famous novel “Radha” the role of the female character Radha is more revolutionary, modern, and radical compared to the traditional women. By fictionalizing the Hindu religion character Radha in a new way with giving her the new woman role in his text. The same kind of subversive role of women in the text, which is debunked in this modern fiction of Dharabasi and give the new role to woman as a modern woman.

Responding to the changing course of time through the fictional text by giving the suitable role to the woman is really the revolutionary work in the field of literature. Especially the treatment of the writers toward the woman characters in their literary texts have been changing. The concept of new women who catch the sentiments of the movement of the time depicted through the literary text challenge the traditional role of the women characters in the texts of that time. In the same way, I have used gender insights envisioned by Simon De Beauvoir, Judith Butler as theoretical parameters to analyze the primary text. This study argues that the struggle

between Nepali myth, society, culture and the women by male dominated society. It is also analyze the effects of male dominant society on Dwaper era to present days.

After knowing about the women are pushed by male dominated society then the character Radha started to reveal social values and formal tradition of the society.

In *Radha*, Krishna Dharabasi presents Radha's contemporary mythical character from Dwaper era. Character Radha cannot come out from the Palace to meet with friend and Krishna as well. And she could not dare regardless of the dignity of the entire society and family. As Radha said:

“In fact, this long separation with Krishna had started worrying me if we were not destined to meet again. I had no courage to run out of the Palace; neither could I soil my father's prestige and dignity. Sometimes it occurred to me that attending the night picnic was a serious crime I was guilty of; I should not have dared regardless of the dignity of the entire society and family” (*Radha* 64).

Which explores that how at that time's daughter (woman) cannot break their parents norms and values by their own sake, but they can sacrifice their own deep desire and wish, because they are guided by that way of culture. In the same sense most of the people thought that women are inferior to men at that time. In this sense the character Radha challenged the culture, myth, society which subordinated the women. Then, she started to think about women can do that can men. Then, she searched about how women can come out from male dominant culture.

In the same way, feminist ethics was initially developed by women who were or had been full-time homemakers or mothers and who felt excluded (and in some cases offended) by the women's movement's emphasis on dismantling barriers to professional careers for women. These women's moral worlds were less concerned

with rights and justice and instead revolved around care giving and maintaining networks of relationships. Inspired by Carol Gilligan's work on care ethics, early projects in feminist ethics shifted the focus of ethics from relations between citizens or strangers to close relationships rooted in emotional attachments, including friends, lovers, and mothers and children. By Margaret Walker, at a minimum, a feminist theory of agency must explain how it is possible for women in male dominated societies to live in ways that reflect their genuine needs and concerns, and it must explain how it is possible for women to develop critiques of sexist social and political institutions and to mount active resistance.

Firstly, Radha's mind is going towards women who are born for do something in their life rather than dominated by male, society, they have right to live according to their choice. They have right to know about themselves in their life who are they. In this way Radha said:

Mom, no one is born in the world to last forever. Once born, we must have the right to live and die as we wish. What am I to get from this life continuing to live? My words perhaps shocked my mother. She gawked at me for a while and said, "What are you saying, honey? Why are you talking like this?" (80).

It means she refers no one can last forever everybody should have a once born though why people talked about superior and inferior, men can do women can't. People (women and men) are created equal. Men thought that we are only brave, courageous and so on but they never thought women can do what men can which we can prove from the example of Shushila who lost her life in Kurukshetra. She killed in battle field by enemy.

Secondly, in the context of how the male dominant society was going in the primary text, which we can prove from the character on Nanda Rai who exchanged

his daughter Eknamsa with Bashudev's son Krishna. They (Nanda Rai and Bashudev) kept the secrets from the whole Braja and Mathura; even they are not said with their wife also. But later on all the secrets come out and knows everybody like wildfire. Yashoda also knows about it, at the very moment Nanda Rai said,

I was not free to weep like you, to lament like you. I had to act a man and appear bold. I have to remain unexposed, act patient. Imagine how difficult all this was for me! Just imagine the moment when I receive an outsider's child, placed him by your side, and with own hands gave away our baby! How did I bear it all that too at a time when I knew the rascal could kill her if he found her on the way! Hadn't I seen your face lying senseless at that moment? (154)

It is clear to see how the men thought they have to control their emotion and they followed society and culture at that time. If men can shown their suffered from weep they are felt to relief in their life. But culture is boundary between emotion and men. That's why men are treated as bold, strong by norms and values.

Thirdly, Dharabasi has presented the novel *Radha* different from the Hindu mythological story. Radha is mythological character who is also worshipped as goddess but Dharabasi in the novel has presented all the characters as a human for example Krishna, Radha, Balaram,, Nanda Rai, Bashudev, Devaki, Yashoda etc. and many more characters. Dharabasi presents the females as the main protagonist and strong, sensible, bold and revolutionary character as equal to male. Being a male writer Dharabasi is always in favor of females and their rights. So in the novel, Radha also does have the same characteristics. Many critics have examined their point of view upon the novel *Radha*. Critics like Dr. SanjeevUpreti, MaheshPaudyal, Baizenty Mishra and many other famous critics gave their vision towards the novel.

And, SanjeevUpreti states that the *Radha* novel is a rewriting of myth with the

experimental feature of fusion of myth with the political and traditional subject matter. Dharabasi has presented the female as powerful and, active catalyst which is different from other novels because it is written from Radha's point of view. Upreti has appreciated Dharabasi's Radha in making female characters powerful through the revision of myth. In Krishna KoLila maya Radha, he states that:

Radha is logical, self-mobilized, and revolutionary than the mythical Radha. The traditional myths and the stories and fictions that followed those traditional myths have not emphasized on the role of Radha. Dharabasi's Radha has proved itself a milestone to present Radha as different from the mythological Radha. (6)

This article by SanjeevUpreti will help to understand the gender theme of the novel *Radha*. As the article is related to Leela Lekhan, it does not seem to be a complete help to the problem of this research.

Mahesh Paudyal also translated this novel *Radha* from Nepali to English where he appreciates the work of Dharabasi in Dharabasi's Radha. A Critical Introduction by saying that it is a deconstructive novel more than a feminist novel. He states :

Dharabasi's *Radha* is a post modern de-reading of the popular Radha-Krishna myth described in the Mahabharata. Though the basic narrative string is borrowed, most of the work reflects the author's original rendering, tuning the work with contemporary realities of Nepal A thrilling work, the fiction forces us to revise our nonlinear and logocentric understanding of realities about people and circumstances and forces us to adopt multiple and dynamic lenses. A must model of easternmythopoetic literary tradition! (1)

Similarly, Mihir Shah in *TheUSReviewofBooks* also talks about Krishna

Dharabasi's *Radha* as a story written from her perspective which shows on the one hand male dominant society in which women were objects of pleasure and one man had many wives. Though character Radha revolt all these things. He states :

Dharabasi's alternative reading highlights a male-dominant society in which women were objects of pleasure and one man had 16,108 wives. For instance, Hinduism glorifies the raasleela, or the cosmic dance between Krishna and the many gopies; however, the reality is that one man was partaking in the night picnic dance clearly as the superior being. (1)

Additionally, critics like Mishra Baizenty seem to be in favor of Dharabasi because Dharabasi has presented the female character as strong in this modern period instead *Radha* is treated as a submissive character in the Hindu myth. Mishra Baizenty writes in a journal Bibechna:

Radha is the nearly born text of Dharabasi. He, through the novel, empowers Radha which also shows the victory of mankind over supernatural power.

Another thing interesting in *Radha* is that the novel is great in the portrayal of The depth of female's feelings through the beautiful use of psychoanalysis.

Another interesting thing is the novel of Dharabasi is the portrayal of the Martyrdom of the female character Shushila. (2)

Hence, it seems clear that despite being a male from a patriarchal society Dharabasi is dissatisfied with the view of the females by the society, the female character Shushila light upon the thought of society which always treats women as weak and fragile.

From the above critical study, it is clear that the novel has been analyzed from different perspectives. Some critics have criticized *Radha* as a feminist novel.

Similarly, the novel has also been analyzed feministic ways.

These critics have focused on *Radha* as a feminist novel, where the female

character is shown empowered and strong, wise and bold. Some compare the novel with the Hindu myth Mahabharata presenting the love of God Krishna and Radha and all the mythical characters. Some critic takes *Radha* is deconstructive novel, some as a revision of myth, where Radha is a self mobilized and revolutionary character. Some critics have even linked novel to war and its techniques. But showing a departure from the critics, who has not presented this novel as subversion way. This research paper wants to prove that the writer has used women are pushed into limitations by a male dominant society.

Dharabasi utilizes his literary creations in order to dismantle the prevailing patriarchal belief, thoughts and cultural practices. He not only demystifies the societal gender discourses and cultural ideologies but also looks at the positive sites of them. As he regards masculinity and femininity both as constructed phenomena, he precisely emphasizes the cultural social discourse about gender role to be revived in the right manner that is the human manner.

Krishna Dharabasi gives a new perspective to understand the notion of femininity and feminine in order to postulate the root cause of bias and inhuman gender practices. For him redefining the conventional novel constitutes a path to follow a modern gender discourse where there are no biases between male and female or between masculinity and femininity. Though Dharabasi wrote many books on the topic an imaginative retelling of a mythological narrative but here Dharabasi raised the issue of gender inequality which was an ancient to now, but I found here how character Radha destabilized the gender role of the society where women kept under surveillance of the male dominant society.

Finding Radha: The Quest for Love, makes for a sequel of sorts as it trains its lense on another female character from Indian mythology, Radha. This anthology,

according to the editors, is an attempt to address the apparent lacuna in scholarship devoted to Radha and “follows Radha’s perspective in texts of literary and cultural value” and presents reconstructions of her story (p xx). Lal states: “To speak of Krishna is to evoke a rooted tradition of religious and cultural ethnography, to speak of Radha is to enter into the interstices of such narratives” (xxviii). The central question propelling the ‘quest’ for Radha concerns her growth from obscurity to inseparable union with Krishna over the centuries, despite the explicitly transgressive, adulterous and incestuous elements of her erotic attachment to Krishna. Some philosophical questions of identity related to Radha-Krishna arise who is the lover and who the beloved; which is the divine love; and whether Radha has an identity of her own, outside Krishna. Gokhale asserts that Radha “was born of the need to establish a direct emotional and mystical relationship, a sensual, tactile, immersive connect, with the sacred” (xiv). Maghnad Desai later suggests that despite innumerable gopis and wives, the absence of a single, privileged consort was felt as a lack in a god of Krishna’s stature, which could only be addressed through the all-absorbing devotion of Radha, even though their union is short-lived.

The collection begins with Devdutt Pattanaik’s short essay that provides a refrain for later ones- it traces the absence/presence of Radha, in the Hindu religious and literary traditions from the *Bhagvata Purana* to Jaideva’s *Gita Govinda* and beyond, highlighting the symbolic value of the Radha-Krishna union as the longing of the “universal soul” for “the supreme divine being”, seeking freedom from worldly responsibilities. Thus, many critics review on Radha and her activities in the *Bhagavat Puran* and the other religious book.

In such a way that, the arguments put by like Judith Butler will guide in her work is not discriminated rather her work gives equally value on their gender role and

woman term. Butler states that it is difficult to show the violence and determination in the structure of gender. She explains this with two acceptances of society. Firstly, gender is the shape of existing of sexualities. Secondly, this concept is a cultural norm that is not possible to be changed easily. It wanted to refer gender role is not ordinary thing which never can change easily because it is guided by social and cultural norms and values. Though, Butler brings some references to prove the gender role can be changed by their brave, positive thought which has been causative factor for the new women. The binary opposition will be the primary tool for analyzing the narratives of the primary text.

Defining gender study, Gudith Butler's, "Gender study is how the society understands to male and female by their born, work". Representation of new women in Krishna Dharabasi's *Radha* is strong example of the novelist challenging traditional mores by presenting mythical texts in a different light. Inspired by Judith Butler's *Theory of Gender Trouble*, she had completely changed the character of Radha as we come to know them. VedVyas and the Mahabharata's Radha is minor character, whose only purpose seems to be Krishna's plaything and got his love only. But Dharabasi's Radha is brave, dignified and can also been as revolutionary and can do many things by her. She keeps focusing on the importance of women, which too can be seen as a challenge to formal traditions.

Similarly, some historical references also included in the novel *Radha*. In, Nepal the Maoists started a guerrilla war against the state, then the state began searching for and killing them. The policy of 'siege and killing' was started by the state. "In the process of this 'encircle and kill' policy the police operation has in many places killed more innocent civilians than the guerillas, a fact noted by several human rights organizations including the Amnesty International" (2). The same thing in the

novel “Shusila’s squad could not penetrate one of the barricades. They fought for a long, long time and finally attained martyrdom” (215), and then “the couple who sheltered them and their children too was all killed” (226) the martyrdom process of the Maiost has been allegorically mentioned.

As stated earlier, this study draws theoretical concepts from Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of Identity*. Femininity generally means the quality of being female or womanliness. This definition is simply in the sense that being feminine means being a woman, no matter how you choose to express or embrace this quality. Feminine means also being pretty, sensitive and gentle as well as many other stereotypical traits, both physical and emotional. But now there are understandings that femininity should no longer be understood as those traits that are deviated from masculinity; on the contrary, femininity should be understood as a way of being that needs no point of reference except itself.

In *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler shows the distinction between sex and gender where sex as a natural given category and gender as an acquired cultural-social category. Butler argues that sex also is a socially constructed category which stems out of social and cultural practices and in the context of a discourse that has a history and its own social and political dynamics. She argues that gender, sex and self is the effects of publicly regulated performance. Gender is not expressed but constituted through action. She explores the relationship between power and categories of sex and gender. She calls for people to disturb the categories of gender through performance. Dharabasi, just like Butler who are picked up the socio-cultural differentiates by their work and responsibility. Dharabasi is showing female strongest and they also can raised question towards discrimination. That’s why writing as a homogeneous landscape that simply serves specific consciousness raising goals that is the new sets

of gender and social values groundings on humanity and humanism.

As Butler sees, sexuality and gender roles are simply discursively constructed. She argued, “‘gender’ is constructive, rather than a core authentic, innate subjectively” (218). According to her the gender and sexual orientation are just socially, culturally constituted by the patriarchal power. She further argues that subjectivity and performativity begins here because the gender body utilizes semiotic and material signs (“words, acts gestures and desire”) to similarly create what appears to be an interiority, which she calls “the effect of an internal core or substance”. This in turn becomes a new prison within which human subjects are trapped .

For Butler, all human become subjects if the society prohibits to a ‘false stabilization of gender’. Gender is not absolute stabilization rather it is the matter of performance. False stabilization of gender needs to be re-performed by its “acts”, not by some essentiality. Those acts need to be performed within the public domain, and take on social and political significance. Moreover, Butler argues that “all of the norms produced by gender performances on the material surface of the body/ society are ultimately arbitrary, constructed, and ‘Phantasmatic’, thus subject to deformation, breakdown and change” (582). According to her, gender is not absolute construction; it is just the matter of performance. It means that gender issue, masculinity and femininity are not the inborn quality rather it is the construction by the society.

In such a way that, war is even waged under the leadership of Shusila, she is female character of Radha. She is also dismantled male dominant society as well. “She miraculously gained excellences in the training. She learned the art of sword fighting, archery, jumping, and running faster than her male counterparts. By didn’t of her skills, she became the commander of her squad” (214), and “Shusila and her friends to have joined our training camp” (177). This evidences show that women are

also involved in Krishna's war. Shusila considered that war a great sacrifice. She says, she got involved war to wash away her sins, while other women seem to be on the battlefield, unable to bear the repression of Kansa. Just as capable women in the war were given the leadership of the front.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* offers the point of view of gender role as enacted and it questions over the fixity of gender identity. She analyzes, Gender can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible" (180). Gender can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of primary and stable identity. In patriarchy, historians were defined male as rational, bold and strong. They treated woman to fit to carry a child. But Dharabasi shows adventures and revolutionary woman in "*Radha*". They not only physically rather are mentally increasing their power to walk with male. The character Radha starts to think why her society could not allow going outdoor from home. Why male are superior to female. Then she cannot stop herself to explore her idea. And she finally finds out the women's capacity to do anything with men.

Gender troubles are in our mind, home, society and so on. In our society even now our grandparents cannot break the ancient values, rules and regulations then how Dwaper era's people can break their cultural values. In this way, gender trouble is a quite difficult thing to change and reformed it directly though they try continuously because they thought that men are our lords, without them female cannot run and they presented as defenders. Radha and her mother discuss in this case. Radha's mother states:

We are doomed to be insecure from men and again, doomed to be defended by men themselves! Even for our own security, we always crave for a strong,

robust, heroic and courageous man with us. We make him defend us from others and license him to consume us as much as he wants. That's not true, Radha. Men are our lords. Without them, the world cannot run. Our husbands are our defenders too. It's wrong for you to bear such negative thoughts against men. (259)

Here Radha's mother who grown up in the ancient culture she never wants change their condition nor get the chance to other. They always want to live emotional, inferior, innocent and uneducated life. In that way she teaches to Radha but Radha cannot tolerate all these things and she wants to bring change into socio cultural values. Radha raised the questions and argues to her mother and she opines:

What's wrong in that, Mother? A single man exploits a number of women. Should a husband stick to one woman? A woman is required to bestow all her loyalties upon a single man, but the same doesn't apply to men. Is not this practice the men themselves made?" Again she said, I was feeling that for unknown reasons, I was growing more and more rebellious against the menfolk. "Krishna made all the girls of Braja dance and play with him. He loves us and receives our love. For his sake, we also endured such a big case of embarrassment. But look, he ruthlessly forgot all of us today. He has grown so busy that he cannot visit Braja even once. We, his lovers, stand waiting for his return. As for him, he's dancing elsewhere. Where's our dignity? (259-60)

Radha is gone totally against male dominant society where women taken as non-living thing and cannot give valuable sacrifices in the society. She raised question upon our social norms and values where women are beaten every mistakes by male and their rules. She also accused to Krishna because he has many girlfriend and he easily forget their love and emotions. He also rejects to the women's feeling name of

too busy, Radha wants to search her dignity. Not only her dignity rather all women's dignity she wanted to perceive.

According to Simon De Beauvoir, she proceeds to offer her own existentialist overview of women's history, an account that challenges certain male-generated myths about women. From earliest nomadic times, women have suffered the "bondage of reproduction," a function which must be viewed as natural and not as comprising a deliberate project through which she might affirm her existence (57). And yet, a major factor retarding her freedom was the continued existence of the family, sanctioned by the various ideologies-political and religious- which aimed to detain her in her traditional roles. Beauvoir regards the present as a period of transition, in which woman's desire for transcendence is still constrained by her perpetuated subjugation and the defining of her choices by men (28). De Beauvoire is confident that women will arrive at "complete economic and social equality, which will bring about an inner metamorphosis" (686). And both man and woman will exist both for self and for the other: "mutually recognizing each other as subject each will remain for the other *another*" (688). In this sense, the new woman emerged as economically independent which we can see in Radha character that collected taxes and politically active in the society. So, far as my knowledge is concerned, I have not found any research to fill the gap on the new woman's perspective in the *Radha*. That's why I choose this issue to fill the gap and point of departure.

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir argued that some men in philosophy managed the bad faith project of both ignoring their own sex-situatedness and yet describing women as the Other and men as the self. Because men in philosophy take themselves to be pragmatically human and take it upon themselves to characterize the nature of womankind as different from men, Beauvoir said that men socially construct woman

as anOther. Famously, Beauvoir said, “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman,” that is, one may be born a human female, but “the figure that the human female takes on the society,” that of a “woman,” results from ‘the mediation of another (that) can constitute an individual as an Other’ (329)). Beauvoir described a woman who would transcend this situation “as hesitating between the role of object, of Other that is proposed to her, and her claim for freedom” (84), that is her freedom to assert her own subjectivity, to make her own choices as to who she is, especially when she is not defined in relation to men. Beauvoire’s work profoundly shaped the emergence of feminist ethics as lacking morally worthy rational capacities. Instead, by the middle of the twentieth century, some influential philosophers in Europe and the Americas had moved toward approaches that often led to describing both gender and ethics as irrelevant to philosophical discourse .

Mary Daly argues in *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* that women were traditionally defined throughout intellectual history as being subversive of rationality, impartiality, and morality as traditionally conceived. Daly argues that women ought to embrace, as essential to women’s natures and good, some of the very qualities that she says men have ascribed to women as essential to women’s natures and bad. Daly suggests valuing both women’s capacities for child bearing and birth and women’s emotionality.

Henrik Ibsen argues that the term new woman was the term used at the end of the nineteenth century to describe women who were pushing against the limits which society imposed on women. Today she might be called a liberate women or feminist.

The New Woman typically values self fulfillment and independence rather than the stereotypically feminine ideal of self-sacrifice; believes in legal and sexual equality; often remains single because of the difficulty of combining such equality

with marriage; is more open about her sexuality than the 'Old Woman'; is well-educated and reads a great deal; has a job; is athletic or otherwise physically vigorous and, accordingly, prefers comfortable clothes (sometimes male attire) to traditional female garb.

Ibsen supported greater freedom for women and expressed his belief in his plays. It means even male also supported to do something bring the change of conventional gender roles. In such a way, we can see in the Radha character on the Nepali novel *Radha*. Radha moves here and there for visits and see the condition of women in all regions and rescuing them by different ways.

At the same time male are uncompleted without female, remembered to Radha Krishna made RadhaBhavan in Mathura where Krishna sees many Radha's similar natural beauty in RadhaBhavan. When Krishna gets free then he goes into nature and he talks with their natural things which event was in Braja and environment. Krishna regrets with Radha because Radha waited many years for Krishna. He states:

As soon as I saw the sight, I remembered the years-old event in Braja in which I had troubled you all. I'm telling you the truth, Radha. I lost the sense of temporal difference that moment. Among the beauties there, all I saw was you, so I drew myself near the pile of their clothes and stood, staring as they dove into the water. For quite a long time, they did not notice my presence, but when they did, they were so embarrassed that they remained drowned in the pond as though they were dissolved in the water. (351)

It is showing the male nature also has regret towards neglecting thing which always awaken them and passed their entire life with the remembrance. In this way Krishna also live with the past memory of Radha and her love sacrifice. How couple of dove cannot survive when they left by each other at the same way Krishna also

thirst for Radha's love and her memory.

The Twentieth-Century's influence on women's right in the U. S., the centrality of sex and gender issues in public ethics reached a high-water mark during the Progressive Era. Yet throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, as economic difficulties, military conflicts, women's groups and feminist activists in many countries would advanced, with some success, feminist and arguments for workplace, professional, electoral, and educational access, for the liberalization of contraception, marriage, and divorce laws, and against militarism.

Dharabasi, in *Radha*, examines traditional patriarchal notion of desire and intention in the modern society. His most of novel reflecting women power in any sort of work in the society. "The largest part of the novel is a diary entry by Radha, Krishna's lifelong sweetheart, and it presents Krishna's story from her perspective. From the realm of God, Krishna is brought down to the realm of a human male, and by that very token, all his mortal weaknesses as a man are exposed" (3).

The objective of this research is to analyze the effects of male dominant society on that Dwaper era to present days. Women or girl are always in captivated by either in their parents or their cultural values. In such a way that, "There was a prophecy that Kansa, the demon king of Mathura, would be killed by a male child born to Devaki, his own sister. So Kansa had jailed Devaki and her husband, Bashudev, so that he would be able to grab and eliminate any child the moment it is born to Devaki. This happens with the first seven kids of the couple. Krishna would be eight child; so they want to save him at all cost. Krishna grows in Braja as Nanda's son. Radha, in her diary, attacks this act, flaying it as an act of belittling a girl child and offering her to be killed merely to save Krishna, the male child" (5). The presented statement is showing that in the Dwaper era the society also given value to

male, in such a way that Krishna was exchanged with Eknamsa (female). Male was more powerful than female that's why Krishna was engaged first in Kurukshetra.

Then, "Strewn with such feministic entries, the novel criticizes every initiative taken to groom and educate Krishna for kingship and heroism. Krishna, as revealed by Radha's diary entry, appears licensed to be willful, who could get any of his wishes fulfilled. His faith in love with Radha too is flayed on the grounds that he maintains relations with many concubines and marries eight queens one after another, barring Radha, whose claim for love is unconditional. Radha remains unmarried all her life, waiting for Krishna to come in person and take her to Dwarika, where he has established his new capital, but this does not happen. Krishna pretends to be 'too busy' in his state affairs and has no time to come back to Radha. Radha chooses to be an ascetic and moves from place to place, preaching lessons of love, celibacy, and spiritualism" (*Radha*6). On the one hand, it reflects Krishna as the male superiority, decision making power where Radha as emotional, submissive character who remains unmarried all her life waiting for Krishna. On the other hand, it shows the female power in decision making, Radha unmarried all her life and she chooses to be an ascetic and moves from one place to another. She proved that women can remain all their life without marriage and they also can world visit lonely. Here Krishna is 'too busy' refers that the male nature cannot know about female love and he gave more priority to state rather his life Radha. Even Radha collects taxes and send him innocently.

After "Back in Braja, Radha collects taxes and fetches it to Kansa merely to abide by the rules but sends a major portion of the same to Krishna to assist his war preparations. Radha herself walks out to Mathura and meets Kansa; she also meets Minister Akroor and Eknamsa, the girl with whom Krishna was exchanged in

infancy. Radha is suddenly aware of the violence that had been meted out to Eknamsa merely to save Krishna for the fact that he was a male child”(7). Radha collected taxes and send to Krishna and Kansa and she walks out to Mathura and meets with Minister Akroor. It shows her legs are going towards awareness and talking power, she also can revolt anything in the society.Radha moves place to place for rescuing women who wanted to come out from the house and cultural boundaries.Radha also meets with widowed women and their condition in the society too.

Radha meets with Kunti in her travel, “Kunti andRadha engage in a passionate discussion about women’s plight and non-reliable nature of the menfolk; this further provokes Radha to loathe men, including Krishna, and strengthen her determination to be a celibate and a recluse.Kunti tells the circumstances under which she conceived before marriage and threw her firstborn baby Karna into the river; she tells how she later had to compromise her life with an impotent prince Pandu, who could never impregnate her but accused her of being barren instead. Later, under immense pressure to beget sons, she had to involve in extramarital sexual relations with Dharma,Vayu, and Indra, the fathers of her sons, Yudhishthir, Bhim, and Arjun, respectively” (10). Here, it showing discrimination was in that period and now it remaining in different ways. At that time women were suffered in the name of barren, cannot beget son and they should share bed with another person to beget son respectively. At the same time women forget their prestige rather they are going to save their husband’s masculinity because of male barren. On the other hand there was eight husband of one wife, this is not for her choice rather the society, culture and social values accepted it and forcefully pushed in it. The given paragraph explored before marriage Kunti was impregnate but Karna threw her firstborn baby into the

river, how cruelty was there in their mind and norms. They never thought women also a human being, have emotion, desire and have to right for their body also. Women only taken as innocent thing doll and bought from market which never can fight against their right.

Thoroughly, “Moving out of Hastinapur, Radha moves north with Pilli. They accompany the Tibetan traders moving north and reach the Himalayas, where they come to see the Tibetan people’s social life and gender equation. They too are polygynous, ordained by the practice that the wife of the eldest brother is, by default, the wife of all his younger brothers as well” (11). It’s all about the northern part of Himalayas where one female married with eldest brother and wife passed their life with many husband, can’t have their personal life. Character Radha sees all dominant nature of the society and she thinks what happening in this world with women.

In novel, the story inscribed on the plates turns out to be Radha’s autobiography. It begins with the *raslil* that takes place at night in the forest of Braja. Radha relates how Krishna took her and other *gopies* (female cowherds) out into the forest to dance with him all night, how she feared competition for his love, and how he took her aside into the dark for a while and assured her that she was his first and only love. Alan Entwistle points out that in the *Bhagavatapurana*, the primary source for the story of Krishna and Radha, Radha “has no independent function outside of her relationship with Krishna” . For an inventive novelist, this represents an opportunity to weave a story of his own. Once Dharabasi has dealt with Radha’s early dalliances with Krishna in Braj, for which he must defer to the standard narrative, she becomes an empty canvas onto which he can paint anything he wants. His account remains faithful to the standard popular versions of Krishna’s adventures and exploits. Unlike them, however, it foregrounds Krishna’s repeated betrayals of Radha,

portraying her as a strong and independent woman who is wronged by Krishna but who goes on, undeterred, to forge her own destiny.

In Dharabasi's novel, Krishna's godliness is played down and his miraculous deeds and celestial origins are presented in the form of beliefs, not as absolute truths. While in the *Bhagavatapurana* Krishna's behavior is not governed by the rules applicable to ordinary people, in this novel the local people, and particularly the parents of gopis, are outraged by his transgressions. Radha, who is the daughter of the Pradhan of Braja, is forbidden from seeing him ever again, but Krishna continues to visit her in disguise.

After the Rishi Garga reveals Krishna's true identity to him and tells him that Kansa now plans to have him killed, Krishna tells Radha that he and his brother Balaram must go away. Radha pleads with her mother to help her to maintain her relationship with Krishna. Her mother cannot do so, but we learn from her response to Radha's pleas that there was also a time in her own life when she yearned for freedom to take her own decisions:

She got up abruptly and walked away. Today I saw a strange conflict in my mother. She seemed to have closely remembered some old past of her own. I saw her as if she was merely doing her duty by her present life but had left her own life somewhere in the dark when she came here. I sensed that although she was the wife of my father Vrishabhanu, she was someone else's darling.

Meanwhile, Krishna and Balaram prepare for war, setting up 'training centres' (*talim Kendra*) for the young men and women they recruit to fight against the corrupt and oppressive Kansa. The combatants in the training camps include Radha's erstwhile friend Sushila, and Radha becomes jealous of her because of her closeness to Krishna. But they meet and are reconciled; Sushila's dedication to the struggle and willingness

to sacrifice herself are a form of repentance for having tried to usurp Radha's rightful place as Krishna's favorite gopi. After their conversation Radha reflects, "How did we suddenly become so old and come to be doing such big things?" (*Radha* 115), and when Shushila is killed in battle Radha gives arousing speech to her mourners:

We must be able to decide how we look at life, how we will use life. Should we born, live for a time like an ordinary creature and then just die and disappear, or should we die while broadcasting a great message of what it means to be born on this earth? ...Each one of must be involved in the war that is going on in Mathura, assisting in whatever way we can, whether with our minds or our wealth. Braj must not weep over this war. A daughter of Braj has sacrificed herself in such a magnificent war, why should we cry? We should be proud. (*Radha*122)

Krishna and Balaram are unable to defeat Kansa's forces in open warfare and resort to guerrilla tactics. Eventually they infiltrate his bow ceremony, where Krishna breaks the bow and puts Kansa to death. Krishna now builds a new capital at Dwarika, but Radha stubbornly refuses to go to join him there, insisting that she will not do so until he has returned to visit and thank the actions, saying:

We are forced to stand in one place just like a tree, suffering the gales and storms, being pruned and trimmed, having our branches lopped, bearing fruit, breaking into pieces. What we have that is firmest and most secure is the ground that we have that we stand on, our society. If we take even one step away from it, how insecure that step is. (*Radha*148)

Radha decides not to travel to Dwarika but instead takes a vow of renunciation and undertakes a long pilgrimage to the holy places of India. After many months she is persuaded to visit Dwarika at last, and there Krishna installs her in the palace he has

created for her. Radha forgives Krishna but says that she cannot remain with him because his effect upon her to make her forget her mind. She explains that she is going to resume her travels:

Throughout this journey I am going to go from place to place and teach love and non-violence. I am going to oppose the excesses committed against women and teach women's awakening and consciousness. I am going to oppose this tradition in which men take women only as commodities for their consumption and women accept themselves accordingly. Krishna, if it wasn't for this tradition how would you have collected so many wives?' (*Radha* 227-228)

Radha then takes her leave of her mother, declaring that she does not believe in heaven, Ishvar, or the gods, and that they will never meet again (228-29). Her story ends as she departs for the Kurukshetra battlefield, where she hopes to be reunited at last with Krishna. At the end of the book, we learn that the sadhu who has read Radha's story for us is none other than Ashvathama, condemned by Krishna to wander the earth for eternity in atonement for his sins.

Thus, the author combines the contemporary female struggle with society and cultural values for their right. They wanted to equity rather than equality in the male dominant society. Dharabasi portrays character Radha as bold, wild minded, quick decision maker, major character and so on. Popular novelist Dharabasi has said that the current situation of women and dismantle female domination of the society should be understood after reading the novel. He has mentioned that since the novel is shown a social biased nature to women in every work either their sex or by gender. Dharabasi said that the novel describes the then environment of the society. He mentioned that since the novel is traditional notion of truth making and encourages a

new history of women. Therefore, Dharabasi seems to have feminism created this novel to show female encourage in the male dominant society and context as well. While reading novel, one does not have a sense of the time of writing novel, but later looking at it, it seems that the character Radha wanted to bring change in values, assumptions by her various bold decision and her work. Before 1977BS there was Sati Tradition in Nepal where women should die with their husband in burning fire though they alive, young. Gradually, after 1977BS this tradition is totally banned in Nepal as well as culture. The women are dominated in the society at that time, at the same way Dharabasi's Radha also shows women's biased and inferior status in male dominant culture. Taking out from this wave Dharabasi picked up the myth Mahabharata's story to convey message indirectly.

Dharabasi, through presentation of character like Radha, Shusila and other female character, proves that the conventional notion of gender representation is subverted because of women's capability of involving in war, or even helps war by collecting taxes, excellent training, taking quick decision and having the ability to revolt social norms and values. Male characters realized absence of women in any work. While females who are exposed to various challenges and sacrifices show their courage and bold as revolutionary women. The analysis of *Radha* concludes that the physical body of human being is unable to determine gender issues. People can be male or female by their behavior rather than just gender roles. Gender role can change according to situation. It is not a matter of inborn quality rather it is a product of society and the society has given the name of male and female. Here, Dharabasi gives role to characters beyond the social expectation. If women get chance to perform then that society can call her masculine. Women just need courage and inspiration from family, society and gender. Then they can do what men can. In *Radha*, character

Radha and Shusila are presented as courageous, superior, bold and strong as role of traditional males. In the eyes of the society, Radha is female but from her insides, she can perform the role of men. When her father pass away, she takes responsibilities of all Braja state as Pancha. She brilliantly takes care of state and sends money for battle field. By tolerating everything in the society she gets to know more what women should do and what they can. Situations make her active in work like Radha, Shusila, Pilli (widow) challenge conventional society. After leaving Braja, Radha struggles but she does not lose her courage. She struggles in her life by showing her masculine attributes in female body. She visits everywhere she wants to go and she gets to know about the condition of women and social treats on them in the name of assumption. At the time of Maoist Insurgency many innocent people died from government as well as from Maoist. They fought each other for their demand and nationalism but they were martyred for the nation and couldn't change social traditions. Many women were involved in the battle field. Thus, we can say that they were courageous and brave female women on their work front. They proved their masculinity in their female body.

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