

Tribhuvan University

Construction of Womanhood in *Seto Dharti* and *Yogmaya*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
through the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English

By

Samsher Bahadur Rawal

TU Reg.No 6-2-519-67-2007

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

August 2021

## Approval Letter

This dissertation entitled "Construction of Womanhood in *Seto Dharti* and *Yogmaya*" Submitted to the Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Samsher Bahadur Rawal in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.Phil. in English, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Dr. Komal Phuyal

Internal Examiner

---

Prof. Krishna Chandra Sharma, PhD.

External Examiner

---

Prof. Jib Lal Sapkota, PhD

Head of the Department

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgements**

I have no words to convey my feeling of gratitude to Dr. Komal Phuyal, lecturer at Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, without his scholarly vision and continuous encouragement during the thesis work, this research would never take this present shape.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Jiblal Sapkota, chief of Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University for giving me permission to write this thesis. Likewise I would like to thank external supervisor Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma for his valuable suggestions, comments on the dissertation. I extended my gratitude to all my teachers, friends who have directly or indirectly helped me in the completion of this research.

This thesis can never take this present shape in the absence of my mother Kunti Rawal who provides her precious encouragement and support in my every step in the course of study. My thanks go to all my family members who provide their support in the course of the study.

Lastly, my gratitude goes to those authors and researchers whose works have been consulted in preparation of this thesis.

## Abstract

Amar Neupane's *Seto Dharti* (2012) and Neelam Karki Niharika's *Yogmaya* (2018) build the two complementary versions of social reality of the then contemporary Nepali society. The novels depict how the patriarchal social system has become an obstacle in the path of women's progress. Both the novels portray the pain and suffering of the women in Nepali society, by exposing certain events from history and contemporary Nepali society. The suffering of female characters becomes the main subject matter in both the novels. The women confront the patriarchal structure, become the victims of it, resist it, and finally pose a challenge through spiritual means. Similarly, there are functional women who are means of the larger social-political structure. The women are forced to adopt the dominant patriarchal ideology. They appear as domestic workers and the machine to bear children. This study has employed feminism as frame of analysis for the novels to examine the condition of women. Key concepts of gender and marginality of women from Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, Judith Butler, and other relevant theorists are used to interpret the texts in both the novels. Contemporary Nepali women basically appear in three roles: social conformist, victims, and resisters. Those who pursue change in society take the form of rebel in both the texts. In fact, the study explores the role of rebels in the making of contemporary self of women in Nepal.

Keywords: Discrimination, Social Conformism, Victims, Patriarchy, Gender, Rebel, Resistance.

## Table of Contents

	Page No
Chapter I Introduction	1-4
Chapter II Woman, Gender, and Nepali Novels	5-23
Chapter III Woman's Self in Nepali Novels	24-70
Chapter IV Construction of Women in Contemporary Nepali Novels	71-73
Works cited	

## Chapter I. Introduction

The study examines the ways of Amar Neupane's *Seto Dharti* (2012) and Neelam Karki Niharika's *Yogmaya* (2018) explore the condition of the women in the contemporary Nepali literary imagination. In both of the novels, the protagonists are female characters. This study explores the issues related to the experience of the protagonist and other characters' desire for freedom, emancipation of self-identity, autonomy and courage, and examines resistance of the women against the social oppression. They struggle from their parental home to society for equal rights and liberty, thereby challenging the patriarchal values. They go against discrimination between men and women, which exist through social norms and values in the society. The novels show how women are excluded and dominated by patriarchy and how they seek out their ways to rights and freedom in the existing social conditions.

Neupane's *Seto Dharti* tells the story of child widows Tara, Pabitra and Yamuna and the problems faced by them for their existence and survival. Niharika in *Yogmaya* depicts the story of struggle of Yogmaya for the establishment of the '*dharmarajya*' in the country. The novels depict the real issues of women and their victimizations, domination, discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization in patriarchal order. Moreover, women lack their actual identity, existence and individuality in patriarchal order due to which they are pushed to the position of being subaltern. The women are taken as the functional entity in the society as patriarchy assigns them certain codes of conduct. The choices of women to live in their own way are never paid attention to because their roles are limited within the four walls. The women are forced to reside in the domain of oppression of men led practices as they are treated as the second sex. They are forced to accept masculine hegemony. The texts present the protagonists

resist traditional practices of the male dominated society and want to establish egalitarian society.

Neupane and Niharika have brought women at the center of their writing in order to promote the resistance of women against patriarchy. Their attempts have turned successful as well. Both the novels depict the three types of the women as they are conformist, suffering and rebel women. The women who adopt the male ideology without any questions become happy. The rebels resist the patriarchal mode of value system and its repression on them. The victims silently suffer and curse their fate for being in such a terrible situation of life. In fact, the rebels resist and opt for change in the social configuration.

The research follows the qualitative mode of analysis by applying close reading. The proposed text are interpreted from the perspective derived from the equal rights to women following the theoretical discussion based on construction of gender and choice of the personal through resistance. The theoretical insights are derived from Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, Michael Garnett, Antonio Gramsci, Simone de Beauvoir, and Barbara Nimri Aziz. The issues of the women's suffering, marginalization, victimization, discrimination, and domination are used to interpret the novels. The feminist movement as such fights against such practices in society. The texts under discussion find proper lens when they are applied with these key concepts.

Patriarchy establishes certain restrictions and dictates certain values over women. It results in establishment of men's superior position in society. Men begin to exercise their authority upon women's self. Traditional society believes that women should be obedient, shy, honest, and passive. These stereotypes are the lens of men to look upon women. Such masculine value system always teaches women to believe

that they are physically, mentally, spiritually inferior and unequal to men. Simone de Beauvoir raises voice against such dichotomy as she argues, "... the male ideology makes women the second sex" (1995). She has analyzed that the passivity of women have been shaped by social institutions to fit them in the roles of women. She asserts that gender is not a biological essence and natural category. Rather, it is a social construct a learned behavior, a product of language, culture and institutions. Masculine order creates such values and assumptions, and reinforces men's supremacy. It can be called male ideology. Patriarchal order always promotes the discrimination of gender roles.

Neupane and Niharika show the issues of the women as they have been forced to adopt the traditional rules. Male ideology is shaped in such a way that the traditional women became happy by adopting such ideology in their life. They think that their duty is to serve the household activities and make their family's members happy. Men treat the women as the product and use them as they please. Neupane depicts the pathetic condition of the child widows. The major female characters are Tara, Pabitra, and Yamuna: they are the victims of patriarchal values. As a widow, Tara is forced to stay single throughout her life remaining true devotee to her deceased husband. Structurally, the Hindu social order helps patriarchy play the most significant role in shaping the attitude and perceptions of the people. Tara is deprived of seeking the biological gratification. Niharika presents Yogmaya as a victim of patriarchal values. However, she revives her self and grows larger than the social structure by gaining a rebellious posture. Due to excess domination, Yogmaya leaves her first husband and marries twice with the person of her choice.

When she returned back to home from Assam she became an ascetic and she started to go against every kinds of discrimination prevalent such as casteism, child



marriage, Sati system, and slavery in the society. She demands the government to establish the 'dharma rajya' in the country. The novel describes the overall situation of the then Nepali society. Amar Neupane and Neelam Karki Niharika examine the suppression of women under patriarchy.

## Chapter II. Woman, Gender, and Nepali Novels

Amar Neupane's *Seto Dharti* deals with the issue of child widows that existed in the earlier time of Nepali society. The protagonist, Tara is married to a man at the age of seven and she turns into a widow when she is nine years old. As her husband dies, she has to perform all the rites and live in the name of dead husband. She is forced to perform the death rites of her husband according to existing traditional norms and values of the society. She has to face different types of difficulties throughout their life.

Neelam Karki Niharika's *Yogmaya* depicts the life of Yogmaya. She was a religious leader and women right activist of her time. At the time of Yogmaya, there was more domination upon women within their houses. Their role was limited within the boundary of house. They would not go against the traditional values of society. The society treated them like a machine to bear children and carry out domestic chores.

In such context, Yogmaya begins to raise her voice against domination, inequality, and discrimination. She wants a *dharmarajya*. She sent Prem Narayan to Kathmandu to talk to Rana government to solve the social problems of society. However, the Rana government only assured them of fulfilling their demand but their demand was never taken seriously from the top seat of the state. She came to Kathmandu with her followers came to Kathmandu and met Juddha Shumsher and requested him to address her agenda. The Prime minister showed hope to them; so they returned to Majuwabesi. However, there was no progress towards fulfilling their agenda. She was frustrated. She decided to leave the society through self-sacrifice: she had sixty-seven followers drowning themselves in the Arun in 1998 B.S.

### **Readings of *Seto Dharti* and *Yogmaya*: A Review**

Amar Neupane is a Nepali novelist, poet, and a story writer born in 2034 BS, Chitwan, Nepal. Neelam Karki Niharika is also a Nepali poet, story writer and novelist born in 2031BS, Palpa, Nepal. Both the writers explore two complementary versions of social reality of the then Nepali society in their literary works *Seto Dharti* (2068) and *Yogmaya* (2074). They depict women's issues in which their characters are concerned with the patriarchal social norms, values, and their quest for a just society. They want to live their life as per their choice. The protagonists make attempts to raise the voices of widow and voice-less people. The protagonists go and speak against the men's domination, patriarchy, and social change for a better society for everyone to live in perfect harmony. The writers dedicate the fictions to these shadowed women who are also part of the subaltern class of people in Nepali society. This section reviews some of the available documents written on and about the texts under study. Since these texts are recent publication, serious critical studies have not been carried out so far. However, the review has used the online publication of reviews as well to bring together the discussion on the texts in online media as well.

Neupane looks at the issue of a child widow in *Seto Dharti*. According to the writer, the widow has described her own history in the text. The child who is married to the unknown person even does not see the face of her husband. Neha Sharma writes:

... the child widow describes her own history. She explores her events of life from a child widow to old age. She says that she has not seen the face of her husband and within two years of her married she becomes widow, and she has to live a widow life in his name till the end of her life, when she knows that she thinks that she is in the dream of her life.(6)

She examines the story about the child widow that exists in the earlier time of the Nepali society. And the pain of a child widow throughout her life. As Aayush argues,

Tara is a submissive character in the novel. Throughout the life she has been at the whim of forces that is beyond her control and these have guided her into marriage, then widowhood all of which she accepts suppressive without any hints of rebellious. She does not realize lacking as she is in shades and depth, resembling a vacant vessel of sorts, given to a weak and white cloth of perpetual sadness. (5)

In the fiction *Seto Dharti*, Tara exposes her very pitiable condition and she accepts all the consequences of her life without questioning in the patriarchal society. Shakhar observes:

Tara marries at the age of seven as her own father and mother lies making her to stay in yagya of marriage and at the age of nine she becomes widow. She forgets the face of her husband and after some years she spends the remaining whole life in Devghat in the name of god being Sanyasi. (6)

The novel depicts the life of widow and tries to cross the boundaries of patriarchal culture and values and at last she becomes successful by leaving home and being Sanyasi. Arpan writes:

Tara tells the story that is related on the life of daughter. It describes the past tradition of the Nepali society. At that time girls are not allowed to read. Their role is limited within four walls of the house. Girls marry before being menstrual without the consent. They have not even seen the face of her will husband and marry with more aged boy. At the small age they have to work hard. After marrying, also up to long time wife and husband do not talk with each other. (6)

*Seto Dharti* covers the story of the nineteenth century of the Nepali society that the girls have to face in the traditional Nepali society. Critics Dilip Poudyal points that the main story is circled in the life of Tara. When she was seven, she got married by deception. At that time, she is unaware about the marriage. At nine years she became widow and is made to perform all the rites of her death husband. Her life was like a voyage without a rudder by disobeying the traditional rules. She headed towards Devghat at night, and performs own funeral rites to avoid the lineage (gotra) and it is against the norms, values of the patriarchal society and it shows the female resistance against the social construction of the society.

When Yogmaya was born, there were huge restrictions on women within the boundaries of their home or family. But, Yogmaya is able to lead and inspire lots of people to stand up and raise the voices against an oppressive regime and the social norms of that time. She is also capable of observing the root causes of problems and offer solutions to move ahead for better future and prosperity, not only women but also for all aspects of society. Yogmaya struggles for ending every kind of discrimination prevalent in the society. The very fiction has raised several issues concerning the dominance of men over women, discrimination, inequality, oppression, exploitation and negligence of women in the then society. However, this fiction primarily begins its plot development rooted in the issues related to women at that time.

Yogmaya is a historical novel of Nepali literature. She struggles with the Rana government and devoted her life for the betterment of country. No sooner had it been published in 2018 than there appeared a host of critic with their reviews. Their reviews in the novel appeared on the national dailies and weekly of the nation. The Kantipur mentions that the novel is based on Karki's research on Yogmaya as a

historical person. The reviews cite the comment made by Krishna Gautam who views that breaking the tradition of writing the history of the rulers. The novel is taken as the text that chronicles people's history. Critics Ramji Timalsina and Tika Atreya believe that Karki has done justice in the portrayal of Yogmaya, the fighter of the early twentieth century Nepal. Timalsina appreciates Karki's art of narration and characterization thus:

*Yogmaya* is an artistic fusion of facts and human sentiments. As a historical novel, it is a par excellence; it portrays more than fifty characters taken from history and none of them sound exaggeration. It makes a lively address on the history of Yogmaya constructs her position as a social reformer and dismisses the rumors about her as by product of pervading wrong ideology in the existing society. (6)

As Atreya asserts that *Yogmaya* is a research based historical novel that makes a just verdict upon the female fighter. She analyzes that Yogmaya fights for justice of women and other deprived people. It raises social, economic and political issues as well. Atreya explains that Neelam is successful in her attempts of documenting Yogmaya's contribution and removing the mystery that surrounded her personality. Timilsina and Atreya argue that Karki's novel does justice to Yogmaya by establishing her as a social reformer and freedom fighter.

Likewise, Bimal Bhaukaji claims that the novel is based on a real life situation of historical people. He also appreciates Karki's art of writing a historical novel for him. Yogmaya is not only a courageous woman, but she is more rebellious than men. So, Bhaukaji wanders about the factors that made an innocent girl betrothed to an exploitative marriage. He reflects on the emergence of a rebel from the girl and the situation leading her to commit self-sacrifice for social change. Anjana Poudel also

agrees that Karki has documented the historical incident that took place hundred years ago in the eastern Nepal. She also points to the facts that Karki has found proper explanation about Yogmaya. Both the critics agree that the novel documents the historical incident that took in the eastern hilly region of Nepal.

Similarly, Michael Hutt explains that Yogmaya is a female religious ascetic. She urged Rana government to establish a *dharmarajya*, a just state in the country. As the Rana government denied to give the just place, she drowned her into the Arun river along with her sixty-seven followers to challenge the Rana government. The novel is based on Yogmaya's life and it includes for the end of every kinds of discrimination prevalent in the contemporary Nepali society.

Ramji Timalina (2074B.S.) states that the novel has established Yogmaya as a campaigner of social reformation. It has also sidelined numerous scandals imposed on her for years and years, attributing all of them to as false social belief and perspective. He appreciates Niharika's untiring and in- depth research rigorous efforts of making an archeological study of such historical figures that have been long forgotten and even suppressed under the prevailing discourses of discrimination, traditional gender roles, preaching and *Puran* and many other conservative and oppressive practices of the time. Such a reading closely connects a text and its context, paving the path for further research on the novel's connection to social conditions and the place of power relations in it.

Indira Mishra (2019) writes Yogmaya struggles for justice and equity in the society. She mainly focuses on the "factors contributing to Yogmaya's emergence as a rebel...her transformation from a helpless despised rural girl to a rebel feared by the rulers of the nation" (50). Mishra concludes her revolt to gender based violence associated with patriarchal and some other social and cultural institutions of the Hindu

religion. Her major contention is that *Yogmaya*'s rebellion took place largely because of the oppressive power that comes from the state apparatus of social, cultural and economic privileges. Her study is concerned about the dichotomy between the powerful and the powerless.

Reading *Yogmaya* from the perspective of new historicism, Mahesh Paudyal (2018) explains that the novel subverts the conventions' fact- fiction dichotomy by blurring their boundary. This takes place through fiction and fictionalization of history in the changed of rubric power dynamic. He also examines how ideology, discourse and truth have been constructed in various forms to suit the interest of the rulers and suppress the voice of the ruled. Paudyal presents:

Scripture are bunches of ideological fabrications, hegemony documents, constructed discourses and lies that benefit the rulers and hypnotize the ruled.

Discovering the dark face of fabricated truths camouflaged in religious scripture, *Yogmaya* turns a permanent rebel, and plunges into a social and spiritual reformer. Thus, the novel is studied as an interplay of conflicting discourses which are reinforced resisted from different positions of power.

Saradha Dhakal (2018) portrays the revolutionary campaign launched by *Yogmaya* as a wider participation of the rural folk as unparalleled in the history of the world. She critiques:

This work of Neelam Karki Niharika has shown the real history of how a woman can help in change and educate the society for their rights and recognize themselves it clearly depicts how history is constructed, omitted, deformed, and portrays the roles of literature to depict the real history.

Dhakal critically remarks *Yogmaya*'s incomparable contribution to change the face of society. She is regarded her as an aggregate of contemporary social conditions that



aspires her to become a spiritual leader and a rebel. Her *Hajurbani* that is religious verses she composed to correct the evils of the scriptures is regarded as an outlet of her yearning for liberation. She concludes that history has deliberately suppressed the voice against tyranny.

In the similar line of thought, Gangadhar Adhikari (2075) also views *Yogmaya* essentially as a work replete with historical events and contents with the contemporary political, religious, cultural and educational aspects. He says that the novel has also incorporated a lively depiction of rural life, psyche of the characters, philosophy of life, feminine sense, social reformation and positive world views, revolt. He rationalizes that *Yogmaya's Hajurbani* as a counter discourse to the conventional reading of the Hindu scriptures. It is the major strength of the novel.

He finds that the work with a potential of multiple interpretations from diverse angles of vision. This further encourages the reading of this novel. Barbara Nimri Aziz, the American anthropologist who has made the first sustained study of *Yogmaya* explains that *Yogmaya* cannot be studied using the tools and methods of anthropology developed in the west. She is beyond the limit of anthropological analysis. She claims that *Yogmaya* is an extraordinary activist. She takes her as a hero. She was a rebel who needs to be studied beyond the lens of anthropology and Neelam is successful in this venture.

In view of these analyses, *Yogmaya* invites a fresh perspective that can add to a new dimension to the critical eye of the readers. So, the review shows that such texts require further research and analysis. The appreciations that the texts have gathered together show that they need critical examination in the light of gender in a very formal way. This study formally approaches the text to see the ways women as such

are constructed in the contemporary Nepali literary imagination as evidenced in *Seto Dharti* and *Yogmaya*.

Both the novels explore the pitiable conditions of daughter and child widow of the Nepali society. The novels also show the vast discrimination between son and daughter that is created due to the inequalities. Various factors like religion, family system, art, education, knowledge are all set against the women as the patriarchy functions at the core to influence the decision of the people along the lines of the social structure.

Women are simply passive victims and aid to men. Women have been considered as the object rather than human beings, and have been forced to occupy a subaltern position in the society. They have to remain dominated invisible and secondary of male authority. In the beginning of the novel, the child widow adopts the roles assigned by the patriarchy. When they became the conscious of the male domination upon them, they challenge patriarchal values in search of the just society.

*Yogmaya* is based on the real life situation of Yogmaya. She was a spiritual leader, and women's right activist. She seriously attacked the social practices of the time for the first time. As her father got her married off at the age of seven, her first marriage was unsuccessful with the demise of her husband. She found a Brahmin boy of Kandel family and eloped with him to Assam. Unfortunately, her second husband died and she again married a Dotel man for the third time. She had a daughter from him. They named her Nainkala. After giving birth to Nainkala, she realized the sin of remarriage. This realization came from her knowledge of hindu scriptures.

One day, she went to Swargadwari and she became an ascetic, leaving her residence. She began to live in Majhubeshi in a hut. She used to mediate near fire in summer and stayed inside the cold water during winter. People developed faith that

she had attained the divine power in her. Then, there was growth in the number of her disciples in the ashram. She opposed the rites of Brahmin society which discriminated the people as high caste or low caste. She started spreading the message of spirituality as the opposition towards the trends of discrimination society. She raised voice against discrimination, traditional gender roles, casteism and different social problems prevalent in the society. She established herself as a campaigner of social reformation.

In order to solve the existing social evils, she sent to Prem Narayan to talk to the government of Chandra Shumsher to establish a *dharmarajya*. He assured to address their demands for justice in society. When the things were never materialized, her team visited the prime minister. Juddha Shumsher gave words but never paid attention to their demand. She doubted their intentions. When her agenda were not addressed she convinces her supporters that as freedom fighter, they should be ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of freedom. She decided for self-immolation by fire to pressurize the government to reform the rules.

### **Gender in Contemporary Nepali Novels: A Conceptual Review**

The present situation of Nepali society has been greatly affected by Mass Movement II of 2062-2063. The movement abolished the centuries-old monarchy and transformed the country into a democratic republican state handing over the sovereignty in the hands of people. Along with the abolition of the centralized system of monarchy the central power has scattered among the various groups like political parties, ethnic groups, regional groups, subaltern, women and previously marginalized groups, and other minorities. It has opened the door of unbound opportunities for the people from all classes, sex, ethnic groups and regionally backward to involve and participate in the main stream of social, cultural, political, intellectual and economic practices conserving the diverse identities. There are many factors responsible for the

great shift of Nepali politics and change in the social, cultural, psychological and intellectual practices of the society.

Gender is a kind of constructed term where there are the two distinct and separate categories: the masculine and the feminine. They are often placed as antonyms. These two categories are regarded as the opposite gender in the sense that gender divides the human beings and social practices along the lives of 'gender identities'. These two categories are not only regarded as opposite but also they are put into a hierarchy in which male is typically considered as the primary and female as the secondary. The gender roles have been used very successfully to justify in position between male and female where men are kept in power position and women are excluded from equal access to leadership and position of power. In this regard gender is basically defined on the basis of dichotomy between men and women where as men are figured as strong, aggressive, rational, superior, powerful, resistant, logical and independent and women as weak, passive, inferior, powerless, submissive, emotional and dependent.

Moreover, the term gender is socially constructed. It is not an inborn ability. Nor is it a predetermined fact. Instead, it is artificial and constructed idea. Regarding this issue, Simone de Beauvoir says, "One is not born but rather becomes a woman" (203). By articulating this statement, Beauvoir argues that the category of women is not the born in concept but a cultural construction. She says that the concept is a cultural construction. She also insists that the concepts of masculine and feminine are culturally and socially defined categories. Beauvoir further insists that no one is born with gender because it is socially mediated. Social practices lead to a particular effect of gender in human bodies. While talking about this issue one of the famous

feminist critics Sedgwick views that gender is a kind of detailed discourse which defines male and female identities hierarchy. As he notes,

Gender ...is the far more elaborated, more fully and rigidity dichotomized social production and reproduction of male and female identities and behavior of female and male person in cultural system for which “male- female functions as a primary perhaps model binarism affecting the structure and meaning of man other binarisms whose apparent connection to chromosomal sex may often be exiguous or non-existent. (273)

Sedgwick asserts that gender as a kind of ‘social production’ which functions on the basis of dichotomy between masculine and feminine gender roles in a particular society. When gender defines in term of binary opposition between masculinity and femininity, and it operates according to assigned different social roles to be performed by them. It means gender is a construction because gender identity is performatively constituted.

While talking gender as performance, Judith Butler says that “the regulatory practices of gender formation and division constitute identity”(23). She argues that identity is a social construction which is created out of the stabilizing concept of sex, gender and sexuality. Gender identity is repeatedly practiced through stylized repetition of acts. As Butler further comments,

Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures. Movement and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gender self. (179)

Butler suggests that gender is a ritualized form of repetitive acts where the performance is required by the action of different gender roles which are assigned to male and female. She further insists that men and women are two different categories of gender and they are assigned different social roles to be performed. She argues that “gender is the process of embodiment which results from the repeated performance of acts of gendering” (4). In this sense gender can be taken as normative discourse because it is created out of the repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame. In this way, gender seems to be natural and inevitable but actually it is not, it is a social construction. This very concept of gender is ideology in Althusserian sense which operates in such a way that they appear natural and inevitable. As Althusser says, “ideology is the system of the ideas and representation which dominate the mind of a man or a social group” (Zizek120). Althusser argues that ideology shapes the mind of a person and makes them to act accordingly. The patriarchy ideology also dominates the mind of the women and they internalize the oppressive norms and values of the patriarchy and ultimately, it subdues their position in the society.

Similarly, Judith Butler’s view, gender is a socially constructed; therefore, it is fragile, provisional, unstable phenomena. She has claimed that ‘gender identity’ is the sum total of an individual’s appearance, it cannot remain unchangeable. Rather it varies from time to time and place to place (Cinar 55). Re-enforcing the idea of ‘gender performativity’. She has argued that gender identity can be created in various ways through performance. According to her, gender is something that is not a corporeal thing but it is reproducing, changing and moving. In the same ways Cameron (2006) has viewed gender as a created phenomenon that changes through human interactions. She also observes that the context plays a vital role to create one’s identity and to make one’s identity acceptable in the society. According to

Cameron, gender identity has to be constantly reaffirmed and publicly displayed by repeatedly performing acts in accordance with the cultural norms which define masculinity and femininity(421-424).Likewise, Connell (2009) has claimed gender is “a key dimension of personal life, social relations and culture” (ix). He has noticed that gender identity is produced by the society under a strict supervision. Thus, an individual compels to stick to the society prescribed identity. For Connell, gender is a pattern in the social arrangement, and those arrangements are governed in the everyday activities or practices.

Gender has been a prominent theme in the Nepali novels after the end of Mass Movement –II of 2062 and 2063. The novelists of this period observed the changes spread by the mass movement among the people and they reflected those change in their novel. Baral (2017) has assessed that due to the political changes in the country, people became conscious about their rights and equality. Likewise, they started demanding the rights, equality and justice for them. So noticing those changes, the novelists decided to reproduce those changes in their literary creations (87). Furthermore, he has viewed that the novelist of this period focused their writing on gender issues and identity politics. Similarly, Acharya (2012) has evaluated that at present the subject of gender equality is not the concern of the females but also the concerns of the males. Therefore, both male and female novelists have exploited gender issues in their novels. Consequently, the novelists Krishna Dharabasi, Sarada Sharma, Padmawati Singh, Archana Thapa, Uma Subedi, Nayan Raj Pandey, Neelam Karki Niharika, Manisha Gauchan, Sheeba Shah, and others have portrayed difficulties caused by socially imposed gender roles on the people in their literary works.

The novels reveal the social, economic and political conditional of the Nepali society. The novels of that time can prove to be a great help as it not only reflects the outer picture of the society but also reveals the people's condition prying into their life. The novels can be used as means of a precursor to new understanding Nepali novelist have reflected the change that occurred in thought and life style of Nepali people in their novels. The novels that are produced after the Mass Movement-II use gender issue as a major theme (Baral 87). Baral claims that the novelists of this period shift their writing to identity politics as they seem to be influenced by the changes that are happening all around the world. In these novels characters struggle to get equality and identity. So, not only the female novelists but also the male novelists also use gender issues as a prominent subject in their novel. The efforts confirm to what Narhari Acharya's views that "the subject of gender equality is not only the concern of female; it is equally important and essential for male too". Through their novels both male and female novelist begins to use the terms of gender equality which reflects in the literary works.

The male writers also participate in the agenda of gender equality. The history of Nepali novel witnesses that, mainly female novelist showed their keen interest to discuss gender issues in their writing. They are acknowledged with the fact that "social and cultural discourse of various periods have represented women in such a way that corroborated the general oppression of women, and women writes of all ages have to confront this either through assimilating or subverting it. Challenging the accepted notion of Nepali society that femininity and creativity will not go together, the women novelists enters into literary and intellectual activities and attempt to condemn the gender inequality of Nepali society. It seems that novels have become a powerful mean for the Nepali novelists to explore the gender issues as a prominent



novelist Neelam Karki Niharika, Uma Subedi, Rajani Dhakal, Archana Thapa, Manjushree Thapa, etc has explored the gender issues in their novels.

The female writers create such a girl protagonist in their novels they struggle for their individuality, freedom, autonomy and their existence. Padmawati Singh's novel, *Samananter Akash* (2062), similarly is analyzed by Khem Dahal contemporary literary critic. This novel according is full of female consciousness with its powerful female character, Susmita, who revolts against her husband to secure her existence and to create identity. The novel attempts to make women aware and conscious of their existence and aim to advance women's participation in political, social, and economic area.

The female characters Tara, Pabitra, Yamuna, Thulihajur, Ganga, Dukhana and Nainkala from both the novels seem to be conditioned by socio-cultural environment and traditional beliefs that pass from one generation to the next generation in the beginning of the novel. The texts bring the female characters into the limelight, So, other female in our society feel encouraged to raise the voice against the different kinds of discrimination prevalent in the Nepali society. The novels seem to take women empowerment as one of their key missions by bringing female voices in novel.

Both Neupane and Niharika present that women are not just docile beings only. Instead, they see the rebellious characters in women. The women have challenged the social mores and chosen to erect a new system of values in which both of them get equal position, in which both enjoy the fruits of life, the collective living. Focusing on the dominant role to female characters, the novelist has created female characters with their individuality, freedom and decision- making. Most of the female characters are bold, creative and capable of accepting the challenges and change in

their life. To sum up, the female characters in their novels are a fusion of pain, struggle, happiness and perseverance but more than that it can be rightfully argued that they are also emblem of resistance, defiance and the transformation of the Nepali society.

### **Departure**

Amar Neupane's *Seto Dharti* and Neelam Karki Niharika's *Yogmaya* tries to explore the condition of the Nepali women at the then society. Both the novels are based on the real problems and events in Nepali history and society. They have focused the issues and problems faced by female in the patriarchy. Neupane and Niharika project the self of women in the contemporary context of Nepali society where the picture is greatly different from the present society. The questions arise now: How authentic self do they create in their text? What purpose does such construction of female serve in each case? How the female resists against the male domination? This study attempts to answer these key concerns.

The study focuses on gender issues, women resistance. It sees the impacts of women's resistance in patriarchal modes, structures, and ways. It examines the forms of protest and the impact the women have witnessed in the formation of their self. Also, it sees how the women's self is constructed to identify the course of action it has politically implied in the novels. Previous discussions have never taken this path in the reading of the texts. In this sense, the construction of women hood in Nepali novel is a relatively new area of intellectual discussion in the text under scrutiny.

### **Research Methodology**

As a critical vocabulary, subaltern refers to the group that is excluded from society's established structure for political representation and therefore denied the means by which people have a voice in their society. In literally refers to any person or group of

inferior rank whether because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation ethnicity or religion. In general terms subaltern refer to marginalized groups and the lower classes and a person rendered without agency by his or her social status in the society.

Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak developed the idea of subaltern studies a step further emphasizing that the Western Marxist modes of social change that these historians employ does not do justice to the complex histories of subaltern insurgency and resistance which they seek to recover in India.

Spivak not only breaks the dichotomy of self and other but also uses the term 'subaltern' flexibly, accommodating social identities and struggle that do not fall under the reductive terms of strict class analysis. She argues that there is no space from which the sexed can speak. She emphasizes that the subaltern women cannot speak as their voices and agencies were completely silenced under the political, social and cultural hegemony of Hindu patriarchal codes of moral conduct and their representation as victims of a barbaric culture. In the male dominated culture, through these subaltern women attempted to voice their narrative, their voice was not recognized that led their silence in the dominant political system of representation.

The evidences collected by the subaltern are through bare words and not real actual experiences. Thus, Spivak says produces logo centric assumptions inherently restricted or misleading writing built on the study of only one part of the total experience. She was also wary of the intellectuals who attempted to speak on the behalf of the subalterns rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. She thoughts that this led them being positioned relative to the colonial ruler's rather than allowed them cultural identity of their own and subaltern consciousness means the consciousness of resistance.

Michael Garnett essay *Agency and Freedom*, Agency is capacity of an individual to enactment or to show action against something or someone. Agency changes according to time, action, place and it depends upon the situation of an individual or groups. People are not free because they are guided by two forces: external and internal. To be free or autonomous is not an easy task to anyone because everyone is guided by some forces and that cannot be avoided that comes automatically in mind. The agents are always controlled by outside forces. To be an agent is to be, in some sense, an originator of action for your own rights.

Judith Butler writes that women are taken as opposed class in the society. Their oppression is total affecting every facet lives. Women are exploited as sex objects breeders, domestic servants and cheap labor. Women are considered as inferior beings whose only purpose is to enhance men's life. According to her women identity their agenda is oppressed by men. Male Supremacy is the oldest most basic form of domination. As, all the men receive economic, sexual and psychological benefits from male supremacy. Actually in the patriarchal society female are becoming scapegoat in the hand of patriarchy. She says male ideology is interfering female in different aspects of life.

### Chapter III. Women's Self in Nepali Novels

Neupane's *Seto Dharti* presents the story of child widows Tara, Pabitra, and Yamuna and their miserable condition forced by patriarchy. Child marriage was common at that time and that marriage is done without the consent of them. They do not know the meaning of marriage. They are the puppet in the male dominated society. They have no any rights and freedom and they follow the path shown by the traditional values. There is no second chance of marriage for the child widow. Society is highly traditional as patriarchy which pre-supposes the natural superiority of male over female, shamelessly upholds women's dependence on and subordinate to man in all spheres of life. Consequently, all the people and authority within the family, society and the state remain entirely in the hands of men. Female roles are nothing in the male dominated society. So, Tara after the death of her husband she has to live being the true devotees of her dead husband and society as a watch dog observes her behavior. But when she became conscious of her rights and freedom she leaves her father house and goes to Devghat and became an ascetic challenging the traditional rules of society.

Yogmaya is a dissident, she always favors equality in terms of caste, class, gender and social status. She generously welcomes everyone; poor, widow, untouchables and all sorts of social outcasts used to hoard in her asylum. She denies Brahman domination towards widow and elopes with the man she loves. Her life is full of struggle from beginning to the end of the novel. She struggles for shadow women. Each attempt of Yogmaya undergoes a transformation in the process of establishing liberation and freedom in the face of patriarchal values that places restriction on women life. She resists the powerful cultural traditions that portrays in domestic role to women. She fights for the identity of women in a male dominated

society. Ganga, Dukhana, Nainkala, Prem Narayan and many others character' help in her efforts to end every kinds of discrimination in the Nepali society. She even met Rana Prime minister Juddha Shumsher and demands him to address her agenda for the establishment of '*dharmarajya*' in the country. When the government does not address their agenda . Then to establish the justice able society they decided for fire immolation but the government stopped and arrested them but after releasing from the prison she with her sixty-seven followers in 1998 BS jumped into the Arun river for jal-samadhi. She is the first rebel woman to sacrifice life for the establishment of egalitarian society in the history of Nepal.

Neupane and Niharika portray the story of the three types of women in the novel. They are conformist, victims and rebel women. Women have same problems in the Nepali society. Both are the real story in the novel. The protagonists suffer a lot by the male dominated society. Women are taken as passive, weak, inferior, docile, etc in the society. They are taken as the functional entity in the society. Patriarchy gaze's woman's as an object, a commodity or just a heap of flesh. It takes them either as subordinate to run family or object to fulfill men's carnal desire. The protagonists in both the novels struggle a lot against that rigid orthodox of the male dominated society and ultimately they gain freedom and emancipation. They challenge the traditional values and sow seeds against the patriarchy for the transformation of the society.

### **Women in Amar Neupane *Seto Dharti***

Neupane's presents the pitiable conditions of the widow women in the novel *Seto Dharti*. The three main characters like Tara, Pabitra, and Yamuna are child widows in the novel. The condition of woman is miserable and the situation of the child widow is more pathetic in the society. The women are taken as the machine to bear the child

and they are limited within the household activities serving her husband and family members. The society is more traditional and beliefs in the ancient cultural beliefs norms, values prevalent in the society. In the patriarchal values women have more faith on the religion and traditional beliefs. Women are treated as the second sex and their duty is to follow the rules of family and society. They are deprived of their rights and taken as an object and male keep in their control. They cannot challenge the deep rooted social beliefs and assumptions and they are forced to adopt the traditional rules of the male dominated society. Women are deprived of their basic rights. It also reveals the exploitation of women physically, mentally, socially and psychologically by men, but also exposes its adverse effect on women in their various potentialities in their life.

There are three types of women in the both the novels. They are conformist, victims and rebel. The Women who adopts the patriarchal social, norms, values and tradition without any questions such types of female are termed as conformist women. Women often choose to conform the society traditional beliefs rather than to pursue personal desire as it is often easier to follow the path of the male dominated society that have already made rather than forging new one. Female character became conformist because of them bringing and schooling in patriarchal society. As the agent of male dominated society female characters have been completely hegemonies by the spell of the patriarchal ideology and they, as a moral guide, always guide, always tries to inflict the same ideology into female characters. In such hegemony of patriarchal ideology ultimately contributes to the helpless and the submissive status of women where they want to remain under the shadow of their father, husband as protection being unable to questions their position in the society is termed as suffering

women. When the female became conscious of their rights and they go against such traditional values is known as rebel women.

In patriarchal value most of the Nepali female depends upon their father before marriage and after their marriage they rely upon their husband. The decision taken by father before marriage and after the marriage the action taken by husband, they have to accept blindly without any questions. Male is regarded as the head of the family, so his responsibility is to earn the money and to run and to fulfill the family needs and desires. Women duty is to look the household activities and should be limited within the four walls of the house. They cannot take any decision and they have to depend on the male for everything from birth to death of their life. Female mind is shaped in such a way by the male ideology that they became happy by adopting the male ideology and being dependency upon the male. They think that their duty is to make male happy and rely on everything on the men. They have shaped their mind that women have to depend upon male as it is the continuation process and the traditional beliefs of the society. So due to such concept the dependency of the female upon male is still even in the twenty- first century.

In the Nepali society males create such a pressure upon the female, they cannot go again the traditional values of the male dominated society and they are unwillingly made them to accept the values of the patriarchy. They are guided by the male ideology and they belief that to perform the household activities and to serve to their husband is their regular duty. They cannot raise their voice against the domination and discrimination created by male due to the pressure implied upon them. In the novel all most all the female character is passive and they cannot go against the unjust social values due to the pressure of the male. In every steps of life



of women pressure is created and they cannot exercise any kinds of rights for their own decisions.

The unequal treatment between male and female and on the basis of the language, religion, class, ethnicity, etc has created social problems and hierarchy in society. The unequal behavior between men and women is regarded as one of the main problems existing in the society. In the patriarchal values male is superior and the female is taken as the subordinate and they cannot get their identity under the patriarchy.

Women should always be under the rules of male. All the rules and the norms are based in favor of male because they are the creators of the very rule which give them high rank in the society. Due to the discrimination female are treated little more than baby making machines and household servants whose task is to populate the world.

Due to the unequal behavior between men and women as the female is treated as a submissive and confined them in housewife and they are compelled to accept the traditional values.

Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, control of property and control of women. Patriarchy is associated with a set of ideas of patriarchal ideology that acts to. So in the male dominated society especially children, widow and prostitute became the victims of the patriarchy society because they are weak, submissive, passive, neglected, hatred and powerless and they cannot raise their voice against the authority for their rights. The society is built upon the patriarchal foundation that has made a male figure powerful. It has superior and strong developed culture, which has carried out the masculine traits and has been emphasizing male interest and ideology. Children, widow, and prostitute has been simply passive victims and neglected rather than the part of the society. They have to hide their identity and they have to be

represented by others. Though the characters of the novel suffer from social, cultural, educational and economic marginalization they remained silent as they could not raise their voice against their suppression in the patriarchy society. As the aunt is talking Tara says, “In the middle, I said, ”Had I still remained very small, why would they have made me wear the sari and blouse, and decorative me in jewelry?” she hugged me and said,” we got you married, girl. Did you understand it?” Actually, I had no sense of it” (37) . As Tara is like a puppet she does not know about her own marriage and became surprised and she has no sense of marriage. After the marriage, Tara is taken to her husband house and her aunt mentions that “Now your groom’s house is your own house. Your groom’s happiness is your happiness. Your groom’s life is your own life. You are related him as one. You will gradually understand all these things. Your groom is your lord. Do not dishonor your lord. Do not dishonor father, mother, brothers and sisters of your lord. They are your lord” (40) . As a daughter-in-law she is treated as a domestic care taker of each members of the family. She is taken as an entity without any desire of her own. She has to fulfill others demands though out her life and she does not have her own identity and her identity is related with the identity of her husband. She states:

I have not seen the face of my bride even while going home. He did not come to me. I also didn’t go near him. How would I call it going near while I was there washing his feet and taking the water? In fact, the mind rests in the top of the body-on the top. I did not look at it. When he was inside, I was out.

When he came out, I had to go inside the house. Often, it was the wall that did not let me watch him. Mostly, it was ignorance that hindered me from seeing him. (50)

Both have not understood the meaning of marriage and they have not seen the face of each other. The young age has curiosity but they cannot accept in front of each other publicly. Tara aunt questions her “Did you have a word with groom? No, why didn’t you? Why should I talk to him? He is your man. You will spend whole of your life with him. I will stay with my parents. He is a stranger” (51) . As they are unknown to each other even after their marriage, they do not speak with each other and their age matters and she thinks after marriage also she will live with her parents instead of staying with her bride. Neupane observes that, “People cannot look at the face of such true Devi. Alas! Why has fate done such a thing? Poor things! Do you have a sound sleep now? What will happen to this life of yours from tomorrow onwards? Now that you have become a widow in such an early age. If the gods were to suffer from sin, they would suffer immensely for such cruelty... I felt it would be better if I had fallen asleep” (77). She became a widow without enjoying the marriage life and she has to accept all the fate in her life. Neupane narrates the scene, “How surprising it is! I am the one who has to bear it the most, suffer the most. But I come to know it at the last. My parents didn’t know that I had become a widow even after our relatives and neighbors knew it. They did not get to bid farewell to my lord like my relatives and neighbors”(79). She has to face the consequences throughout her life of early marriage as she is deceived at the time of marriage and again betrayed after the death of her husband; multiple deception lead to a kind of mistrust in her life. Neupane presents, “There was someone who could be a close relative, loving me. She said,” you walk weeping, child.” It felt as though she favored me then. She added,” People may say, ‘How heartless wife! She didn’t mourn at her husband’s death’” How could I weep? What would make me weep? I could neither weep nor mourn. I felt nothing: how could I weep?” (80). She does not know about her husband’s death and is

unknown about the mourning as well. She fails to fulfill the expectations of the matured world. Neupane states, “It is not for the love for her husband but for the loss of her cosmetics, she is mourning now. She is protesting now. But Pabitra did not accept to go with the people of her parents’ side. She did not accept it at all”(118). Every child widow’s life is miserable in the contemporary Nepali society. Pabitra condition is also same as Tara and she does not accept the male hegemony; she protests and raises her voice in the patriarchal order. Tara argues, “Perhaps, these balloons would not have burst and would have reached the lord if I had not been a child widow. The desires of child widow are impure like herself. These balloons could not fly high. They could not reach the lord. My heart also burst like the balloon-thud, thud” (127). She thinks herself as an inferior and her desire is not fulfilled as he is a child widow and her voice is not even listened by god.

The unifying one is that tradition refers to beliefs, objects or customs performed or believed in the past, originating in it, transmitted through time by being taught by one generation to the next, and are performed or believed in the present. Tradition can also refer to belief or customs that are prehistoric, with lost or arcane origins, existing since immemorial time. Originally the tradition beliefs are passed orally without the need for a writing system and the tradition belief are often presumed to be ancient, unalterable and deeply important though they may be sometimes being much less “natural” than is presumed. The female characters in the novel seem to be conditioned by socio-cultural environment and the traditional beliefs that pass from one generation to the other. In the novel *Seto Dharti* exemplary that posits the influence of society and culture on female character. Tara even after the death of her husband she is devoted in the name of the dead husband. Neupane states, “By seeing the pitiable condition of my mother, my aunt took her to an astrologer for the peace of mind. Hinting at her three months long pregnancy, the

astrologer said, "you will give birth to a very virtuous girl." Mother was shocked hearing this and promptly said, "Won't I have a son?" (10). She wants son to continue their lineage. According to Beauvoir (2001), the belief in the biological advantage enabled men to treat women as weak and passive biological entities, who are fit only for having children, caring for them and managing the household. Women are taken as a machine to bear a child and at any cost they have to give birth to son. Tara mentions that "I missed my younger sister, Kala put at the other *Yaggya* for worship. Is she also married like me? She is two years younger to me- five years now. Is she also at her bride's home? I asked my aunt," "Is my sister also married?" yes, you both got married in the day. As your parents thought that your brother would survive after getting two daughters married off on the same day, you both got married. Your parents observed your *Kanyadan*. Your grandparents did to your sister (42). Spivak calls a transformation of consciousness a changing mind set (641). She became conscious according to the time. When mother asks to Tara, "How is your mother-in-law? I smiled, "She is a pregnant, she has a large belly, like a pot." There was a student wave of motherly emotions on mother's face. She said, "oh!" later, I came to know that even mother could become pregnant. So, mother was more emotional and showed more sensitivity"(54). The condition of every woman is miserable and they are emotional and they believe that son as a way of liberation, salvation, etc. in the Nepali society.

The process of taking women as an object is termed as commodification. Women are compared as a good of the market. Men can use that good according to his wish. In the novel the main female characters are commodified by their parents and their marriage is done without their consent and they are unaware about their own marriage because as an object their decision is taken by their family. After the death of Tara husband, she is not allowed to marry and she has to remain widow throughout her life in the name of the dead husband but when Tara mother dies every society

member encourage him to marry and finally he marries with the eleven years' girl which age is smaller of his daughter (Tara) from previous wife. Women are traditionally treated and still considered commodities. When women are seen as an object they are dehumanized by men. Almost all the female characters are dehumanized and force to follow the male dominated society rules as they are commodified at time of their marriage. The mother-in-law looks to sister in law and she analyzes, "Granny who was making the thread for offering of light ready casually looked at mother. Before she could see sweats on the tired mother, she looked at the heavy load of grass at her back. And she was happy, seeing the huge load of grass. More than it, she was excited to see mother's growing belly"(3). Women treat women as commodities, things of multiple uses and laborers who continuously work to feed the family. Patriarchy as such seeks utility in women's body in different forms: laborer, domestic helper, cook, wife, child- bearer, etc. Tara scrutinizes that," I do not want to see the place, the place there and the people in the house. I do not have any curiosity to see them. For such desire, you require to develop certain sense of attachment with the place and people there. I do not have such attachment. I wonder why I did not want to see me even while I have fallen ill. What do they get seeing me? Will they be cured from their fatal disease seeing me?"(69). Women responsibility is only to run their life according to the will of men. Dobbins says "Ideology has been called meaning in the service of power, that is, the creation of rationalizing myths, ideas, and in today's lexicon," common sense" that pave the way for people to accept conditions they would otherwise protest against"(24). Tara totally ignores but she is force to accept by her own family. Tara questions," I wonder why they force me to attend mourning for thirteen days. The front yard was fenced with two bamboos mats. They laid haystack on the floor. They gave me two blankets: one to lie on and the

other to cover my body. I obeyed whatever they told me to do there. What would I do? My parents had instructed me to do whatever they said'' (90). Patriarchy forces women to obey their existing norms and values, so she is compelling to accept all the consequences of her life. Tara notes, "I had to stay hidden in a hut for a week. I stayed there. They said I must not see the sun and men for a week. After being widow, I had menses that were same-as red as the menses of married women. How surprising! I had my first menses seven years after my widowhood'' (134). She is still in misconception and traditional belief that menstruation of girl brings ill-omen. She reviews that, "If we had those ornaments, it would have been more comfortable to my father. He has recently married now-half for his own desire and half for the pressure of the relatives. If father had those jewelries, he could give them to his new bride. Father must have thought that the child bride would be happy to put on those ornaments"(201). When Tara's mother passes after three years her father marries and in traditional system men can do everything but the women are not allowed.

In the Nepali society women dominate women and they do not understand their problems. For example, mother-in-law dominate sister-in-law and treated her as a domestic labor. Female do not understand female problems. So the clash between women occurs in the various fields. Women create problems for women and do not let her to move forward. So, the dispute between the women is one of the great problems of the Nepalese society even in the present days. Tara argues, "After one year, child mother and daughter-in-law were not on good terms. They did not like each other- they were just the opposite with each other. The more they were not on good terms, I felt getting closer to my sister-in-law. I was happy about it. I talked to them for their smooth relations. However, their disagreement was a very satisfying thing for men from within"(208). The relationship between two women is also not good; there is

hierarchy even with mother and sister-in-law in the same house. They do not understand each other's feeling and show ego within the same family and same house. Tara argues that, "Suddenly, I hatred towards Pabitra. Fir! Pabitra has done heinous work of prostitution for years and come to defile the pure Devghat after her retirement. The money from such impure acts defiles the ashram when they donate it there. The place certainly faces some misfortune here. The gods do not entertain such things"(327).At the last stage of life every person wants to go to holy place and involve themselves in the religious activities to wash the sins done in the early days. The only way to get redemption in life is a holy place in every one life. The idea of purity also supports the moral values of patriarchy.

To begin with the major reason behind the sustenance of the practice of child marriage is the prevailing pressure of patriarchal values of and institutions. Women in all social classes are groomed in one way or the other, for marriage and motherhood. Since marriage is essential for girls, their choices get restricted by such social values of the society. They are subordinated as well as under-valuation of the roles of girl child within and outside family, therefore appears to be the major reason for the continuance of the practice of child marriage even today. Emerging socio- economic constraints like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and rural infrastructure reinforce such tradition strongly. At the last stage of their life every people go to holy place for redemption of the sin done by them and want to spend the rest of life by involving in the spiritual activities.

The act of going against some things due to injustice or domination of someone is termed as rebels. Neupane' probes into the theme of female resistance in a society where women should waste their life in household tasks and caring their children, husband and family members. This thesis explores the ups and down on the



life of female because of the domination of the male dominated society. And the female is compelled to rebel against the domination of the patriarchy. Pabitra goes to Banaras with a group of saint and involve in prostitution challenging the tradition society. Likewise, Tara also leaves the home and goes to Devghat challenging the traditional values. Tara became the saint which is against the spiritual according to religion girls are not allowed to be saint. The theme of the novel is the women's consistent struggle with their subordinate position. The novel depicts the unavoidable struggle between the subaltern position of the women and the ruthless rule of the male upon the women. These sorts of struggle that takes place deeply within every family, society which is deeply rooted in the male dominated cultural values. So all most all the major female characters' protest socially and spiritually in the novel and they wish to live their life by their own choice. Neupane presents the idea in the following lines," Moon lit night. There are two yaggyas in the courtyard. The yaggya have not been able to see each other. They are fenced with green leaves in the middle. Above it is hung a piece of cloth like bed sheet"(27). Girl is taken as a burden in the Nepali society. It is believed that if they get their daughter married early before menstruation, their soul reaches into heaven after death. Tara observes," The parents worshipped the groom like the god. They made me worship him, too. I wondered if he was a real god. I said, "Mother, is he a god?" Mother just smiled at my query. Such smile has two meanings: both yes and no" (28). In the Nepali society, they treat their son-in-law as a god and give high honor and respect. They even worship him, assuming that he is reincarnation of lord Vishnu. Neupane describes, "Having observed the mourning, I did not want to stay there even for a minute. But they say I must there for a year. I couldn't accept it from my heart. They say I must not visit my parents pace for a year-my heart always hovers at it. They say I must not see my father for a year; still, my

father's face sticks to the eye of my mind" (95). She follows the rule of the male domination from inside actually she wants to go against such rules prevalent in the society. Tara critiques, "I had not complained even while the red flower of my life was picked off. Now I am complaining about my sisters from the neighborhood picking flowers at the courtyard as though they have plucked off the flowers of life. Instead of getting angry at them, mother wept placing her hand on her large belly. She said they got me and my sister married off to protest son. It saved neither the son nor my bride"(120). As Tara is widow, she is not so sad. Her mother is sadder than her. As Hindu social belief reveals it trusts in fortune tellers. Tara's parent accepts to get their daughter married off for the protection of their son. She synthesizes, "While sleeping, I put the nipple of my breast into my brother's mouth. Hurriedly, he held my nipple in his mouth. He stopped crying after this, I felt jubilant"(163). Female shows love, sympathy to everyone. After the death of her mother her younger brother begins to cry and she breastfeed him. Neupane critiques, "I moved out at the dawn next day. There was a very sad tune on Sahanai in the heart. I intently listened to it. I continued to walk hurriedly like the mountain brooks. Go on with the light of your inner heart: even the hurricane and the rain cannot extinguish the light" (221). As Tara gains maturity, she becomes conscious of her rights so she decided to leave home and move to Devghat to spend the rest of her life. Yamuna states, "I left house. I carried three sets of clothes and one thousand rupees. When the eldest son was trying to give some money, I said, "I am the forest stuff, a wild bird. I need nothing" (276). Yamuna also leaves her house and goes to the religious place Devghat and all the major character meet in Devghat to spend the rest of the life. Tara says I am trying to be ascetic to erase own clan name (gotra) and family name for the peace of mind. How long shall I go about dragging the family name and clan name given by an unknown person? I

want to exterminate it. I want to die without my family name and clan name”(292). Self- satisfaction is required in everyone life so she raises the voice of protest and she rejects the patriarch bondage upon her soul. Neupane narrates the event,“ The scripture had the provision of shaving the head and observing mourning ritual for one’s own. I did it. The ritual required sixteen mass of barley and rice to offer at the end. I did it. I felt I was observing my own mourning ritual throughout my life” (295). To erase family name and clan name of her dead husband, she performs own funeral rites in her life and became an ascetic. Neupane analyzes, “I began to feel that the ashram was like a prison cell. I did not want to stay in the prison. I wanted to live life at any cost” (312) . As Pabitra goes to Banaras she is controlled by saint so in search of freedom she leaves the ashram. Pabitra describes, “After sometime, we were three girls together to set up a brothel. We danced and sold drinks there. Tara do not hate me even if you feel it is not right. I practiced prostitution. I looked more beautiful among three of us. It was not only by appearance, I had better skill at dance, music and behavior. The customers liked me very much. I was the most expensive prostitute”(313). Pabitra has enough courage and with her two friends she runs brothel challenging the traditional belief of the society. Pabitra analyzes, “I knew that it would be difficult to give birth to a child without its father being made public in the foreign land. I had to make my choice between “this” and “that”; I chose my child. I wanted to become mother. I did not abort the fetus. I thought the child came to my womb to drive me away from prostitution”(318). It is very challenging to give birth without letting the society know who its father. She challenges the traditional rules and decided to give birth and to rear the child by herself. Pabitra narrates, “As I was fifty-three -years old, my daughter was seventeen years old. She began to study in campus. There was no scarcity of money. I wanted to return back to ashram from my

inner heart. But I did not return the ashram first. First I went to Vrindaban. I took my daughter with me. I bought a house there. I began my penance there. Then I got the name, Gangeshwari”(324). As she earns the money from prostitute and give birth to daughter and she leaves that profession. She changes her name, identity, and place resisting the patriarchal values. Pabitra explains, “She went to another place to escape from the lustful eyes of the people and delivered her baby. When she was a mother, she stopped being a prostitute. She was completely a mother now. She struggled to raise, educate and marry her daughter who is a professor in a university now. It is a huge achievement on her part”(334). She challenges the patriarchal society and gives birth to a child. She fulfills her responsibility and makes her self- dependent and to spend the rest of life she begins to hymns in the holy places. Tara says, ” All the people had chosen Devghat as the final destination of their life” (350). To erase their sin at the end of their life they go to Devghat. Tara says, ” The greatest thing in our life is our body. Love, pain, worship, good deeds, wealth, pleasure, suffering, tears, smile and Devghat remain there as long as we have our body. After the body grows old, rugged and weak, even the god grows old, rugged and weak. Even the god lives as long as we have body” (352). When we have power in our physical body, everything is possible.

Identity refers to the ways in which an individual and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities. Identity can be defined as the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks, and expression that make a person known with the other. Female does not have their identity and their identity is related with the identity of their husband. In the novel *Seto Dharti*, the female characters do not have their own identity as Tara and Pabitra are the child widows and their identity is related with the name of their dead husband. So to avoid their husband

name in their name and to create own identity they leave home and became successful to live their life in their own and able to create their own identity. So, identity is the most important things in his or her life and people want to create their own identity and to be known with the others. To create the identity people, struggle throughout their life. Identity is the foremost things in one's life.

The word independence means “not dependent” or not having to depend on anyone or any things else. It also means being strong and able to survive alone. Every people want to be independent in their life. Most of the women in the Nepali society depend on their husband for their livelihood. So they are always dominated by the male in every steps of their life even their choice and decision is taken by their husband. They have to run their life according to the will of their husband. In the novel all the female character depends upon their father so father as the head of a family all the other members have to obey his rule. Tara, kala, Pabitra, and Yamuna is made to marry in the early age with the unknown people, without knowing the meaning of marriage and without their consent because of their dependency upon their father. As the male is the head of the family and decision taken by them is final and all the other members have to obey and implement in their life. So to be independence means to run one's life according to his/her wish.

Consciousness is one of the very important functions of the mind. It can even be considered the supreme mental function because it makes aware about everything. According to the time, place, age, education, works, etc make peopl consciousness. In the novel *Seto Dharti* the female characters are dominated by their family members and they are forced to accept the decision made by their family members and force them to marry in very early years. When Tara husband dies she became widow and survive in the name of the dead husband but at last when she became conscious of her

rights, she leaves the home and moves to Devghat to spend the remaining life with the full of freedom. Likewise, Pabitra goes to Banaras and involve in prostitute and when she became conscious and give birth to her daughter and leaves the brothel. At last the major character's life became change due to consciousness came in their mind and decided to live their life according to their own will. So to enjoy the life full of freedom, consciousness is necessary in everyone life.

When the female characters became conscious of their rights they protest the traditional social norms, values of the male dominated society. When they became conscious they begin to search their identity and want to be independence in their life. To create their own identity and to be independent they resist the socially and spiritually of the male dominated society. All the changes came in their life because of the consciousness that came in their mind. And consciousness makes them to rebel for their right and freedom and to search their identity and to be independence. There may be so many ups and down in our life in search of identity and to be independence but until and unless if we are unable to create our identity, we should continue our efforts as the main characters have done in the novel. At last they succeeded and create their own identity and live their life with full of freedom.

Neupane's *Seto Dharti* explains mainly the three types of women. They are conformist women, victims of patriarchy and rebel women. In the beginning of the novel all the women including the main characters adopts the traditional rules of the male dominated society blindly without questioning. They think themselves as inferior and male as superior. Their mind is shaped in such a way that they cannot come out from the male ideology. As the women cannot go against the unnecessary domination done upon them as they became the victims of the patriarchy society. They think that to become the victim is their fate rather than the male ideology. When

the widow became maturity and conscious of their rights they begin to protest the patriarchal values. Resistance is a way to achieve the right and value of women. If there is excess domination they became conscious of their right and want to be self-dependent. So, the women resist for the justification of rights and want to change unjust rule which has snatched the right and freedom of the female. The women who have strong spirit cannot endure all the domination and do resist against the injustice. When women became conscious of their right, they rebel breaking the traditional norms and values of patriarchy. They want to change the mythical rules of patriarchy. Only with the power of resistance of female, women can get their right and freedom in their life.

### **Gendered Self in Neelam Karki Niharika's *Yogmaya***

Niharika's novel *Yogmaya* represents the traditional, sacrifice, victimized conditions of women of Nepali society. The female characters of the novel, *Yogmaya*, Ganga, Dukhana, Nainkala are the male dominated women. The status of women is very miserable. Female are treated as commodification as they are forced to adopt traditional norms, values of the male dominated society. *Yogmaya*, the main character is portrayed as a submissive woman. The leading character *Yogmaya* is also addressed by the name of Thulihajur in the novel. The female characters have been represented as the victims of the cultural and social inequalities prevalent in the society. Thus, the realistic depiction of the pathetic condition of the women in the novel reveals the oppression and objectification of women in the society.

*Yogmaya* explores the conflict created in search of identity, freedom, equality in a male dominated society. The leading character *Yogmaya* keeps her efforts to establish justice able society throughout the life getting beyond the traditional values but she is disturbed by the norms and values of the patriarchy but her efforts remain

continuously till the end of her life. The novel portrays the problems of women's identity, freedom, justice, equality and her effort to go against the established values and norms of traditional society. After varied experience she became a mature, strong and dedicated towards her agenda for ending every kinds of discrimination of society. The novel successfully portrayed the dominant structures into which females are compelled to adjust themselves bearing all the grudges of physical as well as mental dominant however they never stop to fight back against those injustices prevalent till the end of their life. Hence, it is essential to subvert all stereotypical male ideology through women consciousness, awareness, empowerment and unity. Niharika's women appear as traditional women, suffering women and resisting women in general in the novel.

Traditional women do not want to go out of the traditional norms, values, and culture prevalent in the male dominated society. They want to continue the past traditional culture without any questions and they became happy by continuing such practices in their life. They became happy by serving their husband and making their family members happy. Their roles are limited within the household activities such as cooking, washing, cleaning dishes, and performing the religious activities and their duty is to remain faithful towards their family members. Patriarchy does not give chance to know the outer world to women. So, they always want to keep them in ignorant position. The suppression of women in patriarchal has developed as culture and tradition. They are made to think themselves as passive, weak, fragile, inferior, etc. They think that they have to follow the ways shown by patriarchy norms and they never dare to go against the practices prevalent in the society. Due to such thinking of women and men think themselves as superior to the women and female are made as a prisoner inside the four walls of the house. People divided the castes according to



their occupation and made high and low castes. High caste people begin to call the low caste people untouchable. This division is done according to the work and still such casteism is prevalent in the Nepali society. Niharika makes subtle claim:

People were group under different Varna: Brahman-Kshatriya-Vaisya-Sudra. Four sub castes. Their job was determined. The caste-division was later interpreted to suit their interest. The very thing became the leprosy, the boisterous boil. The Brahmins were at the top according to the division. The people born in the family were by birth in the upper rung of the society. Without looking into their practices, we had to worship people because they were born in a Brahmin family. They were entrusted with the duty to give us redemption from this world and in the other world. Caste system also formulated the justice system as well. The low caste people had to undergo harsh punishment for what the upper caste people would get less punishment. In other words, lower caste people were treated harshly under this justice system. The upper caste people got Kush birtato get a better place in that world. (159)

The Brahmins devised justice system in which they protect their interest. Spivak says that in her essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She says, “ that the subaltern cannot speak and has no agency” (639). The low castes people cannot speak against the high castes people so they punish the lower caste people and promote their own ideology. The mistakes of the people from the bottom of society are treated harshly. In a sense, they were the rulers of the society who knew what to read and how to read in order to protect their own spirit.

Male ideology refers to the beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards for male behavior and the construct is operationalized by

measures and attitude of male and that ideology is forced upon the female. The male ideology as which encourages women for the traditional roles as daughter, wife and mother as ideal ones. In the patriarchal civilization, women have been subjected to a specific kind of repression and their mental and physical development has been channeled in a specific direction. The male members in the community spend their whole time in outer doing the jobs and involving in different activities. They do not have boundary. But when women come out of the house everyone keeps an eye in their every step of works. Thus, the society has determined their role inside the four walls of the house which keeps women in the second position. Similarly, the way of looking between father and mother to their daughter is also different. The mother remembers her twice married daughter and the father says that she cannot be accepted because she brings them shame in the social arena. To maintain the status in the society, he denied to accept his daughter and showed the male hegemony in the society. Niharika writes:

Observing closely with the dim eyes, she said, “Did you come? If you had been able to come while your parents were alive, it would have been wonderful. But, Shrilal did not change his mind. We tried to persuade him. He gave deaf ear to us. He did not listen to anybody. Your mother would weep every evening. Neupane would say, “The egg is broken to us. That’s it. She passed away. That’s the end.” How heartless! Parents show really different heart. Even when angry, mothers can be persuaded. Your father’s heart was broken and it was further broken to pieces. (62)

If girl marries twice, it is taken in a negative way. So, *Yogmaya* is not accepted by her father. She challenges the patriarchy and marriage thrice in the society. The mother shows her love towards her daughter either she is twice or thrice married but the

father rejects the request of his wife and shows the male primary role in the Nepali society. According to Simone de Beauvoir argues that, “the male ideology makes women the second sex”(995). Whatever roles are given to women all are for men’s comfort and benefits. It is male ideology which is in favor of man and treat woman oppositely. In the male dominated society, the man tries to implement his ideology in his family and orders his wife to accept the social norms and traditions prevalent in the society.

He has to maintain his status. He cannot let his sister touch the kitchen as she marries with the people of low caste. Niharika claims:

You are supposed to follow the customs of society. Some people assume that our sister is a Kshetrini, while others think she is second class Brahmin, Jaisi. Ganga, she can’t come to Upadhyay’s kitchen of ours. Don’t treat her equally. What will we do if others question about our own caste? We could tolerate whatever befalls on us but we have our daughter to get married in future. We have a daughter! You must understand it while there is still time, Ganga. You must wake up. (68)

As we stay in the society, we think of others. People are more centered on what others think than on what they think of themselves. Beauvoir writes,” The work of men they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.”(41). The relationship between wife and husband is also not good because of male hegemony. The husband wants to control her in the name of the society.

Gender refers to the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors and roles that are associated with beings a woman and man as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct

gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender refers to their roles, behaviors, expressions and identities of male and female and the roles are assigned in the society. Male is assigned to perform the outworks and as a head of the family whereas female role is limited with the domestic works and they should be under the control of male. Due to the gender difference she cannot control her stress. She challenges the social chore and she leaves home. Niharika describes:

Throwing the weeds from her hands, she said, “Who would just leave home simply because the father scolded them? He would hate as well. She was a teenager. She must have felt hurt. Who do you blame now? We could safely call that it was her destiny. There was no brightness on her face” (72).

Hatred creates some kinds of problems in everyone’s life. Same hatred to *Yogmaya* results in her leaving the house. People cannot stay at home even while being hated. If woman knows anything, her knowledge is not accepted in family and society. She should not talk more with men.

Domination refers to the exercise of power over someone as the state of being so controlled. Women have been dominated since the ancient time to till now. Women have to walk on the way created by their husband. They do not have own role in family. It is because of the domination upon the female which puts women in the secondary category and male being in the authority. As the product of male-dominated society, her brother also dislikes *Yogmaya*. He hates her in such ways that uneducated people do not know anything and force her to accept the prevalent traditions of the society. On the basis of being uneducated, women are required to accept humiliation at the hands of men. As Niharika states:

“How would you uneducated people know about the scriptures? It is completely different to be able to read letters with difficulty and to understand

the scriptures on one's own," the brother bitterly hurt the sister. "I may be uneducated but I am not ignorant. I have awakened my inner eyes," she said. She didn't utter a word further. Then, she played on a single string instrument.

(118)

Women are dominated by their own family members. *Yogmaya* marries thrice and her brother asks her not to touch her kitchen. He treats her like an uneducated person. He boasts of the knowledge from the holy books and great scriptures.

Most of the women are guided by the traditional force and they became happy by following the traditional rules. They think that women are inferior and they have to follow the patriarchal rules. They are guided by the male ideology and they never try to come out from that ideology. They are emphasizing male interest and objectives with the social organization determined by traditions. Women role and the status have been comprised to their detriment. Women have been considered as the objectives rather than human beings and they have been forced to occupy the subaltern position in the society. They have to remain dominated, invisible and secondary of the male authority throughout their life

Suffering women are ready to sacrifice themselves for the happiness of the family. Due to their sacrificing nature women have been suffering by the male dominated society. Their work is always under-valued by the patriarchy. Their rights and freedom is snatched by the patriarchy. They are ready to sacrifice or suffer for the betterment of the family and they never express their pain in front of other people. No one is totally free from tension. It automatically comes to mind. Courage is the strong power to reach in the goal. Struggle for the existence is necessary in everyone's life. Niharika states:

Bride, we had to suffer unconditionally in heart in past. We had to physically suffer a lot. Mental torture is heavier than that of the body, you see. My parents disowned me. I continued to struggle in a variety of ways: I fell down and rose up again. My body had become like iron, suffering all the strikes. The heart never hardens even with numerous strikes. (73)

We have to gather courage to achieve something in our life. We cannot forget some events that deeply touch us. We need to struggle till we achieve our goal in our life. Struggle plays key role to get success in everyone's life. *Yogmaya* makes the strong commitment not to return to her husband's house and she leaves the house. She thought they would listen to her; however, her parents deny her of their love and she feels further despised for her decision. They persuade her to return to her husband's house. The subtle nature of patriarchy is present in this section as Niharika narrates the event:

“I missed the path. Aunt, I stayed alone a couple of nights in the forest,” I said, coming out of the hay stack. “I stayed in forest. Was I not afraid? What do I say? I came alive. I never had any hope that I would come this way but I was never in despair,” I said. (94)

*Yogmaya* has always challenged the patriarchy: she is a fearless woman who stayed two days in the jungle. She is the courageous lady of her time period. She sent Prem Narayan as her angel to talk to the government about their demands and agenda. As *Yogmaya* became ascetic people begin to call her by the name of Thulihajur. The government only promises but their agenda is never addressed. Niharika pictures: “Thulihajur said, ‘I will go to Kathmandu myself. I am ready to go to any place to establish *dharmarajya*. I will face anyone when it is necessary’” (359). Michael Garnett mentions, “Self- government is a matter of being governed from within-that

is, by motives internal to the self' (41). Until we take initiation, our problems are never heard. *Yogmaya* wants to establish her agenda through her penance and dedication. She goes to Kathmandu to talk to the Rana government. She sent Prem Narayan twice to talk to the government about their agenda but their agenda is not addressed. So, she feels humiliation and useless to live in such a country. She is ready to sacrifice her life against the injustice government. Niharika pictures:

I always understood that social reform was my penance. It was my platform of spiritual practice. I visited Kathmandu, begging for alms. But it had no promise of getting my goal. They returned me giving me flower or putting me on a bus. They attempted to buy ascetic with gold. I am now convinced that I have to enter the fire to sacrifice myself in the pyre. I have no worries in my heart. Finally, everyone has to die one day. For one thing, I feel it better to die than to live in the state of the sinners. Since I have to die one day, I have decided not to live in this world of the sinners. I accept all of you who have trusted me and come to me seeking refuge. I have decided to sacrifice myself in the fire. On the day of *Harisayani Ekadasi*, I will sacrifice in the fire after *Yaggya* in the Triveni. (418)

After the birth on the earth, all the people have to die one day. This is the natural process. The best thing happens if one leaves a positive impact in the society before dying. *Yogmaya* is a social reformer and a rebel from Nepal. She raised the several issues concerning the dominance of men on women, discrimination, inequality, oppression, exploitation, and negligence of women in the society. Niharika presents the idea in the following lines:

Prem Narayan wrote the name of the people willing to sacrifice themselves with her. He asked them to give him thumb print on the consent letter.

Dukhana said that there were 209 people willing to sacrifice themselves. Then, Prem Narayan sat down to write letter as Thulihajur ordered him to. He wrote, “We waited to see Shree 3 Maharaja to carry out the words given to us. Since there was no progress towards your words, we are sacrificing ourselves without harming any property and wealth. If the promise is not fulfilled by the *Kartika Purnima*, we will sacrifice ourselves. We do not want the government interference in this. (420)

*Yogmaya* challenges the government not to interfere in their self-sacrifice. Since the social reform was never implemented, they do not want to live in the society where promises are never fulfilled. Dambar Bahadur Basnet reminds her spirit and narrates her view,” To overcome the pain and suffering of people we do not have to hesitate for detention or even the death” (196). Therefore, *Yogmaya* and her followers decided to take jal-samadhi to threaten the then government and force it to take initiative to establish the ‘*dharmarajya*’ in the country. Niharika pictures:

“We will now go for jal-Samadhi, not fire sacrifice. We won’t have to prepare much for this. So, we can keep it secret from the eyes of the people.”

Thulihajur said it slowly. “We will have to think about who will sacrifice and who will stay behind. We need some strong pillars of ‘*dharmaraj*’ behind here after us,” she added. (494)

Autocratic rulers were happy at the people drowning in the river. After their death, there was no one to challenge their government. *Yogmaya* strategically keeps her devotees behind to safeguard her mission. After the night, the day necessarily comes. The light must follow the darkness. *Yogmaya* with her sixty-seven followers move to the Arun river for ‘Jal-Samadhi’. Niharika pictures it thus: Sixty-five followers step forward. The procession of lights moves towards the tumultuous Arun. There is one



voice: May the adharma vanish away! May the *dharmaraj* establish! ”(516). Aziz is absolutely correct when she says, “Passive resistance was not her style, *Yogmaya* was the woman of immediacy”(87). She takes several actions against injustice and demands for immediate result make her to be a remarkable leader and a social reformer. In the history of Nepal, the sixty-eight people demand for *dharmarajya*. They take jal-samadhi.

The unequal behavior between male and female is termed as inequality. Male treat unequal behavior to women in every sectors. Inequality behavior is created in the traditional norms, values of the society. Women are forced to adopt the unequal behavior from their own family. All the people should be treated equally in the society. Those whose husband or wife is dead both should be allowed to remarry again without any obstruction. Niharika views: “The key issue at hand is that the society must permit widow for remarriage just the way it does to the widower without any hindrances”(181). Michael Garnett states, “To be an agent is to be, in some sense, an originator of action in your own right”(17). *Yogmaya* fights for the justice on both the male and female in the society. She is strongly committed in her decision to serve the society and people. She sacrificed her life again for change in society.

The process of depending upon other for their livelihood and survival is termed as dependency. Most of the Nepali women depend upon their husband to run their life. So, they are always dominated by male. It is believed that male have to earn the money to run their family but women should be limited within the four wall of the house and they have to depend upon their husband for their survival. So, the women role is limited within the house because of their dependency upon the male. Every parent wants to see their daughter and son happy. So, to ask forgiveness, the daughter

mistakes *Yogmaya*. Her father goes to her husband's house and begs pardon for his daughter. Niharika scrutinizes:

Father returned home back five days after leaving home. He said, "Everything is spoiled. It's all spoiled. Destroyed. It's over –all over. We lost our prestige. They said that they would not accept the girl again as their daughter-in-law. Koirala family said that they were ready to go to the court if it was necessary. They were waiting for an excuse." (103)

Male dominated society always blames women for any kinds of mistakes. As Frederick Engel claims, "The overthrow of mother right was the world historic defeat of female sex. The man seized reins in the house was degraded, enthralled, slave of man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children"(67). Woman is taken as the private property of the man. It wants women to maintain their status. They should be kept in their control. Man is allowed to do everything in the Nepali society but women are restricted in the same works.

Men always mistrust women. Women behavior is always doubts by the male dominated society. Their every step is always seen from the suspicious attitude. Their role is assigned in the limited. Male became barrier to them to move ahead in their life. The women think themselves as the second sex. They think that their duty is to cook food, wash cloth, cook food, clean dishes, and so on. They do not get chance to read and write and their family thinks that their fate is to play and live with mud from birth to till death. Niharika explains: "I grew up working in the soil. I have worked in the soil from birth. What could we do as we did not get to work with letters? You can at least read the letters. I said the black dead letters make no sense to me" (71). Being the girls, they themselves think and feel dominated form their inner heart. They think that their duty is to perform the household activities and make their family happy.

They have negative feelings about themselves and realize as the second sex in the society. The society cares as a watchdog in Nepal. The relationship between women is also not good. *Yogmaya* leaves her husband's house because she is treated as an animal and the next woman gives suggestions that whatever steps she takes are wrong and at any cost, she should not leave the house. Niharika writes: "I think you must have left the house because of adjustment problems there. Niece, have you not chosen a further difficult path? I doubt if it's your mistake. The society will not accept your decision to go out alone," he was sorry" (92). The society always blames the woman in everything. Man is free of any errors. As *Yogmaya* is dominated in her own house, she leaves the family to find out who she is. Instead of praising of such decision, the people seek to blame her for the mistakes she has committed in her decision.

Men always dominate women. They are taken as the secondary sex in the patriarchy society. Due to the male dominated society women always suffers from the traditional values and norms of the society. They are ready to sacrifice for any kinds of the works for the betterment of the family. They always create hierarchy between male and female and always want to keep women in their control. Male is taken as the higher position and other members have to be under his control. Male duty is to go outside and earn the money whereas female role is to perform the household activities. Male always suspect to the women in their every steps. Female are not allowed to run their life according to their wishes. They are always in the prison of the male.

The person who can protest is a social rebel. Significantly, it creates the new transitions in the right of the people in the society. As Mathura Prasad Shrestha argues, "Probably *Yogmaya* was the first rebel in Nepal. She took initiation for the end of sati system and slavery" (175). She may be the first rebel in Nepal;

nevertheless, she is one of the rebels, who challenge the whole system. Resistance is a way of revolution to achieve the right and value of the whole people in the state. So, *Yogmaya* resists for the justification of their right and want to change the unjust rule of the society which has snatched the right of the female. The women who have strong spirit cannot endure all the domination and goes against injustice prevalent in the society. When women become conscious of their right they resist breaking the traditional norms and values of patriarchy. Women want to change the mythical rules of society. They think that only with the power of the resistance against the authority they can establish '*dharmarajya*' in the country. Rumor spreads faster than good things in our society. People take unnecessary concerns in others matter rather than their own issues. People show interest in *Yogmaya* and want to know about her. They blame her unnecessarily. Niharika narrates:

I hear there is an elder daughter to this one. But, they are not from the same husband. She went with a Kandel from here. They say she had a daughter from him. People rumor that she eloped with the father of this child after the earlier one passed away. We hear the daughter from Kandel is with her uncle. They say the Kandel family said that it was their duty to give her upbringing and get married. Perhaps, the first daughter is settled by now –maybe she is a mother by now. We have heard them all

we have seen nothing. May the god know the truth! (77)

*Yogmaya* challenges the patriarchy and marriage thrice in her life. Once, she was attending to the *Puran* with her husband and heard that remarriage is a sin in one's life. After this, she decided to leave her third husband and returned back to her birth place to live the life of an ascetic. If we gather courage in our life, even the dark night cannot be bar us from reaching at the goal. If we tolerate injustice in our life, it is also

one kind of sin. *Yogmaya* suffered excessive domination in her husband's house. She decided to leave the house and run away. Niharika views:

It was already dark in the evening while at the forest. I could not figure out what to do now. I felt like weeping, afraid of something I could not tell what. I walked, rolling the hot beads of tears rolling down my cheek. The dark was growing heavier towards me. It was like the lamp burnt out, dead dark. I saw the sudden night prevail in the forest. The night surrounded me from all sides. Only weeping wouldn't do there! I needed a shelter. I chose a big tree and sat under it until the morning. (87)

Every person has right to freedom to live in their life. *Yogmaya* lived life as per her wish because of the excess domination in her husband's house. Coming to her father's house, she stayed in the jungle. It refers to her bold decision in her life. For everyone, the birth place is the greatest thing in life. If any kinds of troubles come in life, they first remember their birth place or their parents. Niharika presents:

Do you think I did not say that I wanted to go to my parents' house? Nobody listened to me. They were all deaf ears to me. Would they have let me come if I had told them where I was going? Nobody from here went to bring me home. They did not come to leave me here. I thought I would do whatever was necessary; So, I walked out alone. (95)

After their marriage, women want to go to birth place time to time. They require permission of the family to visit their parents. When the permission is not given, she moves out alone. *Yogmaya* refutes the rules of the society. She challenges the social spirit of the patriarchy. In patriarchy, some men are against male-domination. *Yogmaya* third husband supports her. He is against unnecessary social norms,

customs, and traditions. He fully supports her: he accepts the challenges of the society easily. Niharika states:

Nainkala's father had stood like a firm wall to lie onto as a resting place for my sorrows and a shield to the society for my protection. One day, he told me that he would not follow the malpractices of the society when I was weeping after leaving Kandel's house. It's not necessary that you spend the whole life weeping. This society does not allow a lonely, helpless woman. You won't be able to breathe wherever you go. You gather courage: we will be together fighting. Change this garment. (113)

If there is unity between wife and husband, no one can do anything. The society and the people accept the conjugal pairs only. The conjugal union makes it possible to live life happily. This is the time of science and technology. The superstitions and different types of traditions rites are still practiced in the name of the dead people. People offer different types of things to Brahmin in their name: *Yogmaya* is against such superstitious beliefs. Niharika describes:

"Who says annual rites to pay respect to the dead, Shraddha is a superstition? However, what does it mean when one is bent on giving away as gift to Brahman in the hope of redemption to the dead? Is it true that the ancestors of the donor get Masino rice if he presents the Brahmin with the gift of Gaihri Khet? Is it true that the ancestors get to ride horse if the Brahmin is offered with a horse in gift?" The sister continued while Tulasha's father went inside, giving no ear to her. (119)

We are in the age of science and technology, we still believe in such traditions and give different types of things to Brahmin in the name of dead people. *Yogmaya* stands against such traditional beliefs of the society. *Yogmaya* expresses the sad feelings of

being woman. She says that they should be always in control of man. Their rights are also snatched away from them. She challenges such belief as she also wants to survive her life in her own way. Niharika narrates:

Men can do whatever they like to as it is their choice. Women are always in their control. The women can't put their voice in the gathering of a couple of men, nor can they do anything out of their choice. He has a rule of his own: women are supposed to follow its dictation. Oh God! I pray to get the birth as men in next life. I want me to be husband and my husband to be my wife. I feel that they would then know how torturous it is. (123)

She prays to be born as men in the next life. She wants to exercise the masculine power that she gets as part of the structure. She wants to break the traditional rules of the domesticity that binds women. We should not be selfish: we must not work for only our benefit. Instead, we should work for the benefit of the whole society. So, she decided not to stop the evening hymns (bhajan) when her brother passes away. This is also one kind of bold decision made by her. Niharika presents:

They discussed about halting the regular evening hymns for a while during the mourning. The sister said, "The devotees come from far away, paying no heed to their sleep. We should not disappoint them because we are mourning. It is not wise to ask others to bathe in the rain of our sorrows. Further, we must not praise the god only when it suits us." (153)

*Yogmaya* is a courageous and rebellious lady in the history of Nepal. Even when her brother passed away, she decided to continue the hymns. She thinks for the benefit of the whole country. She does not want to impose her sorrows upon the whole society. Life moves in cycle. There are many upheavals in life. Luck gets god's favor or

wrath. When the god is kind, things turn good. When the mercy is lost, people suffer.

Niharika views:

The sister said to me, “Stop mourning. Life is a cycle. Who is immortal here? It’s just the matter of turn. The brother-in-law had this much in his share. It’s done. He had this much to stay with us. It makes no sense to mourn at the irrevocable. One should always devote oneself towards good deeds and let the rest on the god. It’s Him who prepares the course –who are we to stop His ways? (155)

Women think that their luck is written by god: they do everything according to the will of the god. *Yogmaya* suggests not to mourn at the death because no one is immortal in this world. She accepts the nature of the world and human life. Everyone has to go away one day. For *Yogmaya*, there is no high caste and low caste people in the society. She thinks all people are equal in the society. All the people have same rights and freedom guaranteed by the constitution of the country. Niharika presents, “I took water from Kainli Kamini and I will receive the Prasad from her now. If you respect my views, all of you accept Prasad from her and give her respect. Please help spread the message that we are all same”(162).

If we want to change the others, we have to start from us. *Yogmaya* does the same thing. She drinks water from the untouchable woman and asks her devotees to do the same. This act challenges the order of the caste based society that segregates the people from the high caste Brahmins at the top. In the name of religion, different types of domination have taken place in past and even in the twentieth century in Nepal. They create fear in the name of religion and it becomes easy to control people.

Niharika writes:



There have occurred big exploitations in the name of religion. First of all, they fill the mind of the family of the dead with all sorts of fear. They explain about the torture in the hell. Then, they give ways of redemption and entry into heaven. Such explanations of the Puranas are not for the dead but they use them to gather more donations. What are the things that the fearful people won't do? The people in sorrow of the tragic moments are easily bent to whatever direction others want. This is exploitation backed by religion. This is super exploitation. They trick the people. The people reading the *Garuda Purana* play with the feelings of the people in distress. (221)

People may reject other things in the past but they cannot reject the spiritual power. They believe that if the people do good deeds, the dead of the family go to the heaven. If they do bad things, they go to the hell. This kind of belief exists even in the twentieth century Nepal. People keep changing according to the time. People have to leave this world when their time is over. This is the rule of the world and the rule of the nature that no one can break. Niharika explains:

After being born as a human, one has to die. Even the gods have taken their leave after completing their duty on the earth. This is the law of creation.

There lies nothing outside this rule. So, one has to be content with this. Time heals everything. Let your wound heal now. If you stay in distress, it's like bleeding the wound, scratching it again. It stops the wound from healing. The people for whom you mourn now calling them your own were also the god's children. They went to him. They took refuse to him. (243)

Humans are bound by the rule of the nature. According to rule of nature, people run their life and complete their duty like the gods. Ganga is sister-in-law of *Yogmaya*: she also makes a bold decision. Ganga gives all property to her nephew and becomes

the follower to the ascetic of *Yogmaya*. She also declares that she belongs to no caste.

She disowns her caste of being Brahmin by birth. Niharika elaborates:

After Thulihajur and Prem Narayan had come, I said with Dukhuna at a close distance, “From today onwards, I declare that all my property, this house, cowshed –I hand over everything to Maheshwar. I disown caste. I no longer remain a Brahmin now. Since I have accepted from the plate of Thulihajur, I will stay in her hut with her.” (246)

There are people committing a lot of crimes for property. Ganga abandons all her greed and gives all her property to her nephew. She decides to live a life of an ascetic with *Yogmaya* for the rest of life. We should be able to raise our voice against injustice of the society. If we keep our agenda only, they listen and address our concern. Without demanding our right, no one gives us what we want. Niharika states:

Thulihajur said, “Fear won’t bring anything. The new born also has to cry for the mother to breastfeed it. Only after this, the mother understands the child’s desire and lets it suck the breast. One has to speak up. If you are hurt, you must speak up. You have voice even when there is torture. You must have voice when you are in disagreement. You speak up to demand for your rights. One day, the epoch changes but it does not happen with a magic wand. The rice grains don’t turn into delicacy, staying in the sack. One has to grow enthusiastic to cook it. We need pot, water, and fire. You must light fire to cook rice. When necessary, you should be prepared to be the fire.” (270)

To establish the right of the people, we should be ready to sacrifice our life for the betterment of the society. We achieve our goal when there is the feeling of self-sacrifice as *Yogmaya* determines to end every kinds of discriminations prevalent in the then society. Her followers support her in the mission. Niharika explains:

When we went to request her, Thulihajur said, “You must not be afraid to fight for your rights. You could observe the mourning alone but it is to accept the exploitation and promote the same practice. We are at war with casteism and untouchability. If they do not allow you to participate in the mourning in the name of robbing away your caste, they promote casteism and discrimination based on it. Come fight against the exploitation. Fight. Go ahead. I am with you. There must be an end to casteism and untouchability.” (299)

We have to fight for every kind of discriminations until we get our rights. The society cannot establish the justice system without such struggle against the illogical system. Thulihajur is very strong in her agenda: even the prime minister offers her gold and diamond. She rejects it and answers that she never needs such things in her life.

Niharika thus tells the story:

One of the Queens signaled a maid carrying a big tray. The maid removed the cover. There were coins of gold. She put the tray at Thulihajur feet. Smiling, Thulihajur said, “I’m an ascetic. Queen, I mustn’t touch gold, let alone wearing it. The Kali rests on the gold. It has no place in the life of an ascetic. It’s not our goal to gather gold and wealth.” (390)

As the Queen tried to persuade her by offering gold, she rejected as it is useless in her life. She is strongly committed to her agenda. History keeps changing and in the same way, rulers also keep changing. It is the right time to over throw the autocracy from the country. They are ruling for their own benefit rather than benefit of the country. Niharika states: You have great courage. How old are you? Why do you need our age? One day, we all have to die. Who is immortal here? We wish our death also should serve other. We also want *moksha* for ourselves. This is our intention. The earth cannot bear this further. (436). History always tells truth. As the government

tries to hide about the scene of *Yogmaya's* sacrifice, it shows the repressive nature of power. After sixty years, the history of *Yogmaya* has come to limelight now. Truth cannot be hidden for the long period of time.

Male dominated society always does injustice to the women in the society. They are always misbehaved by the traditional norms and values of the society. Women are forced to accept any kind of injustice done upon them. Even the parents do not understand the argument of daughter. There lies a deep communication gap: woman is never understood in family and society. The mother-in-law makes her work more than she can do. She always blames her for anything in the family. At any cost, she wants to keep her in her control. Niharika thus makes the subtle claim:

She thought her parents would understand her. They would show pity on her. I controlled myself, consoling that after all, I was their child. I had no warm clothes to wear, no food to eat full stomach, no love from anybody, and no soothing words. How could I stay when it was too unbearable? I had no other option than hanging myself. If somebody from my parents' side had visited in the meantime, I would have got some support. I would not be missing them so terribly. It would be a great backing. Perhaps, they would not dominate as much as they had earlier. After marrying daughter off, was it over on the part of parents? Had they nothing to worry about my life or death? I had such thoughts in my mind. (93)

After marrying daughters off, the parents think that they have completed their duty now. The troubles she has to undergo in her new house are never paid attention to. No one cares for her and her feelings. As a result, she decided to abandon her husband's house. If the wife is dead, man marries within forty-five days. However, a widow has to live a pure life forever in her husband's name. This structural injustice prevails in

the society. *Yogmaya* stands against this cultural practice. Niharika narrates: “A widower finds it difficult to pass forty- five days. He does not go to the crematory ground as they believe that they cannot marry within forty-five days, let alone observing mourning for forty-five days. Why this injustice is upon widows?”(125). *Yogmaya* demands the ‘*dharmaraj*,’ meaning a welfare society where both the genders enjoy the equal rights and benefits. She poses challenge to any form of injustices and discrimination imposed upon people. *Yogmaya* is clear about her goal: she tells her devotees that she is against of bad customs and she is in favor of humanity and justice. She stands against child marriage. Niharika pictures:

The sister said, “You had come to charge me against religion when I opposed the widow burning. I am neither any preacher nor an opponent of any religion. I surely oppose the malpractices. I’m in favor of religion. I’m in favor of justice. The government passed a law prohibiting widow burning now. The government will passlaw prohibiting child marriage and remarriage of widow. You will see the government passing such laws.” (191)

People are against those people who call for change. In the beginning, most of the people are against the agenda of *Yogmaya*. However, they later accepted her ideals and issues for the change in society. To tolerate the injustice is against the religion. So, religion also encourages to go against the discrimination and injustice of the society. Niharika describes:

It is not in line with religion to tolerate injustice. The God assumed human form to fight against the injustice. I am also not going to accept any form of exploitation silently. I will report the authority about it. The Magistrate will issue orders.” Turning the pages of paper, Thulihajur said. (333)

If there is domination on the earth, the God descends down to fight against the evils. The whole world is framed with the idea of justice. Injustice ruins the world. Those people who are in power always want to save their power and rule. Those people who are against them are ready to kill the people. At any cost, they want to save their government. Niharika describes:

Thulihajur said, "I had heard that Shastri was imprisoned for reading the Gita and preaching it despite being Newar. They have casteism and untouchability! They have permission, they have order! Their sin will be punished one day. Their pot will have its fill one day. They did not shoot at those two chests. They had shot their rule now. They have not only hung Sukraraj Shastri and Dharma Bhakta; they have also hung their own rule (484).

If people do good deeds, they have long lasting impact in the people. Those evil doers end their game very early. *Yogmaya* associates herself with the four martyrs and raises her voice with them. She sees herself in her quest with the four martyrs who oppose the Rana rule.

Male does violence upon the female from ancient time to present. Women are the prey of the male violence. Male is doing violence upon the female to threaten and to keep them under their control. Women are not able to use their right to freedom guaranteed by the law of Nepal because of their violence in different form from their own family. Woman is taken as a machine: she has to work continuously without any rest and her duty is to make happy to every family member. If any disorder appeared in the house, woman is blamed for it. Niharika pictures:

They give no food even when hungry. They want work all the time. I had to get up before cockerel. Cleaning the house, bringing water, bringing grass and woods, working in fields and taking cattle to forest –so much was there to do.

I was not supposed to say that I was ill even when feeling uncomfortable. We were treated like oxen. They called me girl of ill-omen every time. When the buffalo gave less milk one day, they blamed me for it. They said I had used tantra on the buffalo. If an ox died, they blamed me for it. They said nothing went well after bringing this girl home. Mother, I won't go to the house. If I have to, I will kill myself. (101)

Michael Garnett states, "We lack freedom in many ways: we can be shackled in chains or locked in cages; we can be stranded on islands or trapped in caves; we can be subject of legal prohibitions, targets of social sanctions, or victims of private threats" (3). Girls are taken as the second sex. So, her responsibility is to perform all kinds of household activities. The family member treats as if she is like a puppet and she does not have any kinds of rights and choices in her life.

The unequal behavior between son and daughter is termed as discrimination. The discrimination upon the women exists since the ancient time to till now through the traditional norms, values of the society. Male is given the higher position and the female is given the inferior position. The feeling and attitude of father and mother are also not same towards their daughter. The mother shows her love, care, intimacy. She is positive. However, the father is against the issues. Niharika writes:

Don't be so heartless, Maya's father. If something un towards happens to the daughter, you will have to take the responsibility. I have given her birth after keeping her in my womb for nine months. How could a father feel the pains like the mother? How comfortably you could say, let her die if she chooses to. (105)

The pain of keeping baby inside womb and giving birth are only experienced and realized by the mother. Man does not know the pain of woman and they take it easily.

All the people have only one caste: human being. All other boundaries are created by human beings to keep control upon others. They all have equal right to praise the lord and worship others' rights. Niharika pictures:

The sister said, "Everyone has equal right at praising the God. He is not for only Brahmin or Kshetris. I don't believe in casteism and untouchability at all. We are all the children of the God and we are one caste. It is human. We are all equal here. There is no discrimination. All are equal. I accept that there are men and women because of the difference in body. Only two sexes. Men and Women . Otherwise, equal." The sister repeated it many times. (158)

She is herself from Brahmin family and she challenges the wrong beliefs prevalent in the Brahmin family. She believes in this world only there is two castes that is male and female. To continue the generation and lineage men and women is necessary. The dalit people are dominated in such a way that they do not have good name. They have to feel shy to utter their name in any place. This kind of domination is imposed on them by the upper caste people holding power in society. The major thrust of such people is to maintain the status quo existing in their time. Niharika narrates the event:

"Kainli Kamini (Iron Smith)? Do you not have another name? Lo! How injustice is imposed on her! They hesitate to take name in our society. This is not their wish to take such name. We are children of the same God. We have imposed so much of injustice upon the children of the God. I drank water from Kainli Kamini. Do I lose my caste? Am I a different person now? I don't accept such practices. Nobody should follow such useless practices. They talk about the upper caste and the lower caste, touchable and untouchable. They fix a separate well for the upper caste and the lower caste. How horrible injustice it is! Is the whole universe different than a prison house to them? Do they have



a different experience than people put in chains in prisons? Let's think from the position of Kainli Kamini ourselves: we are untouchable; we cannot enter others' houses; we must eat food thrown from a distance; we must leave the path to the superior caste, going ourselves aside. If we touch unknowingly, they punish us. Uff! This terrifies me." The Sister said in pain. (161)

The condition of dalit is very miserable. They live a life of a prisoner in caste-based society. They do not have any right to freedom that depends upon the will of the high caste people. *Yogmaya* is against of such things. She fights for right of everyone.

The novel *Yogmaya* represents the victimized condition of the women in the patriarchy values. Women have to tolerate every kinds of domination, discrimination, injustice done upon them. Women have suffered a lot and are placed in a subordinate position due to the role of dominant traditional rules. Female are victimized and marginalized at the hands of rigid orthodox because of the bias treatment between male and female, where societal rules and norms has the powerful tool to dominate women politically, economically, legally, culturally, physically, spiritually and biologically. When they became conscious of every kind of discriminations upon them and develop the sense of resistance against government to establish the '*dharmarajya*' in the country.

The novel *Yogmaya* describes the different types of the women and their role in the male dominated society. Women have been suffered a lot through in the name of the culture, tradition, norms, value of the traditional society. Male ideology makes them believe that they are weak, inferior, passive and their duty is limited within the four walls. They do not want to break patriarchal rules of the society. Patriarchy society demands women to be gentle, submissive, coy and morally upright. Women's development is blocked by the strict code of e patriarchy. Society imposes complete

restriction upon the women. When *Yogmaya* knew every kind of discrimination prevalent in the society she wants to rebel and wish to establish egalitarian society. She sent Prem Narayan Kathmandu to talk about her agenda. The government only assures to address about her agenda but never address their agenda. At the third attempt she goes to Kathmandu with her followers and met the Prime Minister Juddha Shumsher and demands to address her agenda. When the government does not address their agenda . Thus, *Yogmaya* and her sixty-seven followers decided for the mass suicide in 1998BS by jumping into the Arun river.

Neupane novel *Seto Dharti* depicts veils of evil practices of child marriage and the predicament of child widow in the Nepali society. The main characters are child widow such as Tara, Pabitra, and Yamuna and they have suffered a lot by the male dominated society. The main story is circled in the life of Tara, when she was seven years old, she got married by deception. At that time, she did not know about marriage. Her own parents lied her by telling her that she had to go to the temple. Only the next day of her marriage she came to know that she was married with a person whom she had not seen yet in her life. At the age of nine she became a widow and she is asked to perform all the rites of her dead husband. She resists leaving her husband house and returned to her father house and began to stay there. The society has not set any provision for the second chance of marriage to a widow. She has to freeze her natural desires. After the death of her mother and father marries a little girl whose age is less than Tara. Tara step- mother begins to dominate and begin to behavior in very rude way. The domination became excess and finally she decided to go to Devghat, a religious place of Nepal. She became an ascetic and perform own dead rites to erase the lineage of her husband and want to die without any lineage.

And it is against the values, norms of the patriarchal society and it shows female resistance against the construction of Nepali society.

Niharika novel *Yogmaya* scrutinizes the struggle of *Yogmaya*. She was a religious leader and women right activist of her time in the society. When she returned back from Assam to her birth place Majhubeshi, Bhojpur and she became an ascetic and begin to live in a hut with her followers. She begins to raise her voice against domination, inequality, discrimination and many other problems prevalent in the Nepali society. She advocates the voice of all the women and their rights to live their life as they wish and be happy. The then politics of Nepal was going through corruption. The land lords of villagers were taking the surplus values of the grannies they were selling to the poor. Nepali society at that time was passing through the huge discriminations upon the poor people and women in the society. These social problems had let *Yogmaya* not only be the spiritual leader but also rebel. The followers who supported her helped in her every decisions of a just society. But, she became the target of Rana rulers and was jailed and later had to take the decision of mass suicide against the discrimination of the contemporary Nepali society.

#### **Chapter IV. Construction of Women in Contemporary Nepali Novels**

Neupane's *Seto Dharti* and Niharika's *Yogmaya* depict the real incident of the than Nepali society. The protagonists in both of the novel are female characters. Both the novels explore the issue of women suffering, discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, etc. Women are compelled to live the patriarchal mindset with the belief 'to be born a daughter is to have an ill fate'. And it becomes essential for patriarchal culture to define woman's role as submissive, inferior, immanent and dependent. In both the novels the protagonist speaks against the unjust practices of men over women. It tries to establish, freedom and welfare of women in the society. The authors have dealt with the three types of women in their literary works. They are conformists, suffering and rebel women. Conformist women adopt the male ideology blindly without questioning and they are like a puppet of the male dominated society. Such types of the women became happy by following the traditional rules of the society. Another type of the women is the suffering women. Patriarchy society gives pressure to follow the traditional roles of the society. Their rights and freedom is snatched by the patriarchy. They are supposed to accept the masculine hegemony and act as the effect of the social structure. They are surrounded by the repressive force of the patriarchy society. So, they became the victims of the male dominated society. And the next type of the women is rebel women. If there is excess domination upon the female by the traditional norms, value of the society they resist against such discrimination for the freedom of the women.

The authors have presented weak female character in the beginning of the novel. The women are taken as the second sex and they do not have any kinds of the right. They are placed into subaltern position. Women are taken as the domestic workers and their life is like a machine to bear child. They are limited within the four

walls of the house. The economic condition of the society is poor and the women situation is very poor. They are dominated by the male due to their economic condition. They do not have any source of income and they have to totally depend upon their husband for their survival. Their concept is shaped in such a way that they think they have to do all the household activities and male have to earn the money to run the family. Due to such concept of the women became the cause of the domination upon them. Women are being highly marginalized is due to socio and political conditions of the country. The socio condition of the society is highly traditional and favor only male and suppress the women. Their mind is shaped in such away they think that at any cost they have to serve to their husband and make family members happy. They are totally unaware about the political situation of the country. They do not know what is going in the country and what types of the law is implemented in the country. They think that their family and the society is everything for them and their duty is obeying the family and the society. The society is backward in every sector and the girls are more backward than male and girls are not allowed to read and lack of consciousness about the situation of the society. So, they curse their luck to be born as women.

The novel depicts the subjugation, victimization and objectification of women in the patriarchal Nepali society. And it is basically focused to critique the long reign of patriarchy over the bothered and marginalized female within four walls. The novel aims to scrutinize the inherent social and religious orthodoxy which is playing the vital role on the domination upon the female and focus how women revolt against them when they became conscious about the domination imposed upon them. Female think that resistance is the way to establish right and freedom of them. They resist for the justification of the society and challenge that if the chance and opportunity is

given to female they can handle easily. Gender is not the biological essence something natural but a social Construct, a learned behavior, a product of the language, culture and institutions. They think that women are equal to men. They are not only the means of bearing children; they should be allowed with equal rights as men. The culture, religion traditions work as the catalyst to victimize them, that ultimately makes women aware about such discrimination upon them and they resist for their empowerment, equal opportunities in the society.

The modern women are striving to be free and self-reliant by establishing a fair society where both the sexes male and female will be treated equally. Women pursue different methods and strategies while fighting against the traditional system. This suffering and alienation have become the causes of women protest. The main leading characters' Tara and Yogmaya are the symbol of protest of women in Nepali society. The changes they want to bring in the society cannot be achieved easily. So, they struggle continuously against the male dominated society. The only way to get out of such society is to resist against the patriarchal values society and to establish egalitarian society in the country.

## Works Cited

- Acharya, Narhari. "Nepali Upanyaasamaa laingik bibhedi karanakaa muddha" ( The issue of gender discrimination in Nepali novels), 2012.
- Adhikari. Gangadhar, "Yogmaya :Itihase anyaya gareko patramathinyaya"  
(yogmaya:Injustice Reversed on a historical character) *Naya Patrika*.  
<https://nayapatrika daily.com>
- Althusser, Luis. "ideology and ideological state Apparatuses" *Mapping Ideology*.  
Ed.Slavoj Zizek,London:Verso,1999.pp100-140.
- Atreya, Tika."Pustaka Samikshya : *Yogmaya* Eka Nyayika Phaisala."( Book review:  
*Yogmaya*, a just verdict") <https://janasewal.com>.
- Aziz, Barbara, Nimri. *Heir to a silent song: Two Rebel Women of Nepal*. Center for  
Nepal and Asian studies(CNAS), 2001.
- Bahlleda , Robert(2015) Patriarchy, Leaderships Educarional. PP 15-67
- Baral, H. *Marksabaada ra Sabaaltama odhyayana (Marxism and Subaltern  
Study)*,Sajha Prakashan, 2017.
- Basnet, Dambar Bahadur. "Krantikari Mahila: Yogmaya." *Samajik Andolanki Agradi  
tatha Kabi: Yogmaya*, edited by Matrika Timsina et.al., Nepal Adhyan  
Kendra, 2057 B.S., pp. 194-196.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books.1974
- Bhaukaji, Bimal.'Yogmaya Ayama'(The DimensionYogmaya)s  
<https://nagariknetwork.com/news>.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge,  
2007.

Cameron, D. Performing gender identity: Young men's talk and the Construction of heterosexual masculinity. In A.Jaworski and N. Coupland(Eds), *The discourse reader*(2<sup>nd</sup> ed.pp 419-432) Routledge.

Connell, R.W. *Gender in world perspective* .Polity Press.2009.

Dahal, Khem. *Nepali Upanyasko Uttar Adhunic kal : Nepali Upanyas ra Anya path*. NBD Prakashan, Dharan, 2065.

De. Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. New York: Alfred A.Knopf, inc. 1970.

Dhakal.Saradha, *Yogmaya : A novel of a rebel, a mediator and an inspirer*(Blog article)<https://saradadeupur.wordpress.com>

Engels, Frederick. *The Origin of the Family , Private Property and the State*. Resistance Books, 2004.

Garnett, Michael. "Agency and Inner Freedom." *NOUS*, 51:1, 2017, pp. 3-23.

Ghimire, Shikhar. "Sundar Shailima Karunik Katha." *Naya Patrika* 14 July, 2012.

Gramsci, Antonio-Sean p.Hier. " *The Formation of Intellectuals*." *Contemporary Sociological Thought, Canadian Scholars*. pp 49-57.

Hutt, Michael." *Journal of Language and Literature*,Vol.10.pp 1-10, 2019.

Kapoor, Ilan. *The Third Quarterly*,2004, Vol. 25. No.4. pp 627-647.

Karki ,Neelam. *Yogmaya*, Sangrila Book, Kathmandu, 2074 BS.

Lamichhane, Arpan. "Karunik Baal Kaatha" *Nagarik Dainik*: 27 July, 2012.

Lohani, Suresh. *Scholars' Social Studies and Creative Arts Series* for primary level students, 2015, approved by Curriculum Development Center Nepal, Ktm: Scholars publication and printing Pvt. Ltd.

Mishra, Indira. Transforming of the feminine Self in *Yogmaya*. *Journal of Language and Literature*.Vol.10. pp 48-61. 2019.



- Namri Aziz, Barbara. "Manaba sastra Bhandha Mathi." (Higher than Anthropology) <https://www.kantipur.com>
- Neupane, Amar. *Seto Dharti* Fine Print Book Publication 2068 BS.
- Niraula, Tirtha Raj, Interply of Power Relations in Neeharika's *Yogmaya: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis*.  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/dristikon.V10i1.34560>
- Niroula, Aaysush. "Spectators in Their own lives" *The Kathmandu Post* 26 May, 2012.
- Paudyal, Mahesh. Neelam's *Yogmaya: A revisionary rejoinder to flawed history*.  
<https://maheshpaudyal.blogspot.com>
- Poudel, Anjana. "Yogmaya: Eka Sangharsashila Samaja Rupantarana Kartha, Abhiyantar." ("Yogmaya: A Social Reformer Activist.") <https://www.khassokhas.com>
- Poudyal Dilip. <https://diluppoudyal.blogspot.com>
- Sedgwick, Evekosofsky. "Gender Criticism". *Redrawing the Boundaries*. Eds. Greenbelt, Stephen and Giles Gunn. New York: The MLA, 1992. pp 273-274.
- Sharma, Neha "Katha Baal Vivah Ko" *Nagarik Dainik*: 9 June, 2012.
- Shrestha, Mathura Prasad. "Yogmaya-Birsana Nasakine/Birsana Nahune Ek Birangana." *Samajik Andolanki Agradi tatha Kabi: Yogmaya*, edited by Matrika Timsina et.al., Nepal Adhyan Kendra, 2057 B.S., pp. 175-178.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*. Eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg  
London: Macmillan, 1988. Print.
- Timalsina, Ramji. "Itihasamathi Jiwanta Sambodhana," (Liverly Address to History) *Annapurna post*: 10 March 2018.

Wagle, Anup. "Historical Reality in the Fictional Existence," *Journal of Language and Literature*, Vol.10.pp 1-10, 2076.