

Tribhuvan University

Liberation Conscience in Leena Yadav's *Parched*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University for the Approval of the Research Committee

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Kirtipur, Kathmandu

2022

Tribhuvan University

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Letter of Recommendation

Rita Kandel has completed her thesis “Liberation Conscience in Leena Yadav's *Parched*” under my supervision. She has completed her research in September 2022. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Liberation Conscience in Leena Yadav's *Parched*” submitted to the Central Department of English, TU, Kirtipur, by Rita Kandel has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my research supervisor Dr. Raj Kishor Singh, Central Department of English, for providing intellectual guidance, critical comments, genuine suggestion, and essential reading materials. His supervision and inspirational suggestion helped me to prepare this research paper.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota, the head of Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for approving this research paper in present form. I am grateful to him for his valuable suggestions and guidance.

I would also like to express my gratitude to other lecturers and my colleagues who really motivated me during the research.

Likewise, I must wholeheartedly acknowledge my deep gratitude to my father, mother, sister, and brother for their great encouragement.

September 2022

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Abstract

The main thrust of this thesis is to show how the sense of self-discovery and independence comes into the mind of the protagonists Bijli, Lajjo, Janaki and Rani in the movie Parched as they undergo different types of unequal treatments on the basis of gender. Indian society is a patriarchal society where women are taken as commodity and their agency is not perceived. But these female characters become aware of how patriarchy misbehaves them. Bijli is used by her boss in order to earn money. Janaki's father sells her in 4 lakhs; Lajjo is stigmatized as barren women whom her husband uses to fulfill his daily necessities and Rani is compelled to suppress her desires and compelled to live her whole life as child-widow. Their psyche revives in order to challenge the social setting. Consequently, they deny what patriarchy says in order to get rid of all kinds of injustice that have been exercised upon female civilization for last many decades in Indian continent. They are fed up with the patriarchal codes and conducts and thus challenge it. They can control over their own body and mind in A Room of One's Own. Submissiveness, docility, fragility, and feebleness are attributes women reject in favor of self-exploration and emancipation as feminism envisions.

Keywords: Self-exploration, liberation, female identity, submissiveness, patriarchal ideology.

Leena Yadav's movie *Parched* depicts a pretty bleak picture of the reality of life of women in Indian patriarchal society which entails that there is no place for female in an Indian society. The movie deals with issue of women of different ages in the Indian Hindu society. Although they are from different ages, locations, occupations and castes, they have one thing in common that is the pursuit of self-

exploration and liberation conscience. They perform various activities in order to make themselves free from their respective socio-cultural boundaries and rustic circle of male chauvinism that had been descended since last many years in Indian continent. They are socially, economically and politically marginalized. They become victims because of the discourses created by those in position of authority who use their power to make statements about female who lack in power or authority. Truths about people and objects are created through discursive practices. Such truths are not natural, but created ideologically to subjugate and rule women for the benefit of the rulers and holders of power and authority. Leena Yadav takes audiences into the aggravating and thought-provoking region where women are deliberately buying and selling in the name of marriage.

The film starts where Rani, Gulab's mother and Lajjo her friend go to see a girl for her son Gulab. It discloses that according to their previous bargaining, deal was almost fixed in three lakhs, but Janaki's (bride's) father directly says that he is not ready to give his daughter to them in three lakhs. He demands four lakhs for his daughter. Meanwhile he feels proud that he has already three daughters and says, "God sends one daughter after another" (03:15). By this statement it seems that Janaki's father is happy because he would sell his other 3 daughters too in a high price, they are also beautiful and grown up. The early twentieth century's South Indian social reality depicts that the girls are like commodity, that can be frequently buy and sell. Janaki, a fifteen years old girl, mercilessly treated in the hand of her own father, and her sisters are also waiting for their customers. Their father is thankful to God, that he has blessed "God's will" (03:10). The society where girls are things to be sold and their parents are proud of it. The politics of female body is manifested throughout

the movie as the fertile land that can be used as a commodity in order to fulfill the requirements of patriarchal society.

Lajjo is another female character who struggles in order to fulfill her husband's desire and necessity. Her husband drinks all the time and hovers upon her to fulfill his physical hunger. He forgets all the humanitarian aspects, whenever he meets Lajjo, he grabs her and fulfills his erotic desires. He does not care about the basic and fundamental things whether she is ready for copulation or not. As patriarchy privileges him, he beats her on a daily basis. His activities upon her are nothing more than that of commodity and an inanimate object. Society has insulted her relentlessly because she is unable to give birth to a baby. She is declared as barren woman. She is treated as the matter of shame in the society. Socially women are taken as inferior creatures. They are nothing more than that of child producing machines. As torture increases to unbearable situation, Bijli, Lajjo's friend discloses the fact that her husband may be impotent. Fortunately, her advice turns to be true as she makes sexual relationship with another person secretly. This is her debut for the pursuit of self-exploration and liberation from patriarchal brutality upon women.

Rani got married at 15 to an alcoholic husband Shanker who was widowed at the age of 17. She struggles throughout her life to keep her desires and wishes within her for her insensible son, Gulab, who indulges himself in drinking, vandalizing, looting, gang-staring, stealing and burgling. He spends all his time in mischievous tasks.

Rani, whose husband had died when she was only 17 years old. Society does not provide her the privilege of remarriage because in an Indian society widow marriage is beyond imagination. Socially constructed rules and regulations are road-blockades in her life on the one hand and on the other hand her own son, Gulab does

not show any mercy towards her widow mother in her early age. He does nothing in house; all the time he spends all the money earned by his own mother in alcohol and porn films. Janaki all the time waits for him but he visits different brothels and sex workers and spends all the money earned by widow mother.

In the movie, all the women are used as the means of tools to collect money and compelled to dance as the puppet in the hand of patriarchy. Bijli, a beautiful girl is manipulated in the hand of her master named Sharmaji. Sharmaji runs “Ujhas Sanskrit Manch” (1:18:08) on a daily basis where Bijli works as a dancer. He manipulates her in terms of collecting money and matter. Dancing and providing physical service is her primary task in which she gets a nominal economic benefit. This is patriarchal society where women become matter of source of income. Bijli who works for her master could not quit her job and fly away because she is aware about the situation of the Indian society where women are taken as second class citizens. She is well known about her exploitation. Therefore, she occasionally threatens her master that she could fly away to Bombay and settled her own family. She raised a question “Why is woman getting fucked in every cuss?” (1:00:10), because cuss is made by patriarchal society. Her question is due to her longing for the pursuit of self-exploration and liberation.

Another female character Rani, a child widow is hypnotized by patriarchal norms and values. She sacrifices all her desires and ambitions for rearing and caring of her own son Gulab. She could not leave her house and responsibilities that have been laddened by patriarchal society and rejects the marriage proposal that deliberately comes via mobile phone and says, “a 32 years old widow with a 17 years old son” (00:48:12). In an Indian society, the position of widow is strictly restricted for love and romance, but knowing all these things Rani challenges

hitherto existing social norms and values for her pursuit of self-exploration and liberation.

There is no recognition of women in the society. In order to regain the lost agency and women-self Rani, Lajjo, Bijli, Janaki and other female characters deliberately raise the question raising the contemporary south Indian society. Janaki does not want to marry with Gulab, hence she cuts her hair in order to dismiss marriage, but her father already sold her, that's why this marriage could not be tolerate. Lajjo takes a great deal with her life and ready to make relationship with another person for possible pregnancy that later turns true. Bijli time and again threatens her master to run away to Mumbai and settled her own life where she could take breath freely. Revolution can be seen in the moves and chores of Janaki. Being a married woman in Hindu society, where married women are severely restricted to meet boyfriend, she continues meeting with her boyfriend, disobeys the rules and trims her hair short and finally taking the consent of Rani she flees away with him. In the same way, another woman Nabi challenges the existing social norms by rejecting their rules. She goes to next village as she has been teaching as a teacher. Champa, another female character discloses the secret that how her father-in-law and brother-in-law forcefully make sexual relationship with her.

Parched is traced within many critical approaches since its release in 23 Sept. 2016. The story of this movie shows the sense of troubles faced by the protagonist. Although the Indian women in the movie often relegate to margin, they run to search for their own identity and independence. Especially, the five characters, Rani, Lajjo, Bijli, Janaki and Champa are victimized by Indian patriarchal social norms and values. Funny jokes on patriarchy traded between female characters in the movies

focus on the growing awareness of intersectional bonds. Latika Gupta's inquiry on *Language, Cinema and State: A Gender Perspective* exposes "Jokes which make fun of women in a sexual context establish men's power in sexual conduct and thereby serve as means of perverse fantasy" (88). *Parched* is dissimilar to other movies because it acts as a vehicle of eluding from the dominating society and patriarchal philosophies. The movie could be a story of women companionship exploring the thoughts of misogyny impacted by conventions and culture. The film has succeeded in depicting Lajjo, Rani, Bijli and Janaki, their introduction as more than fair a stereotypical character that the audience usually sees in modern cinema. They maintain the patriarchal society with feminist lust, love and belief. The story delineates the challenges of the male characters in their quest to free themselves from patriarchal domination.

Latika Gupta sees the movie from the perspective of female an entity for fun. They live in their rustic lives under the Indian Hindu fundamentalism. She writes, "Jokes which make fun of women in a sexual context establish men's power in sexual conduct and thereby serve as means of perverse fantasy" (88). In these lines, Gupta claims women are merely an object and helper of male member of the society. They from early morning to late night delve themselves in rearing and caring their child. The women in an Indian Hindu society are taken merely as the entity of fun.

Similarly, another scholar Tamilselvi sees the movie as the presentation of women in a "very inferior, timid and someone who needs protection" (90). She makes her judgement that this film especially shows the Indian Rajasthani old society. She writes, "The film brings out age old traditions, social evils, marital rapes and evils of patriarchy. The movie highlights the story of four women in a remote village of Rajasthan which is plagued by many evil customs" (90). In these lines, critics take the

movie as a true picture of old age Rajasthani social reality. The condition of women is downtrodden because of traditional orthodoxy. They are taken as the feeble aspect of society.

In the same way, Akanksha Indora takes the movie as the true picture of Indian rural landscape. She claims that movie reveals the rural lives where female are living their rustic lives. She claims that on the one hand India is in the race of world superpower, whereas on the other hand, its people are damned due to the lack of education, occupation and untouched with the 21st century's science and technology. They are living a quite orthodoxical way of life. She claims:

This movie has covered various social issues such as domestic violence, child marriage, familial torture, dowry, marital rape, etc. It revolves around the life of four women who lives an unwanted life with old traditional practices. Rani, a widow since years, try his son (Gulab) to get married to a beautiful girl Janaki (child bride). Gulab is a spoilt son who spends his time with his stray friends and sex workers. He and his friend's tease an educated woman for her freedom and dressing. Lajjo is a friend of Rani, they both work for local entrepreneur named Kishan. (35)

Through characterizing different characters role in the movie, Indora claims that, in an Indian Rajasthani nomadic people, they have their distinct cultural practices, they live their lives as their ancestors used to. They hate education. They think that education mis-guides female. Therefore, they do not want to read and write. Contrary, male members of the society do not enroll themselves in schools, rather they spend their time on nonsense works such as drinking, playing cards, visiting sex workers.

Similarly another critic Ajith Arpana takes the movie as the portrayal of the society. She claims *Parched* is the movie that deals with the issue of women where

they are merely taken as the bundle of blood and flesh. The given society in the movie is "the rich heritage of man" (64) where their cultural norms and values are responsible for it. Arpana opines:

These women are bound by centuries of rigid tradition. Here, girls are married at the age of 14. They even hold the notion that 'girls who read make bad wives.' A girl married into the neighbouring village returns home but is forced by the elders to go back to her in-laws. All the men in the house don't miss an opportunity to molest her including her father in law. (64)

The Rajasthani nomadic culture is chaotic for women. Their cultural norms and values are distinct. The constitution of India has although banished the child marriage, but there are several such nomadic people who do not let their cultural norms and values descended for last many years.

Although all the critics have examined Leena Yadav's *Parched* from different angles and perspectives, none of them explored the novel through the perspectives of liberation conscience. The characters of this work suffer from patriarchal ideology. Hence, the researcher argues that the proposed topic is worthy to make judgement from the perspective of feminism.

Feminism is a doctrine related on image and ideas advocating women's rights for the equality of the sexes, identity and freedom. It tries to redefine women's activities and goals from a woman centered point of view and refuses to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, a second sex or a submissive other. It seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression inequalities and injustices; women suffer because of their sex and defend equal rights for women in political, economic, social, psychological, personal and aesthetic sense., as Kamala Bhasin in her *What is Patriarchy* writes, "to refer to male domination,

to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways” (3). Bhasin, especially talks about the Asian women how they are suffer in the hand of patriarchy. In Asian continent women are taken as synonymous with inferior, second class citizens, oppression, and weak component.

In nineteenth and twentieth century south Indian women had to pass through various challenges. They are banished socially, economically and politically. In order to get rid from such social taboos, female activists raised their voice against gender ideology, which later became a dominant approach in literature only in late nineteenth century. It had, however, two centuries struggle for the recognition of women's cultural role and achievements. The campaign was earlier started formally through the writing of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Right of Women* (1792). Wollstonecraft claims for the political and social rights of women and goes beyond the notion of patriarchal society. Slowly and gradually, the advocacy for equality between man and woman that formally raised by the writing of Wollstonecraft. It flamed towards the social arean of Asian continent.

Asian women noticed of the writings and advocacy of the western women that was broke out for the equal rights. Regarding the issue of Asian women, Nazumunnessa Mahatab advocates for the equality of male and female in Bangladesh. The traditional society of Bangladesh is permeated with patriarchal values and norms of female subordination, subservience, subjugation and segregation. According to her, women are found at the "bottom rung of poverty, illiteracy, and landlessness" (20-21). Women are treated negatively. They are not getting human behaviour in their society. The situation of Asian women especially in Bangladesh and India is in worst condition. In the nineteenth century, however, the awareness of women's need for

equality with men crystallized in the movement to obtain women's suffrage rather than in any fundamental or far reaching reevaluation of women's social status, roles and their place in the economy. In the later nineteenth century, a few women began to work in the professions, and women as a whole achieved the right to vote in the first half of the twentieth century. But there were still distinct limits on women's participation in the workplace as well as a set of prevailing notions that tend to confine women to their traditional role as wives, mothers and homemakers.

Geetanjali Gangoli also writes from the angle of Indian women domination. She clearly advocates that "Feminist movements in India have posed challenges to established patriarchal institutions such as the family, and to dominant social values and structures, most significantly in the arena of legal interventions in the areas of violence against women" (1). Indian social setting is no more different than that of the definition of given by Nazmunnessa Mahatab in her book *Women in Bangladesh from Inequality to Empowerment*. Gangoli claims that Indian society is quite dominant where family structure has been developed so as to marginalized women as postulated in the movie *Parched*.

In Indian context, feminism in general, however, shares certain assumptions and concepts that underlie the diverse ways that individual critics explore in the factors of sexual difference and privilege in the production, the form and content, the reception and the critical analysis, of evaluation of works of literature. Thus, feminism is a successful political movement which has become successful in giving due place to writing of "non-canonical women writers" (Showalter 74). In short, the following characteristics can be seen in feminism as Showalter writes in "The Feminist Critical Revolution" as, "voice against canon's sexual exclusiveness, rejection of the marginalization of all women, disregard to culture as patriarchal

culture, examine the experience of women from all areas and classes and study of sexual, social and political issues once thought to be outside the study of literature" (75).

Male centric ideology of twentieth-century Indian society as depicted in the movie assumes women to be objects in marriage and in motherhood existing as vessels of maternity and sexuality. They were supposed to be good daughters, wives and mothers moving only from the protection of their father's roof to the protection of their husbands. Moreover, the strictly conventional Indian society had confined women within the narrow boundaries of domesticity. They were expected to be chaste and obedient to their husband primarily and whole patriarchy centric male subjugation.

Parched is a story of five female characters. They perform their act that had happened in their life. They search for their identity and self-respect in an alienating and almost hostile south Indian society where women are taken as commodities. Janaki desires to established her own house i. e. whom she loves. She cuts her hair, so that this marriage will be dismissed, which is her rejection of patriarchal designation and search for emancipation.

Janaki is not ready to marry with Gulab because she loves another boy who is poor and not able to pay big money to her father. Due to the dowry system Janaki is not able to marry with whom she wants but money plays the pivotable role. Her father does not care at all about the happiness of Janaki, rather he has fixed 4 lakhs for her. Economic condition is also a barrier of women which bounds female within four walls of a house and makes domestic slave. Master who purchase things simply control over and takes benefits from it. In this regard, French feminist Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* created a theoretical basis regarding how patriarchy deals

with women in terms of economy. She adds, "He thenceforth has complete power over her person and her property . . . the women's property remains under the guardians' control and the husband's right is only over her person" (127). In these lines, Beauvoir brings the reference of women's dominance history. Here, she postulates the reference of ancient time on behalf of economy. Though Janaki in the movie is bound to marry with Gulab, not with her boyfriend from where domination over women starts.

Patriarchy is the system of male domination and female subordination in economic resources. The postulated society in the movie *Parched* is quite patriarchal, where women, junior men, children and servants are all under the rule of this domination. Kamala Bhasin takes patriarchy as, "male domination, to power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in number of ways" (3). In this statement Bhasin claims that in a patriarchal society male keep themselves in power and manipulating this position in terms of their benefit. As claimed by Bhasin, in the movie too, a father towards her own daughter presents mercilessly. He sells her daughter as if she is a commodity. There seems bargaining of price between parties. The following scene itself presents pitiful situation of women in Indian society;



Janaki's father demanding 4 lakh rupees with Rani (00:03:39)

In the above discussion, we can clearly see that Indian patriarchal society has beautifully politicized the body of Janaki. Her father is going to exchange her with four lakh rupees. By this, it is clear that women are not given any agency. They are merely a commodity and can be sold in order to accumulate money. Kamala Bhasin is right in her opinion that patriarchy refers to the male domination both in private and public spheres. Janaki is commodified in terms of both private and public spheres. Her domination and materialization starts from very beginning when her father sells her. Gulab, her husband pays money for her and starts to suffer her from first night.

In the name of marriage, Gulab bought Janaki with four lakhs. No one asks her about her desire and aspirations. From the very beginning of their conjugal life, Gulab gives her intolerable pains and agonies. He treats with her body as if she is not a living thing. He is proud of it because he has paid lots of money for her. Janaki is like a commodity that can be bought and sold in any time. Gulab asks “Is she any good, . . . Worth the money? . . . did they reduce the money? . . .but listen, I’ll want a refund if she rubbish” (00:04:41). By this dialogue it is clear that Gulab has sent his mother to buy a girl for him. He threatens his mother not to buy Janaki if she is not beautiful. His claim is that he is ready to pay huge amount. If the commodity is not suitable or payable, he will sell her in recycle store in order to refund his money.

There should be harmonious relationships between husband and wife but unfortunately the relationship between them is quite technical. In Gulab's aspect, she is alike commodity he had bought for. As a husband, he commits forceful sexual relationship with her mercilessly. Gulab uses her body as pleasure giving machine, play thing and sex doll. Although, different types of acts, rules and regulations have been made against forceful sexual relationship either it is between the married couple or anywhere else. In an intoxicated condition, in the first night of their marriage Gulab

enters to the room and keeps sexual relationship time and again throughout the night. Such heart rendering situation, Janaki could hardly bear. Rani, Gulab's mother, could not overhear Janaki's pitiful situation as their hut is simply divided by the fence made wooden wings and she escapes from there and goes to the nearby shelter of her friend Bijli. Next morning Rani sees her in an injured condition. The following scene shows the heart rendering condition of Janaki who is compelled to accept the brutality of patriarchy:



Injured Janaki hardly moving with blood spotted bed sheet due to marital rape right next morning of her first wedding night (00:41:23)

Pathetic condition of Janaki who is just 15 years has bought by Gulab in 4 lakhs and in their first night he mercilessly and forcefully established sexual relationship that caused severe problem on her health. She is not in the condition to move easily. She has just woke up in the morning and carrying bed sheet which is tattered with blood and going to make them dry on rising sun. Indian patriarchal society is so cruel where women are taken as pleasure giving machine. In the above scene, it is clearly seen the traumatic condition of Janaki. Janaki who married off when she was only fifteen years and in the honeymoon night, her husband comes on her bed with full intoxication.

Honeymoon night should be honeylike sweet but Gulab treats with Janaki as if she is a machine not a human entity. She suffers a lot on that night because Gulab

presents himself as sex-monger. He directly asks her name as, "what is your name?" and directly starts his business as, "Take this off . . . lie down. Come here . . . Don't do that, shhh . . . please!" (00:37:27). This dialogue which is overheard by her mother is the conversation between Gulab and Janaki in their honeymoon night. He has drunk alcohol and directly enters into the room where Janaki is awaiting to him. They did not talk in a harmonious way because Gulab do not give any agency to her wife. He has invest 4 lakh rupees on her and therefore he directly enters in to the matter of his concern. There is no relationship between them except calm down sexual hunger. He is not ready to hear anything from her. She tries to stop him, but she fails in front of his warning 'Shhhhhh' (00:37:27). The first night of their marriage should be unforgettable but unfortunately it turns to be curse for Janaki. The contemporary "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby 20). Walby explains patriarchy as a system because the notion of biological determinism. Patriarchy says that men and women are naturally different because of their biology, therefore, women are assigned different role in "the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one" (20). As claimed by Walby, the indian patriarchal society has granted the power to Gulab in order to exercise over his wife and she is compelled to bear such inhumane behaviour.

Marriage in Indian patriarchal society is licence for male brutality upon women. Therefore Janaki, in the very beginning of her marriage night faces marital rape. She could not complain it no where else because after the marriage, in an Indian society woman has to bear all the circumstances given by her husband. Geetanjali Gangoli "pointed out that laws relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, succession, guardianship preserve the family as it exists, that is as a system based on male

dominance and control of female sexuality and reproduction" (8). Geetanjali being a daughter of India she is well known about the way how women's body is politicized in the name of marriage and guardianship in Indian continent. She claims that marriage is a kind of bondage for female where in the name of marriage different types of ill and hazardous exercises commit upon her. As claimed by her, Janaki in the movie too, first of all, sold by her own father. Gulab is ready to pay 4 lakhs for her body because she is a 15 years beautiful girl. The motto behind this purchase is to utilize her as his best. So as to his purpose, he exercises his best as the society has given him the power and privilege. Her body has been politicized, because in the name of marriage, her father is able to earn money and Gulab is able to calm down his physical hunger. Her husband has no any concern about the problematic situation due to forceful act, rather he feels proud on it. Gulab early in the morning goes out saying his mother, "Worry not mother, I've performed my husbandly duties" (00:40:56). The society has decided the duty of male and female in different way as we seen in the movie. Boys are assigned as superior and girls are inferior. As Gulab holds the power of patriarchy, he exercise his husbandly duties upon his wife. In these lines it is clearly seen that the son who without any shame clearly says that he has directly come from the bed with wife and he had performed the duty of husband towards his wife as assigned by the society. Hence, by this statement it is clear that the female body is politicized in patriarchal society in the name of marriage as a part of sexual industry. Such type of marriage is no more than the certificate for pornography. On behalf of marriage certificate, Gulab does sexual activities in the presence of his own mother and next morning accepts about it. Janaki becomes the victim of male supremacy and a part of pornography which has been control and conducted by the contemporary Indian patriarchal society and its responsible as Gangoli writes:

One could add that the control of Women's sexuality is not restricted to the civil laws listed above, but to a range of criminal laws. Besides, the experience of women within the legal system demonstrates that the judiciary and the police often underscore patriarchal values and ideologies. (8)

Gangoli in these lines claims that judiciary as well as police who is generally formed and also taken as the responsible factor to create harmony in the society but quite contradictorily closed their eye before patriarchal values and ideologies. They work in favour of male members of the society because the law is also politicized.

According to Gangoli, "debates on law have also politicised" (8). Indian constitution has provided the equality, but in the face of power and politics, Indian women are compelled to undergo with different circumstances including "rape, sexual harassment in work place and in public places, pornography, trafficking, prostitution, selective sex determination, female infanticide, child marriage, dowry and domestic violence" (8). As claimed by Gangoli, all the female characters are prone to living their lives. Among them, Janaki is the victim of child marriage and dowry system, whereas Bijli is compelled to sell her body as the means of commodity and money making means to her boss Sharmaji that can easily buy and sell in the market places.

Bijli's body has been politicized as the means of commodity in order to earn money. Sharmaji, the owner of Ujhas Sanskrit Manch better uses the body of Bijli. In each evening, he conducts dance party where she dances almost in nude position. As she has beautiful body and make-up bring her into the position of pleasure giving entity. In every night she has to make sexual contact to those people whom Sharmaji grants permit after taking from them a big amount of money. She has been known in this village Raand (prostitute). Regarding the patriarchal power to pornography,

Andrea Dworkin writes:

It is the power men have over women turned into sexual acts men do to women, because pornography is the power and the act. It is the conditioning of erection and orgasm in men to the powerlessness of women; inferiority, humiliation, pain, torment; to us as objects, things, or commodities for use in sex as servants. It sexualizes inequality and in doing so creates discrimination as a sex-based practice. (26)

According to Dworkin, discrimination against women is not just found in the labour market, their houses, rather they are discriminated and politicized their body in pornography. Ujhas Sanskrit Manch is that very place where Bijli's body is saleable. Sharmaji, her master has run a dance bar where Bijli has to sell her body according to the desire of her master. Her master takes money from customer and gives her certain percent. In the above picture, Raju her dance partner is there to give her share of money sent by Sharmaji. Her further informs her that "a big client is coming tomorrow" (00:40:06). Whoever and what ever come in her tent she must accept it because she is a powerless creature in that society. She is famous in this area as a whore, all the men and boys go to her bed paying money, but some persons badly neglect her to be in their yards.

Bijli is the product of their own social circumstances. Sharmaji, her master is solely responsible for her because he has been forcefully involved her into this profession. She time and again wants to let this profession, but he anyway makes her ready to be involved in this profession. If she runs away, his business will ruin, therefore he claims she is like his own daughter on the one hand and other he emotionally blackmails her so that she could not go anywhere else. He says, Listen . . . I'm like your father. So I'll tell you the truth. You are a whore. And will always be whore" (00:21:10). In this dialogue, it clearly reveals that a father-like person is manipulating

her body in a good manner. On the one hand he shows love and affection to her but on the other, he threatens her badly. A whore in an Indian society can do nothing anywhere she goes. According to her master, her identity has been fixed as whore and will always be whore. No one will marry her and settle his life because she has been turned as a social stigma.

Indian patriarchal society has taught women "to feel themselves as an object and prompted them to identify themselves with their body" (Beauvoir 598). She also says that "the universal predominance of males, her own education (in schools)- everything confirms her in her belief in masculine superiority" (70). In this regard, Bijli is forced to involve in Red Centre to be ready for her role as a whore. Beauvoir depicts the oppression of women in biology through the social institutionalized maternity within the patriarchal society. She believes that maternity is as a block against women's liberation and regards it as women's slavery. She emphasizes that the social institutions of time attempt to position the women. As claimed by Beauvoir Bijli is taught in the same society where women are taken as vessels of maternity and sexual object. Neither she can run away in order to settle her own life nor she can live her own life. Every night she revives from death. She could not bear pain due to sexual intercourse.. They show their bravado upon female as "Go little rocket! Go! Go! Go! Ah! More Astronauts! C'mon! climb on board the Rocket! Speed up . . . 120 . . . 130. I will break this bed today! Adios amigos . . . I'm going to the moon! Moooooon!!!" (1:37:52). In these heinous words, it is clearly seen that the contemporary society is completely chaotic. There is no mercy towards female at all. He pays "800 rupees and not a penny more" (1:36:09) and leads her towards the position death danger.

Feticides, marital rape, unwanted pregnancy are the issues revealed by the movie *Perched* where women are victims of it. Under the rule of the father, daughters are nothing more than that of slaves and domestic servants. Once they are married off, they don't have any concern how she is living her life. The door of her parents permanently closes up and she has to drink tears of sorrow and pain. Champa, who married off from her parents house. She could not bear the tortures given by her husband including her own father-in-law and brother-in-law. The days of sufferings starts on Chapa's life as she goes to her husband house, where her father-in-law and brother-in-law forcefully keep sexual activities on a daily basis. She could not tolerate such inhumane activities and Champa appeals with her parents not to send her back to in-laws house as:

Ma ! don't send me back ! You should be grateful ! My husband does not even touch me. He has a mistress in the next village. Amma ! Amma !! my brother-in-law forces himself on me! All the men in the house don't miss an opportunity to fuck me. Even my father-in-law! Can you bear to hear more? I had to abort a child because I did not know who the father was! Ma . . . They will kill me !
(00:13:24)

The heart rendering appeal of Champa can be seen in the above lines which she tells herself with her mother with the hope that her mother would do something for her. She could not tolerate the torture given to her by the male members of the house, she ran away from the house of in-laws keeping high ambition that her parents would provide security, love and affection that she had faced. Regarding the issue, a meeting held in the village under the chairmanship of the Sarpanch. Sarpanch in the name of creating harmony, achieves the political power and exercises cultural norms and values over Champa. Sarpanch remains against the will of Champa and orders to go

back. He says, "After marriage, your parent's home is not yours. Go home to your husband. Go before you bring shame to our village" (00:10:03). These are the words of Sarpanch, which is adored by all the villagers. No one seems in favour of Champa, because it is patriarchal society where there is not value recognition to women. They are treated as commodity can sell and buy in the market. After buying goods, it is the right to consumption whomsoever it needs. In the same way, elder brother of the family gets marry with Champa, he has already kept mistress, therefore her own father and brother fuck with her because patriarchal institutions and social relations are responsible for the inferior or secondary status of women. Sarpanch gives the absolute priority to men. Therefore, he is anxious for the possible consequences.

Champa's run away from her in-laws and revealing the hidden truth that all the member try to molest her if they get chance are the evidences for the pursuit of self-exploration and liberation. In an awful society where there is not mercy for female member Champa tries to revolt against social norms and values. She tries to cross all the boundaries. She dares to put cross-questions to village head, "this village is a much mine as it is yours!" (00:11:11). 'I've come home to my parents'. How is that wrong" (00:9:42) are the urgent expressions where the color of revolt against patriarchy is diluted. In this line, Champa seems in rebellious mood against unequal treatment on the basis of gender and puts questions primarily to the village head but secondarily, it is the question of 21st century's Indian patriarchal society that undermines the women. Women are facing tremendous situations since last many decades and dare not to speak any word against it, but Champa's debut in dialogue with the person who keeps control whole village under his fist, is her seeking for emancipation and liberation.

Similarly, another character of the movie Lajo, who is living her life as domestic animal in the hand of her husband Manoj. She is pathetic condition as her husband beats her in a daily basis accusing her as barren women. He has no any concern about her condition. He throughout the day visits different types of places such as liquor store, brothels and dance stations. She manages food for him by doing different types of tasks. The contemporary Indian society takes women as "a girl-vending machine" (00:07:04). If she fails to maintain the social requirements, she has to live her life being a social scandal. Lajjo bitterly accepts that "God created barren women like me" (00:07:17). She is completely fragmented by such fate and her scandle in the society.

Her almost dead hope to be a mother awakened when they; Bijli, Lajjo, Rani and Janaki go far from the village where they could get solace to their soul. They move far from the village into the lap of nature where patriarchal could not touch them, they talk and enjoy nature freely. Bijli takes responsible for the sufferings of women. She traces their designations are applicable in each and every aspect of social activities. Men also associate abusive words with women "Motherfucker" (1:00:06). Bijli believes that all the abusive words are associated with women because the creator of such words were men. She claims "I bet it was man. Why is a woman getting fucked in every cuss? Motherfucker! Sister fucker! It's time the men got fucked! Son fucker! Uncle fucker! Father fucker! Brother fucker!" (1:00:37). In these lines, Bijli rebellious against patriarchal designations. She is logically seems true that "Why is woman getting fucked in every cuss?" (1:00:14) only because there is conspiracy of male. She declares that she would not remain silent because these women are in search of self-respect and in search of freedom. The following scene is worthy to quote here:



Bijli, Rani, Lajjo and Janaki are abusing patriarchy from the tower (1:00:42).

In the above scene it is clearly seen that they want to challenge against male chauvinism. In each and every aspect of life, women are treated as secondary entity. Until and unless they seek their place, this society would not let them to their lives in a harmonious way. They climb in a tower and "shout it out Rani! "shout it out, father-fucker! Son fucker! Brother fucker" (1:00:40) because they want to challenge hitherto existing social norms and values. If they shout from the tower, whole society would listen to them "this will free us from men!" (1:01:16). Female bonding seems quite rebellious in order to make them free from patriarchal suffering. As they are guided with the pursuit of self-exploration and liberation, they are ready to face anything else that comes in their road.

Lajjo as guided by the pursuit of self-exploration, she "wants the joy of having a child! . . . but I won't be beaten by fate, If I can have a child, I want one" (00:59:44). In these lines, Lajjo is ready to cross all the boundaries not "to save their [your] marriage" (00:59:41) rather she wants to take the right to motherhood which is neither the property of patriarchal society nor her husbands, rather it was her fundamental right to give a birth to a children. She does not ready to kill her womb due to his husband's infertility. Bijli suggests Lajjo, "Tell Manoj to get himself tested. What? Men can be infertile too! It is not always a woman's fault. Get Manoj tested. Let's see

who's barren. Him or you?" (00:58:41). The dialogue between Bijli and Lajjo paves the way of women conscience and their questions to male. The reason behind their questionnaire is due to their search for pursuit of self-exploration and liberation. Lajjo does not want to accept her barrenness that has been attributed by her husband.

Pursuit of self-exploration and liberation in women's life is not possible from the personal effort which Leena Yadav tries to postulate in the movie *Parched*. In order to get release from the domination of patriarchy, four women make their bonding and cry because they have the common suffering from it. Bijli advices Lajjo to make sexual relationship with another man, if she does not want to tell her husband for fertility test. Lajjo is ready to cross each and every confinements perpetuated by the contemporary male centric society. In the beginning, Rani refuses to join this project, "I want no part in Bijli's crazy plan. It is such a huge risk. What if someone finds out?" (1:08:10), but later she accompany her as Lajjo is determined to take revenge with her husband he on her body. She makes confident to her that his husband would not know anything about their project as:

How will he? He will never find out! We won't let him. These marks of love he leaves on my body. Should I ignore them? Accept this is my fate? Just imagine, what if I'm not barren? Remember what you said? "Life can't be that unfair. . .". "We too will find our share of happiness." I want my share Rani.
(1:09:00)

In the above conversation, Lajjo is determined in his project and she has not forgotten the torture given by her husband, Majon in the name of barren woman. In an Indian society married woman has certain limitations, but knowing all these things Lajjo and other bonding members are ready to cross all the cultural boundaries in order to get self-exploration and liberation. Lajjo is ready to keep sexual intercourse with a man

whom Bijli makes ready. Bijli asks "Hey, You're sure you want this? According to my calculations, this is the right of the month for you to conceive. Yes, I am sure Bijli" (1:10:43). In this conversation, it is clear that they are on the way to den where the person lives. Lajjo is debunking social norms and values so as to take her right to be a mother which has been provided her by nature. She doesn't want to be scandal of the society, for that she is ready to make relationship with the person whom she doesn't know at all.

Lajjo as guided by the pursuit of self-exploration, she is not ready to the attribution that the society has given her. She has the angst of torture given by her husband as well as the society. She wants to prove that male can be an infertile. She wants to reverse the hither to existing believes that patriarchy generally undermines the women and marginalized them although they were right. She wants to fuck men because they have politicized the female body in a bitter way. But the time has changed and they want to reverse this trend. Lajjo uses that stranger so as to fulfill her desires because "It's time the men got fucked!" (1:00:35). The dreams of Lajjo comes true, she becomes pregnant. A dispute between Lajjo and Manoj occurs, where Lajjo frequently accepts that "she slept with another man. And that's how she got pregnant. Because you couldn't do it! Because YOU are the barren one!" (1:48:22). In these lines Lajjo challenges his husband. She openly accepts that she slept with another man and challenges him, "Go tell the elders. Announce to the whole village, that your wife is a whore!" (1:47:57). As she is guided by the liberation conscience, she is ready to face each and every circumstances that patriarchy gives and she is also ready to dismantle all the boundaries that have been limited whole female civilization since last many decades.

In the same way, another woman, Rani also breaks down all the limitations perpetuated by patriarchal society. She outs her own son as he beats Janaki, her daughter-in-law and sells her house. She dares to marry her daughter-in-law with the man whom she likes.



Rani gives her daughter-in-law's hand to the person whom Janaki wants (1:42:11). As Rani internalizes the unbearable domination of patriarchal society, she outlets her own son from her house, sells her house, marries the daughter-in-law, gives the money to him for Janaki's education. "Take it. Take it. She's smart and loves books. Enroll her in school. She's my daughter. If anything happens to her I'll kill you ! (1:42:05). In these lines, it clearly reveals that woman marries her daughter-in-law. For her education, she has sold her own house because she wants to make her what is right and what is wrong, thinking that one day, Janaki would make aware whole female civilization about their rights and one day the empire of patriarchy will be finished. Their struggle and fight through different moves are due to the pursuit of self-exploration and liberation.

Leena Yadav through *Parched* tries to show how the south Indian especially Rajasthani patriarchal society is, where women's agency is not taken any consideration, they merely treated as a second class citizens. As women in patriarchal

society taken as commodity, they are docile, playing subservient role for the happiness for male members, this movie paints a pretty bleak picture of the reality of life and their endeavors for emancipation from such confinements as imagined by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*. Woolf imagines women freedom where they can control over their own body and mind.

All the female members are trying their best to achieve the self-exploration and liberation. Bijli, who dances and works as a sex worker in terms of money and matter. She is the best knowledge about unequal situations of women in the society. She relentlessly gives feedbacks and teaches the social reality and makes female bonding in order to fight against social circumstances. She makes other three women able to revolt against social norms and values. Her guidelines and principles to go against such social reality are the principles for Lajjo, Rani and Janaki.

The entire society as well as Lajjo's husband prove her as a barren women. In a Hindu fundamentalism to be a barren is the matter of stigma. If they are not able to give birth to a child they are not given any authenticity in the family. It means, women in the Indian patriarchal society are taken as a machine. Their entire duty is to marry a man, give sexual satisfaction and continue his lineage. Lajjo lives a pitiful life. Her husband beats her on a daily basis only because she could give birth to a child. When Bijli opens the hidden secret that male can be a barren. She is ready to make sexual contact with another male. She becomes pregnant and challenges her husband primarily and secondarily the whole Rajasthani patriarchal society that she slept with another person and became pregnant. She debunks all the restrictions maintained by the contemporary society, because she has stepped out for the self-exploration and liberation.

Rani, a widow woman minutely thinks over the social circumstances that how they are doomed in their fate. She has the remembrance of her husband's beaten experience in her psyche which revives time and again as she hears the cry of Janaki when her son Gulab beats. She triggers towards the trauma as she hears and sees the wounded condition of Janaki. Finally, she also decides to release herself from patriarchal bondage. She sells the whole property, marries her daughter-in-law to a boy whom Janaki likes since her school days. She gives all the money come from by selling the property. The money she gives to the boy and tells him enroll Janaki in a school and make her educate. She also warns him if he did any kind of injustice to her, she would not let her alive.

In this way, Leena Yadav shows the subjugated position of women in south Indian Rajasthani society, where women are merely taken as the object. But, in the same time, the movie shows the changing the scenario of this society, where women are also erected for their rights as feminists claim.

The society revealed in the movie is South-Indian society which is completely a patriarchal society where women are taken as commodity and their agency completely rejected, but these female characters become aware how the patriarchy misbehaves on them. All the women characters in the movie are merely taken as the object. Janaki's father has sold her in the name of marriage. Rijli is used by her owner as a tool to earn money. Lajjo is stigmatized in society as a barren woman who cannot bear children, while Rani, a child widow is denied the right to remarry for the rest of her life. Women have been oppressed by the stereotyped policies and rules created by such socially prepared male-dominated society. So, they have broken all these social bonds and moved forward for their liberation which is their liberation campaign.

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