

Tribhuvan University

Female Domination in Bedi's *I Take This Woman*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of the Master of Arts in English

By

Chet Bahadur Kathayat

Exam Roll no. 280064 (2065-2067)

Redg. no.6-2-215-98-2002

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

March 2021

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

Chet kathayat has completed his thesis entitled "Female Domination in Bedi's *I Take This Woman*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from November, 2020 to March, 2021. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

.....

Hem Lal Pandey

Supervisor

Date.....

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Female Domination in *I Take This Woman*" Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuwan University, by Chet Bahadur Kathayat, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Hem Lal Pandey
Internal Examiner

Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota
External Examiner

Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota
Head of the Department

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my thesis Supervisor Mr. Hem Lal Pandey for his continuous co-operation, guidance, comments and motivation in shaping this thesis. This research paper would not have been possible without his kind support and inspiration. I am thankful to the Head of Central Department of English, Professor Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota for his unwavering support and motivation. Similarly, I am equally grateful to all my respected professors and lecturers from the Department who helped me to comprehend the theoretical ideas. Their mentorship and guidance throughout the course helped me a lot.

I would also like to express my gratefulness and due respect to my parents Jaya Bahadur Kathayat and Parbati Devi Kathayat for their love and motivation. I express special thanks to my wife Mrs. Tulasi kathayat who continuously encouraged me to complete this work. At last I express my sincere thanks to my friends and colleagues for their direct and indirect supports in the preparation of this research work.

March 2021

Chet Bahadur Kathayat

Female Domination in Rajindra Singh Bedi's *I Take This Woman*

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes female domination in Rajinder Singh Bedi's novel, I Take This Woman from the perspective of feminism. It helps to clarify the gender roles with belief that males are primary and females are secondary. Bedi challenges this notion by positioning the central female character, Rano. This novel raises the voices of secondary position of female, women violence and exploitation in the patriarchal society. This novel provides initiative of women in the formation of modern society which provides equal roles and position to males and females. This novel shows the real life style of Panjabi village people of India where Rano is the main female character. The prime concern of this novel is to disrupt the traditional gender roles. The whole novel is an example of violence upon women. How the gangs of oppressors' make the vulnerable situation to women in patriarchal society can be clearly seen in this novel. Bedi has used the satiric views as his weapon to subvert the existing belief of women violence. Through this novel Bedi has tried to challenge the male ideology of superiority and create equality male and female.

Keywords: *Male hegemony, domination, patriarchy, discriminatio, violence, exploitation, oppression, faminne, etc.*

Introduction

I Take This Woman is one of the most powerful novels written by Rajinder Singh Bedi. It is translated into English by Khushwant Singh. It received a Sahitya Academy Award, too. This novel is a real picture of Panjabi village life. With the help of this novel he established himself as one of the leading writers of modern Urdu literature and was able to win the Sahitya Academy Award in 1965 AD. This novel consists of female domination in the patriarchal society. Bedi is able to carve the real picture of woman who is exploited by men and the society. It is one of the female stories where she denied the rules and regulations of male dominated society and was able to make her own way of living.

I Take This Woman is a novel written in feministic theme. The main female character (Rano) is compelled to remarry with Mangal who was brought up as her own son after her husband was killed. Rano is a strong female character who refused to sell her daughter to an old, brutal man which was desired by the mother-in-law. In this novel, Tiloka, Jindan, Meharban Das etc are other major characters of male ideology who always like to exploit innocent female characters. Sexuality, social evil, female exploitation and their protest against the male hegemony is the main knowledge of this novel.

Rajinder Singh Bedi's *I Take This Woman* is an example of female domination. He analyzed the universal problem of woman subjugation and their suppressed desire to survive with bare minimum level of self-respect. The writer has strong desire to portray the torn sentiments of these women folk in order to achieve harmony in the subdued means of survival. The great differences in history of abuse against women are too vast to be covered up in few pages yet this paper attempts to show some of the violence against woman. Since many centuries

women have been tortured, killed and subjugated. Although the book reflects the society of 1940s, the issues discussed here still seem contemporary.

I Take This Woman is a well-known novel where there is the central of critical interest and has got much critical responses after it was published. All the male and female characters fulfill the roles according to social norms. It has been researched through different aspects by different critics.

The story begins from the female character Rano, married to Tiloka who was a Tonga driver and tethered to a life of poverty, is actually a scathing critique of a social system where poverty is the root cause of all evil. Though far from an ideal husband, Rano is greatly content with her lot. Her husband beats her when he gets drunk, her mother –in- law abuses her, parents are absent after dumping her at husband's home. When her husband, Tiloka was killed Rano got remarried to her husband's younger brother, Mangal whom she had looked after as his own son. She is not only loved sister-in –law but also a mother figure – individual for him. Three yard cambric sheet (*a dirty sheet*) somewhat comes tattered and then comes to signify a transference of shelter and security from the dead husband to his younger brother. This story would have been a pathetic tale of woman's suppression and the wrongs that men do in the name of custom and continuity but in Bedi's hand it became a story of the triumph of the human spirit above time and circumstance. Rano, the femae character becomes a flesh and blood emblem of courage and strength.

India Gate has supported the view that the novel is a masterpiece of feministic writing. In *I Take This Woman* we encounter a poor woman, who is essentially sold to one man much older, brutal and then forced to marry his much younger brother after her husband's murder whom she had raised as a son. The villagers force her to remarry. It's the only way they can contain the

danger of widow's sexuality. A young profligate's way wards desires and the property involved to the point of beating the groom and dragging him to his own wedding. After that the final turn of the night comes when Rano is persuaded by force to give her consent to the marriage of her daughter with the man who had murdered her first husband. Rano cries "May my death come to me" she is caught by her aged father-in-law's desire to replace his dead son with a real one (102), her own desire to find approval at last from her 'long lost father' (102) then she should not fall forever outside what little share of order she has found. The novel ends with her having a blessing of the mother Goddess. Moving portrait of the powerlessness and suffering of this woman who must prove a survivor without the aid of a brother or father. (26)

The novel has received Shahitya Academy Award for its intensity in portraying the exploitation of woman folk.

I Take This Woman is a brilliant piece of work in the subject of male domination and cultural domination reviewed and awarded by the Shahitya Academy Award, which shows a raw slice of Punjabi village life. A woman compelled her in an unusual way to marry one whom she brought up as her own son. A brutal exploitation of sexuality, society and relationships marked by vivid realism and vigor of narration. (R.K. Narayan 94)

R.K. Narayan says "The novel is a reflection of subjugation of women in a male dominated society" (94). Here, the concern has been addressed enumerating and critically analyzing in detail the many stories of woman subjugation exemplified in Bedi's novel *I Take This Woman*. The writer has very categorically and systematically analyzed the universal problem of woman subjugation and their suppressed desire to survive with bare minimum level of self-respect. The author has very vehemently portrayed the torn sentiments of these women folk in order to achieve harmony in the subdued means of survival in male dominated society.

"Though the story speaks about the Indian subcontinent, yet the issue discussed is entirely universal. Since ages women have been tortured, killed and subjugated".

Force magazine volume 65, explains on Suffrage of Woman and Bedi as:

"This simple and haunting story captures the transience of life and its surrounding emotions. The language and the structure of the novel is showing female disagreement on the patriarchal society using unpunctuated language. The setting and the characters are also showing absurdity in the society. Bedi has realistically portrayed the inner life of a woman. It is a fascinating portrayal of the highly complex relationship that exists between individuals of how the myriad shape our outward behavior." (*Force Magazine*, 50p, 3 June 2001).

Feminism is a kind of thought which tries to dismantle the patriarchal social values and norms, that is against the natural law of equality. Feminism tries to liberate women from suffering and injustice. The movement of Feminism declares that women are also human beings like men. It is a massive complaint against the patriarchal monopoly. Feminism is the voice against the inadequacy, the distortion as well as ideologies of the males. Its main aim is to establish a healthy and equal society for both males and females. For Rowbotham, feminism is "The movement for women's liberation is a part of the creation of a new society in which there are any forms of discrimination. The society cannot be separated from the process of its making" (qtd.in Bryson 257). Feminism focuses on physical, economic, political, religious, psychological equality between men and women. It raises voice against high discrimination upon women based on the assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless.

The expression at the unjust treatment imposed upon women is feminism. Women refused to be shifted under oppression and restriction and intend to rebel against the hostile environment in which they live. It is a struggle or the revolution against the hardship and neglect

imposed upon women as “Patriarchy continually exerts forces that undermine women’s self-confidence and assertiveness, then points to the absence of these qualities as proof that women are naturally , and therefore correctly, self-effacing and submissive” (Tyson 85). Feminism struggles against this kind of false creation for the establishment of patriarchal regime. It is not against the males of society but against their monopoly and dictatorship. It raises questions against the phallogocentric ideologies, patriarchal attitude and male interpretation of literature, politics, religions, economics etc. There are high similarities with feminism and Marxism. Both of them attract the social injustice and discrimination.

All feminist activities include feminist theory and literary criticism which has its ultimate goal to change the world by promoting sexual equality. Feminist activities campaign on issues such as reproductive right, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment, discrimination and sexual violence.

The theme of feminist ideology is that rights, privilege, status and obligations should be determined by sexual identity. It addresses the issues relevant to women of the corresponding society with due respect. Feminism focuses on opposite sexual roles, physical equality etc. in stereotypes and discrimination against the women based on assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless. It also rejects the notion that the males are superior and females are inferior.

After the Second World War the movement of feminism started especially in the 1960s when the minorities’ voices like African- American, Jewish etc. emerged as movements. In that time the suppressed voices got chances to revolt. When the feminist revolution started they came up with an idea that females are in fact made inferior not by nature but by social mechanism.

Females were used as puppet to amuse males in the past, people said that female lack some qualities which males possess.

The feminist literary movement occupies its moral space and position in literature in the society. The first aim of the movement is to free women from oppressive restraints of society which fixes the women's identity within narrow boundaries. Feminists seek equal position of females as the males in the society in every field. Women also should be given the position of human being equal to men. Some other feminists thought that males are enemies for their rights and freedom. They also like to make their own individual existence and identity not the identity and existence given by male members of society. Feminists from western countries like to reconstitute the way of dealing with literature in order to do justice to female point of view, concerns and values. Lois Tyson says, "Feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature and other cultural productions reinforce or undermine the economic, political social and psychological oppression of women" (81)

The nineteenth and early twentieth century feminists authors like Mary Wollstonecraft, her daughter Mary Shelly, George Eliot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Virginia Woolf developed the revolutionary movement that strongly revolted against the male ideology that always tried to prove women inferior to men. The movement included the writing of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, Michele Barrette, Betty Ferden also contributed a lot in opposing and challenging the males' superiority complex and dominating attitude. For the contemporary era, they researched the social realities through the writings of male authors which made the female issue deaf. Although these late twentieth century feminists didn't stand on the base of earlier feminist directly, those earlier feminists' contribution helped them to specify their field. They paved way for modern feminist research, too.

Mary Wollstonecraft depicted how the industrialized Europe of the eighteenth century opposed against the married bourgeoisie women of the time in her book *A vindication of the Rights of Women*. She is an advocate of educational and social equalities for women. She compared the women of that period with caged birds. The sentimental novels of her time had harmful influence on woman's intellectual development and said, "Feminine weakness of characters often produced by confined education is a romantic twist of the mind, which has been very properly termed sentimental" (398). Women are always remaining in the story of love affair and feeling in their sentimental novel.

Male supremacy is a kind of belief that dominates women from every angle. Supremacy is power of the ruling class to convince other classes of their interest. In the past domination was not exerted by force but by power. The ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and comes to be taken for granted.

History is male centered and women are completely absent. The concept of history for women is inappropriate. Males thought that they are the ruler. In the patriarchal society it is thought that man's existence is possible without women because man is the subject and absolute whereas women are incidental and inessential being. Rosemarie Tong quotes in Millet's *Sexual politics* "feminism thought about the male's superiority. Tong quotes: "Patriarchal ideology, according to Millet, exaggerates biological differences between men and women making certain that men always have the dominant, or 'masculine' roles and those women always have the subordinate, or 'feminine' ones."

It is the historical study of the women writers as a distinct literary tradition. (Friedman 18) Eline Showalter coined this term in her essay *Toward a Feminist Poetics*. It relates a criticism that constructs 'a female framework for the analyses of women's literature, to develop

new models and theories'. (quoted by Groden and Kreiswirth from *Toward a feminist poetics, New feminism criticism*,131). The recent feminists also criticize on the bases of Gynocriticism for being essentialist, following too closely along the lines of Sigmund Freud and New criticism, and leaving out homosexuals and Afro-American women.

Gynocriticism is the study of feminist literature written by female writers inclusive of the interrogation of female authorship, images, the feminine experience and ideology and the development of female literary tradition. Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir began to review to evaluate the female image.

Bedi's novel *I Take This Woman* is a real reveal of oppressive female character of Rano, where the novel depicts her tragic story. The novel describes Rano as the perfect tragic housewife, who is timely exploited by her husband, Tiloka as well as the society. The writer, Bedi is a successful person to show the real complexities and conflicts. Generally the conflicts go to the whole female especially the rural women. The novel starts the poor situation of village woman, Rano in rural district of Punjab named "Kotla". The main character of novel is Rano, a housewife of Tanga driver, Tiloka. In the starting of novel, Tiloka, who is product of patriarchal society, always tries to dominate his wife Rano. Rano, also being a member of patriarchal society always obeyed whatever she is ordered to do physically, socially or sexually. Bedi writes: "A line of faces appeared over the mud wall. A crowd collected on the neighboring rooftops. He's killed her! the devil, he's murdered her! hai this urge! they cried from all sides. But not one had the courage to come down to help Rano" (16).

From the above few lines it is shown that the male character of the story, Tiloka tries to beat and kill his wife. He never tries to recognize Rano as a human being but only an object, an object of his own. Tiloka thinks that he can do whatever he wants to do to his wife, nobody can

interrupt between two of them. It is only him who can solve the problem by defeating his wife. In the course of Bedi's novel, Rano performs her sexual role perfectly, having qualities of female character, the dutiful wife and loving mother of five children (including Mangal). Tiloka is completely utter to Rano, and he is harsh, brutal, oppressive, and relatively unhelpful to his family. Men and women are separated into two distinctive categories that unquestionably pit ultimately.

The character of Rano alone represents the face of an Indian woman. Her part carries the stifled and the chains of being born under a stringent community. Woman needs a man in her life to complete her and make her whole that she accepts which is one of heart-breaking matter for her. Even though she married twice with brother-in-law Mangal who was brought up as her own son after her husband Tiloka was killed. Mangal is just like her son though she got married to him in the name of culture and tradition. The fate of women was fixed by the society. Rano was also affected by the rules and laws of so-called patriarchal society. So, she could not raise voice against the society. The novel climaxes on the most powerful and harsh truth "Undoubtedly a woman must have a sheet over her even if it is dirty" (120). Marriage is the ultimate solution which makes her happy and whole for woman. So, they are nothing without men. Women's fate must be written by the hands of men. It is the man who satisfies the woman. Women are dependent socially, economically. That's why they have no right in decision making in their own families. They are marginalized and exploited by the society and men.

Bedi's *I Take This Woman* somehow is related with Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). Simon De Beauvoir states that men fundamentally oppress women by characterizing them on every level as the other defined exclusively in opposition to men in *The Second Sex*. De Beauvoir says "We have seen woman as flesh, the flesh of the male is produced in the mother's

body and recreated in the embraces of the woman is related to nature, she incarnates it; vale of blood. Open rose, siren, the curve of a hill, she represents to man the fertile soil, the sap, the material beauty and the soul of the world and though her passivity she bestows peace and harmony but if she declines this role, she is seen forth with as praying mantis, an ogress. In any case she prepares as pleasure to others, though whom the subject fulfills himself; one of the measures of man" *The Second Sex* (1949). Rano, another character of Bedi represents the other; she is representative of women, who is incomplete and mutilated. She is immanent or inward. Woman is the object whereas the man is the subject. Man is essential, absolute and superior.

At the beginning of the novel, Bedi writes, "village women are like that they will overlook every fault of their husbands by pinning them on to other men. When Rano heard about Tiloka's being from anyone, although she would burn inside her, she would keep a straight face and say nothing" (8). These statements show that if their husbands have done faults and mistakes woman couldn't react and raise voice against them. Besides these things, women remain silent and overlook every fault of their husbands. They have built up these passive qualities. It is the society which treated them as a second sex.

After the death of Tiloka every member of the family were weeping in their own way. During that time, his daughter was also crying there. Watching the condition of her daughter on that very moment, Rano expresses:

"It's all her fault, screamed, Rano. Why was she born in the house of a father who was to die before arranging his daughter's marriage?"

And suddenly it flashed across Rano's mind as she stood on the threshold—'silly women,' she said to herself, "If you do not cry now, you will become the laughing

stock of the world not come to her eyes. Her own children appeared to be strangers; her house an alien place” (29)

Above statements are the best examples of male supremacy in the patriarchal ideology that makes the suffering of women character in the novel. In these statements Rano calls her daughter unfortunate girl because her father was died before the arrangements of her daughter's marriage. It is only father who can do for daughter and this can be done neither by a mother nor by the daughter herself. Not only that why she calls her daughter unfortunate one? She said so because marriage is very essential in order to make a girl a complete woman. That is why she has associated marriage with the fortune of a daughter. The days of suffering stated along with the day of her marriage that seems baseless and ironic to extent which was exemplified by her own life. If it is so, why doesn't she flash back to her own married life? Next intended meaning of this statement is that there is no sense of Rano over the death of her husband. But she can't do justice to her own desire because she expresses her compulsion to cry in order to show herself obedient to her husband even after his death in the eyes of her children and to the society. She wants to do so. But, no tears come in her eyes. That shows how harsh she was with her husband. Although she herself denies to show any kind of respect and sympathy to her dead husband, she is compelled to do so because she was afraid of the so called values of her society which were guided by the principles of the patriarchal ideology.

Not only Rano is affected in the patriarchal society but also her daughter Waddi also suffers which is exemplified with this expression as, “To avoid the daughter's attracting attention Rano kept her in rags. She never combed Waddi's hair, but let it scatter untidy over her face so that no one would cast an evil eye on the girl”(32). The above statement says that Rano was afraid of males. So, she is keeping her daughter in ragged condition. She is doing so not for the

negative purpose but for purpose of saving the life of her daughter from any possible danger from the side of male bigot. It also indicates the suffering of her daughter, Waddi because if there was a full of security of her life she would not remind with dirt and ragged condition. Waddi was a growing young girl. Along with the growth of Waddi, Rano's anxiety also goes on growing that she too feels the strong lack of her husband. It is a kind of effect of patriarchal ideology. It is clearer as:

Rano was despaired of Waddi's simple and unsuspecting nature; she feared that, deprived as she was of father's protection, Waddi would come to bed end. The day when their enemies took fancies to girl she would be a goner. The anxiety for a child future weighed on Rano. She began to lose weight. That she began to have fainting fits. (32-33)

The statements show the good examples of so called hegemony because Rano has associated the need of her husband presence for the safety, well upbringing and the bright future of her daughter. She accepts that she has to be too much anxious for her daughter due to the absence of her husband. She means to say that if there is the presence of her husband there would be no anxiety to her and there would be the guarantee of proper upbringing of her daughter. Due to her weakness Rano was not caring her daughter but due to the inferiority that she has hegemony of patriarchy. Besides these, other factors are also involving in the novel that women characters are suffering due to effect of patriarchy. With the strong effect of patriarchy women are concerned about how to keep their family happy and pleased. This novel either directly or indirectly deals with an issue of hegemony of patriarchy as the source of suffering to women. So, Rano is compelled to marry again with Mangal even if she has already four children. It shows the

facts that women can do nothing in the absence of man either in the form of husband or in the form of father etc. so it also supports the ideas of male hegemony.

The fifth chapter of the novel tries to show an idea of how women are pleased to get their husband as their breadwinners. In doing so a statement is expressed as:

A shiver of a thrill passed down Rano's spine as she took the slides in her hand.

'Ah! She exclaimed in an outburst of ecstasy-but only when Mangal was not listening. Mangal brought out a wad of notes and placed them in Rano's palm.

Tears brimmed in Rano's eyes. She didn't restrain her surprise. 'Eight rupees! How did you come by eight rupees?' (92)

In the above statement worth of Mangal is made high because his earning amount is presented as if that is impossible to Rano. The next important thing is Rano is pleased too much over the act of Mangal but Mangal is taking this thing as a minor one. Rano's tears may indicate both extreme happiness and weakness in relation to her male partner. After passing the time once Mangal and Rano were discussing about family matter. In the discussion, "you have lot of work to do. I know replied Rano, Looking down for some time again she continued 'what else were we woman created except for work" (106). The next male hegemony appears with the reference of festival in that village. All people visit the village in the festivals but Waddi is stopped from going there taking those areas not safe to the girl like Waddi. As the statements expresses: "It was the biggest festival of the year. Even the Hazoor Singh and Jidan went to the temple. But Waddi who had never failed to make her obedience to the goddess, stayed at home with her mother-it was not safe for a girl of her age to mingle in the milling crowds of lusty youths" (109).

From the given statements that women are kept away from being in touch with festivals and cultural programs by creating an environment of chaos and anarchy. This gives us clear

image of male dominated society. On the other sides, males can celebrate the festival with freedom but the females should prepare the necessary things for males and they should stay at home. That women managing the household work at home and males participating in the rituals works in temples or any other places shws a good example of male dominated society. In this way the novel depicts that condition of the society of Indian subcontinent where women are tortured and exploited too much not negating them but by making them the parts of male partners. The above instances show such relation of males and females. In the end, this novel is studied as an example of how male hegemony can be the source of torture and suffering to women.

Bedi's *I Take This Woman* gives a great importance to known of the sexual relations. The story of novel concerns with the struggle of village woman Rano, we can find the sexual discrimination not only on surface level but also in the deepest level of the story. The title of the story also symbolically satires thinking and misbeliefs of man brought up in the patriarchal society. We can find the cruelest examples of sexual discrimination in the novel. Many aspects of patriarchal world can be criticized by Bedi in many ways, where he likes to show the pathetic conditions of women generally exploited by their man. By constructing the character of Rano as a tragic figure, who is forced to get married with her brother in-law, Mangal Bedi criticizes the superstitious beliefs and customs of Punjabi village society.

In the beginning of the novel, Rano who was introduced as a weak character but at last she manages to get the position of revolting woman. Rano always feels lower than her husband as a product of patriarchal society. She tried to raise her voice against her husband and the society but she was frequently oppressed by the male sand society. Her parents thought that she became the burden for them. So, they wedded her with Tiloka, a drunkard. Rano's need became

a problem as she grew into womanhood because her parents were destitute. Rano thinks, "Rano's parents were destitute. As Rano grew to womanhood her needs became a problem. So they sold her to Tiloka and simply disappeared from the village" (13). Daughters and girls of poor parents are always burden for them. Having a daughter is curse for them and they always create problems. Rano's parents also sold her to Tiloka and vanished. Further we can find the sexual issues in the novel. Rano went indoors and began to pack her things in her little steel trunk as she was going away: "O god, do not burden even an enemy with the curse of a daughter! she is hardly grown up when her parents throw her out to living stranger, and if the parents-in-law don't like her, they kick her back to her parents' home. She is like a ball made of cost of rags" (18).

Minds of all the women including Rano of Kotla village are affected by the patriarchal rules and values. Whereas they are not born with this but they are implicated by the society. Even their folk songs are also affected by this:

Waddi the daughter of Rano usually sings the songs.

My brother's come back from play, he's hungry.

I'll roll and bake him a mound to eat.

We've come on to our rooftop

I've a brother tall as a bamboo

My brother's wife is slender as the cypress

My brother's wife wears gold in her nose. (12)

From their folk songs, they could not enjoy their moment even in personal doing of freedom and life is like a hell. They are depriving from their personal freedom. They did not sing their own

songs but they give more priority to the men's songs. They thought that their duty is to satisfy their brother's hunger. It is also a fine example of discrimination based on the sex.

Another example of sexual discrimination is that woman should have a man or husband, whether they are good or bad. It is said that marriage makes the woman perfect. They don't have the right to choose their own man. The society or the elder people have to choose the females' fate. But, these so called elder people are not sincere to choose the right person. If women try to do their own activities, then men's ego hurts. Men cannot tolerate and start exploiting women. Women consciously or unconsciously follow the rules which are fixed by the society. Rano is also concerned about her daughter. She thinks that her daughter will be treated like her. Waddi, daughter of Rano has no future and will spend her life like other women in the village. Rano says "When your time comes, you too will meant" (18). Rano said to her daughter and worried about her life. She is terrified and wants her daughter's beautiful life. The society makes her to think like so. Further in the novel "Rano began to collect things for the dowry. She began to think of finding a young man who would take her daughter away as soon as possible. But, there were not dowries to give to the girls" (33). In the novel, the concern of dowry system makes terrified to Rano and it is a matter of concern to all women who have daughter. Dowry system plays a vital role in the exploitation and sexual discrimination in the novel. Not only in the Rano's society but also in our society, parents have to give dowry to their girls whether they are rich or poor. Dowry makes the girls' fate good because if we give plenty of dowries to our girls they will get good husbands. If you have no dowry then it is a curse for your girls. Firstly, they will not get their husband. Secondly, even if they get husbands then their suffering starts. The customs of dowry makes exploitation in women. Rano is a perfect woman, dutiful wife and caring person for her children, could never satisfy her husband and mother-in-law only because she didn't bring too

much dowry to them. This kind of treatment comes to life as she fails to grasp beyond the depths of her female role in the society as a wife or as a mother.

Bedi's novel *I Take This Woman* shows the example of sexual discrimination on the basis of social norms and customs. Social exploitation of a woman is also related with sexual discrimination. In the novel, the character Rano is frequently exploited socially, economically, physically and sexually. Rano is forced to marry one whom she brought up as her own son. It is the worst thing which has happened in her life. She fought against the society herself but could not revolt against it. At first, Tiloka treated her in a wrong for her, but marrying with Mangal is totally brutal. When Rano became widow after Tiloka died then society and her mother-in-law started to torture her. They believe that Rano is responsible for that. Jidan, being a woman, she never tried to understand Rano's feelings and pains. Besides this, she started to beat her and scold her, seeing that other women of the village suggested Rano to remarry. Chhano said:

This old woman, Jindan – your mother –in-law – she will not let you live in peace, she will not let you be mistress of the house. There is only one way you can do it. ! 'How?'

'You should marry Mangal, let him take you under his mantle'

'I am telling you the right thing to do. When the elder brother dies.....?'. (39)

It is believed that being a woman one could not understand the pain of another. The society has no right to get her married with Mangal. Nobody could imagine that one marrying with her own son like person. We find a vast division between male and female in the patriarchal myth. They define males as a first sex, primary, subject and patriarchal with soul but females are second sex, secondary, other and soulless objects. Sex is a social cultural construct which is

created to insure the rule of man over woman. From the following statements it has been proved. It is discourse between Pooran Dei and GyanChand. Chand says: "All right, about Rano. I am of the opinion that he should take Rano under his mantle. Why should a woman brought to our village have to go to another? Why should we have to look around for other man? This sort of thing can bring a bad name to the village and its men folk" (44).

It is clear that women are nothing than an object, according to the statements. The society drags the sexuality in woman's life. If Rano doesn't get married with Mangal it will be shameful and hurt their manhood so they must defeat woman. Gyan Chand raises his head and thinks that he can sort out the problem. It is man's business rather than woman's.

According to the writer, this novel is based on the myth of patriarchy where female is treated badly. Bedi presents his ideas very freely about the hardship and discrimination of woman: "I don't know. But the elder of the village are all for it. And you know what they say; the voice of the five elder is the voice of God" (112). This extract shows the sexual discrimination over female. How males in the patriarchal society treated to females, who are like a commodity to obey orders and act according to the whim and fancy of males. When Rano rejected to give her daughter to the murderer of her husband Tiloka, her father –in- law and other people of the village forced her to do so.

Why the people are forcing Rano for something that is not justifiable because she could decide what is good or bad for her daughter being a good mother. She could not restrict the influences of the society. She thought she was nothing in front of the society. Rano says, "what else were we women created except for work?" (106). In a patriarchal society females are like valueless objects and they are used as a commodity like a thing of beauty. Rano also gets tortured, abused, brutalized, and dishonored. Females have to suffer all the torture of males. But

such types of darker sides are hideous crime in patriarchal society is normal. All ideas, manners, souls are modified and constant due to the pressure of males in patriarchal society. Commenting on the status of women Juliet Mitchell observes, "Economically woman is the most highly exploited group they are also the most physically determined as inferior. This is of course their position within each race or class. But as a sex, despite national, racial or class differences, they share the overall inferiorization which is total" (Mitchell 67).

In the novel sexual exploitation of women can be found. Bedi describes males as a wolf ready to attack upon the female body. The male characters like Tiloka, Chaudhary, Meharban Das are exploiters of women's body. They use women as a pleasing object and characters like Jehlum, Rano, Salamat are exploited by the hand of males. The given statements also show the women exploitation by men. "The poor thirteen-year old innocent had only a pair of hands as soft as rose petals to defend herself against the Chaudhary's amours. She put them together to pray to be left alone, but that was of little avail. Her skin was as soft as that of a water melon and as easy to pierce with the knife of lust that Meharban Das used" (11).

In the above passage Male fantasy can be seen in patriarchy society. Meharban Das was rich person in the village and has a lust of female. He exploited many girls sexually. He didn't have kindness to girls, so, he abused child, too. He was rapist. He quenches his sexual thirst with women. Further in story; Tiloka, at the Naseeban wala Tanga stand looking for a female passenger for Chaudhary Meharban Das's rest house, with its promise of dainty dishes consumed in a cozy bed to be sure, Tiloka took all these trouble for Chaudhary Meharban Das. But everyone blamed him. And all he got for his pains was half a chop of meat and a bottle of distilled orange liquor (10). That means Tiloka was organizer of female and Chaudhary is as a consumer. Tiloka gets orange juice then he manages the females for the Chaudhary. Another side, Tiloka was also

involved with another girl for sexual harassment though he was married with Rano. In that society, males were allowed to have more than two women in their lives and they have extra marital affairs. But females are not allowed to do so. When Rano found, then she tried to separate Tiloka from that woman. She went to holy man who had set himself up beneath the leafless tree. He was said to have undergone arduous penance and thus gathered great merit. It said that he wore a steel bracket about his lions and never deigned to look at woman. So the female's body is nothing but a commodity which is transacted in a form of thing. Various female characters, across the novel reveal a male obsession and fascination with female body and sexuality. Bedi offers an exploration of this systematic oppression of Punjabi women that occurs regardless of their class, cast, religion and language that brings them under the common umbrella of victimization.

Women are excluding from the benefits of trade and profession in the patriarchal society. Women themselves can be the exploiter of females, they have been hegemonized in patriarchal society by patriarchal values. Mother-in-laws exploit the daughter-in-laws. Patriarchal values are so rooted deeply that women themselves do not know how they have been exploiting and how they have been exploited. Mother also exploits her daughter by teaching her to follow the patriarchal values in the name culture and tradition.

In *I take this woman*; the plot of the novel begins with the description of the daily affairs of Tilok's family. Rano and Tilok's involve in the quarrel when he comes in contact with another girl. During the time of quarrel, Mangal suggests that his mother should not take part in the quarrel between husband and wife. At that time his mother, Jidan responds,

Why shouldn't I stick my nose in whenever I like? Shrieked old woman, He earns, he drinks. He doesn't go begging at the door of that pimp, who's gone to hell himself and left his sluttish daughter with us!"

His mother's words made Tiloka more violent. He tore off Rano's clothes till she had nothing to leave on her. And he yelled as loud as he could, "get out! Get out of my house at once!" Rano was out of breath she started to moan..... "I won't live here. I will live myself"(16).

In the given statement, the main factor of Rano's suffering is the abuse of her mother-in-law, Jidan. She said that the males could spend money for whatever they liked without permission of their wives. And a wife who has brought no dowry has no values. She thought that Mother-in-laws are the superior to their daughter-in-laws. Rano should follow whatever she said whether that is good or bad. Women themselves play a vital role in exploiting women and it is not an individual but of the systems that deeply rooted in the society. The evidence of women's exploitation by women can be found by the remarks of Jidan when she abuses her daughter-in-law and says, "Whore witch! Ogress! You ate my son. And now you have your mouth wide open to swallow us. Get out! Go whichever way your fancy takes you. There is no place for you in this home" (31). Through the statements we can say that Jidan uses such abusive words to her daughter-in-law because she is guided by the principles of the patriarchal ideology. In the patriarchal ideology women are not human beings, they are evil that is taking place in the family. It is due to Jidan throwing piles of blame to Rano though there is no hand of her for the happening of that incident.

There is dispute between Rano and Jidan in the later part of the novel and Jidan was beating Rano severely. At that time Mangal stops his mother beating to Rano. On that occasion

Rano expresses, “Rano, who had not wept since her husband’s death, broke down and sobbed bitterly: “why should I get out? What haven’t I done for this family? Haven’t I borne a daughter? What is that I have not . . . ?” (37). From the frequent questionings of Rano we can say that as a daughter-in-law, Rano has obeyed her duties and her responsibilities towards her family though she could not satisfy her mother-in-law. Jidan has accepted Rano as a mere object not as an individual of identity which is an extreme state of patriarchal hegemony.

A woman does not have any dignity or self-respect in patriarchal society, when Rano consults with her mates about her problem, Chhano, one of close friends of Rano who advises her to marry with Mangal. Chhano says: “This old woman, Jidan your mother- in –law, she will not let you leave in peace, she will not let you be mistress of the house there is only one way we can do it! How? You should marry Mangal; let him take you under his mantle” (39).

There is a kind of passivism in *I Take This Woman*. In this novel Rano is passive not because they are passive by nature but because they have been made passive. Due to the cultural and social conditions, Women have been paralyzed, and beaten too. Not only the young women are affected. The old women affect mentality and treat their younger generation badly. The society remains structured in ways that favor men and disfavor women in comparison.

To end the exploitation, women should get freedom to live. They should understand the social and cultural system of how they have been exploited. They should raise the voice against the false consciousness in the patriarchal norms and rules. They should struggle unitedly for their rights, equality, liberation and freedom.

Rajinder Singh Bedi’s, *I Take This Woman* (1967), attempts to explore the sexual issues by applying the feminist perspective that explores the roles of the female character that is contradictory. Women follow the rules and values silently and blindly in the society. We find

that female characters are often marginalized, victimized and exploited mentally and physically till the end of the novel and fight against the patriarchal values and rules. They fail to achieve their goals even by raising the voice against such rules and norms.

At the beginning of the novel Rano is quarreling with her husband Tiloka. He has a habit of drinking and usually comes home with his orange liquor and when Rano interferes, he starts beating her, "You've brought your other wife on the pot and stood up: you've brought your other wife into the house?" She demanded "Often or not, I am not going to let you drink here" replied Rano tartly. "Where is the bottle? I'd like to see what she has that I haven't" (15).

In the above extract, we come to know that though Tiloka used to beat Rano, still Rano tried to fight against Tiloka. Rano thought that orange liquor is the second wife of Tiloka when he bought it. Rano got inner strength and force even though she was a simple village woman. The story further tells us that, "Rano put up a good fight. She dug her teeth into Tiloka's hand(16). This statement shows the Rano's fighting spirit. Like Rano every woman has her inner strength to fight against the injustice which is going through their lives. Rano tolerates to some extent but not totally. Though she tried but fails to achieve to get the goal of freedom.

In *I Take This Woman* Bedi tries to portrait the real picture of pathetic figure of woman. Rano faces the optimum level of torture by her husband, mother-in-law and the society. So, such behavior makes her riot. Rano was too much depressed and strong enough to fight against the patriarchal society. Rano says: "I'll go where I like! What's that to do with you?" Retorted Rano wailing louder "I'll take a job somewhere; I'll earn enough to fill my belly: I am not going to be a burden on anyone for the sake of a couple of chapattis. If there is no other place of me in the village, I will go to the temple" (19).

It is said that women are passive ones it is said, women can tolerate all the tortures given by males and the society. But, in the given statement females seem weak outwardly and their judgments are weak we think but in reality they are too strong enough as males. When Tiloka beat Rano mercilessly she was not worried about suffering and pain. But, she built up her inner strength and like to manage to build obstacles and problems. At this point, Bedi developed Rano's character as a rebellion. She gathers her inner strength in her mind and thinks:

If Tiloka brings liquor into the house again, I will swallow a mouthful of arsenic . . . or stab my belly with the antlers of a stag . . . or take some of the dog poison they gave to kill the bitch, bori like that dog Daboo, This wretch will only sniff at my corpse and turn away. He may shed a tear or two- if not for me, at least for his motherless children..... where are my parents? to go back to, nothing to look forward to. No, I must not die; it will only please my mother-in-law, who will undoubtedly say "Good riddance!" (23).

From the statements we can understand clearly that Rano is fighting for her husband and the society not only for her children but for the whole womanhood which she belongs too. Her inner soul inspired Rano for revolt. Meharban Das and Ghanisham were arrested by the police:

Thank God! Exclaimed Rano! Channo I will celebrate this by giving every one sugar-candy. They've been molesting other people's daughter; now they will be the son -in-law of the government! Rano clapped her hands and began to dance: I am going to dance. I am going to dance the Giddha! She looks joining her palms in prayer: Goddess Devi, must Holy mother, I thank you . . . You heard my prayer . . . the day has been blessed! (26)

From the above passage, Rano was very much pleased by the punishment of Meharban Das and Ghanishyam. These two characters of the novel are basically representatives of patriarchal society. They are cruel and brutal. They are the bourgeois persons, too. Rano wants to live her life according to her senses and understanding not as per the definition of daughter and woman seeking freedom from the bourgeois' definition of women's intellectual and imaginative abilities.

Rano's Marriage with Mangal is also symbolically revolted because Rano was only agreed when she thought about the future of her children. That is totally brutal and unbelievable because one could not marry with whom she brought up as her own son. But for the sake of her children she sacrificed herself. It is her revolting instincts and power which made her strong enough to bear that tragedy. At first she rejects the proposal strongly. We can notice in the extract. Rano started with a jerk. Was the woman talking of her daughter's marriage? Of course, it was hers! she became as stubborn as a child! no, no no!!, she repeated (51) .

In the above extract we come to know that Rano is trying to fight against her marriage which was set by others. The conscious mind of Rano knew that it is wrong and she has to take stand in her decision. Her revolting attitude makes us aware that she has power and strength. When other women forced her, she began to beat her breast. "Let me go! For God's sake set me free! This will kill me she fell in faint. The woman took water in palm fowls from the pitches assembled for the wedding, poured it on Rano's mouth and splashed it on her fall" (61). Bedi's characters fall as a weak personalities but have inner strength. She is the saver and destroyer of her children. She broke the rules of the society and starts revolting with her mother-in-law. Jindan likes to sell her granddaughter Waddi but Rano protest against that. Due to anger, she

could not respect and speak: "Old Jidan started by demanding Rs.1000. The bargain was concluded for Rs.550. The men were satisfied; they went always to give Jidan fine to think it over. The hag had chosen a time when Rano was out picking cotton. Now getting the money from the men and handing over the girl to them"(45). The given statement shows the real motive of Jidan. She is so cruel so she tried to sell her granddaughter for a penny. Rs. 550 is the value of Waddi as she is treated like commodity. In her womanly quality Rano reacted against this brutalism. She brushed aside her daughter and ran to face Jidan. She forgot her place and status, she was like an angry hen when its chicks are in danger will fight a hawk to the death: "Who were the men who came here today? Who had the audacity to enter my courtyard and bargain for the sale of my daughter? She roared" (46). This kind of attitude makes Rano strong. Her pain and anger are the main source of revolt. Rano is not only fighting for her daughter but also for herself. She again says, "No one can now turn me out of my house. No one can sell my daughter. Isn't that enough? (77).

The character of Rano has both strength and weak in a mixed way. In many difficult situations Rano made her life meaningful and remarkable one. When Mangal was influenced by Salamat Rano was able to save her husband from Salamat. Before their marriage Mangal had relation with Salamat. After their marriage Rano and Mangal fail to develop their relations and live as like unknown. At that time Mangal likes to develop the relation with Salamat. By understanding this Rano forced herself to develop physical relation with Mangal. Giving the permission of Waddi's marriage Rano gives another strong character: "The scene attracted the pilgrims from the temple. They waited for the judgment. It seemed as if the future of the world 'Yes, life would begin again. If she said yes, 'No, it would stop running. The world would loud its voice; the torch its light. God himself would cease to be" (121). This extract shows us that

Rano is a good character who can understand the future of the generations. So Rano at last, agreed with her daughter's marriage. She thought that if she said no her daughter would be lonely for whole life and become a spinster. Rano lifted her head from father-in-law's head and spoke distinctly "Bapu it shall be as you wish" (121). Her softness and forgiveness makes her strong in her life. Rano is a representative of today's woman.

Feminist literature is a major subject matter to feminist critics today. Bedi deals with feminism to raise voice for the equality of woman in the novel. Sexes have the reasonable relation which can be seen in his novel. He presents the sexual differences under the subversion of the traditional patriarchal sexual binary opposition. The pathetic condition of a woman and the dominated society to be a human like the male can be representing by Bedi.

Rano, a main heroine of the novel is victimized by the patriarchal society and the idea of woman as a mere object or other found expression in this novel not only in the marriage but also in every walk of Rano's life. She is treated as a slave and commodity of satisfying her husband's hunger, which makes Rano's pain never end. Rano has been exploited till the end of the novel where she was tortured by her husband, mother-in-law and the society. She is exploited physically, mentally and sexually. Other female members like Rano in the novel also reveal the male passion with female body and sexuality. The sexual exploitation, victimization and emotions of women are strictly controlled and exploited through cultural traditions and the manipulations of religious rules regarding the position of men and women in the society. Male satisfies his hunger of sex with female's body even if she is ready or not.

Bedi's I take this Novel includes such themes such as women suffering, women exploitation, exploitations of the man dominated society and some others. Throughout the novel, we see the suffering of a woman named Rano and the domination of society over her. She was

forced to marry again by the society after the death of her husband, Tiloka. The novel also depicts the grim undercurrent of ruthless tragedy under the placid surface of rural India. In this way, the novel seems to be the pathetic tale of woman's suppression. The novel shows a clear picture of male dominated society. The novel also depicts how a woman suffers under the domination of the society through the character of Rano. The central character of the novel, Rano shows the the situation of a woman in contemporary Indian society. In such a society freedom for women is far from imagination.

I take this woman is a pathetic tale of woman's suppression in the sense that in every bad happenings females are blamed and treated badly though they are natural events occurring on their own without any external effort. The male dominated social values and customs make the protagonist character Rano suffer a lot throughout her life. Poverty also seems to be the root cause of all evils. Women are suppressed, oppressed and inhumanly treated by the patriarchal society where no freedom and equality offered to them. They are given no important and decisive roles to do certain task. Their fate seems to be in the hands of men and society. So, Bedi's main purpose behind writing this novel is to oppose male hegemony and raise the voices against patriarchy for providing equal rights, freedom and justice to the women who are kind, cooperative and of caring nature. By providing equality and justice to women they can lead themselves to the path of progress and development.

The novel reveals that men and women are different on the level of competing social status where men are at top of the society and female are at the bottom. Males are more superior to females. How males take advantages of position of being superior that Bedi has been able to show. Male tries to impose his own rules and regulations that females are depriving of their fundamental rights. The main reason of female's victimization is to depend upon the male for

economic dependency. Most of the female characters depend upon their male partners for their economic situation that helps male to exploit their female partners. Females must be independent socially, physically as well as economically to be free from all types of exploitation and only then they can get progress in their lives.

Bedi explores the issues of marriage and its importance in the traditional society. Rano is enforced to get married twice because people of traditional society thought that marriage is the ultimate solution for the happiness for every woman. A woman cannot be happy without a man, so she must have a man in her life. Without male partner female is incomplete and unhappy because the only man can give the worldly pleasure to woman. Woman cannot continue her social as well as economic life without a man. That is why Rano was remarried with Mangal though she brought him as her own son. The final great tragedy came in her life when Rano is forced to give consent to the marriage of her daughter to a man who murdered her first husband as she is caught by her aged father-in-law's desire to replace his dead son with a real one. So Rajinder Singh Bedi offers an exploration of this systematic oppression of women that occurs regardless of their caste, class and language. In this way, Bedi has tried to oppose and challenge male ideology that leads female domination in a society to create equality between male and female.

Works Cited

Adam, Hazard. *Critical Theories Since Plato*. Revised ed. USA : Horcourt Brace

Jovanovich, 1992.

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8th ed. New Delhi : Magic International

Printer, 2008.

Bedi, Rajindar singh. *I Take This Woman*. Library of South Asian Literature. Delhi:

Majruh, 1967.

Bedi, Rajindra Singh. Suffrage of woman, Force Magazine. New Delhi: Majruh, 2001.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The second sex*. Vintage Books, 1974.

Chhetri, Srijon (L.B.) and T.P. Poudel. *A Critical History of Literary Theory Since Plat*. 2nd ed.

Kathmandu: Kshitiz Prakashan, 2008 B.S.

Mitchell, Margaret. *Gone with the Wind*. Pan Books, 2014.

Mitchell, Juliet. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A radical Reassessment of Freudian*

Psychoanalysis. Basic Books, 2000.

Narayan R.K. Review of *I Take This Woman*, 10 sept, 2005.

Risman, Barbara. *Sexual as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling wit Activism Sexual*

and society 18.4 (Aug.2004).

Showalter, Eline A *Literature of their Own! British Woman Novelist from Bronte to*

Lessing. Blackwell: Oxford, 1996.

Showalter, Elaine, *the New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and theory*.
Pantheon, 1985.

Showalter, Elaine, "Towards a Feminist Poetics, "Women's Writing and Writing about women.
Cromhelm, 1979.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and
Moral Subjects*. London Press, 1792.

Walters, Margaret. *Feminism A short introduction*. Oxford university, 2005.

Witt, Charlotte. *Feminist History of philosophy*. Oxford University, 2006.