BEYOND PATRIARCHY: AN INTERFACE OF EASTERN AND WESTERN WOMEN'S SCHOOLING

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Most of the feminists agree on the point that patriarchy is the rule of male in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men (Bhasin & Khan, 2000, Uberoi, 2005, Shukla, 2006, Beasley, 2005). Feminist's this particular claim of patriarchy heralds that it truly exists in discriminatory gender relation between a man and a woman under the functional features of patriarchy accounted by anthropologists. For example, universal patriarchal features developed by Redcliff Brown (cited by Uberoi 2005: 96) included four systems: 'descent patrilineal (the children belong to the group of father); marriage patrilocal (the wife removes to the local groups of husband); inheritance (of property) and succession (to rank) are in the male line, and family patripotestal (the authority over the members of the family is in the hands of father or his relatives)' which all are survived by discriminatory gender practices in this or that way.

The principal features of patriarchy advocated by Brown could be acknowledged as core areas of study for the feminists to criticize and problematize current gender issues and historical construction of gender and patriarchy (Riger, 1998). Feminists claim that the nature of patriarchy or the rule of male is inherently an oppressive system towards a woman (Weedon, 1992, Shukla, 2006). They also advocate that patriarchal system is comprised with unequal power relations between a man and woman (Weedon, 1992) in

which a man by virtue of his dominant power (social, cultural, religious, economic) controls every aspects of a woman's life. Some feminists (like Bhasin & Khan, 2000) have sharply criticized a patriarchal system claiming that such system have been primarily supporting calls for oppression of a woman in every sphere of her social and private life. They further argue that in a patriarchal family (society) a man controls a woman's sexuality, mobility, production and reproduction. Due to the control of a man, he has been playing a prominent role for the systematic marginalization and subordination of a woman values and agenda in every aspects of her ordinary life. To underpin this problem, then, question comes is matriarchy an answer to address women's subordination?

It is surprising to refer that in the social history of human beings, true matriarchy did not (and will not) exist anywhere Bhasin (2000:17). In this regard, Bhasin conforms that "actually there is no historical evidence of existence of matriarchy, anywhere". In the same way, some feminists (Uberoi, 2005) argue that the term matriarchy is a myth or an imaginary projection that merely exists in the society. These arguments lead us to the fact that there was no true form of institutionalized matriarchy that existed in human history. However, some anthropologists, like Dube (2005) has claimed that there are some practices of matrilineality experienced in different parts of the world. She has elaborated an example of the Muslim Community, in Lakshadweep Island falling in the South East of India. Dube's account on the practice of Lakshayadwep's matrilineality connotes itself as a partial confluence of matrilineal ideology (Dube, 2005:154), with some reference to the practice of patriarchy. Indeed, such sporadic practices of matrilineality (matrilineal principles of descent, inheritance of succession' has opened up some conceptions on how

gender relation varies with the variation of the form and degrees of patriarchy which is inclined towards matriarchy.

Although, women in Lakshadweep Island practice of matrialineality have supported claims to reduce women's gender discrimination, it does not offer a model system of true matriarchy because, these 'women are not in a dominant position, in control of state, power, religious institutions, economic productions, trade etc' as argued by Bhasin (2000:17). In this connection, Muslim women in Lakshadweep Island are not in dominant positions in all sectors, but their practices can be acknowledged from the shifting paradigm from anthropological debates of patriarchy to the feminist's paradigm 'which is very much alive and kicking as a central concept of feminist discourse' in reference to the universal form of patriarchy (Uberoi, 2005:94). In this connection, the practice of matrilineality in Lakshyadweep Island has reopened an area to reconceptualize the micro-gender practices adopted by relatively varied cultural cults.

In this context, here, I became interested to find the root cause of, why true form of matriarchy did not exist in the history of the world? I am also interested to explore an inquiry on the question "how and when did patriarchy come into existence and what have been its historical forms" generated by Uberoi (ibid: 93) and its gendered ramification in a particular Hindu socio-cultural context. In this connection, this research study explicitly focuses on what are the intrinsic sources that supported measures for institutionalization of the universal prehistory of patriarchy? To find out the answers to these queries, I have tried to examine religious provisions advocated by different prominent religions in the world because religious rules are the oldest and authentic guidelines to construct and regulate a social system (Kaudinyan, 2007). They are the rules for normative social

behavior that are considered as *akatya* (unalterable), and common to everyone for any respective religious society. It applies equally to everybody, encourages everyone to follow its eternal essence, and acts as an adhesive lubricant to tighten psychic and social relation among its members. Actually, religious provisions create a long lasting effect to the society as its nature is spiritual, moral as well as social too and ensures in developing the collective belief among its members (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:50).

To examine the universal form of patriarchy, I revisited the great religious literatures that have been playing a vital role into coding the multifaceted patriarchal intrinsic to the socio-religious rules for the corresponding society. Among the religious provisions I also revisited were Hindu's socio-religious rules, Islamic social rules, Christian socio-religious doctrine and Buddhist's religious doctrine. I have also examined some fundamental similarities and differences advocated by these religious provisions, with a special focus on the difference in power authenticated to a man and a woman by every religion, and its close repercussion in shaping gender relation between a man and a woman.

Although, I dedicated my effort to revisit prominent provisions advocated by different religious literatures, I concentrated my focus on the nature and function of Hindu patriarchy framed primarily under the socio-religious doctrine. From my day-to-day experience, what I came to realize is that Hindu patriarchal society covers the micro-practices of bipolar hierarchal gendered activities that are shaped under the patriarchal cosmology. Brown's understanding gave intuition that the overall gender practices are to be analyzed in a continuum; rooted to the far historical period. As per my understanding,

Brown's patriarchal features have functioned as an outlined structure under which discriminatory gender practices are evident (Bhasin & Khan, 2000).

With a few diffarances as assumed by Derrida (Powell, 2003), Hindu patriarchal system's additional doctrine, namely the *patibrata dharma* (a system of woman's unconditional loyalty towards her husband forever) has specially contributed for its specificity. To denote its specificity, I have borrowed a word "hetero-patriarchy" coined by Wilkinson (1993b cited in Jackson, 1998:35) and used it in my entire research work. Wilkinson has used this word (hetero-patriarchy) to criticize hetero-normative sexual behaviour as a fundamental feature of patriarchal value. But I have frequently used this word to denote particular Hindu socio-religious practices, primarily based on hetero-normative sexual behaviour that has dominated all other ideals and practices of social life.

In this sense, hetero-patriarchy assumes that a man and a woman specific socio-religious system can be regarded as guidelines of hetero-normative social rules (Richardson, 1998) that has significantly contributed for the construction of institutionalized (legalized and normalized) gender relations. For me, as Richardson has argued; Hindu patriarchy is hetero-patriarchy because it's ideal (social, religious and cultural) values and norms are highly associated to the hetero-normative socio-sexual practices which have controlled the whole system of social life. My aim put forth was to use the word 'hetero-patriarchy' instead of using patriarchy is to explore blended form of patriarchal features, and its values within woman specific religious doctrines, and vice versa. Actually, under Hindu religious system, both a man and a woman specific hetero-

religious culture equally reciprocates to the survival of hetero-patriarchal ideology and practice.

I can agree that Hindu patriarchy is still strong and functioning well because of the existence of women-specific system in the form of *patibrata dharma* (unconditional loyalty of a wife towards her husband)*,* adhered with the patriarchal features. Indeed, a Hindu religious doctrine, which highly values *patibrata dharma*, that emphasized immortal relationship between a man and a woman is a unique character of the Hindu system. Ideally, a Hindu religious system did not offer any provision for divorce (Bottomore, 1986); but it has developed different provisions for a woman to retain her life fulfilling subordinate companionship of husband forever.

Within these arguments and contexts, I endeavored to undertake this research to outline a major religious provision that are intrinsic to hetero-patriarchal features and its gender relation to the woman's everyday life. This work included analysis of religious doctrine, its interpretation, textual portrayal of woman in subordinated light and gender relation that can be claimed under this system.

Research Question

In Hindu socio-religious world, there are different religious literatures and philosophies to describe and clarify the same subject matter. Some of these literatures have contributed to reconfirm the former ones. For example, the provision of woman's *patibrata dharma,* advocated by text *Manusmriti (*Luintel, 2004) was also reiterated by other religious texts like *Garudhpuran* (Upadhaya, 2001)*, Purushottammahatmya*

*(*Purushottammasmahatmya, nd), *Gita* (Srimadbhagabadgita, 1993)*, Swasthani* (Thulo Sriswasthani Bratakatha, 2003) *Bhagabatmahapuran* (Bhattarai*,* 1995). In some cases, additional provisions are added to the literatures and in some cases some are eliminated from the older provisions. For example *niyog* system (a system of bearing children by a woman from extramarital sex relation, in case of her husband's inability to reproduce children or his death before having any children) advocated by *Manusmriti* was rejected by *Nirnayasindhu* (Sharma, 1990) saying that it is not applicable in *kaliyug* (present religious era among other four eras; viz *Satyayug, Tretayug*, *Dwaparyug* and *Kaliyug*)*.* But this system is again accepted, and tried to bring in practice through *Satyarthaprakash*, a critical work by Dayananda Saraswati (Saraswati, 1939). Likewise, *brahmacharya* (observing celibacy) system advocated by *Manusmriti* is opposed by *Kamsutra* (Burton & Arbuthnot, 1971). Likewise, *Chandi* text (Basistha, 2000) has symbolized a woman as a source of power and portrayed her in the form of a warrior. In the same way, Sati system (Hindu's system of burning a woman in a pyre with her dead husband) was added by the literatures after *Manusmriti* was promulgated. Similarly, rejection of marriage in certain *kul* (clan) as advocated by *Manusmriti* is also reconfirmed by *Satyarthaprakash* (Saraswati, 1939)*.* Besides this, the *niyog* system for bearing children as advocated by *Satyarthaprakash* could be seen in continuum of the eleven types of sons (Annex -I) as advocated by *Manusmriti.* I have mentioned its detail in literature review section and the brief introduction of the religious texts mentioned above are given in (Annex-2).

Besides the Hindu religious texts, other religions have also advocated certain patriarchal provisions related to the issues of women in which some are similar to Hindu

doctrines, and some are different from them. For instance, Christian religion in Old Testament has advocated for the *niyog* system in the same tone as *Manusmriti* has done. These religious doctrines have been contributing to define and play a fixed gender role between a man and a woman in different circumstances within social life.

Although, the nature and intrinsic value of the religious provisions may be the same to each individual person of respective religions, the individual gendered subjectivity can be different from one woman to another woman. This is so because each individual woman's gendered epistemology can differ according to the difference of inherited character, family background, education, age, and economic factor, exposure to the mass media or so on. In order to unfold the religious doctrine and its influences in constructing gender role and relation, I have generated two sets of research questions. I developed first sets of questions from the literature review section. These include:

1. How has socio- religious provisions contributed to nurture a hetero-patriarchal culture?

2. How has hetero-patriarchal culture strategically contributed to produce bi-polar gender culture and women's subordination?

The above research questions were answered through the religious literatures. The second sets of questions were developed for the empirical study. They were:

1. How women's sexuality is ritualized and controlled through women centric hetero-patriarchal culture.

2. How women's interests confront against each other in hetero-patriarchal society.

3. How does an individual woman constructs her gendered subjectivity in a given

socio-religious context under hetero-patriarchy?

I have generated the second sets of research questions to analyze and interpret empirical information accumulated in the field. Remaining within and balancing the intention of these research questions, I have tried to focus my entire research work in order to explore new ideas and conceptions in the above mentioned field.

Research Problem

I started this study to satisfy my curiosity upon how has patriarchy emerged and spread as a universal phenomena and how did it survive in a long run? The never ending debate on nature versus nurture also encouraged my interest in this area. Islamic social law emphasized on women's weak biological body and coded gendered role and relation accordingly (Umri, 2004) enabled me to conceive this study as a problem. On the other hand, Hindu and Christian religious provisions that have highlighted women's social body and coded gendered role and relations accordingly made me more interested to go deeper into the problem. Besides this, feminist's universalized interpretation of women also encouraged me to purposefully conduct this study.

Importance of the Study

This study has primarily focused in investigating the universal nature of patriarchy defined by different religious ideology. It also helps to find similarities and

differences in the patriarchal values coded by different texts under Hindu religious philosophies. In the same way, it also focuses on exploring various intrinsic values embedded in patriarchal nature coded by various great religions other than Hindu religion. This study also contributes to understand gender relation existing between a man and a woman; and between a woman and a woman under Hindu hetero-patriarchal society. In the same way, the contribution of this study is to introduce a method to research 'on self' being a researcher a researched one applying auto-ethnography method and unveil truths from many angles.

Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

This is a qualitative study. For this study I have selected and interviewed with different sets of co-researcher women and one set of men. Among these selected included men and women all belonging to Hindu family within Kathmandu Valley, except one Muslim girl. From all these co-researchers; I have analyzed the experiences of women selecting some of them from different sets in different thematic chapters. In some cases, like tempo drivers, only one co-researcher's experiences have been incorporated although, an interview was undertaken with six of them.

This study is both general and specific in nature. It is general because of its theoretical ground (finding a nature of universal patriarchy) it is based on. It is specific because it has focused its attention to uncover the subjective reality of high caste Hindu woman under socio-religious point of view.

I have presented literatures review into two chapters. In the same way, interpretation of the field information has covered three different chapters; with specific thematic subchapters.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one consisted of introduction and research questions. Literature review is presented in chapter two and three. In chapter two, Hindu religious provisions were discussed under hetero-patriarchy, whereas the third chapter included the patriarchal provisions under other religious philosophical doctrines that have contributed in shaping overall structure of patriarchal features. Chapter four included the method of the research study. In chapter five, I have presented analysis of the information gathered, related to ritualized sexuality of *patibrata* women with different theoretical closures. Chapter six included the conflicting relation between Hindu kinswomen like *sasu* and *buhari.* The eighth chapter contains   researching of the self experiences accumulated to gendering processes.

And, in the last chapter, I have included the findings, discussions and reflections, along with the implication for further education.

CHAPTER II

Patriarchal System in Hinduism

The literature review has been divided into two chapters. In this chapter, I have reviewed religious provisions, which I have termed as 'hetero-patriarchal rules' advocated by different Hindu religious texts. I have also analyzed these hetero-patriarchal rules that are blended and manifested in cultural traditions which have deliberately or symbolically contributed to produce a stereotypic gender culture.

In order to undertake this work I have gathered issue wise religious provisions that have portrayed or highlighted a man and his attributes suitable to be a dominant companion of a woman (as a God, as a strong ruler, as a protector, as a breadwinner, as a fighter, as an active social agent or so on) and a woman and her attributes suitable to be subservient companion (service provider-devotee, physically vulnerable, weaker, passive, untrustworthy or so on) of a man. In doing so, I have highlighted the revisited religious rules that the hetero-patriarchal rules, manifested through the various cultural activities ultimately contributed to produce and consume hierarchal gender culture in everyday life (McGee, 1996, Kaudinyayan, 2007).

In the succeeding chapter, I have reviewed other main core religious literatures from the world (viz., Buddhist religion, Christian religion, Islam religion, etc.) that have coded specific provisions to prove man's superiority over a woman which might have played an effective role in shaping gender relations. I have also reviewed philosophical doctrines and stories of the respective religions that have reflected an imbalanced gender

relation held between a man and a woman. The reason is: I believed that religious texts are serving as an authentic body to institutionalize patriarchal system in the society portraying and interpreting a man and a woman culture differently. Apart from it, I have tried to compare the same and contrasting religious provisions in women's issues advocated by different religious texts.

Women in Hindu Religion

Provisions coded in Hindu sacred religious literatures are the main guidelines of the Hindu social life (Kaudinyan, 2007). These literatures, starting from the Rig-Veda to *Satyarhtaprakah (*Saraswati, 1939) have offered traditional to modern rules and regulations to direct a Hindu people's socio-religious life. In Hindu religious and philosophical world, there are mainly two categories of sacred texts, namely *'sruti'* or hearing and '*smiriti'* or remembering (Bhatta, 1979, McGee, 1996:20). McGee argues that, these categorizations are "based on their traditional means of transmission" from generation to generation.

To explore the portrayal of a woman's subservient attributes, I have used second categorical sacred texts, the *smrities* because, as argued by McGee (1996: 21), "the *smriti* texts tend to be more accessible than the Vedas and thus many of them are popularly remembered and passed from generation to generation". Describing the salient feature of *smrities* McGee has further said "..in the *smriti* text, God is imagined to be much more personal..." and "verses from *smriti* texts are often recited in an individual daily mediation and the stories from these texts are repeated by priests, grandmothers and

storytellers as a means of inspiring moral living" (p.21). Highlighting on the importance of these texts, some scholars (Bhatta, 1979:17) clearly stated that, *smriti* texts are "the fundamental basis of 'Hindu Laws". Bhatta further added that, *smrities* had given the social rules in elaborated form. These include the ways of rights, duties and responsibilities.

Among the *smrities*, Bhatta (ibid.) has noted that '*Manusmriti* is considered as an oldest one among other *smriti* texts'. Highlighting the importance of *Mansumriti* in social life, Renou (1962) also noted that *Manusmriti* constituted a classic of judicial theory that is perhaps dated one or two century before our era.

Looking at the importance of *smrities* in Hindu social life, I have selected some popular *smriti* texts including *Manusmriti* to analyze the religious rules and provisions on the issues of a woman. Some of the texts I have selected included: *Manusmriti, Gita, Garudpuran, Purushottammahatmaya, Swasthani, Chandi etc*. In the same way, I also have selected some other text, namely *Nirnayasindhu, Satyarthaprakash and Kamasutra* etc. that are somehow critical and analytical than the classical literatures; but have been influencing in the construction of socio-religious knowledge. Among these sacred texts, *Manusmriti* and *Gita* are more philosophical, whereas some other literatures (like *Garudhpuran, Swasthani, and Purushottammahamatmya*) are recited in different ritual functions that are equally accessible to women in the form of the story describing different mythical characters. Both these kinds of literatures have played a significant role for construction of a type-gendered knowledge in understanding the individual and social self.

In order to analyze the rules offered by different religious texts, I have developed different themes. Each of the themes is interpreted by analyzing one or more religious literature-based contents as mentioned above. I have started my work from the analysis of the husband and wife relations as argued, according to the Hindu philosophy.

Husband and Wife Relation

Manusmriti advocated that, *Brahma* is the God of creation, who is also interchangeably known as *Prajapati* divided his body into two equal halves (male and female) and started to have sexual reproduction between them (1/32). Text *Vedantasabdakosh* edited by (Yatri, 2004:133) has further accounted that *Prajapati* worshiped Rikdevi Goddess to create the world. Following the worship of *Prajapati, Rikdevi* came out in the form of *ardhanarishwor* (combination of half male and half female) who was later separated into male and female for the purpose of recreation. This symbolized representation of the human creation shows that, the image of *ardhanarishwor,* half part male and half part female blended in a single individual human entity. This idea also, represented the inherent character of yin and yang in each male and female envisaged in according to the old Chinese philosophy (Capra, 1983). Therein, yin and yang notion argues that, each male possesses feminine nature (yin tendency), and each female also possesses masculine nature (yang tendency) in different proportions.

The notion of *ardhanarishwor* on the other hand is connected with an intention of maintaining an intimate, most closely and harmonious relation between a man and a woman. This notion has created an irreversible, paired relation existing between a

husband and a wife. Terrestrially speaking, this thought has been translated into immortal and spiritual connection between husband and a wife in different rebirths. To symbolize this relation, Poddhar and Goswami (1990) also argued that husband and wife share very intimate relation in course of their social and physical life. Such ideas of eternal connection of a husband and a wife have been championed in the practice of Hindu people who acknowledge the wife as '*ardhangi'* (McGee, 1996:28) or 'half of the husband'.

The intimate, spiritual, immortal, irreversible relation between a husband and a wife is highly valued under the ideal Hindu family system to carry out the functions of family life. This has been translated into the culture coding the provisions that husband and wife should observe rituals together, so that they can achieve the desired worldly and spiritual wishes. *Manusmriti* has further reiterated it in a way that if wife is happy with husband and vice versa, a family life always becomes happy (3/60).

The discussion above about gender relation between a man and a woman could be analyzed in different ways. In the first form of its origin, it remained as a single entity as *Brahma*. In the second *ardhanarishowor* form, it showed hermaphrodite (sexless) characters interchangeably as appeared in a nucleus form. In the third form, it remained as two sexes of human being as a man and a woman. In the forth variation, it is understood as husband and wife, that are confined with a separate gender identity with distinct culture which is popularly known as gender culture.

Since gender analysts used the forth form of understanding (Capra, 1983), I have analyzed some major aspects related to gender relation between a Hindu man and a woman. Fundamentally, a man and a woman enter into a defined gender relation after the

marriage. Universally, marriage is the fundamental institution of a society in which "the influence of religion has been very strong" (Bottomore, 1986:176). Agreeing with the terminology of Bottomore, I began my further writing with the analysis of the religious codes sanctified under Hindu hetero-patriarchal culture in the succeeding paragraphs.

Marriage and Codes

Hindu philosophy has given a high value of the bond relationships between a man and a woman that is established through sacred marriage. Highlighting the religious value of marriage, McGee (1996:28) writes that the marriage is an important step among all of the rituals which 'involves elaborate rituals'. Giving an important emphasis, *Manusmriti* has also stated that, the marriage ceremony included observing the necessary ritual rites for women (2/67). Once relation between husband and wife is established through the sacred marriage, it is indissoluble (Bottomore, 1986). This is because; a man gets his marriage partner (woman) that is fixed by the grace of God, and the relation continues for several rebirths (9/95). This social bond of marriage system echoes the concept of *ardhanarishwor,* which argued that the embracing cordial relation of half male and half female contributes towards fitness for the function of procreation.

As argued by religious texts, marriage carries high social and psychological value in the life of a young woman. She will get full social, religious and cultural status only after the marriage. In the same way, after marriage she achieves social sanction for and becomes eligible to have physical relationship with a man. Marriage between a man and a woman is therefore acknowledged as an inevitable moment of initiating a new life.

Marriage has its own unique system as an institution which has protected its authenticity derived from the religious texts. Religious texts have formulated different effective codes that are regarded as rules and followed accordingly. First of all, I would analyze the marriage age coded by different texts and their ultimate effect in woman's life in the following paragraphs.

Age of the Marriage

Religious literatures from the *Rigvedic* period have not recommended any coded age to conduct   ideal marriage of a man and a woman (Baral, 1993). On the basis of the Vedic notion-a part of the co-work of husband and wife is to involve in ritual activities, it denotes that a man and a woman in Vedic period used to marry when they were physically grown up and were fit and compatible for the physical and social relation.

Emergence of child-marriage system, as argued by Baral resonated after the *Rigvedic* period. Baral (ibid) reiterates that, almost all *smrities* have advocated in the same tone that a girl should be married before menstruation (from four years to twelve years). Why *smrities* (especially *Manusmriti)* advocated for early marriage is not clear. But, as indicated by Baral (p.143), *Brahminism* (system of Brahman groups) is the cause for an emergence of this system which supported measures towards maintaining the girl child marriage for a long period. I have presented a table below to display the codes of age for marriage offered by *smrities* and other religious texts.

Table 1: Marriage Age of Boys and Girls Advocated by Different Religious Texts

Text	Boys/Girls age	Advocacy for girl's marriage
Manusmriti	30/12, 24/8	Girl's marriage before menstruation (8/94)
Swasthani	70/7	Girl's marriage before menstruation (p.179)
Nirnayaksindhu	30/15, 16/8.	Father has to give virgin gift before menstruation (p.445).
Satyarthaprakash	25/16, 30/17, 36/18, 40/20, 44/22, 48/24	Best marriage is after three years of first menstruation (p.43, 81, 82)
Kamsutra	3 Years or more younger girl	Marriage when one becomes capable (p.125)

Source: Compiled from Different Religious Texts

The table shows that there is a big difference in the marriage age of a boy and a girl. Such type of age gap discards the origin of man and woman from *ardhanarishwor,* who were compatible on equal footing. The age gap has also neglected the possession of the yin and yang in each individual, irrespective of the sex, which automatically created imbalance power relation between a husband and a wife. Capra (1983:22) argued that this was exceeding 'yang over the yin', which "lead to a profound cultural imbalance" because it continuously nurtured power hierarchy and male supremacy. In the long run, the result produced from this system suppressed woman's physical and psychological compatibility in respect to their male counterpart.

Analysis of the historical evidences, practice of early marriage of girls seemed to further reinforce the impact of   Muslim invasion over Hindus in the following periods. In this connection, Baral (1993:144) also argues that, after the Muslim movement to conquer the *Bharatbarsa* (the Indian Sub- Continent), Hindus became more rigid on the issues of their daughters, because Muslim warriors had very few women with them; and they targeted Hindu girls for conducting marriage as it was related to their war strategy to produce more Muslims. To prevent their girl child to marry a Muslim, Baral further

reiterates that the Hindu hardliners started to give marriage of their daughters at early ages in a hope that married girls will not be raped and or be mishandled.

To support Barals' argument, there are enough evidences about the violent movement of Muslims during 14th century. Baral (ibid) has accounted that, not only in India, but there is a whole history of the attack of Muslims in Kathmandu Valley too. In 1350, Samasuddhin attacked Kathmandu Valley, and destroyed temples and looted valuable assets terrorizing people for seven days. In the same way, Poddhar and Goshwami (1990:573) presented an example that during 1303, Allaudin attacked in Chittaud getting enticed by a Hindu woman Padmini, who was a beautiful wife of a Hindu leader Ratna Singh. When Ratna Singh was defeated and was killed in the war by Allaudin, then his beautiful wife and her thousand of followers entered into the sacred fire to protect themselves from the abuse of the Muslim men.

Poddhar and Goshwami further claim that severe attacks conducted by non-Hindu religious sects thus also exhibited a bitter experience in the history of Hindus. These main and other sporadic armed conflict events also created an adverse effect on the status of Hindu women. It only helped to purportedly support to continue to follow an oppressive system like an early marriage or burning in the funeral pyre after the death of her husband, etc.

Although, classical literatures like *smrities,* in the above table have advocated the best marriage age of girls before menstruation, some other texts have dealt with it differently. A critical thinker Dayananda Saraswati (1939:43) in his popular text *Satyrthaprakash* states that the girl's marriage should be held after three years of menstruation. It has advocated a male's best marriage age to be established at 48 and 24

for female (P.80). On the same light, the sage Vatsyayan in his popular work *Kamasutra* (Burton & Arbuthn, 1971) has argued that man and women must be sound (physically and psychosocially) to gain extreme joy from the physical relation. Vatsyayan clearly stated that (p.125), to be a perfect couple, a man must marry with a girl 'who is three years or younger than himself. The argument of Vatsyayan seems more practical from non-oppressive gender relation than that of the arguments put forth by other coded scholars.

Despite the codes advocated for the proper age marriage, *smrities* also have advised for deliberately inculcating proper attributes of a man and woman that are best preferred for the purpose of marriage. I have presented expected attributes of the boys and girls as advocated by different Hindu text in the following paragraphs.

Expected Physical and Social Attributes

Apart from the age, *Manusmriti* has clearly stated that girl's physical, moral and psychological fitness are acknowledged as important prerequisite for the purpose of an ideal marriage (3/3, 7-11). Different texts have highlighted on the girl's attributes with a great priority that are given in the following table.

Table 2: Preferred and Rejected Attributes of Boys and Girls for Marriage

Texts	*Manusmriti* Chapter 3, 3/7, 8, 9, 10, 11	*Satyarthaprakash*	*Kamasutra*
Girls Preferred	A girl, who is beautiful, has a beautiful name, possesses long	Slim, beautiful who is named after the	Born in respected family, beautiful,

Attributes	hair; short teeth, movement like elephant or swan, should be selected for the marriage (3/9).	happiness like yasoda, sukhada, motion like elephant or swan, small hairs, soft body	with good dispositions, with lucky marks in her body (p.125)
Girls Rejected Attributes	Girls with grey hair, talkative, eyes with grey background are not allowed to marry (3/8). Names of girls that indicates *nakshyatra (planets),* river, trees, *mlechha (non-Hindus),* hill, snake, slave and other dreadful names (3/9). Girls who don't have brothers, and whose father is unknown, or made *putrika* (that woman kept as male and expected her son to perform ritual rights by girls family). 3/11 Girls from 10 *kul* including absence of Vedic knowledge to genetic disease (3/7)	Girl with yellow colour, with unnecessary body parts, with disease, height more than a male, with great strength, and involves in dispute (p.79) Girls holding names of certain *nakshtraya,* certain plants, certain mountain, certain goddesses name like Kali, Chandika (p.80) Reject 10 *kul*-absence of Vedic knowledge to genetic diseases (p.79)	
Boys expected attrib*utes*	Educated, Knowledge of Veda, same caste (3/12).		A man from a prestigious family

Source: Compiled from Different Religious Texts

The table above shows that the selection of girl for marriage again rejects the doctrine of *ardhanarishwor,* which is embedded in a balanced proportion of yin and yang attitude. It also shows that the demand for a pretty girl with submissive feminine character has again nurtured patriarchal power hierarchy between a husband and a wife

(Capra, 1983). Similarly, the demand for women's feminine physical attribute and the man's intellectual characters has clearly separated the social and intellectual domain of a husband and a wife. It considered a wife as a suitable person to carry a labor-intensive work, and a husband befitting works driven towards carrying out intellectual/mental work.

Although, the *Kamsutra* has advocated measures for being perfect in sixty-four arts for both the man and woman, it has also reiterated the demand for prioritizing attractive physical outlook as the tenet for a woman while selecting a marriage partner. The table also reflects that a woman who possesses a name related to planets, certain plants, certain mountains, certain goddesses name like Kali, Chandika (the name of the warrior God, Devi) are also discouraged for marriage. This clearly signifies that the existing marriage system appears to bind the man and woman at an unequal footing that only create and harbors a lifelong inequality power hierarchy between them.

Threat felt by man in the names of Goddess of warrior character like Chandika indicates that man seems to connote the scared of the women's unlimited power. Generally, a Hindu man controls female power in two ways-by suppressing her and worshipping her. Text *Chandi* is an example that contains the verses entirely dedicated to the female Goddess Durga; and only men are practiced to recite these texts during the *dashain* festival with a great enthusiasm.

The exclusion of the marriage of the girl from the ten *kul* (lineages) seems to create awareness of the people towards transmission of genetic diseases. The text *Satyarthaprakash* has also advocated that the restriction for ten *kul* codes is equally

applicable to the male lineage too. Some of the restricted code attributes seem to be scientific for the sole purpose of inheriting a healthy life value system.

After discussing the attributes of the female considered as an important element while selecting the proper girl for marriage, I have tried to discuss the highly popularized, well institutionalized woman specific *patibrata dharma* that played a great role for women's subordination character under hetero-patriarchal culture.

Patibrata Dharma, the form of Hetero-patriarchy

Patibrata dharma is a popular woman specific socio-religious system. The literal meaning of *Patibrata dharma* is a woman's 'loyalty to one husband' (Poddhar & Goswami, 1990). In an ideology and practice, *patibrata dharma* is the devotion of a woman bestowed towards her husband from her body, mind and behaviour. It is explicitly women specific religious system which is also known as *sanatan dharma or* eternal religion (*Manusmriti*, 8/216). The origin of *patibrata dharma* seems to be as old as patriarchy which is institutionalized with the institutionalization of other patriarchal values. It includes both cultural practices; and a belief system that exists in both theory and the practical level.

Arguing the views from the above religious text, Poddhar and Goswami (1990:17) write that 'women do not need to perform any separate fire sacrifice or religious fasting; but she can achieve salvation only from the faithful loyalty towards her husband'. This argument indicates that *patibrata dharma* demands unconditional loyalty by a woman to her husband. This belief system is rooted to the *bhakti path* (one way of achieving

salvation among other four paths) of getting salvation among other paths, in which the relation of the God (here husband is God) and the devotee (wife is devotee) is defined by the relation of lord and servant (Ibid).

Highlighting the inherent value of *patibrata dharma,* 30th chapter of text *Purushottammahatyamya* (30/1-97) has entirely coloured and put a blurred picture. This chapter has portrayed a woman as a slave or her husband as lord, as argued by Poddhar and Goswami (1990:17). This 'lord and slave relation' of the husband and wife has been valued in all the religious books. These texts further argue that everything related to her husband should be considered as the things from the temple and the women should take care of them unconditionally.

In Hindu religious philosophies, *Bhakti* path is regarded as a simple way to salvation among other three types of spiritual paths *gyan marg (*knowledge path), *karma marg (*action path) and *bhakti marga (*devotion path) of achieving *mokshya (*salvation) by a Hindu devotee (McGee, 1996:30). McGee further argues that, the devotee of *bhakti marga*, as advocated by the holy text *Gita,* 'involves a complete surrender to the God' (p.30) and 'no special knowledge, language or ritual is required to relate God on a personal level' (p.31). The characteristic feature of *bhakti* path or the surrender to the husband regarding him as a God for *mokshya* (salvation) excluded women from the access of knowledge and reinforced her to be a physical laborer. Practically, the specific bond of a wife attached with her husband fundamentally based on *bhakti marg* appeared to be an oppressive system because of its enforced characters that even neglected women's fundamental human rights. This relation encouraged a woman to become a slave forever and get salvation from the pleasure of her lord husband. Such types of bi-polar

status (slave and lord) created a permanent form of gender hierarchy, which is inherently

oppressive and problematic (Derrida cited in Powell, 2003).

Strong *patibrata* faith, inculcated in *bhakti path* does not support the inherent

meaning of *ardhanarishwor.* It is because; the doctrine of *ardhanarishwor* was evolved

more to associate towards recreation of the world through sexual method, but not to

divide man and woman into two hierarchical people possessing separate culture- the

master and the slave. *Patibrata dharma* rather served institutionalized discriminatory

gender relation between a husband and a wife (Baral, 1993). It is the process of the

domination of intuitive knowledge feminine values by rational knowledge or masculine

values (Capra, 1983), which is the chief characteristics of hetero-patriarchy.

Patibrata dharma, which is also characterized as a spiritual and immortal relation

of man and woman, has restricted woman to join with other males freely who might be

regarded as her inherent partner when they are evolved in their first form,

ardhanarishowor or the blended form of yin and yang. Creating a wall of *patibrata*

dharma, social codes (as mentioned in *Manusmriti*) have prevented a woman a widow or

a divorced woman or a woman separated with her husband) for remarriage at any cost.

Like *Manusmriti*, other subsequent literatures such as *Garudhpuran* (4/35-53) and

Purushottammahatmaya (30/1-97) have also strongly condemned those women including

a widow, who commit sinful acts like extramarital sexual or emotional relation in

presence of or in absence of her husband. Text *Garudpuran* (4//28-30/), states that a

woman who neglects her own husband and remembers the other one, is compelled to go

to a dreadful hell. This sort of notion creates a fear psychosis that attacks women's

thought and behavior permanently and reinforces her to be confined on the above mentioned boundary.

To make *patibrata dharma* more prestigious, orthodox Hindus used to follow a practice of *sati* system (burning woman in a pyre of her dead husband). To clarify the notion of *sati* system, I have revisited the historical events related to the ideology and practice of it that was continued till eighty years ago in Nepal. I have presented the *sati* system and its socio-cultural effect in women's life in the following lines.

Sati System

Sati system was named after the name of Sati, the wife of Lord Shiva, who sacrificed herself burning in the sacred fire who could not tolerate verbal abuse of her father Dakshya Prajapati became shore against her husband (Poddahar & Gowswami, 1990:321). After the period of *Sati,* this sacrifice was institutionalized as a *sati* system in which a widow woman started to burn in a funeral pyre of her husband in order to make a husband and wife relation immortal.

It is difficult to mention the actual time when the *sati* system was promulgated in the Indian Sub -Continent. Text *Manusmriti* is silent towards mentioning of any rule related to the *sati* system. Baral (1993), in this regard argues that, most probably, this system was carried from the ancient Greeks. Baral further claims that this system was effective only before some century BC. He argues that (p.355) *Bishnudharmasutra* is the first text to mention *sati* system. Some scholars (Kamat, 2008) opined that, *Agnipuran*

has clearly coded the greatness of the sacrifice made by the *sati* woman that stated that a woman who becomes *sati* with her husband ultimately joins heaven.

The sacred text *Garudpuran* is also one powerful source that reinforced *sati* system. It has magnified extremely *sati* system and women's glory in a positive light. It has also offered a ritual process to enter into *sati* with her husband. The woman who wished to be immortal as a *sati* needs to wash her body, decorate her body using perfumes, wear good dress and ornaments, donate valuable things to the priest, visit temple and pay the last salute to the God and then go to the cremation place and greet the Sun God and then ride to the pyre, take the husband's head in the lap; and allow the friends to lit the fire (p, 317, verse, 35-53). Such a *sati* woman, as advocated by the text *Garudpuran* can eventually join her husband in the heaven and again marry with the same man in the next birth also. Thus, *Garudpuran* amplifies that, once a relation between a husband and wife is established, it continues towards an infinite, timeless period.

Likewise, the story of Brinda in the text *Swasthani,* who burnt herself in the pyre of her husband after his death, is a really popular story for shaping up the women's delicate mindset towards *patibrata dharma*. This story message recollects that, a *patibrata* woman is spiritually powerful than any other God and Goddesses. Poddhar and Goswami (1990) argue that the final aim of a woman is to achieve salvation through the self-sacrifice of woman as a *sati*. They have presented hundreds of names of historical women who became *sati* burning themselves in the pyre with their husband.

Theoretically, Hindus believe on the rebirth. In text *Gita,* Lord Krishna has told, 'when the power of *dharma* decreases, and *adharma* (opposite of *dharma*) increases, I

will reincarnate myself to protect sages and to destroy the demons' (4/7, 8). Practically, in this era, it is hard to believe that when a man brings many wives, then all will be his wife for different rebirths. Looking at this I see many causes behind the practice of the *sati* system. Some of them include: the text *Garudpuran* has symbolically coded that a woman who fears to go as a *sati* will have to suffer from the pain of the tragedy with her beloved husband and suffer from the discard of family and society (10/54). Kamat (2008), in this regard says that women were enforced to become a *sati* for other greedy ones to snatch away their valuable ornaments. The next reason seemed that the death penalty was preferable for a widow woman than facing the lifelong sufferings from humiliation. Supporting Kamat, Baral (1993) also argues that *sati* system was a strategy to remove the demand of property by the widows of a dead man because in the past wealthy and power holders (politicians and others) used to bring forth dozens of wives. Jealousness and competitive attitude among the co-wives for the inheritance of property and power of the late husband was always prevalent between them. To prevent all these tensions, *sati* system might have been one of the strategies that Hindus followed and adopted it in their codes for many years. When all wives of the deceased man are killed with him then, she may not claim any sort of property or bring any man in the absence of her husband.

Going back to the history of the *sati* system in Nepal, Baral (ibid) states that women used to become a *sati* before 1920. During this period, this system was in practice in the Brahmin family, King's family, elite class family, and in some degree to the families of the general people. He argues that in Lichhavi period (250-878) there was no compulsion for women to go as *sati,* but in Malla period (879-1768), this system was

strongly effective among women from the high family and also percolated to the general family too (Koirala, 1996). In Baral's opinion, late part of the Malla period was influenced by the medieval Indian *sati* system that was practiced highly by Rajput women to protect themselves from the attack of the Muslims (p.359). Baral also stated (p.357) a historical fact that in 1520 AD, ten wives of King Ratna Malla became *sati.* Likewise, 9 wives of King Bhupalendra Malla, 9 wives of King Srinivas Malla, 33 wives of King Yog Narendra Malla, 8 wives of King Jagat Prakash Malla also burnt themselves in the funeral pyre of their husband. He tentatively claimed that, if women were denied to become a *sati,* then they were severely tortured, their heads used to be broken-down, physical injures were incited, and they were forcefully wounded. This phenomenon also compelled the woman more to attend *satihood.*

Incidentally, this system also continued in the modern period too. After the death of Great King Prithivinarayan Shah, 8 wives went as *sati.* Likewise, 14 wives of king Rana Bahadur Shah, were enticed to became *sati.* There is a cruel history that the wife of 19 years old king Girban Shah's wife was compelled to go as *sati* leaving her infant son through pressure of the then prime-minister, Bhimsen Thapa. Rana Prime Minister Janga Bahadur's name comes in the forefront so administered some serious measures to eliminate this cruel system, He had carried a bill in 1910 (Baral, p.363) that had proposed various provisions against the *sati* system. However, this system was totally abolished in the period of Rana Prime Minister Chandra Samser only in 1929; just 80 years ago from the annals of the history of Nepal. In these modern days, although *patibrata dharma* is strongly observed by Hindu women, there is no *sati* system in practice after 1929 in Nepal.

If we analyze the cases of our history, *sati* system was indeed a cruel system, adopted mostly by high caste family of the Kings and other elites. The action of Bhimsen Thapa to send a young widow of King Girban reconfirmed that widow women also became the victims of the power politics of the ruling class people. The other cause might have been the threat of the young wives of a dead man (as advocated by text *Gita*), who can bring other man's gene and the property might be divided to the children of the others gene.

From all these advocacies measures, what can be understood is that, the religious texts and customary practices have deliberately tried towards promoting *patibrata dharma* by honoring her sacrifice (as a *sati)* with a great value in the worldly life and in the spiritual life too, to solve the social and psychological problem she was bound to face in her widowhood. After explaining *sati* system, I have explained the demand of genetically pure male lineage system over-valued by hetero-patriarchal society in the following lines.

Hetero-patriarchal Lineage System

Patibrata dharma (including *sati* system) as advocated by the religious texts is further attached with the notion of lineage purity. Almost all religious texts, including the text *Manusmriti* have stated that the main problem of a patriarchal family is to maintain lineage purity. The main threat in Hindu family is the fear of incorporating other's gene (hybrid/cross children) in one's own lineage by kinswomen (Bennett, 2005). Hybrid children are thus considered as a source of a great threat to building a strong patriarchal

family. The text *Gita* also states that the hybrid children produced by the widow women destroy the whole prestige earned by the ancestors of the patriarchal lineage (1/39-44). The following table shows how the Hindu religious texts have emphasized a pure lineage system.

Table 3: Advocacy for the Pure Lineage System in the Religious Texts

Text	Male lineage	Region for male lineage
Manusmirti	Inheritance (of property) and succession (to rank) are in the male line	For the salvation of the ancestors through the ritual rites
Garudhpuran	Male line is highly demanded	For the salvation of the ancestors through the ritual rites
Chandi	Devi is worshipped for the prosperity of male line	For spiritual/social
Purushottam mahatmyama	Strong demand for a son's lineage	For social/spiritual purpose
Gita	Reinforced pure male line	For salvation of the ancestors
Swasthani	Reinforced male line	For social support
Nirnaya Sindhu	Strong demand for a son for lineage purity	For salvation of the ancestors
Satyarthaprakash	Strongly advocated demand for lineage	For salvation of the ancestors

Source: Compiled from Different Religious Texts

The table shows that Hindu hetero-patriarchal culture prefers measures towards incorporating the male lineage value system. It is highly characterized with the demand of male lineage with the maintenance of genetic purity. *Manusmriti* states that a woman must be controlled to protect her body because by protecting the woman, children, character, lineage, soul and religion will be protected (9/7). The text further states that, by force, woman cannot be protected. So to protect her, her mobility must be confined

within domestic periphery (9/11). This statement clearly proves that women must be domesticated to maintain lineage purity.

Lineage purity, as specified with the demand of bearing a son, has created a tremendously discriminatory attitude against girl children. Although this notion is attached with the spiritual value of preference of the son, its impacts can be acknowledged from the practical and psychological dimension too. Like the texts *Manusmiriti*, *Garudpuran* also states for parents of a good son never to encounter a bad faith and urged that a Hindu couple might perform many religious activities and medications to produce a son (7/7-15). There are annual *sraddha* (ritual offerings) held from which a son also satisfies his ancestors. *Garudpuran* has warned that if his sons or wife does not carry a person's death rituals properly, that person never achieves salvation, rather it becomes a captive of a bad faith, in the form of *pretatma* (a soul in a bad faith). In the same way, the text *Purushottammahatmaya* has also included different stories of mythical people who encountered bad faith who could not produce a son easily.

All these entire examples prove that Hindu hetero-patriarchal culture is gene preferring attitude to seek male lineage. Practically, demand of the son seems to be related with the assumption of the protection, and it takes care of parents in the old age. The other cause is more spiritual, related to the notion of salvation from the world. The demand for the son was also interconnected with the war and conflict losses between the evil and good power. The text *Chandi* highlighted the running stories of the war between the devil and God in which the main fighter from the side of God was Goddess Devi. The stories of the mythical or modern history were coloured with the blood of the wars in which men were the main actors with the fighting spirit to do or die (Baral, 1993). The

preference of son might be a cause to balance the number of men and women in a right proportion. The stories of the Kings who possessed many wives also show that the number of men was less than the number of women. Islamic texts have clearly mentioned that the number of men was less than the number of women in the period of Prophet Mohammad's experienced to the events of war (Mudadi, 2004). So, at that time polygamy was an inevitable phenomenon in order to manage the imbalanced proportion of men and women and male preference value had thus been nurtured in that causative way.

This demand for lineage purity and in terms of male child preference again violated the *ardhanarishwor* doctrine in the first form. The preference for male helped upgrade the value of male child and degraded the value of female child. Preference of male child has also challenged the natural phenomena and the tradition of killing female embryo in mother's womb with the help of the modern technology. Some of the social economists (Sen, 1999) have argued that the trend of aborting female embryo is appearing as a greatest threat in the present world which has violated girl's birth right from the very beginning. The system of remarriage by male and the practice of torturing woman for not having a male child is also a serious problem that Hindu women frequently face in their life. They are even debarred for remarriage; but their male counterparts have been given ample opportunity to remarry for the production of a male child. In this connection, I have examined the remarriage provisions of Hindu people in the following paragraphs.

Remarriage System

Ideally, in a normal scenario, Hindu religious doctrine is against remarriage for men and women. Almost all the classical religious texts have discouraged the remarriage system in the condition when both the husband and wife have no physical or psychological defect. However, when problems are encountered in marriage life (death of wife or unable to bear male children), then these literatures (like *Manusmriti, Garudhpuran, Purushottammahatmya*) had consented for a man for undertaking remarriage. I have developed a chart to explain the provisions of remarriage system advocated by different texts as follows:

Table 4: Remarriage System in the Religious Texts

Text	Provision for Remarriage
Manusmirti	When a wife dies, a man has to remarry after lighting the funeral pyre in her mouth (5/138). Provision for male to re-marry: 1. Instantly marry, if the first wife shows misdemeanor characteristics 2. Marriage if the wife succumbs to injury (death) 3. If the wife is barren up to eight year of the marriage, 4. If the children die during ten years of marriage, 5. And if there is only a girl child up to eleven years of the married life. Widow Women has to make her body thin eating fruits and roots but should not take name of other man (5/157)
Swasthani	Has portrayed the stories of the remarried men like Lord Shiva, Navaraj etc.
Nirnayasindhu	Text *Sangraha* (p.478) said, 1. Infertile wife should be left in 10 years 2. If a woman bears only girl children, she should be left in 11 years 3. If children die, should be left in 15 years 4. And if talks harsh words cause, then it should be left immediately

	and have to remarry by a man again
	Once married woman, but not indulge in sex activity also restricted for remarriage in *kaliyug* (p.470).
Kamsutra	The causes of remarriage during lifetime are: The folly or ill temper of the wife Her husbands dislike her The want of offspring The continual birth of daughters The incompetence of the husband (p.147)
Satyarhtaprakash	Saraswati argues that once married man and woman cannot remarry with a virgin girl (*akshatayoni*) or a bachelor boy (*akhayatabirya*) (p.117), but they can remarry if they have not indulged in sexual relation.

Source: Compiled from Different Religious Texts

The table above points out that a man can remarry in different conditions. Among five conditions argued by *Manusmriti* and four conditions put forward by *Nirnayasindhu* it seems related to the problem of bearing children for the continuation of lineage. If we clearly analyze the provision of *Manusmriti* and *Nirnayasindhu* in the table, we can find that a man can always remarry if he wants to undertake this step. In the same way, the provisions of remarriage offered by *Kamsutra* also encouraged men towards remarriage.

As I have already discussed, when a man is allowed to remarry, for any purpose, he can bring another wife as per his interest. On the contrary, a woman is not allowed to leave her husband, if she disliked him or in case he brought another wife. Not only that, even a widow, or a woman separated from her husband does not deserve any right for remarriage. This makes her subservient to man and tolerate whatever he acts against her. It may also lead the human world to experience a social disaster due to the continuous rejection, devaluation or oppression of women's intuitive wisdom (Capra, 1983:21).

Although, *Manusmriti* and other texts have allowed men for remarriage, the text *Satyarthaprakash* has proposed more equitable provision for remarriage. It argued that a married man or woman cannot remarry with an unmarried (virgin) man and woman. But both of them can remarry if they are not indulged in sex relation after marriage. The text has argued that married man or woman can produce children from other married man or woman from a *niyog* system. I have analyzed the provision of *niyog* system as argued by different texts in the table below.

Table 5: Provision of *Niyog* System in Religious Texts

Texts	Provision
Manusmirti	Children from other man goes against *sastra,* so women are not allowed to find the next husband (5/162) A widow woman or a woman with a husband can bear children from the *niyog* system from her *dewar* (husband's brother) or a man of the same family, in case of an inability of her husband to produce the children and give him the wealth of the person (8/59, 60).
Gita	Discouraged the *niyog* system
Nirnayasindhu	This text has strictly rejected the *niyog* system. It states that such provision is not applicable in *kaliyug* (p.470).
Satyarhtaprakash	*Niyog* system is *sastra sammat* (that does not violate the doctrine of *veda* (p.124) A man can keep sexual relation with 11 women and a woman can keep sexual relation with 11 men to produce ten children from *niyog* (p.120) A woman can bear children from *niyog* system (p.121), if he does not come home 1. 8 years if he had gone abroad for earning religious virtues, 2. 6 years if he had gone for education and fame,

	3. 3 years if he had gone for wealth.

Source: Compiled from Different Religious Texts

The table above has opened up another dimension of hetero-patriarchal ideology; and the practice that contradict with the overvalued *patibrata dharma*. *Niyog* system either advocated by *Manusmriti* or by *Satyarthaprakash,* has provided the value of male lineage over the sexual purity or *patibrata dharma*. Text *Satyarthaprakash* has also elaborated the rules of *niyog* arguing that a man can keep sexual relation with 11 women; and a woman can keep sexual relation with 11 men to produce ten children under this system (p.120). This step indicates that the text is eager to authenticate *niyog* system (p.124) for those who anticipate children administering that *niyog* system are *sastra sammat* (that does not violate the doctrine of the Veda). It has also argued that even a woman in the long run in the absence of her husband can bear children from the *niyog* system (p.121) as shown in the table above.

Text *Satyarthaprakash* has provided some examples of the birth of famous mythical male and female characters from the *niyog* system. The wives of King Pandu of the Great *Mahabharat*, Kunti and Madri, produced five brave children (Uddhisthir, Bhim, Arjun, Nakul and Sahadev) from *niyog*. In the same way, King Pandu and his brothers Dhritarastra and Bidur were born through *niyog* with Maharshi Vyas by the widows of his brothers Chitrangad and Bichitrabirya (p.121). In the same generation Draupadi (daughter in law of King Pandu) married with the five brothers and lived a reputed life. Describing the story of Draupadi who married five Pandav brothers differently, the text *Purushottammahatyamya* (10/18-36) had tried to unite all the five brothers; and personified them to be assumed a unique unison of one man characteristic phenomenon.

Although, *niyog* system is offered by different texts, practically it is devalued and outdated in practice. Fundamentally, *niyog* system does not advance to promote sexual pleasure or blend emotional attachment between two persons who bear children from *niyog* system. I have examined some of the provisions that have primarily focused on the codes of sex relationship and *brahmacharya* (observing celibacy) system which are presented as follows.

Sex for Lineage Rather than for Physical Enjoyment

The consent amplified by the text *Manusmriti* for bearing children from *niyog* system seems to have been adhered with the continuation of lineage rather than attached with sexual pleasure as its priority. It advocates measures that after having sexual relations to bear children from *niyog* system, a man and a widow woman should maintain their relation as a *guru* (teacher) and *putrabadhu* (daughter in law) (9/62). This provision provokes that after keeping sex relation to produce children from *niyog,* they should not continue to be enticed in the sexual affairs for pleasure seeking.

Table 6: Codes for Sexual Relation

Text	Codes
Manusmirti	Have sex relation only in *ritukal* (3/45). *Ritukal* remains after the 4th day of menstruation up to 16 night
	Avoid sex relation for the four day of menstruation, 11th night and 13th night
	Son will bear if sex relation is kept in even nights and daughter in odd nights (so avoid 5th, 7th and 9th night too). (3/48)
	Man is considered as a *brahmachari,* if he keeps sex relation on the said days

	(3/50)
Nirnayasindhu	If sex relation is kept on the restricted period (*ritukal*), the virtues will be destroyed (p.65).
	Have sex relation only once in each mentioned night (even nights as argued by *Manusmriti*) of the *ritukal* (p.352).
	Never keep sex relation before menstruation because it causes *brahmahatya* (sin of killing the God of creation, *Brahma*) for loosing the sperm without the purpose of bearing children (p.350)
	Man is considered as *brahmachari* if he keeps sex relation on the said days (p.352)
Satyrthaprakash	Have sex relation only in *ritukal* (3/45)

Source: Compiled from Different Religious Texts

Contradictorily, whatever was stated about child bearing system from *niyog* practice in *Manusmriti*, or as advocated by *Satyarthaprakash,* the other text *Nirnayasindhu* has strictly rejected this provision. It says that such provision is not applicable in *kaliyug.* Actually, this could be the cause that, in these days, there is no *niyog* system in the practical life, as it was practiced during the period of the *Mahabharat. Manusmriti* also has made aware in this case that *niyog* system is deplored by some orthodox groups of people who claim that such system will destroy *patibratadharma* (9/68). Here I can see that discouraging *niyog* practice is closely associated with devaluing bodily relations within extramarital physical relation.

All these instances indicate that, remarriage of a woman or involvement of a woman in a *niyog* practice is not freely entertained by a Hindu religious system. These types of seeking pleasure from sexual relations are termed as a secondary aspect, not a prioritized one. This can be best understood by analyzing the codes, do's and don'ts related to the sexual relations between husband and wife. *Manusmriti* and the subsequent

classical literatures (*Swasthani, Garudhpuran, and Purushottammahatmya*) have strictly prohibited adult male to touch his wife (as well as other females) for the first four days of her menstruation period. Excluding these four days, a man should keep sex relation with his wife during *ritukal* (fourth to the 16th nights) for the purpose of bearing the children. During *ritukal,* also, 4th, 11th, and 13th nights are considered inauspicious and prohibited for sex relations (1/45-50). On the other hand, *Manusmriti* has made it amply clear that a man who keeps sex relation only in the mentioned days in *ritukal* is also considered as *brahmarchari* (a person who observes celibacy). In the same way, text *Satyarthaprakash* (p.41) also emphasized for *brahmacharaya* practice. It has advocated that if a man marries at the age of 48, he will gain the mentioned result what he best deserves from observing *brahmachraya* religion.

In the same way, *Garudpuran,* (4/41) states that a man who commits a sin having sex relationship with his wife in her menstrual period must categorically land in the hell. There are several other verses (5/24-37) in this text which emphasized about bad faith, when one is compelled to face obstacle, and when he breaches the aforementioned sexual rules. This stage will hold attention to enhance *brahmacharya*, which is the best way for achieving salvation by a man.

Thus, relationship practiced between a husband and a wife seems to be deliberately codified and a dignified venture advocated so as making it more structural. Prioritized lineage purity system and *brahmacharya* value system, is connected within the realm for achievement of salvation ethics that has prevented oneself towards sexual pleasure in conducting a normal life between a Hindu husband and wife. McGee (1996:29) is worth citing here where he has presented his view that Hindu ideology

discouraged running for an involvement in sexual pleasure because "exclusive pursuit of or attachment to pleasure is dangerous, even immoral, leading to greed and sufferings and distracting from ones responsibilities and the ultimate goal of *mokshya" (*salvation)*.

From these discussions, it is clear that, Hindu religious texts have emphasized on the devotion of life for social interest rather than individual. It has emphasized more on the spiritual life rather than the worldly pleasure and has dwelled upon the philosophy for up-keeping up lineage purity in order to release ancestors from entering into hell.

After discussing some of the religious provisions related to the different social and gender issues related to women, I have tried to bring forth some knowledge advocated by the *tantrik* system in religion. I am not going to bring larger issues related to this system, but wish to note some remarkable points that have also exerted some influences in shaping a Hindu socio-cultural system.

Tantrik Religious System

Tantrik dharma is popular in a practical level of social life. *Tantrik* religion is popular in a practical level of social life because of its affiliation with the treatment of different mysterious problems (Bhatta, 2006). In this system sex is highly admired and different ways of worshipping sex are practiced in a mythical way. This religion believes of the miracle of supernatural power, and shows its power to treat it as well. In this connection, *tantrik* religious system has developed to bridge a gap created by the *brahmacharya* system which neglected sexual urge in social life.

Hindus have been practicing the traditional way of medication since the ancient period (*Sabar Mantra aur Yantra*, 2005:22). It contained the ay of using *of mantra, yantra and tantra*, popularly known as *tantra marga* or *tantrik* way of medication (p.21). The *tantrik* way of medication was practiced during the Vedic period (Baral, 1993:210). Baral further argues that the *Atharva*Veda has included the provisions related to the *jadu* (magic) and *tunamuna* (inducement acts). Specifically, the *tantrik* way of medication included the use of *mantra* which stimulates the will power of the *sadhak* (users). The image of *mantra* is *yantra* and the *kriyatmak rup* or practiced form of *mantra* is *tantra* (ibid.).

It could be said that the *tantrik* way of traditional medication used to be a combination of all these or one or more ways at once. *Tantrik* way of medication could be classified as per the aim and wish of the *sadhak* (practitioner). A *sadhak,* tilted towards spiritual path, who wishes mental peace recites mantra that is connected with the divine power (p.21), because there is a popular saying that the Gods are under the control of *mantra* (p.79) which is used for the mental peace. It is more spiritual way. But, a *sadhak,* who wishes to overcome some worldly problems or desires to fulfill a certain wish, recites mantra and uses domestic medicine prepared by *trantrik* (who practice *tantra*) simultaneously (p.79). In doing so, *tantrik* follows certain steps systematically in the process of using his skill for the treatment of his patient.

After discussing various religious provisions on women's issues coded by Hindu religious literatures that favored male's interest; and comparatively neglected women's in the same spirit, I have presented some of the legal provision (Shrestha, 2008), that is effective in the present days in Nepal.

Legal Provisions Coded by *Muluki Ain*

Among the legal provisions on different issues of women; some of them are similar to the religious codes advocated by the religious texts; whereas some others contradict it. The following table shows the legal provision coded for the issues of women which is effective while bringing in the legal measures. In this study, I have selected only some provisions that were related to the issues of a Hindu woman I have analyzed above.

Table no: 7 Legal Provision for marriage Age as Coded by *Muluki Ain,* (the legal Code)

Codes and Section/Clause		
	For a woman	For a man
Codes related to marriage	For an arranged marriage, the age of a girl is 18 years. For love marriage; the minimum age bar is 20 years (*Muluki Ain,* 17/2).	For the arranged marriage age of a boy is 18 years For love marriage; the minimum age bar is 20 years (*Muluki Ain,* 17/2).
Condition to make a marriage avoidable	A marriage is avoidable if a woman complains that she has discovered her marriage partners' physical or psychological incurable defect (*Muluki Ain,* 17/4-5) A marriage becomes avoidable, if it is arranged without the consent of a boy or a girl (*Muluki Ain,* 17/7)	A marriage is avoidable if a man complains that he has discovered his marriage partners' physical or psychological defect after marriage (*Muluki Ain,* 17/4-5) A marriage becomes avoidable, if it is arranged without the consent of a boy or a girl (*Muluki Ain,* 17/7) A marriage becomes avoidable, if either

A marriage becomes avoidable, if either party have hided the actual status (married, divorcee, widow) of a man or a woman (*Muluki Ain,* 17/8)	party have hided the actual status (married, divorcee, widow) of a man or a woman (*Muluki Ain,* 17/8)

Source: *Muluki Ain,* edited by Gyanendra Bahadur Shrestha (2008).

The table shows that the legal provision on the marriage age of a girl and a boy is equal; which contradicts with the provision advocated by the religious texts. Although, the rule is there to have a marriage of a girl only after the age of eighteen, but the cases of the practice in this matter is less effective. After overlooking the age of marriage of a boy and a girl, I have tried to examine the remarriage rules and conditions as stated in the legal provision for a man and a woman; in the following table.

Table no:8 Legal Provision for Remarriage

	Codes and Section/Clause
For a man	A man who have a wife with him, without taking divorce can remarry in the following conditions: If wife is infected from the incurable sexual disease. If she becomes mad that cannot be cured. If a medical board proved that his wife is barren for forever. If a woman became ill and needed complete rest forever (*Muluki Ain*, 17/9). If a wife stays separate taking her share of property if her husband did not take her properly as stated in *ansabanda* (division of property) section. (*Muluki Ain,* 13/10). A man has to pay *jari kharcha* (the expense of marriage cost) to a husband of a wife if he takes away her to make his wife (*Muluki Ain,* 18/1).
For a woman	There is no any provision for a remarriage of a woman cannot remarry with another man before taking a divorce with him

Source: *Muluki Ain*, edited by Gyanendra Bahadur Shrestha (2008).

This table shows that, the present legal codes are similar as advocated by the codes of *Manusmriti.* Here, in the table it is clear that a husband can remarry without taking a divorce with another after fulfilling certain conditions. On the other hand a wife cannot remarry with another man before taking a divorce with her husband, at any cost. This reiterates that, Hindu system does not allow a woman to have many male partners or husband at the same time. On the other hand a man can keep many wives with or without the permission of the previous wives. Due to the restriction of the remarriage for a woman in presence of the first husband, the legal rule for divorce seemed more liberal for her. The following tale shows the rules for taking divorce stated in the legal codes.

Table no: 9 Legal Codes for Divorce

	Codes and Section/Clause
For man	A man can take a divorce with his wife in the following cases; *(Muluki Ain*, 12/1-8).
	If a woman stays separate without taking any consent with her husband.
	If she commits any act causing her physical or mental harm.
	If she is infected from incurable sexual disease.
	If a wife commits extramarital sex relation with the other man.
	If husband and wife both agreed for the divorce.
For a woman	A woman can take a divorce with her husband in the following cases; *(Muluki Ain,* 12/1-8)
	If a man brings other wife or wives.
	If he compels his wife to leave a home.
	If he does not give her means of basic living.
	If he neglects her for three years and stays separate from her.
	If he commits any act causing her physical or mental harm.
	If he cannot reproduce children.
	If he is found infected from an incurable sexual disease.
	If he committed extramarital sex relationship with the other woman.

	If he committed forceful sex relation within the marriage.
	If husband and wife both agreed for the divorce

Source: *Muluki Ain*, edited by Gyanendra Bahadur Shrestha (2008).

The table shows that the legal codes for divorce are more liberal for women. Such system seems to work as a compensatory measure proposed for the women because they did not have adequate opportunity for seeking remarriage before they took divorce with their first husband. Although, the rules for the divorce of women are codified in the legal codes; it is highly discouraged in the practice due to the influence of socio- religious provisions as we have discussed above.

After examining the major doctrines prescribed by religious texts, legal rules promulgated by the State, I have tried to focus my attention in concluding the knowledge obtained from the above discussion that is associated with the outlining nature of hetero- patriarchy in the following paragraphs.

Knowledge Obtained

From different themes as is explained from above it indicates that gender relation advocated by religious doctrines have violated an equitable status of first man and woman who were created from *ardhanarishwor.* In the same way, the intrinsic value of social world that is fundamentally based on the balanced proportion of yin and yang tendency is also undermined with the overvaluation of yang tendency. This process promoted patriarchal culture or domination of a man over the woman on one hand, and it provided submissive space to the women on the other. The continuation of this process in

the long run supported to create an atmosphere to inculcate woman that they are incompetent, inferior to a man in every sphere of the social life (Kerber, 2002).

The legal rules although seems to be more progressive and liberal in the issues of women related to the age of marriage and in undertaking a divorce; but in practice, the dominance of the religious codes is widely experienced in the practice realm. The other consequences, outcomes, and debatable issues from this literature review will be examined in the next chapter comparing it along with the other religious systems.

Chapter III

Patriarchal System under Different Religious Texts

In this chapter, I have discussed religious provisions articulated by Christian, Islam and Buddhist doctrines. After analyzing these provisions, I have compared the similarities and differences of these religious provisions, and raised some issues for further debate. For this, I have begun my work with the thematic analysis of religious provisions depicted in the Bible-both Old and New Testaments (*Dharmasastra,* 1973) in the following lines.

Table-10 Women in Bible

Topics/ chapter/verse
God created Adam in his own form (*Utpatti*, 1/26). God created a woman (Eve) from a rib of a man adding flesh in it for the purpose so as to become a companion of a man. (*Utpatti* 2/21).

That is why a man lives together with his wife (leaving his father mother). So, husband and wife are like a single body (*Utpatti* 2/24).

Adam and his wife Eve were naked (*Utpati*, 2/25)

Later on Eve was enticed by a wicked serpent to eat a prohibited fruit that was disallowed by God. She also gave her husband to taste the fruit. Due to the effect of this fruit both of them felt ashamed (*Utpatti,* 3/6).

God cursed Eve- by uttering you should feel a lot of pain during the childbirth, your desire will be tilted towards your husband; and he will control you. (*Utpatti,* 3/16)

Adam and Eve created offspring (*Utpatti*, 4/1).

Each man's head is Christ (God) and each woman's head is man (*Kurinthino*, 11/3). *

Each woman is obliged to cover her head by a veil, but a man does not. A man is a form and glory of God. A woman is a created form of a man, but a man is not a created form of a woman, A woman is created for a man, but a woman is not created for a man (*Kurinthinio,* 11/6-16)*

O woman, stay under the control of your husband (*Kulussiyo*, 3/18) *

In ancient time, pure woman used to stay under the control of her husband (*Patras*, 3/5) *

A woman with a good character:

She will help her husband in his life

She will wake early in the morning and prepare food for the family

She will make cotton clothes, and sell them to run family (*Hitopadesh,* 31/10-31)*

Source: Compiled from the Bible- Old and New Testament (*Dharmasastra* 1973))

Note: * Denotes the Provision given in New Testament

The table above amplifies the way that the Bible has represented the first woman, Eve as a suitable subservient to the man, Adam. The text clearly states that the first

woman is created as a subordinated companion to a man. Her character is portrayed so negatively that she was the one who could not control her desire of eating the prohibited fruit and eventually enticed her male partner to it. In the same way, the curse cast by God 'remain under the control of your husband' was a sufficient religious statement to create discriminatory relation. This provision in the later period further provided sufficient space for a male to be a ruler and a woman to be ruled forever.

Like this provision, there are also other enumerable examples in the Bible that helped to preserve male's authority and superiority over the female character. Among them, I have gathered some of the provisions related to marriage and sex relation in the following table.

Table: 11 Codes Related to Marriage and Sex Relation in Christianity

If one engages in sex relation with a virgin girl, he has to make her his wife by paying certain penalty to her father (*Byabastha Bibaran,* 22/16).
If a man releases sperms without any cause, he will be impure for one day, and he has to take a holy bath (*Laibyabastha,* 15/16).
The impurity for the menstruation remains for up to 7 days. Whoever touches her, that person becomes impure for one day (*Laibyabastha,* 15/19)
Any thing touched by a woman in menstruation period becomes impure. Anyone who touches becomes impure for one day and should bath to be pure (*Laibyabastha,* 15/20-23).
If a man sleeps with a woman in her menstruation period, and comes in contact with blood, he also becomes impure for seven days (*Laibyabastha,* 15/24).
Woman becomes impure to that day until the bleeding continues (*Laibyabastha,* 15/25-27).
Don't keep sex relation with a woman who is in her menstruation (*Laibyabastha,* 18/19).

If one man is found to be sleeping with another's wife, both of them should be killed (*Byabastha Bibaran,* 22/22).

If a *bagdatta* (verbal consent of the guardians given to a boy for the marriage proposal to a girl) a woman is found to be indulged in sexual relation with other man then both of them should be killed (*Byabastha Bibaran,* 22/24).

Don't keep sex relation with any other man (homosexual) (*Laibyabastha,* 18/22).

Don't keep sexual relation with animals (*Laibyabastha,* 18/23).

Never go with the other woman because she heads you towards death (*Neeti Bachan,* 5/3-5).

One who wishes to have relation with another woman deserves to lose his life. So, the way towards reaching such a woman is to go towards hell (*Neeti Bachan,*7/24-27).

Good wife is the crown of the husband (*Neeti Bachan,* 12/4).

A debating wife and the shower drops of water in rainy season are the same (*Neeti Bachan,* 27/15).

Never give own strength to a woman, nor be controlled by her (*Neeti Bachan,* 31/3).

Cruel punishment (torturing and killing throwing stones are other arms) of a prostitute woman (*Yahejakel,* 23/46-47).

Sex with a prostitute, grapes-wine or fresh grapes-wine destroys the knowledge/wisdom (Hose, 4/11).

Prostitute and other woman betray a lot of men (*Neeti Bachan,* 23/27-28).

Restricted sex relation with mother, wife of father, own sisters, step daughters, grand daughter, sisters of father and mother, all daughter in-laws of grand father, sister in laws, two woman who are mother and daughter, and with the sisters of wife in her lifetime (*Laibyabastha,* 18/6-18).

If one commits sexual abuse with other's wife, both must be killed (*Laibyabastha,* 20/10).

If one commits sexual abuse with step-mother wife, both must be killed (*Laibyabastha,* 20/11)

If he commits physical relation with both mother and daughter, they all of them should be burnt (*Laibyabastha* 20/14).

If one keeps sex relation with menstruation woman, they should be destroyed (*Laibyabastha* 20/14).

A priest cannot bring prostitute woman, uncontrolled or left woman (*Laibyabastha* 21/7).

If a priest's daughter becomes prostitute, she should be burnt in fire (*Laibyabastha* 21/9)

The main family priest must marry with a virgin girl, but not with a widow, divorcee, or a prostitute (*Laibyabastha* 21/13-14).

A war captive woman is allowed to make wife as per the interest of the winner (21/10-14).

A widow daughter of a priest who does not have a child must stay in her father's house by following strict rules (*Laibyabastha*, 22/13).

If one is blamed that his newly married wife has already lost her virginity, then her father must defend it and has to prove her virginity. If an accused girl is found guilty, she should be killed by throwing stone in her father's gate *(Byabastha Bibaran*, 20/13-21).

Christ rejected to kill a woman who was accused as a prostitute by throwing stones. He allowed her to be free and asked her not to commit such a crime again (*Yuhanna,* 8/1-11).*

Source: Compiled from Bible (Old and New Testament)

Note: * Denotes the Provision given in New Testament

The table depicts that some of the provisions on issues related to women coded in the New Testament seems to be more liberal than the Old Testament. For example, Christ in the New Testament rejected the provision of killing a prostitute woman. In the same way, the provision of divorce was also made effective after Christ had suggested his disciples for undertaking so.

Although, Christ rejected to kill a prostitute woman, the Old Testament holds knowledge that the prostitute woman as a great evil of a healthy society, and put restrictions upon her to marry with a 'great man' like a priest. Not only a prostitute, but other women like a widow, divorcee or one separated from a husband were also considered as a great threat for heralding a normal societal transformation. They were overseen as a promoter of a bad culture, like a potential prey falling back towards prostitution.

From the analysis of the religious texts and customary practices, I uncovered that a woman's physical existence is always under the suspicion that is out of a man's direct supervision and control. For a woman, to remain free from under a yoke of a man's control was/is totally against patriarchal doctrine. It fosters an insurmountable challenge in a man's sole authority. To disrespect a widow, a divorcee or a prostitute means to perceive that these women are not under the protection of any man. Thus they are not equal with those women who belongs herself towards a protected forum (virgin girl or a married wife living with her husband) or the man.

The table above also shows that the fear lingering due to social stigma, a woman therein becomes self-conscious to prove that she is under the control of a man. She respects wholeheartedly for a man's stated order, she obeys his command, she agrees to his rules and regulations, she does not defend his words, and she cannot even dare to cross her boundary. If she does so, she must be ready to bear any negative repercussions.

There is no doubt that, every patriarchal society shaped by the above religious dogma, grants women's purity, especially protected within a man's domain. What could be the actual cause behind the notion that only a woman protected by a man is considered

as a pure person? I think a man's controlling intention of a woman goes beyond the intention of protection of a woman's sexual purity. It commences with the reinforcement of patriarchal philosophy feature recalling that a woman is the property of a man; and he is the ultimate predestined owner of this property. Obviously, a woman controlled by a man is considered as other person's property to the other man. He is disallowed to proceed to have access on her.

The table implicitly underlines that in practice, usually; a man rarely attacks another man's wife threaten one's life at a stake. If he commits so, then there will be a bloody battle ensuing between them. To eliminate all these violent relations between a man and the other, a system might have developed to internalize that a woman under the control of other man is pure; holy and she should not be touched at any cost. Even social laws advocated by the Old Testament may be intended to prevent a potential war between a man against another man. From the protection of a woman, a man exercises absolute authority upon his women. In the same way, by developing a rule to ignore another's wife; he endeavours to prevent the possibility of frequent violations exerted from intolerable jealousness as prevalent within his own species.

After reviewing the provisions coded on marriage and sex relations, I also examined the biblical provision of remarriage and *niyog* system which is depicted in the following table.

Table 12: Codes Related to Remarriage, *Niyog* and *Brahmarcharya* System

Birth of Christ occurred from a virgin woman, who became pregnant from the holy spirit (*Matti,* 1/18)*

If a man tries to leave his wife, then give her divorce. But, if a man leaves his wife without any proper due cause, he compels her to become a prostitute; and if he brings a divorcee woman, he commits prostitution (*Matti*, 5/31-32) *.

If one man finds his wife sexually impure, he can divorce her. If another man who takes that divorcee also abandons her, the first husband should not bring her back at any cost (*Byabastha Bibaran,* 24/1-4).

Christ said-that even before the period of Moses there was no provision of divorce because God has created man and woman to stay together like a single body (*Matti*, 19/4,5,6)*

Story of a woman who was married with seven brothers for the purpose of bearing children- *niyog* system (*Matti,* 22/25) *

If a man dies, his childless widow has to produce children from a *devar, a*nd the name of the first son should be kept after the dead man, so that the name of that man may remain forever (*Byabasta bibaran*, 25/5).

If that *devar d*enies for *niyog*, *the* widow woman should bit him by his own shoes and spit on him in front of old prestigious persons (*byabastha bibaran* 25/ 7-10)

Source: Compiled from Bible (Old and New Testament)

Note: * Denotes the provisions mentioned in the New Testament

The table above provides an account of the birth of the great Christ from a Virgin girl, named Mary. His birth account reflects that he was born from *niyog* system within a supernatural power jurisdiction. This notion signifies that usually, the birth of the great people occur from direct connection of divine structure, much different from that of an ordinary person. This parameter is used in the birth of Lord Buddha who is portrayed that

he was born via asexual relations emanating from *Tushita* heaven and eventually born through the woman, named Mayadevi- from parthenogenesis process.

Like Hindu rules coded in the *Manusmriti,* the Old Testament also allowed a widow woman to have sexual relation with her d*ewar* (husband's younger brother) in order to bear children. However, the first male child born from the *niyog* system would be named after the name of the widow's dead husband. This provision also reiterates the priority put forth towards continuation of male lineage; and it gave immense value to the male child.

Bearing a child from *niyog* system as advocated in the Old Testament was also reconfirmed in the New Testament too. For example the New Testament has depicted an account of a woman, who married the seven brothers for bearing children from the *niyog* system. Although New Testament has allowed a man and a woman for divorce, it also tried to discourage such practice in many ways. I have presented some illustrations in the following table to depict this phenomenon.

Table: 13 Provisions Related to *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy*)* System

In the New Testament, there are no any accounts available related to Christ's marriage, Christ himself was unmarried, and he observed *brahmacharya* life.
For widow and virgin woman, it is better to stay without marriage, if possible. If not so, they can marry and stay together with each other. If they cannot stay together, it is better to be separated, but without the other marriage (*Kurinthinio*, 7/8-11) *
Women should not wear men's dress and vice versa (*Byabastha Bibaran*, 22/5).
It is a good idea that a man might not touch a woman. However, if he cannot, he can marry. Woman does not have the rights over her body, but in vice versa a man has control

over her. Never separate from each other. (*Kurinthino,* 7/1-4)*

If one has married, try to stay together, if you are separate from your wife, it is better not to

seek the next one (*Kurinthino* 7/27-28)*

A widow can remarry. However, it is better not to remarry and remain associated with God

(*Kurinthino,* 7/39-40) *

Source: Compiled from Bible (Old and New Testament)

Note: * Denotes the Provisions related to New Testament

The table above points out that, both the New and the Old Testaments has

provided emphasis on the *brahmachraya* system. Christ himself remained unmarried in

his short, but productive life. In the same way, he requested people including widow to

practice celibacy as far as possible. In his opinion, both male and female *brahmachari*

can contribute more time to religious actions so as to make the society a better place. The

continuous preference to the *brahmacharya* system for both male and female shows less

involvement and inclination in the bodily pleasure activities, and it allows people to

contemplate over spiritual life.

The intention of Christianity prioritizing the promotion of *brahmacharya* has

some specific ramifications. By encouraging a widow, divorcee and other deprived

groups of people to become *brahmachari,* and follow over a definite religious path, it has

provided forth an alternative solution to resolve a social problem attached within the fold

of dishonor and stigma perpetuated against women.

After reviewing the multivariate religious provisions related to a woman in

Christianity, I now focus my attention towards the provisions related to gender issues as

focused in the Islam religion.

Table: 14 Gender Relations in Islam

Topics/ Chapter/Verse, Page Number
Woman is termed as a cloth of a man and vice versa with a male (*Al-Bakar,* 187, p. 21). Man is one grade above than that of a woman. Man is a head/protector (*sirdhare*) of woman *(An-nisa*, 34, p. 28). In the eyes of God, a couple, husband and wife were made to love each other (*Ar-rum*, 21 p. 21).
In the childhood and early youth, the father looks after her upkeep, and after marriage the husband has to bear the burden (p. 83).* Men are the protectors, and maintainers of women because Allah has given one more strength than the other and because they support them from their means (quoted from *Al Quraniv*: 34) * Islam regards woman's household responsibilities as of prime importance (p. 83).*

Source: Provisions in Islam, gathered by Maududi (2004)

Note: *Denotes that the information cited from Umri (2004)

The table above clearly amplifies that the religious provision strongly supported a man to become a ruler of a woman. This text explicitly portrayed a man heralding a protector role or becoming a head of a woman, who deserves the right to take control over a woman. Actually, this provision rejected equal social relation between a man and a woman. With this unequal gender relation existing between man and woman, I have presented a table focusing on some provisions related to marriage as follows:

Table: 15 Provisions Related to Marriage in Islam

Topics/chapter/verse/page number
If a woman denies obeying her husband's rational orders, he should punish: by not sleeping with her and beating her (*An nisa* 34 p. 91).

If you think that you cannot provide an equal justice to all, then don't marry many wives (*An Nisa-3* p.40)
Don't show much favoritism/inclination towards any of the wives and don't discard the other (*An-Nisa,* 129, p.38).
Visit each wife at least once in four month time (*Sur-Bakar*, 226/227, p.42).
The girl's permission is necessary in a marriage tie. If the ward happens to be the widow, or a divorced woman, her explicit consent is necessary (p. 37).
In the sight of Islam, polygamy is not an improper practice (p.109).*
Polygamy is not only a tendency of a man; but portrayed as a need of this. Desire for sex is a natural urge. The highly sexed individuals and those whose passion is uncontrollable, one woman cannot meet their abnormally frequent demand of sexual gratification (p. 111)*
If a woman walks without covering her body by *chadar* (veil), she invites the man to fulfill his morbid pleasure (p.69).*
Islam instructs the woman to keep along the side of the road, (taking the footpath if there is one) to avoid collusion with men (p.74). *
If the right (divorce) is granted to her, a morally irresponsible woman, whenever she chooses, she shall divorce the husband and hand over the children to him, she will take of leave with him the 'booty' of her dower and her jewelry and gifts in full triumph,…(p. 128)*

Source: Provisions in Islam, gathered by Maududi (2004)

Note: *Denotes that the information cited from the work of Umri, (2004)

The table amplifies that Islam has empowered a woman to take a rightful decision regarding her marriage status. It has stated that, woman's (either virgin girl or divorcee) consent is necessary while finalizing the decision of a marriage (*nikaha*) with a man. In the same way, the cost paid by a man in *nikaha* becomes her personal asset; and she can use it as per her own wish. Actually, these provisions support a Muslim woman to calculate the amount of property to be put under her possession.

Besides these provisions, the table above provides the clues that other social rules offered by Islam are actually nurturing patriarchal values that are inherently oppressive to

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a woman. For instance, a man exercises his explicit power to leave or beat a woman, if she so denies his order. He can even remarry in the presence of one or more wives in the house. Polygamy is considered as a proper practice; and claiming that a man needs it.

Islamic ideology also grants a man's right to fulfill his desire from a woman because he has brought a wife paying a cost (in *nikaha)* for this. Indicating such intention, Mudadi has argued that, 'the man who stays with a wife cannot leave her because a man gets right over the woman by expending his money, so he deserves his right to leave her' (p.45). Such a notion ultimately helps us to acknowledge that, a patriarchal value regards woman as a property of a man, and the man deserves a right to manipulate a women's right as per his requirements.

The table shows that in the Muslim community, women's sexuality is highly suppressed by pursuing her to remain under the veil. She has to cover her body by a veil, in order to protect herself from men's menacing physical lust that might shower upon her. Islam has frequently reinforced women folk to remain isolated with men, as far as possible. As depicted in the table, in addition to covering the body by a veil, Islam women are bound to live, primarily, within the domestic boundary. Her primary importance resides in maintaining the domestic works and judiciously conducts household services.

Repercussion of a woman's domestication again allows a man to exercise his monopoly over a woman. Likewise, as advocated by *Manusmriti i*n Hindu culture, Islam also reiterated the same tone that women are not allowed to remain free. Islam has stated, as argued by Umri (2004) that a father and husband are the caretakers of a woman in childhood and young age (p.83). Thus, like Hindu culture, Islam also fosters a sole

responsibility of protection of a woman forever through a man. This phenomenon comprises the chief characteristic of strengthening in of patriarchy system. To analyze a women's status further, I have reviewed some provisions related to divorce and remarriage system in Islam. The table below clarifies about it:

Table: 16 Islamic Provisions Related to Divorce and Remarriage

Topics/ Chapter/Verse/Page
If husband and wife cannot resolve the problem, they can appoint mediators to mediate from both the sides (*An nisa*-35 p. 91). If the mediators cannot solve the problem, then announce divorce (*Al baker*-229 p. 92). If a man decides not to go near his wife, he gets four months time. If he does not go with her for four months, he must decide for the divorce (*Sur-Bakar,* 226/227 p. 42). *Talak* is two times, then, either keep in a good way or give her third *talak*. Al Baker 229 p. 96). Don't announce *talak* during menstruation period (*Ata talak*-1/2 p.49). A man cannot take back any property he has given to his wife (in *nikaha)* after *talak* (*Al-Bakar*, 229), because he has already tested her (*An nisa* 21, p.55, 89). If you did not touch her after engagement, and gave *talak,* you can give half of the *mahar* (*Al baker*, 237, p.89). Once *talak* is given, wife cannot return to the same house without her marriage with another man (A*l baker*-230 p. 52). Woman can remarry when she takes a *talak*/divorce with her first husband (*An Nisa,* 3).
Man is empowered for divorce. It has vested this power in man for the simple reason that he enjoys a little more dignified position in the family. (p. 126)*.

> If the right is granted to her, a morally irresponsible woman, whenever she chooses, she shall divorce the husband and handing over children to him, she will takeoff leave with him the 'booty' of her dower and her jewelry and gifts in full triumph,…' (p.128).

Source: Compiled from Islam (Cited by Mudadi, 2004)

Note: *Denotes that the information cited from Umari, (2004)

The table discloses that a woman can remarry after taking divorce with her husband. However, the sole right for divorce is again fallen under the control of a man. The table also depicts that a woman does not deserve a divorce right, because she might be an irresponsible fellow, who can betray against a man. From these arguments, it can be disclosed that effectiveness of the law of divorce seems redundant for the woman because the primary facility to exercise this right is explicitly empowered by a man.

After examining the knowledge from Islam, I focused my attention on some religious provisions envisaged in Buddhist religions. In undertaking this stature, I gathered the information related to the expenses encountered by Buddha during his visit to different holy places with his disciples. Some of the relevant contextual information is presented in the following table:

Table: 17 Women in Buddhism

Gender rules in Buddhism
Suddhodhan, the father of Buddha wished to marry a girl Mayabati, among seven daughters of Subhuti. But when Subhuti denied giving his youngest daughter before the elder daughter's marriage, Suddhodhan brought all 7 with him and married Maya and Mahaprajapati. He eventually gave other five sisters to his brothers for marriage (p.25). Buddha's birth seems to be parthenogenesis that is Suddhodhan was not his progenitor. He

came from *Tushita* Heaven with his own choice (p.36).

The establishing of an order of female ascetic characters has become attached to the legend that the admission of Mahaprajapati as the first nun after the death of Suddhodhan (p.107).

Mahaprajapati went to Buddha and asked that women might be allowed to leave the world under the doctrine and discipline of him (p.108).

Buddha refused her request three times (108).

Mahaprajapati then cut off her hair, put on yellow robes and followed after him with other Sakya woman went to along Buddha's pathway door (P.108).

Buddha again refused three times (p.108).

Anand requested to ordain her and Buddha told only -if Mahaprajapati will take upon herself the eight strict rules let this be her ordination (p.108).

She admitted that she will strictly follow the rules (p.108).

Among strict eight rules, some rules were:

1. A nun, even if she is a hundred years old by standing shall (first) salute a monk and rise up before him even if he is just ordained (p.108).
2. A nun shall not spend retreat in a place where there is no monk.
3. Twice a month a nun shall ask from the orders of monks the time *uposatha* (bimonthly meeting) (p.108).
4. A nun is not to rebuke or abuse a monk on any pretext (p.109).
5. From this day, truth utterance (official statement) of nuns to monks, is forbidden, of monks to nuns is not forbidden (p.109).

Buddha insulated a girl Mara whose father wished to marry her with Buddha. Buddha said that 'even with my foot, I did not wish to touch' 115.

Buddha claimed: 'if women had not received the going forth according to the doctrine and discipline, religious system (*brahmacharya)* would have lasted long, the good doctrine

would have stayed for a thousand years, but as women have gone forth, now the good

doctrine will last only for five hundred years (p.109).

For just as houses, where there are many women and few men, are easily broken by robbers,

even so in the doctrine and discipline in which a woman goes forth, the religious system will

not last long (p. 109).

Later accounts had shown that there were 70 nuns, including two other kinswomen from

Buddha's family (p.110).

Source: From the text the life of Buddha written by Thomas (nd.).

The table depicts that, the birth of Buddha was by the process of parthenogenetic. According the Oxford dictionary (2006), the meaning of parthenogenesis is 'the process of producing new plants or animals from an ovum that has not been fertilized' (p. 1104). The choice of Buddha to appear on the earth from *Tushita* heaven shows his relation with the supernatural power starting from the birth. This idea resembles to the birth of Christ as well.

In the same way, the table underlines the concern of Buddha towards maintaining brahmacharya of the monks. So, he tried to stop the entrance of nuns in his religious organization claiming that because of the woman, *brahmacharya* system of monk could eventually be destroyed. This clearly underlines that Buddha also did not recognize and value a woman's stature as being equal to that of a man. He perceived the woman's body as an enticing factor that tends to disturb the monk's concentration alluring their physical thrust. In other words, Buddha saw women's body as a threat to maintaining total religious system. Even when, he allowed women to enter into the system, he erected new rules for women that contributed enormously effort towards empowerment of a man to

control all the religious system including that of women. Thus, patriarchal value system entered in religious institutions, as it was already prevalent in family institution.

After reviewing the major outlines of different religious doctrine, I have endeavoured to focus on the similarities and differences advocated by them, in relation to the gender status of a man and a woman in the following lines.

Similarities and Contradictions in patriarchal doctrine between Hindu and other Religious System

As I have already argued, for inculcating Brown's model (as described in an introduction chapter) of patriarchy that is found embedded in each and every religion. The intimate association of religious provisions into nurturing patriarchal values contributed to foster a hierarchal gender relation between a man and a woman, in which a woman's interest is dominated by the interest of a man. In this connection, I have endeavoured to sum up the essences of religious provisions that have nurtured patriarchal notion in the following table:

Table: 18 Provisions Related to Patriarchal Values Under Different Religions.

Aspects of patriarchy	Hinduism	Christianity	Islam
Relation of the first man/woman	Equality between a first man and a woman who were created from *ardhanarishwor*	Inequality/ Adam was superior to Eve	Inequality/ Man is a grade senior than woman
Marriage codes	Highly valued girl's virginity/preferred marriage before menstruation	Valued highly a girl's virginity	Valued highly a girl's virginity
Remarriage	A man can remarry, a woman	A man and woman can	A man can remarry,

	cannot remarry forever.	remarry after divorce	but a woman can after divorce
Divorce provision	No provision for divorce	Divorce is lawful but discouraged	Divorce is lawful
Widow remarriage	Totally restricted	Can remarry but discouraged	Can remarry
Lineage	Male lineage with purity	Male lineage	Male lineage
Niyog system	Niyog from *dewar* or *sagorti* (the man of the same clan) or God (eg. Vetran hero of *Mahabharat* Arjun and his brothers)	Provision *niyog* from *dewar* or *sagorti* or God (Christ from Virgin Mary)	Not mentioned about *niyog* system
Gender relation	Spiritual, irreversible relation from various rebirths Man overseen as God, protector, Woman as devotee (slave) to a man.	Man as God, protector, breadwinner Woman as a subordinate companion of man	Preference to worldly relation Man is a protector, Woman as a subordinate companion
Extreme practice	Burning woman as Sati (as stated by different *smrities* and *purans)*.	Killing prostitute woman (as stated in Old Testament) by throwing stones	Beating a woman, if she denies husband's order

Source: Compiled from Tables 1 to 15

The table above explicitly shows that almost all religious texts, doctrine,

philosophies and practices primarily contributed for institutionalization of the rule of

male (patriarchy) authentically. The same table helped me to claim that man is depicted

as unconditionally suitable to be a strong ruler, a bread winner and an authentic person to

control over the female/family. Despite some fundamental controversy associated, all the

religious provisions primarily served man's interest whose ability was exaggerated

referring to different contexts. I have brought some examples that briefly clarify how religious provisions have supported for stimulation of patriarchal features as argued by Brown (explained in introduction chapter) that are presented in the following lines.

I reiterated that Brown emphasized on four characteristics of patriarchy, viz patrilineal descent, marriage is patrialocal; inheritance (of property) and succession (to rank) are in the male line, patripostal family. In this, I have added *patibrata dharma* to specify Hindu hetero-patriarchal characteristic.

The first and important characteristic of patriarchy as argued by Brown is the system of patrilineal descent. The arguments claimed above clearly states that, every religion has suitably imagined a family structure in which the children belong to the clan or *gotra* or carry the surname of the father. We can see that Hindu and Christian religion have given consent to give birth to children from the *niyog* system to continue lineage of a dead man. Even in Islam too, the children are known after the caste of their fathers. This means Hindu, Christian and Islam advocated for patrilineality system.

The second feature that marriage is patrialocal is also a fulfilled agenda by the religious system to continue patriarchy. My analysis shows that the above religion advocated bringing a woman through marriage in the house of a male. The life history of Isaac, described in the Old Testament, Abraham (the father of Isaac) has ordered his favorite servant to bring a benevolent wife for Issac from outside his own village. Following his order, the servant went to the destiny and brought a beautiful girl, Rebecca asking with her father to marry Issac (Jasnita, 1999:102). There is another story in the Old Testament, in which Jacob, the son of Rebecca, showed interest to marry with the daughter, Rachel of his maternal uncle Laban. Laban agreed to give his daughter, but in a

condition that Jacob was to stay seven years in his house. Jacob consented and he did,

accordingly. After seven years, Laban cheated Jacob and gave his first daughter instead

of Rachel. Jacob got angry, but Labon again urged that he has to serve for another seven

years, and he will give both daughters to him. He did the same and after fourteen years,

he brought two wives and children in his home town. This instance clears approves that

patrilocal residence practices was inherent from a long run before. The same system is

inherent in Hindu culture. Generally, a man doesn't go to live in his father in law's house,

but brings his wife to his own house.

The third feature of patriarchial system, inheritance (of property) and succession

(to rank) are prevalent, according to the male line argued by Brown. It also seems to be

fulfilled by the religious provisions. There is no doubt that, Hindu and Christian has

given a high value to a male successor. These religions have even given emphasis to give

birth to the male children from a *niyog* system. *Manusmriti* has clearly stated that 'if a

husband dies, then his woman has to bear child from the *niyog* system and should provide

the husband's property to that son (9/231). In the same way, Christianity has asked the

woman to give birth to a son child from the *niyog* system, and inherit name and property

of a dead man to that male child in order to continue the name of the dead man (*Byabasta*

bibaran, 25/5). Although, these provisions are outdated in practice (which indication is

there in *satyarthaprakash*); but when this knowledge was generated, we can guess that

the value of son was quite high. This was to cope with the loss of male who died in a

frequent war between and among different tribes. In Hindu philosophy, we can find that,

from Vedic period, to contemporary days, religious doctrine repeatedly wishes to have

many children. Despite own son (*Auras Putra*) Manusmriti (9/180) has given eleven

types (names) of the son who is considered as a representative of a son.

There are some proverbs that underpins that, *jasaka vaisi uska bhainsh, jasko*

chora usaiko dhan (who has got buffalos he owns the forest, and who has sons he owns

the wealth). The other proverb says, *dhilai hos, chhoro hos* (though late, hope son). These

entire customary proverbs still reflects a social demand of a son over a daughter that

continues patrilineal inheritance.

The fourth feature of Brown's patriarchy is related to the nature of family as

patripotestal, i.e. the authority over the members of the family is in the hands of the father

or his relatives. This feature is distinctly visible in Hindu religious culture. In this culture,

once a woman enters in her husband's house, then her relation with that house remains for

ever. Even if she dies, elsewhere than in her husband's house, her funeral rites must be

performed by her husband's family. Actually in every religious society, the authority over

the family members resides at the hand of the father or other senior male member of the

society.

The fifth feature, *patibrata dharma*, I have added (to specify Hindu patriarchy

that I have termed as hetero-patriarchy) continuously supports for the effectiveness of the

patriarchal features as argued by Brown. In this connection, *Patibrata Dharma* functions

as an independent feature (system) centering women's issues and it also collaborates with

other features for their sustenance as well. Undoubtedly, a woman's unconditional loyalty

to her husband nurtures patriarchal features because its intrinsic values adhered with the

systems tightly.

The discussion above shows that, almost all religious society shares Brown's patriarchal system. To me, the root cause of universal patriarchal system is interblended with the intrinsic values guided by the religious provisions. After discussing the features of the Browns patriarchal embedded in religion, I focused my attention to explain the infliction of patriarchy in an individual woman's life structure. As I understood the outlined feature of patriarchal culture facilitated a man to control a woman's production, reproduction, sexuality and mobility etc. where by unequal gender relation between them has been established. In line with this understanding, I have tried to examine some of the similarities and contradictions on patriarchal provision argued by different religions in the following paragraphs.

Similarities and Differences in Advocacy of Religious Texts on Gender Issues

The religious texts helped me to understand that Hindu hetero-patriarchy is mainly characterized with the notion that the existing relation between the man and woman is equal to that of God and loyal devotee which is spiritual and irreversible in nature. Due to this cause, there is no definite provision mentioned in *smrities* for commanding a divorce system between a man and a woman (Bottomore, 1986:176). A Hindu woman thus cannot disconnect her relation with her husband and his family unless she violates moral boundary (extramarital sex abuse). In this culture, a woman has a duel status, a ruled and a ruler, a worshipped (virgin daughter as Goddess Devi) and a worshipper (as a wife). From the patriarchal point of view, she is ruled by a man and from the hetero-patriarch doctrine; she exercises her power as a ruler too.

For continuation of hetero-patriarchy, there are some women-centric systems (like *patibrata* faith) that explicitly supported measures into maintaining the immortal and spiritual relation between a man and a woman. Hindu notion does not look at a woman merely as naturally weak to provide enough sex-service to satisfy a man. On the contrary, this system has asked a man to suppress his uncontrollable sex desire (*brahmacharya*); and have sex relation only on the prescribed days (*ritukal*-16 days counting from the fifth day of menstruation cycle). According to *Manuscript,* a man can keep sex relation ten times in a month excluding restricted four first nights of menstruation, and eleventh and thirteenth nights (2/45/46/47) successively. He cannot exceed more than that. In this light, male's aggressiveness and uncontrollable desire seems to become a nurtured trait which can be controlled through the continuous practice of suppression (*brahmacharya*) throughout the life.

In the same way, in Hindu religion, strictly avoides extra-marital sex relation. If a man commits such a crime, according to *Manusmriti,* he should be killed. Although, *Manusmriti* has provided a consent to keep up extramarital sex relations to give birth of the children from a *niyog* system, the later *smrities* (like *Niryanasindhu*) have discouraged to continue this system depicting that the provision was not made for the *kaliyug* (present religious era).

Hindus considered a woman's body as a delicate item both physically and socially. In comparison to the physical body, a social body (for example, the state of a virgin girl, lost virgin but unmarried, virgin and unmarried-aged, married but barren woman, has only daughters, mother, widow, prostitute, etc) is valued differently. She is also treated differently, according to her social status. For example, a virgin young girl

(especially who is under the control of her father) possess a great value in the society. But a virgin middle aged unmarried woman is treated in a different manner. In the same way, a married woman living with her husband is treated differently from that of a widow woman. Likewise, among married woman, a woman bearing a son child is treated differently from that of a woman bearing a daughter child. The fate of a barren woman presents more of a pitiful conditionality. Most probably, the most unfortunate women are the sex workers (prostitutes) who hardly expect nor command due social respect.

Interestingly, the Christian system shares many provisions similar to the Hindu systems (like promotion of *brahmacharya* and provision for *niyog* system). Although, this system has given consent for divorce, it is highly discouraged so as to bring it into practice. In this regard, Bottomore (1986:176) argues that 'Hinduism and Roman Catholicism have not allowed divorce'. But, the Christian's religious provisions have not advocated a spiritual or immortal relation between a man and woman, as in the Hindu domain. This religion has encouraged a deviated male or female (widow, divorcee, prostitute etc.) to observe *brahmarcharya;* and sacrificed the remaining life towards a service of God; rather than again to be indulged in worldly relations.

The analysis of religious provisions also shows that, Christianity has neither advocated that man is physically aggressive than female nor asked to suppress sexual desires at any cost. In the same way, it did not advocate that a woman is incompatible to provide enough sex-service to satisfy a man. It did not claim that polygamy is only a man's need, rather merely dwelling upon the fact that women are disabled and physically weak in comparison to men. It has promoted maintaining one to one relations rather than engaging in polygamous marriage system.

Bearing child from the *niyog* system is another similar practices experienced both in Christianity and Hinduism. It has put a great value for the continuation of a male lineage, even for the sake of the name of a dead man. It has also offered a punishment to that *dewar* who denies having *niyog* relation with the widow of his brother.

On the other hand, Islamic religious provisions related to patriarchal system sharply contrasts with the Hindu patriarchal values. For instance, Islam has depicted a man one grade superior to a woman. So, the relation between a man and a woman in Islam is not portrayed as immortal or spiritual. It is viewed more from the materialistic point of view. In this religion, there is effective provision of divorce and remarriage for both a man and a woman.

Islam has also regarded a woman as physically weak, who is incompatible to provide enough sex service to a man to satisfy his uncontrollable sex desire. Here, Islamic scholars (Mudadi 2004, Umri, 2004) have eneavoured to rationalize polygamy system claiming that a man is naturally aggressive enjoying a strong and uncontrollable sex desire. For them, engaging in sex for a man is natural; and they should not suppress their sex desire limiting it only to a single wife. It is the reason why Islam did not specifically encourage for *brahmacharya*. It rather suggested steps for expressing sexual desire marrying many wives, but ensuring maintainance of suitable justice between or among them (co-wives).

After analyzing the provisions given in Islam, I also gave a cursory glance in Buddhism. As I knew, Buddhism highly encouraged the *brahmacharya* system than any other religion. In this connection, this religion has also exceeded the religious provisions coded in Hinduism. For example, at first, Buddha denied ordaining a woman in religious

institutions underlying that a woman (nun) can be the cause to destroy the monks' celibacy. But later on, when his mother requested him to allow her (woman) for ordination, Buddha accepted it only with some strict provisions to follow celibacy.

Preference of strong *brahmacharya* of monks in Buddhism has acknowledged that, man's aggressiveness and strong sexual lust is spiritually and morally unacceptable. The monks and nuns are strongly urged to follow *brahmacharya* ordinance; emphasizing self-concentration on religious activities. Here again I saw that in Buddhism also, women are portrayed in a subordinate light with respected to the man.

By analyzing the multifaceted provisions, as advocated by different religious philosophies and literatures, I have tried to open some debatable issues on the aforementioned discussions in the succeeding paragraphs.

Umri (2004) said that,

> Polygamy is not only a tendency of a man but a need of this. Desire for engaging in sex is a natural urge. The highly sexed individuals; and for those whose passion is uncontrollable, one woman cannot meet their abnormally frequent demand of sexual gratification (p.111).

> Umari's argument gave birth to the following questions.

> 1. Can a man's sexual desire be suppressed as argued by Buddhism?
> 2. Is a woman compatible enough to fulfill a man's uncontrollable sexual urge?
> 3. How can a man's uncontrollable sexual desire be managed?

4. Should overemphasized Hindu's spiritual and irreversible relation between a man and a woman be continued?

5. Why almost all religion did did give overemphasis on woman's physical and social body? Which body (social or physical) is a more determinant base for woman's subordination?

6. A man's body is free from being stigmatized although, he sleeps with hundreds of wives. Otherwise, if his body is portrayed equally impure as women's social body, then the whole social system might be overturned.

7. How far has preference for male linage violated a woman's right?

8. How can we create a balance between yin and yang tendency? What types of repercussion might arise with the continuation of present socio-religious system?

Like Umari's argument, Acharya (7/17/2008) brought forth another case. He wrote,

One man keeps sex relation (extramarital) with a woman who is deprived, alone, poor, widow, or women in *hadnata* (the same clan). Woman becomes pregnant. Man encourages woman for abortion or to kill the child after its birth. The woman does the same. The law grabs the woman and takes legal charge against her. She becomes murderer and goes to jail for crime for killing the child. Contradictory, the main culprit, the man who makes woman pregnant moves freely; and the law does not feel necessary to charge him for breaching law and order or killing the child (p.7).

This quote also yielded a number of questions. They are:

1. Why do women only face such problem?

2. Why are men granted legal escape?

Questions like these help to create a new discourse to make women free from being vulnerable, stigmatized sexed body, without which her subordination status cannot be improved or eventually removed.

After discussing the social provisions advocated by the religious texts; I have underpinned some ideas from the feminist literatures in relation to the feminist theories and women's subordination. These literatrues are explicitly used while analyzing the field expereices with the co-researchers. In these topics, I have brought some of the highlited feminist's worldviews in relation to the patriarchal notion and values in the following lines.

Women in Patriarchy under the Feminist Lens

Patrarichy is a rule of male, with or without the direct presence of male (Shukla, 2006). The word Patriarchy is derived from two Greek words-paters (father) and arche (rule), indicated the 'rule of father' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy, Visited Date: 3/29/2008:1) Most of the feminists have interpreted the rule of father or patrarichy as a social system which reflected the deeper expectations of formal male dominance in a wide range of social relationships (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy_in_feminism,

Visited Date: 3/29/2008:1). From the feminist's worldview, patriarchy is a multi-faceted social reality which "informs all aspectsof the social effectively shapes women's lives" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005:313). Some of the feminist argue that (as Bhasin 2000) opinioned that patriarchy controls women's mobility, sexuality, production and reproduction in a social life. Likewise, some of the other feminists like Weedon (1992: 2) prefered to define the term patraichal as a "power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men".

From all these feminist's viewpoints, it can be said that patriarchy as an institution or an interconnected social system in which confrontation of men and women's unequal power relation occurred due to the control of women's interest by the the intersest of men. Most of the feminists agree that the family is the chief institution of the patrarichy culture in which the gender hierarchies on varied power realities are reflected (Shukla, 2006, Moi, 2005). Almost all feminists agree that patriarchy describes the structuring of society on the basis of family units (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy, Visited Date: 3/29/2008:1). Most of the feminists; especially the radical feminists criticized a family as an oppressive patrarichal institution for the women where women's discriminatory gender roles are confronted with the males (Weedon, 1992). Analyzing the radical feminists position about patrarichal family, Wedon futher wirties,

>Radical feminists tend to see the root of women's oppression in either women's
>
>biological capacity for motherhood or innate, biologically determine male
>
>aggress, as manifest on rape which makes men dangerously different from
>
>women. The stress laid on biological sexual difference as the basis of woman's
>
>oppression under patriarchy leads radial feminists to posit an essential femaleness

which women must seek to recapture beyond the structures of the patriarchal family. (p.17)

Weedon's argument on the radical feminist's viewpoints has challenged patrarichal family notions; and has put questions on the relevancy of the family in connection of the women's liberation from any sorts of discrimination. For the feminists, patriarchy as an oppressive social system to women was adopted uncritically, due to amillennia of human experience where male physical strength was the ultimate way of settling social conflicts-from war to disciplinging children (ibid).

In feminist theory, the opposite of feminism is not masculinity, but patriarchy. The feminine form of patriarchy is matriarchy, but there are no known examples of matriarchies from any point in history. In views of anthropologists like Radecliffe Brown (cited by Uberoi, 2005:96), patriarchy comprises some of the fundamental structures (like descent –patriarlineal, marriage-patrilocal, succession-male line, family-patripostal or son), which served as cites for contextualization of the power struggle beween men and women in a given cultural ground (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/patriarchy, Visited Date: 3/29/2008:1). Post stucturalist feminists; reflecting the nature of patrarichy in a micro-level of practice (Weedon, 1992:127) argue that patraichy is 'scoailly produced' organization 'on the basis of biological sex'. In the same way, Shukla, (2006:48) reiterates that ' Patriarchy as a 'chief institution of the family…encourages its own members to adjust and conform its rules'.

After discussing some of the feminists' literatures, I have developed a conceptual framework, inorder to underpin the women associated in the field. The conceptual

framework serves as guidelines to problematize the field issues of women under hetero-patrarichy in reference to the mentioned religious and feminsists literatures.

Conceptual Framework

After analyzing the religious provisions advocated by the different religious literatures, I have developed a conceptual framework that included the gap accounted between the provisions of religious literatures and the areas that I wanted to do empirical research. The table below shows the main issues I reviewed in the literatures and the main issues I was going to capture in the empirical studies.

Table: 19 Areas Denoting the Literature Reviewed and Proposed Areas for the Empirical Study

Women's issues reviewed in religious literatures	Proposed issues for the empirical field research
1. *Patibrata dharma*	1. *Patibrata dharma*
2. *Sati* system	2. Linage purity
3. Linage purity	3. Remarriage
4. Remarriage	4. *Sasu-buhari* relation
5. *Niyog* system	5. Socialization of a girl
6. *Brahmacharya* system	

From the religious literatures, including a Hindu one, what I realized is that patriarchal system has highly valued woman's sexual purity to maintain a pure patriarchal

lineage system. In doing so, Hindu hetero-patriarchy has developed a woman specific

patibrata dharma system.

For the continuation of the male lineage, Hindu religious system provided a

privilege to a man for the remarriage whereas, it restricted for the women claiming that it

destroys *patibrata dharma*. But at the same time, religious texts developed an exceptional

provision for a woman to use a *niyog* system for bearing children in case her husband is

unable to do so. Likewise, Hindu religious texts also emphasized to observe the

brahmacharya system as far as possible.

From the major religious provisions, I have selected only some issues to be

analyzed in my practical field. In doing so, I have selected *patibrata dharma* and lineage

purity as the major agenda. In the same way, I have tried to problematize one new issue,

the conflicting relation between *sasu* and *buhari* which was not mentioned in the

prominent religious texts; but prevalent in practice. In the same way, I did not undertake

niyog and *sati* system because I did not find these systems under the current practices.

Chapter IV

Research Method

This is a qualitative research which is inherently a multi method of social inquiry

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Denizin and Lincoln argue that it focuses on multivariate

issues that cross cuts the complex socio-historical field including class, caste, gender,

race and ethnicity. This method provides flexible sets of theories to cover multiple realities of human subjectivities, as argued by Denzin and Lincoln as "interdisciplinary, trans- disciplinary and sometimes counter-disciplinary field" (Ibid, p.7). Thus qualitative method crosses the boundary of particular theoretical approach. It entertains application of multi-approaches to uncover subjectivity of people that came from different background.

In this research, among different sets of theoretical tools in qualitative research, besides religious literatures; I have ventured to use feminist method which is also inherently multi-disciplinary in nature (Stewart, 1998:55). As argued by Stewart, I discovered feminist theories compatible and "intuitively appealing" which focused on the different issues of women related to subordinate gendered subjectivities under hetero-patriarchal culture. In course of using feminist qualitative research, I acknowledged the influential nature of feminism movement and the feminist research as Olesen (2005:235)and noted that it is 'divergent methodological and analytical approaches' that compete for and against among each others. As voiced by Olesen, I realized that, actually, without using multi-methods and approaches, it is challenging to analyze Hindu women's issues that cross-cuts age, interpersonal relation with other members, education, family prestige, sexual orientation, personal intuition, or even differs for a day and night issues. In this context, Riger (1998) also argues as Olesen and claims that women's subjectivity is blurred within the field of an oppressive structure. It thereby needs a critical and deconstructive approach to uncover its realities. Following these authors, I have used intuitive appealing of Stewart, analytical approach of enquiry to carry forward this research study.

Feminist qualitative research focuses not only on the problems in the surface, but in its multi-faceted issues rooted in the local context. In feminist qualitative research, one uncovers a new agenda and carries forth research on that agenda probleamtizing its issues in multiple strategic ways and behaviour. The flexibility of this research stands within an open ended possibilities, as argued by Olesen (2005) so as to problematize the hidden issues and agenda related to a woman. Olesen, further (ibid. 236) writes that qualitative research "problematizes women's diverse situations as well as gendered institutions and materials and historical structures that frame those."

In this ground, I have used feminist methods; to carry out this research, so as to problematize some women specific institutions like *patibrata dharma* based on hetero-normative patriarchal values which are inherently oppressive (Pulmmer, 2005). In the same way, I also tried to problematize the relation between the main female actress *sasu* (mother in law*) and buhari* (daughter in law*)* in a family that is also seen as problematic in the course of the practical life experiences.

Likewise, I have endeavored to problematize my own gendered experiences I have inculcated during my childhood till the puberty stages. Doing this, I have tried to establish a research tradition to count personal accounts of the researcher as a researched one (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I felt glad and free will latitude to adapt to the flexibility on the qualitative method that also opened and granted a way to research on oneself. Highlighting the role of the researcher's personal epistemology in qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln argued that the most suitable method to interpret self-experience (self-subjectivity) is 'auto-ethnography'. In auto ethnography, as argued by Denzin and Lincoln (ibid. P. 645), the "researcher" becomes the "research subject". These

conceptions provided a high value to the multiple selves of the researcher because the knowledge a researcher bears creates a significant effect upon the whole research work-starting from the theme selection to landing into certain conclusive factors.

As we acknowledge that the researcher can be the researched one, the questions arises on the ways upon how to present the researcher's selves that are constructed and can be uncovered to interpret it in a meaningful way. Guba and Lincoln (2005: 210) have argued that while setting over the research agenda, reflexivity ('the process of reflecting critical on the self as a researcher', forces the researcher to revisit the critical self -critical-subjectivity (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 210). This means, that the researcher is also a research subject, possessing multiple selves who also needs to negotiate with other multiple selves encountered in his/her lives. Justifying this fact, Rigger (1998:48) prominently advocates that the socially constructed knowledge of the researchers also influences highly the entire work of the proposed research. In this connection, poststructuralist feminists (Olesen, 2005; 248), seemed to possess enough awareness to argue that a researcher "too has attributes; characteristics; a history; and gender, class, race, and social attributes that enters the research interaction" which puts forth a great impact on the output of the research. In other words, the outcome of the research is also well grounded on the situated knowledge, generated through the interaction of subjectivity of the researcher and the researched "blurring phenomenological and epistemological boundaries between the researcher and the researched" (ibid).

While becoming and behaving as a researcher as a researched, I became 'double insider' of the purpose of the research study. One label is concerned as the 'cultural-insider,' a Hindu women brought up in Hindu hetero-patriarchal ideologies and practices;

and the other is the 'gender-insider', researching my woman self by myself. Herein, one tried to reflect on the subordinated gendered subjectivity as 'a researched one' presenting one's own life-experiences. In such a situation, I also endeavored to be critical on the system of my culture as Bishop (2005: 111) has shown his concern that "insiders are inherently biased, or that they are too close to the culture to ask critical questions."

Bishop (ibid.) on the other hand has quoted Merriam et al. (2001:411) who argued that, "….being an insider means an easy access, the ability to ask more meaningful questions and read non verbal cues, and most importantly be able to project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under the study." In the same way, Smith (1999) acknowledged that cultural-insiders need to be critical to cultural provisions and as advocated by Bishop (2005: 111) a researcher has to focus on questions concerned with "initiation, benefits, representation, legitimacy and accountability" while conducting the research.

Considering all these arguments and advocacies expressed by different qualitative scholars, I carried this research incorporating Western theoretical closures and blending them with the Eastern religious, cultural and psychological aspects. In doing so I also analyzed Hindu women's gendered knowledge through the lens and methods of East and West. In this research, I tried to represent the experiences as a gender insider (as well as the cultural insider as advocated by Smith, 1999), to underpin women's oppressive subjectivities charaters in the hetero-patriarchal socio-cultural contexts.

Study Group

In this research I have collected information from four categorical sets of women informants, interchangeably co-researchers. Preliminary, I commenced this research with some (five) women tempo drivers (three from Hindu women, two from the ethnic group) working in the local route in Kathnmandu. I did not include their names here because; I only have incorporated one tempo driver's (Gita, of age 46) view in this study.

In the second category, I undertook discussion with six women (all housewives), from the so-called high caste Hindu family. They were selected purposively. In some cases, snowball method was also applied to find them. These co-researchers comprised of the diverse background (age, education, hierarchical status, orientation, mobility, economy, etc). Among the selected co-researchers (whose names were changed for mainaining confidential purpose) were: Sita, of age 54 (illiterate migrated from Sindhupalchok district), Ushana of age 48 (can read *swasthani,* migrated from Sindhupalchok district), Ratna of age 36 (illiterate, from Kathmandu), Rachana of age 27 (completed class five, from of Kathmandu), Sarita of age 18 (simply literate, migrated from Sindhupalchok district) and a Shresha of age 38 (IA passed, migrated from Morang district after marriage).

In the same way, third categorical informants comprised of six elites, 3 males, 3 females holding different status of age and education, for a single purpose and enquired querries with them through mobile SMS.

At last, the fourth categorical informants included two co-researchers, Priya of age 36 and Sreya of 34 years old. Both of them are MA degree holders. Priya is a lecturer in a college, whereas Sreya works in an international social organization in Kathmandu. In the same way, I have selected two lesbians, Bishal of age 38 (who played the role of

male in sexual activities) and Karuna of age 21 (who played the role of female in sexual activities) In the information generation process, I also enquired with a Muslim girl of age 21 living in Kathmandu. I have presented Muslim girl's views only for garnering reflection from different perspective of religions.

Since, I was interested to understand subjectivity of the women who were outside from the house; and were engaged in a challenging job crossing the gender boundary; that uptill now is predominantly dominated by males. I selected women tempo drivers covering along the Chabahil-Sundhara routes. I took informal discussions with some women (both high caste and ethnic women) working there while the drivers stood in line to get passengers or I traveled with them along the situated route during the various trips. In the discussion, I found that women broke the stereotypic gender boundary, became competent with their male counterparts, and comfortably used some restricted codes. Some of them felt proud to create a space for women in this challenging professional area.

In spite of all these changes, place, context, job, income, status (as a driver) what was found quite interesting is that high caste women's thought did not differ with that of the other domestic high caste women. Women drivers from the high caste are equally conscious with their patriarchal customary practices of dos' and don'ts', stigma, taboos, criticism and accusation against the other female driver, and so on. Most of the high caste women here were also carrying out the same legacy of the *Patibrata* faith and trying to impose it to the non-Hindu female drivers.

Besides these, women from the high caste family exerted pressure to understand their cultural supremacy in contrast to the non-Hindus. They did not tolerate free and

frank attitude of women drivers from the non-Hindu group. In such contast case, these high caste women originated from the superior culture seemed to occupy virtual ruler stats to their female counterparts from different culture, rather than from the Hindu one.

From this instance, I changed my research agenda to uncover the gendered subjectivity or gendered subjectivity (Reay, 1989) of women that remain relatively constant under the Hindu patriarchal culture, although the profession was changed. I found that the feelings of cultural (patriarchal) superiority of high caste women restricted them and others for promotion and celebration of the inter-ghetto cultures reflected in the working class community.

Therein, I turned to uncover women's subjectivity acknowledging that the source of knowledge and the gendering process are the main determining factor to understand all of these items.

Nature and Sources of Information

The nature of the information was mainly associated with the primary stage. The primary sources included life history, auto-biographies, and lived-experiences. The secondary data and information were collected and analyzed from within various theoretical literatures, articles, collection of diary, letters, and so on.

Information Generation

As the nature of the data is qualitative, I have applied different techniques to collect data. I talked with women tempo drivers sitting next to them, while they were

running their tempo on their route. I took an in-depth interview with the housewife women about their lived experiences in their own home or working place. In the same way, I did mobile SMS to collect some information that were necessary to reconfirm the social realities. These were my close associates comprising my University Professors and other colleagues, with whom mobile access was easy. I talked with Priya while returning home form college in a restaurant, in Kathmandu. I took a telephone interview with the Muslim girl to understand her view form the Muslim women's standpoint.

Actually, I used both participatory and non participatory methods in this research because being a representative member of the same gender; I was somehow familiar with the context of housewives from the High caste community with whom I took interview. I did not find a wide gap in etic and emic perspective of thought and behaviour of my co-researchers while sharing information in different settings.

In this information generation process, I used the Eastern ways of seeking knowledge and making out the meanings. In doing so, the Eastern method of seeking knowledge did not contradict with the Western thoughts in many ways. For example, Easterners use *Sruti* (texts), *Pratyakshaya* (observe social realities), *Aitiha (*analyze historical events) and *Anuman* (prediction or hypothesis) to find out the social and spiritual reality (*Srimadbhagat* 1978, 11 chapter, 19 sub-chapter, and 17th verse). So, I also tried to use these methods to carry this research in a meaningful way.

Although, the research tools of Eastern (*sruti, prathyakshaya*, a*ithih*a and *anuman)* corresponds to the Western tools of research (texts, observation, historical evidences, and prediction), the epistemological, ontological and axiological differences are evident. In the East, these conceptual terms were used to theorize a high level of

philosophical discourse like Vedanta (essence of Veda) or so on. In contrast, in the West, these terminologies were used to theorize materialistic world based on the facts and figures.

Information Analysis and Interpretation

Collected informations were analyzed splitting them into different thematic segments. Each thematic segement has tried to explore certain issues problematized it for further discourse and discussion. In this connection, I delibaritely sorted out the field informations gathered, and presented them as per the demands for the thematic interpretation.

Theoretical Framework

This research has extensively focused its intention on the socio-religious issues of Hindu women under hetero-patrarichy. In order to undertake this study, I have analyzed socio-religious worldviews in women and underpinned their experiences with the help of contending theoretical closures. Some of the theories I reviewed and applied included the poststruacturalist feminist's viewpoints to interpret women's sexuality and gender. In the same way, deconstructionis't viewpoints, psycho-analysis, and cultural theories are applied to interpret the hierarchical relation between *sasu-buhari* (mother in law and daughter inlaw). In order to understand the ways of a girl's gendering process, I have used

autoethnography method and interpreted gendered-self-sexuality, revisiting my own past

experiences.

Chapter V

Reutilization of Hindu Women's Sexuality

In this chapter, I have attempted   to analyze Hindu women's ritualized sexuality

in respect to purity and pollution and its various manifestations, as well as latent

meanings and functions (Bottomore, 1986) in the social world. In doing so, I have

endeavoured to examine women specific *patibrata dharma* (unconditional loyalty

expressed towards one husband) system which has been serving as a fundamental

institution in ritualizing a Hindu women's sexuality (Poddhar and Goswami, 1990).

The fundamental assumption of *patibrata dharma* is adhered with the Hindu

women's overvalued sexual purity. Principally, a Hindu women's sexuality remains pure

(Channa, 2003), if her virginity is protected before marriage (i.e. avoiding sex relation

with any man); and if she limits her sex relation only on her husband after her marriage (i.e. tight restriction for extramarital sex relation) in presence or absence of her husband. In order to maintain woman's sexual purity, as already discussed in literature review section, Hindu philosophies and doctrines have advocated different social rules which have been put into application through different ritual practices and belief systems.

In this context, the main focus contained in this chapter has been delineated to analyze the responses expressed by Hindu women in relation to the different functional aspects of *patibrata dharma,* they observed under Hindu hetero/patriarchal system. Some of the aspects that I have focused to unveil included the features adhered to maintaining sexual satisfaction achieved by women, her overviews in relation to reaping social security from her *patibrata* life, her experience of power relation exercised with her husband, and her instrumental role played for the continuation of (male) lineage. I analyzed these issues connecting the field data (women's perception and her subjectivity) linked with different theoretical closures. This chapter is commenced with an analysis of the field information expressed by the co-researchers in relation to the intended and achieved sexual satisfactions retrieved from their husband.

Patibrata Women's Heterosexual Sex Experiences Under Hetero-patriarchy

Hindu hetero-patriarchal doctrines, like manusmriti emphasized on the observance of women specific *patibrata dharma* system in order to regulate and satisfy the sexual needs between a husband and a wife; and to procure pure children, thereby. It is widely based on the acts committed in heterosexual intercourse practices existing

between a husband and his wife. The nature of sexual practice is highly dependent on the gendered thought and behaviour of a husband and his wife they have inculcated in their life phenomenological experiences.

Philosophically, a Hindu woman can enjoy natural sex related relation only after the marriage. As the marriage system between a Hindu man and a woman is comprised of different anomalies in its principle and practice in reference to the literature, its reflection can also be experienced in sexual relation between them. In this sense, sexual relation existing between a husband and his wife in Hindu system, as an inherent component of *Patibrata dharma* itself is highly problematic. In this connection, I have tried to examine Sita's case (age 54), who married at the age of seven. She remembered and recounted her experiences as,

> I was only seven years old and my husband was 23 when I get married. He was a big composed man, like my father with a black complexion. I was very small, like a playing girl. My husband was not talkative. He was introvert, more reserved. I did not know about any technique, how to talk with him and what to express. Our relation was so anonymous and detached that there was no visible sign of intimacy existing between us.
>
> In the first day of my marriage, I slept in the same bed, with my husband, as others suggested me to do so. I was so fearful and my body trembled that I became most nervous in the new perplexed situation. I was breathless. I occupied a small space in the bed, and tried to manage myself not to touch my husband. When the noise from outside stopped to enter in the room, I felt sleepy. At the same time, I experienced my husband's hand touching my body. I got alarmed,

stepped down from the bed, and took shelter for myself in one corner of the room. This event was inadvertently repeated on other days with the same painful experiences.

One night, my husband came along with me, although I folded myself frightened in a corner of the room. I felt that he came there to misbehave with me. I managed to escape from the door, which had no lock from inside. I slept in the cow shed that night.

From that day onwards, I used to be quite afraid to enter into the room in presence of my husband. At night, I used to stay in the corner of the room because I was fearful to sleep in the same bed. When all the family members slept, I used to walk slowly and cautiously, to the cowshed, and used to sleep under the straw. In full midnight, cows used to finish chewing the straw, which I used to cover while sleeping. Early in the morning, I again used to come to the house and start conducting household choir activities. I spent about eight years, frolicking to and fro, entering out of the room in the evenings and nights, and coming out from the cowshed in the morning.

The experience of Sita about her sexual relation with her husband seems to be problematic, despite prevalence of different causes. It was due to the vast difference of the age existing between them. Sita's case unfolded as an oppressive heterosexual practice (Richardson, 1998) because of her prevalent psychological and biological immaturity manufactured in terms of the age gap. Her case also supported as it raised a question on the rationality of the Hindu religious literatures, including *Manusmriti* and

other succeeding religious literatures which have frequently advocated girl's early marriage with a remarkable age gap.

Sita's case was also associated to the existent of oppressive sexual relation with her husband. It was not limited only in the age gap bracket, but its lack of sexual knowledge had equally contributed to it, also. Lack of mechanism for sexual orientation (for both Sita's husband and Sita) appeared, as a fundamental basis in creating anomalies and alienation between them. Being a more matured man, Sita's husband's duty was to convince or orient her about the sexual relationship or to wait for some years till her maturity. But, in this case, his inability to become a true facilitator to orient her was exposed as his weakness. The weakness of the parents was also prevalent. The lack of orientation about sexuality through enculturation process appeared as an integrated factor for Sita's oppression. Unknown to sexual affairs, Sita was really afraid with her husband's demeanour. She repeated the fact that she was extremely shocked with an uncertain casualty that might have occurred while sleeping with her husband. She reflected her feelings as,

> For me each night reflected like the night of my death. Each night only brought forward a terrible horror in my heart. After having a dinner, I used to weep. Sometimes my *sasu* used to console me. She used to suggest me not to be afraid with the husband. But she never convinced her son to behave in a friendly manner with me. Many times I went to my mother's house, but received no common solution.
>
> The most ironical moment was the situation when my mother suggested me to die rather than to escape away frequently away from the house. One day, she told me,

'dear daughter, don't come here again and again, what will others say? Villagers will say that you could not live a normal life at home. You have to win your husband's heart. If you cannot do so, remember that there is a river. It is better to enter into the river rather than come here'.

After listening to my mother's bitter suggestion, I wept a lot. While returning to my husband's house from my father's house, I made my feet loose so the river could inundate me, so that I could even flow in the river. However, the season was winter, and the water level was very low. I returned home, I felt that I was going to the jaws of uncertain death. Sometimes, I became surprised myself how could I still have become alive, even till now?

The subjective experience Sita has disclosed is the worst practice of child marriage where a girl is forcefully bound to have unfriendly sexual relation with her husband (Richardson, 1998). In this case, Sita seemed unable to compete with her husband who is more than triple than that of her age; and nurtured in an oppressive heterosexual practice, a dominant mode of sexual practice inherent to the hetero-patriarchal system (Bhandari, 2008). She could not compete with him in this race because she was too young to measure her husband's physical or psychological demand. In the same way, Sita's mother's fear with society also stirred her towards psychological terrorization. Compulsory patrialocal residential system (Brown as cited by Uberoi, 2005), in which she had to live in her husband's house, also appeared as an element for Sita to become a victim. The inhospitable factors in her socio-cultural realm existed; prior to the existence of Sita made her helpless and hopeless (Levy, 2007). For example, her mother's inability to fight against the social accusation, her sasu's indifferent reaction on

buhari's mental trauma, her husband's negligence on her desire also supported Sita to become a victim.

Sita's case made me more curious to explore the heterosexual relation between a husband and wife who shared comparatively compatible scenario, in terms of age or education. To observe such relation, I requested my co-researcher Priya of age 36 to share her experience. With a flashback brief, she retold,

From the very beginning, you can say before my marriage, I had mixed perception related to the sexual relation between a husband and a wife. Before my marriage, I used to be aware listening to my friends' comment on sexual relations with their husband. Some of them used to say, yes it is fantastic, some others said, it is somehow painful or problematic in this or that way. Actually, I did not deciher any clear idea on sexual relation between a man and a woman. I used to imagine and reflect this and that before my marriage.

Later, I get married with a man, educated to a MA degree. After marriage, I found an opportunity to experience myself about sex relation with a man. Let me say the experience of the first night. I was previously prepared myself to enter in this relation, with some cautions measures. I was aware on every step that my husband took ahead. When everybody locked me and my husband inside the room, I tried to comfort myself sitting in the bed. My husband asked me whether I needed to change my dress. I told I did not. Then, he waited for a couple of minutes, frolicking here and there. After that, he came nearer to me, as if it was his plan. He started directly to entice me without any hesitation, as if I was familiar to do

so since a long time. He did not talk in any topics, nor asked me any topics related queries. He did not ask my desire, my health situation, my sentiment or so on.

To say frankly, he was in a hurry to finish his job. Unfamiliar with these activities, he compelled me for sexual participation. I could not protest because my friends have told me to accept any step my husband desired to undertake. I could not internalize every moment because I was busy how to present myself comfortably. During intercourse I felt a great pain. I told him what I felt. He continued it by saying that this was a normal situation for the first time. I remained receptive, although it was hard to tolerate. At that moment, I was the sole one to console myself and wait to finish everything as soon as possible. After finishing his job, he slept unconscious. I left along to readjust myself in this new situation.

In fact, my first experience was bitter. I did not enjoy it as people used to exaggerate over it by saying *suhagrat* (the first night of marriage with husband). From the next time also, the same formula was repeated; no conversation, no enquiry about physical,psychological condition, no more embracing, no more foreplay, no more sharing experiences. It is my hard reality that I am indifferent towards sex relation with my husband. The total process is initiated by him, for him and dominantly for neither his satisfaction, not for me nor my satisfaction.

Sometimes, I wonder, what makes a male so different than a female. They are so formal, so straightforth and mechanical that they are like a lived machine who doesn't know how to exchange love and affection with their wives. They just come, grab our body and advance their apparatus for penetration. Sometimes I used to become surprise how women manage to adjust with these heartless men who are never determined to touch women's inner pulse?

Priya's personal accounts related to sexual experience differed with that of Sita's, in the sense that her first sexual test contradicted with her expectation of romance and joy. Unlike Sita, Priya was compatible to judge her satisfaction she had achieved within the parameter of her expectation. From the theoretical point of view, Priya's experience supported poststructuralists feminist's argument who claim that women's sexual satisfaction is based on conservation and touch that encourages blurring the boundaries of sentiment and ownership between each other (Irigaray's view cited by Shukla, 2006, p.36). Priya's case has verified the findings of a research report published in *The Kathmandu Post* daily (June 11, 2008) which showed that, sexual violence within the marriage was a serious problem to women. The report (p.1) also stated that, "about half of the young married women among (19 out of 39) …reported that they have suffered from forced sexual relations".

Priya's case, as reiterated by *The Kathmandu Post*, appeared problematic due to its nature of sexual practices against her expectation. Her expectations of sexual behavior of her husband with her were supposed to be based on touch, close conversation, sharing of likes and dislikes or so on. But, in practice, her sexual relation with her husband was manifested as an offending binary opposites of penis/vagina in which the "penis is

privileged over vagina" (ibid; P.29). As argued by Irigaray, Priya's case escorted me to understand that hetero normative sex relation between husband and wife remained problematic although the age gap was reduced. Priya clearly concluded from her experiences that her first and successive sex experiences were not satisfactory because it was her husband centric, initiated by him and ended with his wish for termination (Richardson, 1998, Every, 1998, Ramazanoglu & Thomson, 1998).

When I have reviewed Hindu religious literatures, I have thought that the age factor or the nature of a man was a major problem that a *patibrata* woman has to suffer in her married life. But, after analyzing the above cases of Sita and Priya, I came to know that not only the natured character like age, but a nurtured character under hetero-patriarchy also obstructed a man to cross-cut exploitative sexual practices with his female counterpart (Weedon, 1992).

After analyzing the cases of Sita and Priya, I have presented Sreya's experience that looked somehow different accumulated in different experiences. Sreya (34), who was habituated to live in suitably modern culture with her husband in the heart of the capital city, Kathmandu, offered her experience related to the sexual relation with her husband as,

> Generally, my husband creates an environment and shows his advancement. As we husband and wife used to live in a rented room in Kathmandu, we usually take hard drinks in our dinner. He offers it to me and I also drink. After taking drinks, he usually releases his frustration in relation to his business activities. Then his mood turns towards romantic conversation. Sometimes we dance. Sometimes we enjoy watching new movies. As the environment becomes hot, we don't care each

other situation, dress, status or identity, who was who and who does what. Both of us start to tease each other using slang words until our excitement exceeds beyond ecstasy.

In unconscious stages due to over drink, sometimes one manipulates the other for one's enjoyment and benefits more from other. Generally, my husband controlled the whole circumstance; he pressured me for over drinking and enforced me to play as per his wish. But, when I understood his trick, I started to offer him more concentrated drink whereas, my share used to be diluted. In these situations, sometimes, I also enjoy opportunity and play with his body as per my wish.

Sreya's experience opened another pathway to explain hetero-sexual sex relation between a husband and a wife in different cultural context. Although, Sreya's husband played a dominant role in setting the stage and managing the background to enjoy private moment (including sexual relation), he also allowed Sreya to participate in it with a full heart. The culture of drinking, sharing frustrations, and teasing each other also supported to reduce power hierarchies (Ramazanoglu & Thomson, 1998) between them. This context (which is different than that of Sita or Priya) created an opportunity for Sreya to enjoy her sexual life in a more non-oppressive way. Her case also challenged a feminist's notion that the only males were aggressive and desired to play with woman's body irrespective of their desire (Ramazanoglu & Thomson, 1998). But, once again, it is remarkable to acknowledge that the sole authority to open the romantic scene was exclusively handled by Sreya's husband. What I can argue is that all the cases mentioned above has reiterated that male's supremacy seemed inherent in his cultural (patriarchal)

power, although natural power (male instinct or aggressiveness) remained in a balanced state.

From the cases explained above, I became able to underpin some areas rather that hetero-sexual sex relation as problematic to the Hindu *patibrata* women. In doing so, I am assured that males have secured supreme position to enjoy sexual romance because of their cultural power which is manifested through the sexual aggressiveness during the sexual practice. In this connection, a *patibrata* (sexually ritualized) woman seemed ill-fated if her husband did not understand her interest and desire in connection to her sexuality. In the tradition, when, ritually and culturally, a *patibrata* woman has no option to revolt against or change her husband and adopt the new one, her life becomes so miserable which is beyond comprehension. But in case of a man, if he dislikes his wife for any reason, he, at least, advances himself to bring another woman, escaping from the eyes of law although legal provision restricts him for doing so (Shrestha, 2008, Acharya, 7/17/2008). These illustrations highly supported to reconfirm that men were more empowered and are more privileged to control and exploit women's sexuality.

After viewing sexuality of *patibrata* women under hetero-patriarchal culture, I have tried to bring field experience of a Hindu woman in relation to the role of continuation of lineage system in a hetero-patriarchal family. Following paragraphs shows the experiences of Hindu woman on their role of producing lineage for the males.

Patibrata dharma for the generation of pure male linage

I am interested to enter in this theme because after receiving sexual (un)satisfaction, a woman's ritualized sexuality (*patibrata dharma*) is adhered with a maintenance of the lineage purity from generation to generation (Luintel, 2004). A *patibrata* wife is the fundamental agent for continuation of the pure (male) lineage in a hetero-patriarchal system. Women are the lived vehicles who transfer a male's gene from generation to generation. I have brought a case, shared by Gita, a woman tempo driver whose father had married a step mother after her mother could not bear a son child. She remembered,

> My father married at the age of 45 when my mother could not bear a brother. We were three daughters. Initially, my father was reluctant for the next remarriage. But later on he changed his mood. In this case, my mother was against such decision, but when our relatives, including our grandmother pressured him for the next marriage, she consented. She told my husband that she wished to stay separate before he brings a co-wife.
>
> No one permitted my mother to stay separate before my father's next marriage. Everybody in the family assured my mother that they will not make any injustice against her. She was unhappy; but there was no better option for her except to be a silent rather than become a violent one against the common decision taken by the elders.
>
> After the marriage of my father, my mother told that she wished to stay separate. When my father denied doing so, she asked for divorce. In the meantime, an unforgettable quarrel occurred in the family in a small dispute. My father

unwillingly allowed my mother to stay separate giving her share of property fulfilling the legal provisions.

The above case, expressed by Gita clearly reflected a tension in a hetero-patriarchal family to acquire a son for lineage continuation. In this story, Gita's mother was forced to tolerate her husband's second marriage and be ready for self-exile from the home. As Gita's mother could not adjust herself in a joint family becoming a marginalized one (Bennett, 2005) when her husband brought a co-wife against her existence, she was compelled to take three daughters with herself. Although, Gita's father gave some portion of parental property for her livelihood, but sole responsibility to fulfill the needs of three daughters' was in the shoulder of Gita's mother. One can assume here that how much difficulty did Gita's mother face for rearing three girls from a small piece of land, who did not have any other source of permanent income.

This instance proves that, like Gita's mother, a Hindu woman has to suffer due to the lack of proper income or other sorts of social security which lead her to face severe deprivation in her life (Sen, 1999) in case her husband discarded her. The children, like Gita were also victimized from poverty when her father brought another mother in the expectation of a son child. Gita's mother's case encouraged me to understand a woman's perception what she explicitly mentions in issues related to her situation in terms of her socio-economic empowerment. The following paragraphs detailed them out how does a *patibrata* woman internalizes her security in the family.

Social Security of *Patibrata* Woman

Manusmrii has discouraged a man to use his daughter's or a wife's property as a means of livelihood (3/52). In the same way, it did not mention any provision to secure women's right over parental property equally as a man deserves. Although, there are some lines that touches on women's right on her *pewa* (accumulated property received from gift), in real sense, there was no social provision that ensured women's economic rights over the tangible assets. Behind some of the nominal rules to receive parental property by a woman reflects the nurturance of the rule of *manusmriti* by the modern legal system too (Shrestha, 2008). To this consequence, women themselves were so indifferent to acquire property that they even felt the husband and his property resembles as their own. In this sense, Manusmriti projected that they don't need separate property in their own possession that seemed reflected in the practice. To find a woman's perception about her interest for acquiring fixed property, Ushana (48) retold,

> I don't have any fixed property in my name. My husband owns this. There is no tradition to own the fixed property like land by the women. From our tradition, the owner of the property is male. My husband pays the tax, collects other bills, and carries official works as well. Still now, I haven't seen the revenue collection office. I don't have time to go to the revenue office. When he manages everything, why should I worry for this? In case, if he fails to do so, there are two sons, they pay the bills while going to the office. Ultimately, the property is theirs. I am only the protector of their property. After we are deceased, everything is theirs. They must look at us in our old age and take my property as well.

Here, Ushana's case is different than that of Gita's mother's. Ushana's case clearly portrays that women themselves do not expect to possess property because they have

internalized that they are not here in the earth to own the parental property as there is no tradition of inheritance of the property to the women. Ushana seems somehow assured that her sons will look after her at her old age, but in case of Gita's mother, there was no space for her to dream like this as she does not have any son. Here, for Ushana, her economic capital became her sons (Reay, 1998), whereas for Gita's mother, she needed fixed property to run the family; and for her old age as a substitution of the sons, as we can see in the Western culture.

Connection to the women's self-detachment towards claiming the fixed property[2] could also be analyzed from the administrative point of view. Ushana felt uncomfortable to go to the land revenue office, pay tax or manage any other necessary documents as well because of the uneasiness to cross the gender boundary (Weedon, 1992). If we compare the cases of Gita's mother and Ushna's, then we can find that women have strategically claimed their share of fixed property from their husband if they did not have a son (or any other one) to look after them in their old age. In such case, women's tendency to seek the fixed property appeared as an exceptional or a situational decision (Bennett, 2005) rather than as a fundamental right. This reflects a woman's psychological as well as economic dependency on her husband or son forever. In this point, I can see that a hetero-patriarchal culture has supported a woman to be a self-dependent without any criticality on one's own situation (Olesen, 2005). I will relate the example discussed by Sita in this connection. She shared her opinion as,

> At my young age, I did not get any respect or love from my husband. I spent
> most of the life suffering from different disputable accusations thrust by my
> husband. But I have some hope from my sons. Although, the first two sons are

already separated, the youngest is with me. He is planning to go abroad. I told him

first to bring a *buhari,* have a child and then to go abroad. If he did so, I can teach

her (*buhari*) and grand child our value and rules so that she will be able to

acknowledge the household philosophies.

The tendency of Sita confirms that she has accumulated receiving a lot of hope of

care and support from her sons particularly form the youngest one. Amidst several

uncertainties, she has accumulated the rays of hope for the better old days. Although, she

is not confirmed that she can keep son and future *buhari* in her desired track crossing

several gender and social hurdles, but she was trying to reduce her uncertainties dreaming

of a grand child with whom she can engage and measure her rest of the life in a peaceful

manner. Once again, she dreamed over her future in the hands of her son for her survival

rather than to construct her own way of living (Unger, 1998) independently.

The other aspect opened by the conversation of Sita is that she is captivated on

patriarchal values in such a way that she wants to transfix her life with it at any cost. She

is not willing to discard the hetero-patriarchal value system which imposes alienating

features against her interest (Bhasin & Khan, 2000). Her behaviour finally reiterates her

role for socialization of her *buhari* for fostering into patriarchal culture. Sita's hope from

her future *buhari* (even in the absence of her son) also signifies that a *patibrata* woman

fixes herself in her husband's house; as if she is a permanent employee of that house in

presence or absence of her husband. In such case, *patibrata dharma* is the only cultural

mechanism that binds a *buhari* to stay in her husband's house, although a husband may

not get enough time to stay at home. This compels Sita to live with her *buhari,* who

might be considered as the alternative to social security in her old age in the absence of her son.

After discussiong some issue based experiences of a *patibrata* woman under Hindu hetero-patriarchal system, I have tried to bring forth some sexual practices adopted by homosexual women, lesbians and see how the concept of *patibrata* is embedded in it. I have presented some of the issue based experiences in the following paragraphs.

Queer theory and challenge to *patibrata dharma* system

From the above cases of *patibrata* woman, a level of knowledge was constructed to clear that, heterosexual method of sex relation appeared as problematic in ideology and practice in Hindu hetero-patriarchy (Every, 1998). Although, ideologically, mainstreamed Nepali society is largely dominated by the hetero-sexual family, but at the practical level, it is facing many challenges and problems against its notion and practice. The challenge of the hetero-normative social life has been emanating from the institutional appearance of gays and lesbians who have emerged as a contending paradigm to challenge the mainstream understanding of sex and gender (Pulmmer, 2005). The increasing number of homosexual couples with the demand of their sexual rights and identity has attacked to the core values, principles and practices of the *patibrata dharma* system under Hindu hetero-patriarchy. In this connection, I have met and talked with a lesbian girl, Karuna, of age 21, who was married with a female (who played a role of male in sexual relation) just six months ago and were staying in the protection of Blue diamond society (a social organization working for the rights of the homosexuals/third gendered groups of people,

situated in Katmandu). I asked her why she took the decision to marry a woman husband and requested her to offer her views. She replied,

> I met with him (female husband) in course of my study. We talked with each other, liked with each other and loved each other. He proposed for marriage. First of all I denied. But later on I gave consent. Later on I came here with him telling to my parents that I wished to go to Katmandu to learn about beauty parlor.

> I am happy here with my husband (lesbian partner). My husband fulfills my desire, as far as possible. He takes me to the restaurant, takes me to the resorts and parks, movie theatre, and brings new dresses. In the same way, he works in the kitchen, helps to wash dishes. In this respect I am happy to stay with him. Here I don't need to bother on the domination and comment of husband, and his relatives or any one as my villagers used to do so.

Karuna's response on why was she sticking with her lesbian husband just underpinned me to rethink on the dependency syndrome of a young lady for materialistic items (Sen, 1999) rather than the intellectual or spiritual one. In the same way, Karuna's happiness to stay with a female husband also attacked the customary gender practices in which women were compelled to carry gendered role at any cost. In this point, Karuna was compensating her subverted lesbian role with the gendered role of a *patibrata* wife of a hetero-normative patriarchal family (ibid.).

Although, the marriage of lesbians have attacked to the structure of a hetero-patriarchal family, but it is not free from the influence and practice of the heterosexual practices, especially in connection to the role playing in sexual activities. Feminists have

also agreed social constructionsis't position claiming that "there is no total escape from the heterosexual framing of desire within a social ordre where heterosexuality is privilidged" (Jackon, 1998:22). Supporting the view of Jackon, I have presented a view expressed by a lesbian husband, Bishal (38), to unveil the oppressive sexual behaviour he has been practicing with her wife. The lesbian husband told,

> Although I am a woman, I always behaved like a boy. I played games, defeated many men, became a champion, became a campaigner challenged boys. Any boy, who tried to abuse me verbally or physically, I opposed him at the spot. Look at my body; it is harder than that of the males. I neither became a passive nor became a yielding one. I did not sleep under a man. But I made girls sleep with me.
>
> I loved three girls from different trajectories in my life. My first love was with a girl of age thirteen. We were so closed to each other for four years that I have made a dream to live together happily ever after. But later on, she married a *lahure* (a man working in army in a foreign country) where she went to the foreign country for earning. I again came to Nepal, suffered from breast problem, remained in hospital for six months, and started to love a nurse. I married her. She stayed for about six months. Then, again I faced tragedy with her. She married another man. After that, when I came in this institution (Blue Diamond Society) I met with a girl of age 22. Now I am living with her as a married couple.

From the expression of Bishal, I have generated a couple of openings. Firstly, the way Bishal presented itself led to discover a set of fluctuating identities, sometimes an active masculine and sometimes, a passive feminine. Bishal's sense of self is constructed

with the fluctuating proportion of yin and yang tendency, which might have supported him/her to compromise challenging adversities (Capra, 1983). She-he seemed aggressive, as he played a role male, especially in transaction of sexual affairs. On the other hand, she-he seemed receptive while performing a woman specific gendered role. His expression also signified that, to protect a woman from a man's abuse, she must build her body according to masculine attributes which is not easy for all. But one remarkable thing I acknowledged is that she-he crossed a gendered boundary, and deconstructed and reconstructed power hierarchy (Powell, 2003); and struggled against dominant hetero-social structure, although the extent of cost in doing so might be considered as beyond measure.

In my understanding Bishal's struggle represents a courageous campaigning of homosexuals in pressuring to acknowledge their particular issues and agenda by the State and the society. In the context to the worldwide movement of homosexuals for securing their identity and prestige (*City Post/The Kathmandu Post* Daily, AP, 24/10/2008:III), Nepalese homosexual's efforts also signifies its own importance.

In Western countries also, sex minorities have been continuing their struggle in intellectual level and practical level too. The emergence of the queer theory and its popularity during 'the mid to late 1980s from North America' (Pulmmer, 2005:365) had created its own set of ideologies, belief system and a culture in a distinctive form. Following this theory, the homosexuals became success to gain its popularity in the successive years of post-modern era, because of its radical offer in the field of sexuality and gender. Similarly the culture of cross-dressing, whereby males are interested in wearing bra and panties, that is also gaining momentum as the males felt comfortable

signified a deconstructive method (*The Kathmandu Post, 2008).* This phenomenon *also* supports Queer theorists' argument. In order to understand and analyze the experiences of people like Bishal, I acknowledge the relevancy of queer theory in the study of gender and sexuality as highlighted by Pulmmer (ibid) as,

> …queer theory puts everything out of joint, out of order. 'Queer", for me, is the postmodernization of sexual and gender studies. 'Queer' brings with it a radical deconstruction of all conventional categories of sexuality and gender. It questions all the orthodox texts and tellings of the work of gender and sexuality in the modern world (and all worlds). It is a messy, anarchic affair-not much different from intellectual anarchists or political international situationists. Queer would seem to be antihumanist, to view the world of normalization and normality as its enemy and to refuse to be shocked into conventions and orthodoxy…It transgresses and subverts. (p. 359).

As argued by Pulmmer above, at least, the increasing influence of gay and lesbians have hit the less problematized and monolithic picture of ideal family based on hetero-normative *patibrata dharma* system in Hindu dominated society. I think, queer approach offered by critical scholars would help to engage people in a new discourse for deconstructing all the conventional values and notions attached to the issues on gender and sexualities.

  Knowledge Obtained

From the above discussion, I deciphered some areas of discussion in relation to the notion of *patibrata dharma* in different aspects of women's life. Some of the knowledge that I could generate from this study include:

1. Patibrata dharma is a woman specific culture that is adhered with almost all spheres of women's life no matter whether they are homosexual or heterosexual. It is a prominent socio-religious factor inherent in cultural activities that contributed in shaping women's gendered life.

2. A *patibrata* woman must fulfill her sexual need from her husband. From the experience shared by the co-researchers, it is found that heterosexual method of sexual practice remained discriminatory for women due to different reasons. The main reason appeared as a culture, the second reason appeared as the aggressiveness of the males; the third cause appeared as the multiple effects of women's backwardness and deprivation.

3. It is also revealed that if patriarchal culture is changed, exploitative sexual relation could be changed and vice versa.

4. Patibrata women scarify her life continuation of the hetero-patriarchal male lineage system. She also expects her social security in her old age form her sons. She does not seek fixed property, but seeks emotional support form her children and husband. This signifies that she cares social value rather than the individual self interest.

5. A *patibrata* woman must negotiate with her husband and his family members to Spend her married life. Although she plays a dominant role to meet family needs, her own ability is not equally recognized as her male counterpart.

6. In recent years, after the emergence of radical movement of queer theorist's gender and sexuality has also influenced the hetero normative life pattern in which institution like *patibrata* system have been inherent. Currently, in its course of a long history, *patibrata* system has also been put under pressure to deconstruct and reconstruct its traditional value system, so as to address women's issues and multifaceted agenda suitably in this era of study.

Chapter VI

Conflicting Relation of Women in Hindu Hetero-patriarchal System

I have commenced this chapter problematizing the popular proverb *'pohor marin sasu, ahile ayo ansu'* (mother in law died last year, tears was shed this year). This chapter put focus on the hierarchical and conflicting relations existing between kinswomen, especially *sasu* (mother-in-law) and *buhari* (daughter-in-law) in a Hindu hetero-patriarchal family. In fact, a Hindu hetero-patriarchal family is constantly nurtured and updated by receiving the services of its female members. Its periphery is confined within stipulated domestic spatial relations. It is acclaimed as an open secret that each and every kinswoman is bound to fulfill her needs and interest within the same domestic and gender perimeters regardless of her age or status.

I have underpinned some of the problematic issues that lead a *sasu* (mother in law) and *buhari* (daughter in law) towards direct antagonism. In my observation, there are primarily three causes; that exert antagonism between *sasu* and *buhari.* These are: conflict of resources, conflict of hierarchical power, and psychological conflict. All these causes may work in isolation or in a combined form. Sometimes, misunderstanding between *sasu* and *buhari* ends after heated exchange of some inflammatory words, but sometimes it takes a violent nature that even leads to the collapse of solidarity and destroys an integrated family structure.

Interestingly, popular religious literatures including *Manusmriti* did not mention any rule to systematize substantial relations between *sasu* and *buhari*. *Manusmriti* advocates that a son must look after his father and mother, but it failed to advocate that a *buhari* is compelled to look after her father/mother in laws. Very few religious literatures (like *Garudpuran*) have symbolically indicated that a woman, who fears to become a *sati,* has to eventually suffer from the bad actions of *buhari*. However, recent literatures like *Badhu Sikshaya* (education for daughter in law) of Bhanubhakta (cited by Bennett, 2005) and other collection of the proverbs have interestingly dwelled upon existence of a bitter relation incurred between a *sasu* and a *buhari.*

In the same way, Western literatures are also silent to bring into discourse and problematize the issues of *sasu* and *buhari.* Most of the feminist literatures have focused their attention on the existent problematic gender relation between a husband and a wife. Some of the critical scholars like queer theorists have tried to theorize the issues related to sexuality of different groups (like homosexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, transgender etc.) of people (Kerber, 2002, Beasley, 1992, Pulmmer, 2005, Olesen, 2005). These literatures have popularly emerged with the emergence of the movement of the gays/lesbians and other groups of people, especially dominant in Western countries.

Actually, contending literatures proposed by Eastern feminists (Bhasin, 2000) have argued that, the antagonistic relation between or among female members is actually the reflection of dominant and oppressive nature of patriarchy rather than the rival tendency within individual female members. I also agree with Bhasin's view (ibid.) that patriarchal values are so dominant to a woman; and that it creates categorically divided hierarchical status among female members including *sasu- buhari*. The characteristics of

Hindu hetero-patriarchy can be overseen clearly reflected, wherein women undertake double standard role as a ruler (*sasu* in this case) and becoming a ruled one (*buhari* in this case).

To uncover problematic relation between *sasu* and *buhari,* I have tried to disclose into it from different theoretical closures grounded in conflicting relation between sasu and buhari (Charmaz, 2005). Some of the theoretical aspects include: Derridian theory of deconstruction, Freud's psychological theories of Oedipus complex, Sartre's theory of existence precedes essence and 'being for other' including that of other traditional Eastern philosophies. These theories were applied to analyze the existing problematic relation of *sasu* and *buhari* in the following section falling under different topics.

Hierarchical Relation between *Sasu* and *Buhari*

Hindu hetero-patriarchy underscores specialization within layers of hierarchies. There is caste hierarchy, birth (age) hierarchy, gender hierarchy, generation hierarchy, economic hierarchy, intellectual hierarchy or so on. The relation between *sasu* and *buhari* viewed from intergenerational gap also appears as hierarchical in nature. Bennett (2005: p.186) in this case found that the hierarchical relation between *sasu* and *buhari* is based more on the seniority ladder, with different cross-cutting social matters. She put forth the notion that the *sasu* is privileged to enjoy opportunities because she is the "wife of the senior male in the family". According to Bennett, to become a wife of a senior man is "the greatest source of prestige available for women…" in Hindu family. Due to the senior status of the *sasu* which she acquires from the *sasura* (father in law), she demands

unconditional faith, loyalty and service from the *buhari*. In this mission, *sasu* is always

conscious to secure and maintain her hierarchical position. Simultaneously she inflicts to

enforce patriarchal ideology upon the *buhari.* She even does not hesitate to maltreat her

buhari, if she realized that her *buhari* is opposing her in an ideological or a practical

level. Undoubtedly, *sasu* being a powerful female member of a patriarchal family

naturally fights tooth and nail to control her *buhari* who is junior in the succession rank.

For deconstructionist scholars, like Derrida (Powell, 2003), such hierarchical

relations is always problematic. Derrida argues that, hierarchical relations prevent the

members to enjoy a free interaction between each other; whether they are females or

males. Hierarchical binary opposites bind people to confine limited role preventing them

to cross the boundary from various ways. For Derrida, in each pair of binary opposites,

one member will be privileged; and the other will be suppressed. In the above case, being

a senior member of a patriarchal family, *sasu* is more privileged than a *buhari* who holds

control over domestic activities; and insist *buhari* to confine her boundary, accordingly.

Conflicting hierarchical relation between *sasu* and *buhari* ultimately safeguards

the hetero-patriarchal values. When two female members like *sasu* and *buhari* stand

opposing against each other, as a ruler and a ruled, their mechanical solidarity becomes

weak (Bottomore, 1986). They become unable to create a commune of female members

to struggle against an oppressive rule of male. On the contrary, they support to strengthen

the patriarchal values. I have presented an experience shared by a *sasu* (Ushana of age

48) who stayed separate with a *buhari* since five years ago. She narrated her experience

as,

Within two months of my son's marriage, our joint family collapsed in a small dispute with the *buhari*. That day, *Buhari* also returned lately from her *maita* (natal house) in the evening. I prepared food lately as I was feeling pain in my chest. When she returned home, she even did not come to the kitchen to prepare food. Instead, she just stayed inside the room locking the door from the inside. After an hour, she entered the kitchen and started to chop potatoes. I told her that I have already cooked curry for the dinner; and she can return to her room. She angrily ran away from the kitchen. After some time, my husband arrived. As I put my distress with my husband, *buhari* again appeared in the kitchen. She did not speak a single word, just stayed for some half minutes, and went out from the kitchen. I continued sharing my tension with my husband.

After some time, my son suddenly came in the kitchen; and asked me what his wife's fault was? I replied him to ask with his wife. In the meantime, my husband suddenly asked my son to stay separate with his wife. Although, I tried to convince my husband not to take a tough action, he denied rethinking in this matter. From the very next day, they started to cook food separately.

This example is a typical replication which portrays a real picture of hetero-patriarchal hierarchic gender practice where a woman is compelled to become a ruler and a ruled. The *sasu* seems to become a ruler of her son and daughter in law, but she is again ruled by her husband. *Sasu* used her virtual power to rule over the *buhari* unhesitatingly, and the *sasura* ruled over her unhesitatingly. Both women could not appear in the forefront while taking a real decision. They took support of their husband to exhibit and exert their influences over the dispute.

Currently, I have sketched a scenario after the breakdown of Ushna's joint family. After the family split, both the father and son actually did not lose prestige, or form other sorts of social privileges they used to enjoy before. *Sasura*, as a senior male member of hetero-patriarchal family continuously gained honour from other members, and received non-paid services from the *sasu*. In the same manner, the son also received unpaid services from his wife. The split of the family did not weaken patriarchal ideology or practice; but reinforced to retain once again from the first to the second generation. After the split of the family, both *sasu* and *buhari* became free from each other; but their subordinated gendered relation with respect to their husband did not change. *Sasu* started to prepare one set of meal for her couple, cleaned one set of pots and performed daily worship and rituals as usual. *Buhari* also used to repeat the same sets of activities separately. Both *sasu* and *buhari* are domesticated through the sex based division of labour under an oppressive patriarchal culture that is inherently problematic.

After analyzing this case, the focus of attention was diverted towards the dispute of the *sasu* and *buhari* that reached to a climax which was not interrupted by the male member to settle the dispute. I have presented a case in which the *buhari* took divorce with her husband in the dispute with the *sasu*. Divorced *buhari* (Ratna of age 36) narrated her experience as,

> I was married in a traditional way. After marriage, I used to help my *sasu* in our domestic work. I cooked rice, took fodder for the cattle, milking, everything. After the meal, I used to press her legs with oil till late night. She was happy with me at that time. However, the situation changed when I became pregnant. After my pregnancy, I could not work as before. In turn, my *sasu* adivised me to go to

my natal home as I could not carry household works. I told my father what my *sasu* told me. My father rejected my *sasu's* decision. Instead, he offered a proposal that he will supply me enough food to eat, until my delivery period. In response, my *sasu* became furious with my father. She even threatened to injure my health. My father also threatened her. After this event, my *sasu* forcefully compelled me to leave the house by not giving food to eat. I came in my father's house. After delivery of a girl child, I took a divorce and permanently disconnected the tie up with the family.

This story is different than that of the previous story. In this story, the dispute of the *sasu* and *buhari* ended culminating with a drastic step of divorce undertaken by the *buhari.* In this case, I can see two divergent effects-the first effect as that argued by Capra (1983), a woman unfriendly hetero-patriarchal ideology and practice itself is in disintegration. The national legal provision (Shrestha, 2008) that contrasts to the rule of *Manusmriti* has provided ample opportunity for women's divorce seemed women friendly rule in this case.

The second is, as argued by Pulmmer (2005), women are capable to be a strong societal component, and take radical decisions against oppressive patriarchy. The third is, if a woman takes initiative to undertake a decision, subversion of the normative family structure is possible, because when a system is deconstructed, it changes its shape to reappear again.

Conflicting relation between *sasu* and *buhari* in Hindu hetero-patriarchal family can also be interpreted from Capra's (1982:20) point of view on patriarchy. He argues that patriarchy is a system that is survived by its dominant logical or rational knowledge

system (yang tendency) over intuitive knowledge system (yin tendency). He further says that women's nature is associated more with a yin tendency, whereas men's tendency oscillates towards a yang one. What I discovere from Ratna's case by applying Capra's interpretation is that the relation of *sasu* and *buhari,* remains harmonious; if both *sasu* and *buhari* use their intuitive knowledge, that is based on the direct "experience of reality" (ibid. 21). But, if both *sasu* and *buhari* use their rational knowledge, then, the existing hierarchal relation between them automatically breaks because of its 'self-centered' nature.

On the other hand, what I realized is that, if a *sasu* uses an intuitive knowledge; and a *buhari* rational knowledge or vice versa, the relationship between *sasu* and *buhari* also becomes more problematic. Besides this, conflicting relation of *sasu* and *buhari* appeared due to an overriding variation in use of rational knowledge (by *sasu)* and intuitive knowledge (by *buhari*), although both of them possess both sorts of knowledge. Although, both *sasu* and *buhari* could use a rational knowledge in practice, but in comparison to *sasu, buhari* and it becomes incompatible to impose her rational knowledge against the *sasu*. In such a situation, mostly, *sasu's* nature of using rational knowledge leads to 'discriminate, measures, and categorize' which is inherently self centered; but the *buhari's* nature of using intuitive leads to 'expanded state of awareness' which is more generous.

I have related this explanation to the response of *buhari* (Rachana of 27 years). She narrated her experiences as,

> My *sasu* is strict to follow traditional rules, compulsory do's and don'ts. I could
> not make her happy in any way. She does not tolerate small mistakes. If I could

not follow what exactly she said, she lamented that in our period we did this much of work, our *sasu* was so strict, we brought water from this distance, we did not eat before our *sasu- sasura*, we kept veil on our forehead, stood fasting for these many days, used to go to this and that temple etc. She remembers her hard days; and creates pressure on me to follow the same rigid structure. I felt a great difficult to convince her, and win her mind towards my own favour.

Here, sasu seems more rigid and hard, loyal to conservative rules and practices.

This is due to the use of her rational knowledge. Here, *sasu* also seems unable to adjust in the changing context inflicting hardship in the *buhari's* shoulder. She failed to realize the *buhari's* context and tried to impose her absurdities upon the *buhari. Sasu*, as per her rational knowledge, categorized and compared her *buhari* with others. This became *prima facie* cause for submission of the *buhari's* desires and expectations. By controlling the *buhari, sasu* reinforced patriarchal tradition even amongst women folk to bring into practice.

I can make this notion clear from another example. In heteropatriarchy, hierarchical relation between *sasu* and *buhari* appears in a structural form. Under the patrifocal residential family structure, oppressive relations co-exist between female and female, where senior female rule as a male to continue male's supremacy. In such a family, a senior female feels proud, if she could maintain patriarchal ideology into practice. I found a family Rachana's family (I have also presented her views above), in which, there are no male members for three generations, but all rites and rituals are continued by female members. In this family also, Rachana expressed that she is bitterly exploited by her *sasu.* She shared her experiences as,

My *sasu* was already a widow when I got married with her son. After eight years of marriage, my husband died in an accident. I have two daughters. Now, we five women (grand *sasu, sasu*, myself and my small daughters) live in the same house. As my husband was alive, my *sasu* and grand *sasu* used to behave well. But when he died, they accused that the extinction of the male member was due to my ill fate. They always accused me that I was an ill-fated woman, who was unable to protect her husband or produce a male descendent to perform annual rights. After the death of my husband, my grand *sasu* always calls a relative uncle to perform annual ritual rights like *sraddha* on the stipulated occasions.

Experience of *buhari* in this case has opened up a window to analyze how patriarchal values have captivated a woman's psychology. Actually, women are the real vehicles into transferring cases of patriarchal culture. They really desire a son to transform their inheritance of lineage and property. Oppression between each other is also prevalent within senior and junior female members.

Understanding the Relation between Sasu and Buhari from Psychological Perspectives

In order to analyze the prevailing conflicting relations between *sasu and buhari*, I reviewed some literatures related to psychology and gender. Among some books, I reviewed, 'psychoanalysis and gender' edited by Rosalind Minsky (1996). When I did not find sufficient literatures related to socio-cultural relation between *sasu* and *buhari*, the task of dealing straight on the issues of *sasu* and *buhari* became uncomfortable. In such a case, I endeavoured to apply psychological theories to interpret socio-psycho-emotional

relation between the mother and son because such relation between a mother and her son in a specific context can assist to provide a background, when there is few incidents to analyze the conflicting relation between *sasu* and *buhari*.

Psychoanalysis perspective, theorized by the renowned psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, is predominantly dominated by the domain of interpretation of the "unconscious or psychic reality" (Minsky 1996:3). Magnifying the dynamic process of psychological construct, Minsky argued that the central concern of psychoanalysis is to analyze the hidden or suppressed psychic reality-that is grounded in the unconscious zone of the individual; and it comes out or erupts under suitable condition from different ways. Highlighting the dimension of unconscious psychic condition, as theorized by Freud, Minsk (ibid.) further writes,

> Freud thought that we can only catch glimpses of its meanings in dreams or random slips of the tongue or pen, in jokes, in what he described as neurotic symptoms in the form of anxiety guilt, depression, obsessions, phobias, and psychoanalytic illness or in sudden eruptions of emotions which we find impossible to explain (p.3).

As argued by Minsky, Freud's psychoanalysis is useful, to describe the nature of unconscious or psychic world that is beyond the conscious subjectivity of an individual. I am personally convinced with Minsky's view that psychoanalysis is a useful theoretical construct because it "provides the essential 'missing link' between biology and history and culture" (p. xii). So, by using psychological theories, I have tried to interpret women's unconscious psychic world that erupts in certain contexts or conditions creating an effect to nurture or disrupt an existing social system.

As discussed earlier, psychoanalysis assumes that the relationship between mother and son is driven by the unconscious (sexual/bodily) desire. Hindu culture also has specified mother and son's relation conferring some imbedded duties; and obligation of a son to his mother. For example, *Manusmriti* has greatly admired a mother's selfless sacrifice towards bearing and rearing children. It has amplified the value of glorified mother and demanded her son to be obliged to fulfill his duty, according to the wish of his mother. In doing so, it has offered the highest status to a mother than any other one in the earth. Islamic doctrine has also advocated the same notion (Umri, 2004).

In a practical life also, a Hindu woman like Ratna's *sasu* socially and culturally regained her prestigious status by giving birth to the son. Her wish to have a son appears as a rational way to satisfy the demands of the culture (Bennett, 2005) or to satisfy the demands of unconscious desire as argued by Freud (cited by Minsky, 1996: 54) that "only a birth of a male child really gives the women the penis she is longing for…".

This means, culturally or psychologically, a Hindu woman like Ratna's *sasu* regained powerful status after the birth of a son. Culturally, she deserves an absolute right to maintain her biological intimacy with her son and pour her love through breast feeding and caring. When mother becomes a first person to take care of her dependent infant son, she becomes an ideal person to him in his childhood. The tight bond of love and affection between mother and son develops in such a complex way; Minsk (ibid, p.8) in this regard argues that Freud had termed the development of such a condition an 'Oedipus complex'. (This terminology was, as argued by Minsk, 'named after the Greek myth in which Oedipus unknowingly-unconsciously-killed his father and married his mother').

According to Freud, argued by Minsk, Oedipal complex becomes so contradictory when the son feels a great loss when he understands that he has to adopt his father's patriarchal culture to transform him to perform as a full man with an expected masculine attributes. So, in psychological theories, the relation between mother and son seems to become a mainstream or dominant discourse to analyze the painful loss by son and mother after the son starts (is compelled) to live entirely an independent life. Psychologists further argue that, this complex relation between mother and son never ends despite the forceful intervention of the patriarchal culture. Their inner intention to marry with each other remains quite suppressed in the unconscious mind, forever. I can relate this assumption with the views expressed by a mother of four children (Sita of age 54) as,

> Actually, I should not say so. Love and affection between mother and son is beyond comprehension. It is so pure, so natural and so prestigious; I think that is totally bounded with the past deeds. If you analyze the birth of mythical heroes like Krishna or other Gods, you can find examples that women have praised Gods to get a son (or sons), who will have a great divine power. To fulfill such women's wish, God themselves have to reincarnate being the son of that woman.

Sita's view unfolds an idea that women are always eager to be a mother of great hero, who can become a famous person in a wide territory. It also proves that even a mythical woman consciously or unconsciously possesses a strong desire to be a glorified mother of a legendary son. Those women with whom I took an in-depth interview also expressed that the existing love between mother and son is beyond interpretation. Some of them also informed that mothers are really angry (jealous) to those people who

temporarily or permanently snatch her son from her lap. In contrast to the view of Sita, Ratna (who divorced with husband due to an ensuing conflict with the *sasu* and husband) reiterated her thoughts,

Ideally, the relation between mother and son is auspicious, very natural and pure. But, practically I cannot think so. Although, I should not say so, but, I think some mothers sleep with their son even after his marriage too. I relate this account with my own life story. My former *sasu* was very much wicked. When she disliked me, she used to say this and that to her son, filled his ear, encouraged him to be brutal and act violently against me. My husband physically and mentally tortured me several times listening to my *sasu's* blaming and accusations against me. He was quite a coward man in front of his mother. He even used to sleep in his mother's room (there was only one bed), as she enforced him to do so. My *sasu* openly threatened me to claim my life, if I dared to disclose such events in public places. What I feel is that, a *sasu* can take an extreme step against her *buhari,* if she is really annoyed with her *buhari.*

Ratna's experiences supports Freud's concept of an Oedipus complex. Explaining Freud's insight to interpret the penis envy, Beasley (2005:31) commented as "in the Freudian paradigm, female desire is always the desire for a penis…" and "male desire, on the other hand, is to get back to the mothers body, to have sexual relations with his mother, as is evidenced in the Oedipus complex". When I asked Ushana, to offer her comment on physical attraction between mother and son, she said,

Ideally, people comment, that (relation between mother and son) is auspicious. Generally, no one suspects in upkeeping relations to another mother and her son.

However, I have heard an instance on the physical relation existing between a mother and son in my village when both were eventually boycotted from the village as the villagers found that she was pregnant from her son. People from the village accused them for breaching auspicious relations between a mother and son. I think, male and female instinct is so powerful, that it can cross any sorts of boundary in the real life. The proof is that, when people blame others, they use restricted phrase of accuse and counter accusations 'the mother fucker' (*terima ma..ne., mam.phakha, ma. jhyakne, poilane,* etc). Even, the small children, while playing with their friends constantly use slang phrases to accuse against each other. We can see mother and son relation in animals too. Look at the instinct of a male goat…when it can stand on its feet, it starts to jump on her mother. I think, for a son, his mother is always at a distance where he can get free access than with others. This is the cause, male goat have more chances to produce offspring from his mother.

Ushna's interpretation also proves that some sporadic cases were there in her village related to the existing physical relation between a mother and her son. However, one can take this phenomenon as an exceptional event, and perceive it as a normal case. However, if we analyze the use of 'restricted code' by a huge mass of the people (including children), consciously or unconsciously, it can be foretold that the psychology (desire of penis by mother, etc.) existed (still exists) as a mass sentiment in a number of people.

What I realized from the above case of Ratna is that when a mother brings *buhari* into marriage fold with her son, she suffers from the pain of losing her beloved son. She

becomes mentally unbalanced, seems to be at unrest because, theoretically, *buhari* also deserves an equal right status in the household. Suddenly, the domestic house experiences encounters with two power centers, two separate individual-selfs, two cultures with hierarchy.

Naturally, *sasu,* as an elder, experienced, mother-power endeavors to hold her supremacy suppressing the *buhari* as much as possible. On the other hand, *buhari* also attempts to resist from her side. Let me associate another view expressed by another co-researcher (Sarita of age 18) about her sasu's (55 year old, uneducated) activities as such,

> I just slept for five days with my husband, after I married him before two years. After that he came to Kathmandu. He used to go home at an interval of several months. When he came home, my *sasu* never allowed me to interact or talk with him freely. She used to occupy her son's time at any cost. She took him to her room and talked for many hours. She is also jealous to my *jethani* (sister in-law). My *jethani* (sister in law) spent twelve years of her marriage without securing proper love of her husband. Due to *mohani* (application of extreme affection using traditional medication) made by my *sasu,* my *jethaju* (brother in law) is ready to die for his mother, but utterly neglects his wife. My *jethaju* sleeps in my *sasu's* room, when he comes to the house. He fulfills every wish of his mother, gives money, gives clothes, even if he could not come, he sends money from another person's hand to give it to the *sasu.* I don't know why he brings other's daughter as a wife just to torture her…?

Sarita's view opens up other ways to interpret her *sasu's* behaviour. Sarita's *sasu* tries to hold authority, as well as spends scarce economic resources too. She seems more

worried on the resource earned by her sons, and she even does not allow the *buharies* to understand how much money they earn. This tendency amplifies that the *buhari* is very often portrayed as a threat for a *sasu's* overall security because they can eventually claim that the property earned by their husband can belong to the *buharies*. To continue an emotional attachment with the son is another psychological part of the *sasu* that can again be interpreted through Freud's lens of the penis envy.

In the same way, it is not surprising that in a hetero-patriarchal family, where the women's stability in her new house is secured after she gives birth to her son. This is because the inheritance of property passes from the male succession. The most important thing is that after the birth of the son, the mother gains new status, prestige, power. She becomes a perfect woman with an existence of full manifestation of femininity qualities because she could reproduce a male successor, the person who can rescue all forefathers, and the upcoming generations too. The main religious texts like *Manusmiriti* (2/26) has added great value based system for motherhood as; 'women are worship worth because they give birth to children and increase the glory of the house'. This text highlighted the value of the son of daughter which resonates that the daughter's son is 'pure and more valuable into performing religious rights including memorial ceremonies (3/235).

Socio-cultural Viewpoints

Nepalese women's epistemology character is amply guided by the patriarchal socio-cultural mindset. In (hetero) patriarchal society, social cultural practices represent patriarchal culture (Minsky, 1996). On the other hand, gendered subjectivity is also a

cultural product transformed through the enculturation process. Broadly speaking, *sasu* and *buhari* are the products of the same orientation system- on acceptance of the supremacy of patriarchy, and is motivated towards the same goal-to reinforce the same supremacy and to be ruled by it.

From the cultural point of view, there is a system before the person. Every person is bound to fulfill, according to his/her own cultural demands. Culturally, hierarchical relation existing between a *sasu* and *buhari* is considered a normal and natural state of affairs. A country like Nepal, wherein social life is guided through a shared or common value based contextual understanding, there is no iota of doubt that *sasu* vehemently attempts to train a *buhari* to embrace her thought behaviour in the social hierarchical system. What *sasu* ardently adheres to is that it is her bounded duty to keep a *buhari* within the right track, so the *buhari* wantonly continues to follow a patriarchal culture in the absence of her life too. To magnify this, Ushana offered her relation with the *buhari* as,

> I don't wish to speak hard words against my *buhari*. But when she does not follow the fundamental rules of the family life, I become compelled to say some words of caution. Look, she never goes to the field to work, even then I did not say anything. She does not go for *parma,* (labor exchange). I did not say anything. What I asked her is to help household activities. I am alone. If she does not help me, then who helps her? I did unbelievable struggle in my life. This is all for my *chhora* (son) and *buhari*. Now I am getting old day by day. I expect, at least she has to be perfect to manage her house, learn how to behave with the relatives and guests, know how to work promptly...know how to prepare ritual offerings…must

be perfect in the household activities…cooking… cleaning, purifying…. We have a culture to worship God daily, worship *Tulasi* (a sacred plant), other festivals, *sraddha* (ritual rites in the name of ancestors). Our life becomes prosperous only if our ancestors are satisfied with us. In 365 days, we must perform different rituals which we have been conducting from the era of our God. No one can argue against it. If buhari remains aloof from such activities, it is hard to tolerate. My duty is to teach her as my *sasu* had undertaken towards me. When I teach, if she takes otherwise then the tussle is automatic. At least she must endeavor to stay in order.

Ushana's expectation from her *buhari* is very simple. She wishes her *buhari* to perform a dominant patriarchal culture. She is reinforcing the *buhar*i to follow an integral part of the system. For me, expectation of a *sasu* from a *buhari* is not an ambitious demand that cannot be fulfilled. What I feel is that a *sasu's* expectation is traditional; she wishes to continue the custom and ritual without modifying it, as per the change in the time and technology. Lack of self-criticism, *sasu* herself is working hard, and endeavoring to impose the same system to the *buhari* too. She does not seem ready to ask her husband or a son to help in the the household activities; nor is she ready to modify ritual practices. She reinforces a value system to her *buhari* to merely simulate as a photocopy, encouraging imitation codes to become a subordinate person in relation to another male.

The social/structural relation between *sasu* and *buhari* in Ushna's house is Hindu hetero-patriarchy and highly problematic. It is quite embedded within a patriarchal system because her house is guided by the Hindu social system loaded with the

patriarchal ideologies that even exist in the absence of male for some (or many) generations.

What I generally feel is that, women actually do not tend to live for themselves. They live for others, do things for others, and even think for others. They are trained to be social, to be cultural, to be emotional, and to be tolerant and become habituated more for the purpose to please others. I think, a woman is enforced to inculcate such behaviour she becomes entitled to eventually seek farewell from her father's house sanctified by marriage. This act turns out to be the most striking and painful moment of her life. Marriage culminates to be the eventual function that puts her to be disdained from her kith and kins; and eventually enforcing her to venture into virgin territory in a complete new and an insecure environment. Then she enters in a new world-the world of her husband's domain that is entirely new and filled with suspense towards accommodative and non accommodative behaviour for her. She is compelled to adopt and adjust herself in a new system, new customs and tradition. In the word of Bennett (2005), marriage is a moment in which a girl is going to become a 'dangerous wife' leaving her 'sacred sister' status in the Hindu society. She is compelled to please all her people's interest in her husband's house. Even if, she becomes old, such obligations do not end. Sometime close kinswomen also influence in the affair within the household. I can relate the experience of Ushana shared as a prevalent cause of the existing quarrel encountered between her and her first *buhari* in a joint family. She vividly remembered the event as reiterated thus,

> At that morning, there were a lot of guests; kinswomen came for the marriage of
> my daughter. All of them were *chhoribeti* (female kinswomen. They were
> planning to return to their own house after attending the marriage ceremony. I was

in a hurry to prepare *koseli* (food items as a gift to be given to the *choribeti)* for

them. In the morning, I cleaned the house, from top to bottom. I expected that the

buhari will come to help me for cooking. Some of the kinswomen were asking me

to call the *buhari* to work and learn to bear household responsibilities. But, till

7am she did not come out from her room. I prepared rice-flour for making *sel*

(rounded rice sweet). I started to prepare *sel* with the help of my *phupu sasu*

(*sasura's* elder sister). Other kinswomen were also there looking and commenting

about the shape and size of the cooked *sel.* This *sel* became like a moon, this

became like the face of this or that.

At seven, in the morning, *buhari* came in the kitchen. *Phupu sasu* cautioned her

in a lighter vein some words to her for arriving late, and beckoned her to help.

The other women in the kitchen also added some inflammatory words against her

laziness attitude. I also added some words and told that she is hardly cooperative

in the household issues. *Buhari* listened to us for some minutes; and left for the

kitchen without any verbal reaction. Everybody in the kitchen was really shocked

to encounter such unexpected behaviour. My *phupu sasu* was so annoyed with her

that, she even told me to split the joint family immediately and allow the *buhari* to

stay separate.

In the same day, the *buhari* went to her natal home without even asking me. At

the moment, the son was not there in the house. When the son came, he also threw

some words of dissatisfaction. *Phupu sasu* also accused him for not controlling

his wife. In return, he accused me saying that I was the sole cause to destroy

harmonious relation. Then other kinswomen also took my side; and ordered him

to play a balanced role.

Therein, after thirteen days, *buhari* came from her natal house. She did not talk to

me for about three months. After six months of this event, our kitchen was

divided. *Chora- buhai* started to eat separately, and we husband, wife and the

youngest son started to eat separately.

Ushana's accusation thrust against her *buhari* compelled me to explore some new

contextual and character domain. The bone of contention is that *buhari* discarded sasu in

front of the public. For sasu, she felt that her power, authority, or even her existence got

suddenly threatened. Her own son accused her in front of the public. This is the primary

cause that the *Sasu* intended to make it into a public issue, even after the end of the event.

In this context, sex-based behaviors were appeared in the subject matter of "public

scrutiny" that judges the moral nature of the male or a female (Unger, 1998:485). Unger,

in this regard, opines that "public behavior appears to sex stereotypic assumptions much

more than does private behaviour."

 Speaking frankly, Nepalese women always tend to fit themselves in front of

others because they need to receive sanctions to show perfectness in their characters that

is possible only when social eyes reconfirm it. At such occasions, both *sasu,* in the above

case Ushana and her eldest *buhari* compete against each other to be sophisticated in front

of others. *Buhari* felt humiliated when her *sasu* portrayed her negatively in front of others

and vice versa.

Analyzing the matter as vented in the public domain, Ushana utilized this incident

as an opportunity to show the *buhari* as a deviant, non-cooperative self, whence she

becomes successful to accumulate sympathy from the kinswomen. On the other hand, she felt powerless to confront her son's increasing family and social domain, as he suddenly accused her as a failure to treat the *buhari* well. Immediate intervention by the male (son) has filled a gap (a separate adverse atmosphere was created through a trifle incident that the *sasu* had not expected to unfold), which resulted into the rivalry contest against each other. *Sasu's* social power was trounced by the *buhari's* individual (sexual) power of control exerted through the son.

I can thus link the *sasu's* painful complain of hurt and humiliation from Sartre's views too (Levy, 2007). Sartre argues that the personal life is joyful until anyone disturbs it. When one person's individual life comes under other's experiment, the person's freedom becomes reduced or it objectifies. Being a member of dominant patriarchal values, a woman gets less opportunity for gaining personal freedom, and she is bound to live a life for others in an oppressive (patriarchal value) system.

In a practical life, both *sasu* and *buhari* are circumscribed to cheat each other as a coping strategy against suppression or dissatisfaction. In doing so, *buhari* have to suffer more than the *sasu* because of her junior hierarchical status in the family. I can see a *buhari's* compulsion to cheat her family as she has to struggle against social, cultural or economic deprivations at once (Sen, 1999). In such condition, she can survive either by constant suppression of her desire or seeking alternatives to satisfy them. Generally, desire for basic needs is uncontrollable. To satisfy them, a woman (*buhari* in our case) even takes risky steps hiding the truth from other members of the family as a strategy to handle the desire. Such events sometimes also includes socially forbidden acts that

buhari commits to achieve a solution. To clarify this, here is a case of *buhari*, Sarita of age 18 years, who in a discussion told,

> Without telling a lie, our domestic life does not run. In my home I used to do one thing and tell another thing. My husband used to live in Kathmandu. He did not give me money to run the house. On the other hand, my *sasu sasura* expect everything from me. Sometimes, I used to sell rice from the mill and buy oil and species for the house. Once, I sold my gold ring and pretended that I lost it in the jungle. I did this because I needed money to buy chemical fertilizer in the field. But, to the *sasu*, I reiterated that the money I used was given by my mother. There are innumerable events I remember in which I have pronounced false statement for this or that reason. Once, my *jethani* stole some money from the *jethau's* pocket; and we kept that money making a whole in the jungle. My *jethaju* asked me whether I noticed that money used by my *jethani*. I told him I did not see. Later on, she used that money to buy clothes for her children.
>
> Sometimes myself and my *jethani* used to eat delicious food hiding form the eyes of the *sasu sasura*. I still remember that, one day, we ate meat in my *jethani's* natal home while going to collect grass for the cows. We came late in the evening, but, we did not tell the cause to our *sasu sasura* why we became late to return. In the same way, we used to hide some food in the cupboard in our room and eat in case *sasu* did not give on time in the evening in late arrival of *sasura*.

Such events as foretold by Sarita always make a buhari suspicious; and she is compelled to pass under strong supervision. If she is caught up while taking away food or money or valuable items, anything can occur. Everyone accuses them as a thief or calling

many more items. She even has to leave her husband's house. The acts that Sarita did it secretly is really a heart piercing. She keeps the food inside the room because she does not get enough food on time. She likes to wear good clothes or expense some money to buy other items; she does not have enough money.

Agreeing with Sartre, what I argue is that people commits socially unaccepted behavior secretly, and then they had to suffer to hide the act they have undertaken. They tell many lies in order to hide one lie. They become suspicious, they become nervous, they hide things here and there, they start to blame others picking their secrecy or so on. Life would be full of myths, anxiety and full of tension, traumatic and so on. Not only *buhari,* but *sasu* I again relate Sarita's accounts what her sasu had done to her. She comments,

> In recent Dashain my husband was ready to go to *sasurali* (wife's natal house). But, when he entered to the sasu's room for half an hour, my husband changed his voice. He told me that he will not go to her *sasurali* this year. Then I went along to my natal house for receiving *Dashain's* blessings. In the late evening, I returned back home from my natal house. That night my husband came to sleep with me. I think he was eager to know my mother's reaction for not going to *sasurali.* But, I did not say anything. I was tired and I managed to sleep quite early. Before sleeping, I opened the door to go to the toilet. When I opened the door, I found my mother in law in the door, listening to us. I was angry and furious. I asked her why she was staying out there in front of others door. Her face changed and said 'I am thirsty. I came here to ask some water'. I entered in and asked my husband not to stay at that room; and requested him to go to the *sasu's*

room to sleep. Despite being angry, he laughed at me and said, 'you just know now. It's not a new event. Usually she does so when I come back form Kathmandu. Let her stay there for the full course of night. I cannot do anything'.

There was no limit of my surprise. I again went to the door. She was not there. I went to the toilet and came into the room and slept. In the next day, she slept in her room, and did not come out. Following the next day, my *sasu* did not come in direct eye contact with me.

Listening to Sarita's views against her sasu, I tried to access the women's complex and measurable life story. I felt pity on Sarita's *sasu*. Her *sasu* is restless. She is worried on the *buhari's* comment to her son for not going to take blessing in his *sasurali*. Certainly, to follow the secret affair of the son and *buhari* does not eventually help her to gain mental peace. It is really a terrible moment for the sasu when her *buhari* caught her in front of the door. Sartre has well documented such accounts when one's personal issues are scrutinized by others eyes in his theme 'being for others' (Levy, 2007). When Sarita saw her *sasu* outside the door spying *chora-buhari's* personal affair, *sasu's* freedom becomes reduced into an objective being. In this case, *sasu* became an objective being for a *buhari*. In view of Sartre (ibid: p.39) when Sarita found her *sasu* spying upon her activities, *sasu* became 'an object within someone else's world whose actions became relatively predictable and manipulatable to become an object for others'.

When, anyone's personal activities comes under public scrutiny, the person's freedom becomes reduced into an object. In the case above, Sarita could predict her *sasu's* behaviour to the public contemplating she is this and that sort of a woman. *Sasu*

must have felt guilty for spying against the *buhari's* personal activities. I can relate this story of Ushana too. Ushana's *buhari* was furious with her, as she tried to demoralize her in front of others. Both Ushana and her *buhari's* action became relatively predictable, or even manipulable. I could perceive that, the relatives of Ushana encouraged her to control the *buhari's* activities on time.

Here, in the case of Sarita, her *sasu* is exactly objectified when she is caught by her *buhari* spying against her. Sarita became quite able to talk about the self, nature, attitude of the *sasu,* she can accuse the *sasu* saying this or that. Weeping of the *sasu* taken place in the next day in front of the son is to help alleviate the shame for the act to which she was responsible for the last night. This single event became the root cause for the departure of Sarita from the house. She further foretold her story as,

After she wept in front of all when my husband told her that he is taking me to Kathmandu, no conservation was made between the family members. That night, (the next night of the event happened) my husband slept in his mother's room. At night, I made my luggage ready to go to Kathmandu with my husband in the very next day. In the next day, when my *sasu* understood this, she locked me inside the room and managed to escape her son. After two days, I took permission with the *sasura* to come to Kathmandu. He consented. That day, I went to natal house, stayed one night and came in Kathmandu the next day. But, my luck punctuated, my *sasu* had already managed to escape her son. He was not there in the room in Kathmandu. I decided not to return to that house where my *sasu* does not respect my aspirations. I decided to work in other's house and stick in Kathmandu at any cost.

This event expressed by Sarita, has also opened up another idea, i.e. the central figure of the conflict between *sasu* and *buhari* was the relations with son/husband for whom *sasu* and *buhari* also wish equally to keep in touch. For the same person *sasu* was applying greater emotional, psychological, moral, and social power to control over him, whereas buhari was applying more through enticing her sexual power. Actually*, buhari* had left the house to use her psycho-sexual power to attract her husband, but failed to do so when she could not meet him. This conflict amplifies that the war/conflict between sasu and buhari is between the war of morality and sexuality, sociality and individuality, spirituality and materiality, psychic and body. But, another charming fact, we should not forget is again the gendered role between females under hetero-patriarchy, where all these binary subjectivities (Powell, 2003) are centered forward.

Conflicting self-aspirations and expectations of sasu and buhari when it collides, anomalies between them becomes natural. Both sasu and buhari, being a member of the same hetero-patriarchal family, are considered to become close in there domestic spheres. They have to manage household activities; and are compelled to share scare resources in an effective way. In this condition, gender relationship between sasu and buhari is highly conflicting, and problematic. *Buhari's* gender role suddenly turns into becoming vulnerable and threatening to the *sasu's* influence domain. To clarify this opinion, Sarita, of age 18 expressed her experience as,

> After my marriage, my *sasu* left to go in the field. Instead, that work came on my
> shoulder. I did these works as far I could. I used to work in the field, bringing
> fodder for the cattle, cutting grass, milking of cows or so on. I also used to go to
> *parma* (labour exchange system) in the season of cropping and harvesting the

food grains. My *sasu* used to work in the house. Her works included: food preparation, managing economic activities, giving or taking foods (barter system) or so on. Slowly, she has confined her area within the domestic periphery.

The context in which Sarita brought her experience clearly underlines that the family structure is from the village; where agricultural activities are dominant means of subsistence. This also underlines that there exists visibly separate male and female domain based on a gender division of labour. But, in this family, this domain is further specialized, i.e. working area of the *buhari* was outside the house and *sasu* inside the house, in the kitchen and so on. This specification facilitated the *sasu* to bring domestic politics-as talking with the neighbors, cooking, eating food, giving and taking loan, manipulating the son's brain, supplying husband's needs, etc. Actually, sasu has changed her outdoor field to indoor one where she can best exercise her power.

In this instance, as argued by most of the sociologists and feminists both sasu and buhari are engaged in the domesticated gender role but differently. In this regard, I tried to draw attention to see the connection of the above case with the views of post structuralism feminists (Weedon, 1992; 19), who argue that it is necessary to explore and theorize the power offered to the women by patriarchal family "to socialize children, to run the house and to be the power behind the thrown' although that woman is 'subject to a male control".

Weedon's view fits here to analyze hierarchical power exercised by *sasu* against the buhari; although both are oppressed from the rule of male. Sasu's oppressing tendency to her buhari cross-cuts different issues including the buharis' personal power. I can oversee that, when the buhari comes in the house, sasu tends to enjoy privilege as far as

possible; including the exemption of the household works. She limits her boundary in which she can enjoy socially. Many of the s*asus* start to concentrate their focus in the kitchen and other household politics. I could see this tendency in Ratna's sasu too. She changed her domain from outside home to inside home. However, for a buhari, her duty was fixed, packed and difficult. She has to adjust herself with those persons, neighbors and outsiders who were stranger to her. She was under the scrutiny of the *sasu's* guptachari. She was a 'dangerous wife', suspicious to all, of the Hindu agnatic (hetero-patriarchal) family in the word of Bennet (2005).

In the above case, as a *buhari* becomes obedient to her *sasu*, the relation between *sasu* and *buhari* was unproblematic. Domestic life was normal, personal relation was normal; as if *sasu* and *buhari* were working with mutual trust and understanding with each other. There was no explosion of confrontation competing personal interest between these two women. However, when, *buhari* became pregnant, she could not go to work in the field, in cowshed, in tap or in the kitchen. *Sasu* started to become furious. Her suppressed pain or ego-action (Capra, 1983) came into surface; and she started to be confronted with already manifested relief eco-action. Her role again reversed when the *buhari* could not go out to work. She even has to complete double load, in and out of the house.

The concept of Shukla (2005:53) who argues that the core value; but not the widely uncovered contradictory nature of patriarchy, "is to set one woman against another, in the past creating a lively antagonism between a whore and matron, and in the present between career woman and housewife" clearly magnifies that patriarchal ideology is survived by 'divide and rule' principle, as in politics. Under this institution, as

argued by Shukla, women are whores and matron, women are witches and goddesses. Nature of mythical goddess, (like Devi) also seems contradictory in her functional role. She is both a protector and destroyer. She is protector to those who prays for her and becomes destroyed to those who are the rival of prayers. I think the nature of sasu and the mythical Devi share similar characteristic and trade. *Sasu*, as a form of mother protects her son at any cost excusing his weakness. On the other hand, the same *sasu,* acts as a rival (destroyer) for the *buhari* digging up her weakness and ventilating her as much as possible.

This instant also points out to another idea for analysis. As, Hindu culture is a gene-honoring culture, this culture is always suspicious with the people who are outside the gene culture; either the person is male or female. This culture maintains mechanical solidarity among the blood sharing kins (Bennett, 2005). Any one, who is outside the blood relation, is always the 'other', and comes under a great suspicion. There is less emotional or biological attachment; and that is the prime cause along with other causes to erupt a conflict between *sasus* and *buhari*. On the other hand, cultural provision to bring out many *buharis* has also played significant roles to increase the *sasu's* courage to oppress *buhari.* Otherwise, if there was no such direct provision, *sasu* could be afraid with the *buhari.* On the other side, buhari always fears the *sasu*; whether she brings other co-wife, if she could not fill her demands.

Knowledge Obtained

From all above explanation, I found some causes for out breaking conflict between *sasu* and *buhari*. Some of the major causes appeared are as follows:

1. The most superior position a women can secure is gaining a position of *sasu.* When one woman becomes a *sasu,* her hierarchical status increases in grade. After the marriage of her son, a perfect family of second generation becomes establishesd and *sasu* can become the head of that family too. In such case, she exercises her power she had received from her husband. She starts to reinforce the patriarchal culture controlling *buhari's* production, reproduction, and sexuality or mobility characters.

2. The second cause is that, Hindu hetero-patriarchy is survived by the contribution of a woman or groups of women who are infected by multiple deprivations. Actually, a woman lives her life by concealing, suppressing or hiding her desire and aspirations in her life. When she becomes *sasu,* then she also tries to take revenge with her *buhari* to get relief form her suppressed mentality. For her, socially, culturally or hierarchically, a *buhari* is an appropriate person to whom she can inflict her psycho-social burden.

3. When *buhari* enters the house, she takes away a son from the *sasu*. *Sasu* cannot enjoy emotional and economic wealth of her son as previously. She becomes jealous to her

buhari who snatches her intimate son form her. In such a case, accidental conflict between them becomes natural.

4. The working domain of *sasu* and *buhari* is the same. They have to work together in same areas, have to use scarce resources for the benefit of the family. It is natural that while working in the same domain, the sentiment of competitiveness spirit, jealousness, variation on access of economic resources also makes an effect. Both of them know each other's weakness; and when they find appropriate time, they attack on that weakness to weaken the power of each other.

5. Intergenerational gap is another factor to arising conflict in between the *sasu* and *buhari*. Psychologically, a *sasu* and a *buhari* cannot honour same values for the same act or perception. Difference on epistemology of knowledge offers different grounds for different thinking. In the same way, different aim of life, personality conflict could also be a major cause for misunderstanding ensuing between a *sasu* and *buhari*.

6. Infliction form the outsiders is also evident in outbreaking of the conflict between *sasu* and *buhari*. We can see this from the story of Ushna and Ratna. In Ushna's case, her *phupu sasu* stood for her and against her *buhari*. In the same way, the tussle between Ratna's father and Ratna's *sasu* is an evident case in this light.

Chapter VII

Researching the Self

In this chapter, I have researched myself using the flexibility of the qualitative research method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In doing so, I endeavored myself to use auto-ethnography method that is basically grounded in the soil of qualitative schools in research, which constantly encouraged me to enter in these areas. My intention, in this context was concentrated into establishing a tradition of making a researcher as a 'researched one' (Jones, 2005) in social science of inquiry. I openly embraced the emerging trend of researching self, as highlighted by Denzin (2000, p.261, as cited by John, 2000, p: 763) that 'the next moment in qualitative inquiry will be one at which the qualitative research moves from personal to the political'. To be motivated in this path, Denzin (as cited by Jones's 2005, p. 764) has offered an auto-ethnography method as an appropriate way for self-research that demands "multiple reflection" in which "our personal accounts count". Supporting Denzin's argument, Jones (ibid; p.770) also presented a discourse in which his professor has asked the students for self-investigation about 'physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, artistic and artifactual selves'. This signifies that each of the researcher acclaimed as an individual possesses multiple selves

situated within certain historical and cultural background that can be shared, compared;

and reflected to interpret personal subjectivity.

Standing on the theoretical argument offered by Denzin and Jones, I endeavored

to interpret my own personal experiences that contributed to construct subordinated

gendered subjectivity which Bourdieu has termed as 'gendered habitus' (Reay, 1989). My

aim of conducting this research was to open a field for other scholars to be engaged in

this tradition. In this background, the aim of this research did not differ from that of Jones

(ibid), who concluded the essence of auto-ethnography as,

> Setting a scene, telling a story, weaving intricate connections among life and art,
>
> experience and theory, evocation and explanation….and then letting go, hoping
>
> for readers who will bring the same careful attention to your words in the context
>
> of their own lives (P.765).

Jones arguments provided sufficient flexibilities so as to adopt multiple methods,

theories and experiences to explain self reflections that are commonly shared by other

women too in the same society. In this pace, I have revisited my past experiences, looked

into its consequences reflected them in present state of mindset, and analyzed them from

the relevant literatures and theories. In doing so, I initiated to examine myself with the

theme of perceived sexuality under Hindu hetero-patriarchal culture where I was raised in

the following paragraphs.

One of the chief characteristic of Hindu hetero-patriarchy system, I have

acknowledged was the dominance of male privileged philosophical doctrines focused

towards institutionalization of women's gendered subjectivity. In this context,

construction of my gendered subjectivity as a Hindu woman was the product of a battle

of an empowered man's socio-religious culture and a powerless women's domestic culture in my society (Jeffreys 1998, Riger, 1998). I understood my gendered experiences what Riger (Ibid: 47) has noted as, "gender does not reside within the person; instead it is constituted by the myriad ways in which we 'do' rather than 'have gender." As argued by Riger, I constructed my gendered knowledge closely associated to the sexualities which Jeffreys (ibid: 77) has called a "product of sexuality itself".

To denote here, my gendered knowledge was associated to my mother's menstruation process. As I have already discussed in previous chapters, my gendered subjectivity was highly characterized with the notion, belief and practice of ritualized sexualities which was inherent to the *patibrata dharma* system. I constructed my gendered sexuality through different socio-cultural ways. For example, I learnt social notion of women's sexual purity and pollution through enculturation. In the same way, I understood women's valued virginity through the religious doctrines. Likewise, I inculcated the sexual notion in relation to the reproduction from the traditional medication process. In the same way, I acknowledged the sexual biology from the formal education system.

In my childhood, I first knew myself as sexually gendered woman rather than socially, culturally, economically gendered one. In such scenario, I have presented my reflection on gendered sexuality I had inculcated through enculturation process in the family in the following paragraphs.

Gendered Sexuality through Enculturation

Let me began my analysis on the reflection of gendered sexuality "being a gendered person in a society" (West & Zimmeraman, 19998:105) in a patriarchal family where 'social construction of sexuality serves the interest of men' (Jackon, 1998:23). Being a female member of a hetero-patriarchal system, I do realize that my gendered sense of femininity or gendered sense of sexual self, self was constructed through (Hachen, 2001) various gendering processes under the Hindu Hetero-patraichal system. To enternalize, social sexuality, my family served a primary role (Sharma, 1992), from where I learnt gendered sexuality through enculturation (Harris, 1995). The first conception I realized about sexuality was the social ramification of my mother's menstruation in my life. Although, the term menstruation was somehow an abstract concept for me, I was just able to internalize it in relation to the practice of untouchability, do's and don'ts my mother used to follow and command regularly.

In my early childhood (about nine or ten years) I was totally ignorant to the biological aspect of menstruation. For me, menstruation associated with my mother included to her personally confined social acts of self seclusion, self-prevention of touching food items, avoidance kitchen work and worshiping God or so on that appeared ambiguously in my mind There was no clear vision in my delicate mind what menstruation itself represented. As I grew up, I slowly internalized the cultural importance of menstruation in my particular family culture. In this sense, my epistemology related to gendered sexuality was more cultural in nature in which my

thought and behaviour were shaped in a controlled family circuit where elders did apply the provision of reward and punishment in order to reconfirm my gendering track. I was then intimidated in such a way that I consciously or unconsciously learnt my mother's gendered menstruation exactly in the way Harris (ibid) noted in the process of enculturation in anthropology. Highlighting the process of enculturation, Harris further (ibid.) expressed,

> Enculturation is a partially conscious and partially unconscious learning experience whereby the older generation invites, induces and compels the younger generation to adopt traditional ways of thinking and behaving. Thus Chinese children use chopsticks instead of forks, speak a tonal language and learn to worship their ancestors because they have been enculturated into Chinese culture rather than into the culture of the United States (p.8).

As told by Harris, initially, I was enculturated in a Hindu hetero-patriarchal family and my understanding of menstruation was attached with the social taboos and stigma (Huston, 1979) that was practiced in a social life. I still remember my ignorance on the biological concern about menstruation. If one asks me an unforgettable memory attached to menstruation, I certainly tell everyone my childish absurdity on fake belief that male also undergoes menstruation. Let me relate it with a story. One day, my father asked me to help him in the kitchen work in the absence of my mother. I could not deny him no, but tried to ignore his order in a logical way. In a response to his order, I suggested my father to tell my mother that he became *nachhuni* (menstruation) and did not cook food at that day. I didn't remember how he reacted on my childish views; but till now he remembers and jokes at me for what I had told him at that day. In the same way, I

still remember that, while playing with my friends, sometimes I used to imitate as a menstruated woman like my mother and pretended that I should not touch this and that, exactly what my mother used to do in the house. One who used to play the role of a menstruated woman, she was exempted from the household activities like cooking a fake food or so on, but had to collect firewood from the outside. This was my way of constructing knowledge of gendered menstruation through enculturation process.

When I revisited my past, I clearly remembered that, for me, till nine or ten years, my mother's menstruation was attached with the notion of *chhuna nahune* (untouchability) culture. The terminology *'nachhuni'* (menstruation) itself tells its meaning rercollecting the stage of untouchability, popular in a public with the culture of forbidden practices for touching this and that item. My mother and other adult women used to observe the menstruation culture following stringently the Hindu's religious provision codes as advocated by *Manusmriti* or (2/45-48) or the Christianity's provision as advocated by the Bible (*Laibyabastha,* 15/19-23). The other notion was that my mother's culturally deprived do's and don'ts related to menstruation used to compel me to sleep hungry (Sen, 1999) in a case; if there were no other persons to carry the kitchen works. Its accumulated consequence was malnourishments deteriorating my health. But sometimes, I used to become happy when my father used to sprinkle *sunpani* (gold washed water) to purify himself from my gold ring in case of the accidental touching by him to my mother during the menstruation period. A very negative notion attached to menstruation was a verbal abuse and accusation against a menstruated woman by a man, for not disclosing her menstruation in proper time. Such incidence was more frequent while carrying in the agricultural works during the harvesting season.

As a new member of a family and society, I gradually internalized a menstruation culture as a social reality (Carabine, 1998) which is natural and fixed. I also inculcated my mother's culture when I came under my puberty stage, and my involvement appeared as a "self-regulating process while beginning to monitor my own and others conduct with regards to its gender application" (West & Zimmerman 1998, p. 117). In the long run, my gendered personality (Hrdy, 1998) is modeled in such a way that I became like a carbon copy of my mother into understanding the gendered sexuality attached to the belief and the practice of menstruations.

Still now, I am suffering from the influence of my gendered sexuality, gravitated to my thought and behaviour of myself, with reflection to the others. I cannot forget the rules what my mother adhered and compelled me to follow. The use of gold ring culture was out there, if the adult members discovered that they touched me unknowingly during my menstruated period. Consciously or unconsciously I don't cook food nor worship God. My mind captivated with the fear of sin after having always prevented me in doing so and so.

Menstruation process or system nurtured me to internalize the value of *patibrata dharma* As a Hindu girl; I observed a fasting after my first menstruation in *teej* ritual (a woman centric ritual). Principally, the *teej* ritual is symbolized to manifest two functions. The first is asking to become *saubhagyabati* (a status of a married woman with her husband). The second is to wash the sin; a woman might have committed committing to forbidden acts during her menstruation. Although, I was unmarried, I observed the culture with a great enthusiasm, as my mother and other relatives taught me the processes to inculcate.

After discussing upon how I constructed my gendered sexuality through enculturation, I have tried to examine the gendered sexuality through the ritualization way, which I termed as ritualized sexuality for the analysis and interpretation under hetero-patriarchal system in the following lines.

Construction of gendered sexuality through ritual texts

The fear psychosis attached with menstruation was further deepened as I became aware towards its imbedded religious provisions. In my knowledge, textual accounts interpreted by the priests were second messengers to ritualize the gendered sexuality. As I have already noted in literature review, interrelation of religious provisions described in the texts and ritual practices to make these provisions effective were the basic salient methods that gravitated deeply in the self construction of my gendered personality (Brown, 1998). Let me again join myself to the knowledge of gendered sexuality related to menstruation culture. I understood menstruation as a kind of impure stage of women in which I should be conscious about its do's and don'ts philosophy, as argued by religious texts like *Manusmriti* or Bible. I always used to fear that if I committed any sin against the religious provisions then I have to suffer the torture of going to hell, or I should take next birth in a poor and awicked family. Religious texts like *Garudhpuran, Purushottammahatmya, teej bratakatha,* further pressured me to be receptive towards the do's and don'ts during menstruation. Story of *Garudhpuran* also terrorized my mind; and I became much aware in this textual issue. The *teej* ritual also reiterated the fear psychosis attached with the menstruation differentlyin my psychic.

It is amply clear to note that the story behind the menstruation of woman clearly portrays her negatively. It is attached with the sin done by Indra[3], the King of the Gods. The ritual *teej* is popularly acknowledged as an occasion to remove her sin by purifying her body while the period of menstruation. Such rituals, I used to practice along with other women distinctly supported me to shape a mindset that woman's body is made up to tolerate sufferings every month due to the menstruation problem. During *Teej,* all women of the village, who have crossed their menstruation, gathered in the river to wash them for bathing in the river. While returning home from the river along with the other kinswomen, I used to feel that women's world is totally different than that of the male (West & Zimmeraman, 1998). For me, culture of self-seclusion for four days observing untouchability, observing *teej* rituals were some of the stringent ritual mechanisms in imposing the negative notion of women's sexuality attached with menstruation. In other words, it was like doing gender; the process that differences between a man and a woman (West & Zimmeraman, 1998). Clarifying the process of doing gender, West and Zimmeraman further (ibid) stated that,

> Doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential or biological. Once the differences have been constructed they are used to reinforce the essentialness of gender (p.113).

As argued by West and Zimmeraman, what I argue is that I have internalized a Hindu's woman's menstruation culture-a way to create a parallel distance between a man and a woman which, in its surface seems impossible to bridge this gap. Obviously, a

woman's pregnancy, labour pain, child birth, and rearing of children could also be reflected in the same insight.

In contrast to the association of women's body with menstruation or pregnancy, men are free from these experiences. They also were freer from the manual works and could easily escape from the household activities. These practices further separated a man and a woman into hierarchical bipolar centers, where a man like my father used to be engaged in an intellectual work, whereas a woman like my mother used to be engaged in the domestic and manual works (Powell, 2003). My sense of femininity also directed towards my mother's path, although I was fortunate enough to receive some opportunity of receiving modern education. Till now, I cannot devalue the provisions in the texts, the ritual in the practice thinking that if I denied the religious provision, this might become a way leading to self-destruction. I cannot remain aloof of observing menstruation properly, although the degree of strictness is loose due to my compulsive mobility in public places.

I also reproduce the same sequence of culture overtly or covertly even after about the thirty years, I have learnt it from my mother (Reay, 1998). Although, modern education has supported me to deconstruct some notions of gender and sexuality (Pulmmer, 2005), but I can not remain absolutely free from these gendered notions at any cost. In these days, I am survived by adopting a hybrid culture; mix of traditional and modern in different proportion. The way I use to practice the do's and don'ts related to restricted behavior is visibly different in public and private places (Unger, 1998, Levy, 2007). For example, in front of elder and conservative people, I pretend that I observed

menstruation period strictly. I also don't do culturally prohibited works, whereas in my individual sphere I don't care too much about it.

After describing the gendered sexuality through the textual and ritual way, I have targeted my attention to unveil my experience on my gendered sexuality through the medication or the traditional way of treatment system in the following lines.

Construction of Gendered Sexuality through Medication System

Tantrik way of understanding sexuality was different than that of an advocacy of other religions mentioned earlier (Bhatta, 2006). In this connection, I have brought here some of my reflection of my childhood in relation to the understanding on sexuality while carrying medication using the *tantrik* way.

As I revisited my past, I reflected the t*antrik* way of medication system that was deeply rooted in the culture of the Hindu hetero-patriarchy society. As I understood the particular way of understanding the social and personal problems and seeking its solution by the woman from a *tantrik* way, Bennett (2005) also had remarked it as a distinct one rooted in a socio-cultural realm of daily life.

There were different superstitious belief system in my family and the society related to the psycho-biological problems. My *phupu* (sister of my father), who could not bear a child used to go to the *shaman.* She was then treated in a *tantrik* fashion to cast away the attack from *bokshi* (witch). She succumbed to injury while hot water was poured in her body. It was so with other diseases also. All women in the village were aware about the attack of the *bokshi* and used to visit *tantrik* to neutralize its bad effect on

their personal life. If someone suddenly felt ill, he or she immediately did visit the *tantrik*

for the treatment. In the same way, the pacifying *bhut pret* (devil), the *sime-bhume* (local

God), *pari deuta* (the God from the other village) were some popular culture to overcome

on the unresolved fantasy. *Mohani* and black magic system was equally popular to

attract a person (male or female) who used to be detached from one showing attachment

to the other one.

Interestingly, village women were culturally familiar with these traditional

systems because their knowledge used to be a collective belief (Denzin & Lincoln,

2005:50). As a member of the same society, I also constructed my knowledge through the

situated experiences (Oselen, 2005:245) of my villagers in my local culture. Many times,

I have escorted my *phupu* to visit *tantrik* for conducting her treatment of her barren

problem. She spent a lot of money to solve her problem, but unfortunately, her problem

did not become minimized or got solved ever after that. In the same way, my mother used

to go to visit the tantrik in case of irregularity of her menstruation. I used to remain at the

side of my mother as the *tantrik* used to treat her using mantra, *yantra* and *tantra* (*Sabar*

Mantra aur Tantra, 2005).

Although everybody used to receive tantrik treatment from the local expert, but

there was no guarantee for ensuing success of the treatment. In such case, if their health

condition did not improve, she then used to blame for her own misfortune of the past life.

In my life, superstitious beliefs related to the illness menstruation or pregnancy appeared

as 'marginalized and stigmatized social realities (Foley &Valenzuela, 2005:218).

Revisiting the past, what I felt is that, superstitious belief systems were

dominantly women specific issues grounded on the cultural context which were indeed

the "unrealized agendas" (Oselen, 2005:245) of which cause and consequence was

neglected by men, but acknowledged by women. To come to this, as I understood was

due to the lack of an effective mechanism to translate and solve private problems of

women they frequently encounter in their deprived life (1999). I still remember that, there

was no alternative medication system to address to my mother's illness, my *phupu's*

barren status. For this, it was natural for them to visit *tantrik* where there were no

facilities of hospitals for modern treatment system to cure their illnesses. In such an

atmosphere she was bound to accept her condition as "natural, necessary or inevitable"

because she was forcefully made a sufferer by the hetero-patriarchal system (Kincheloe

& McLaren, 2005:304). My way of knowing the social problem also modeled within the

influence of my mother where "dominant ideologies, practices and discourses shape our

vision of reality" (ibid; 310).

In my knowledge, *tantrik* way of medication system ultimately reinforced

women's *patibrata dharma* system and her role to reproduce male children as well. Most

of the women who suffered from the sexual disease or illness used to go to visit the

tantrik because of the fear that their husband might bring another wife. In the same way,

barren women were the worst sufferers because of their inability to bear children for the

continuation of male lineage for the salvation of the deceased ancestors. These were some

of the fundamental ways to define women's status form her mystified relativities (Huston,

1979). Unveiling the ways of women's mystification of women, he further (ibid) writes,

> The status of women were still affected by numerous practices-often based on
>
> taboos, superstition, religious beliefs or even misinterpretations of religious tenets
>
> that continues to have a stunting effect on their personal development,

assertiveness and participation around them. Century old customs and practices continue to support a common perception on women as weak, inferior, even unable to resist temptations (P.37).

As described by Huston, what I can claim is that, my experience of gendered sexuality either form enculturation process or through the medication system was constructed in a subordinated light. It was because "of the patriarchal feature, that informed all aspects of the society and effectively shaped women's lives" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005: 313). Sometimes, traditional medication system supported to create unnecessary tensions and conflicts among or between female members (Shukla, 2006) which again supported to nurture hetero-patriarchal value system.

After reflecting the self-construction of gendered sexuality through medication system, I have tried to reflect it from the way of the schooling system in the following lines.

Construction of Gendered Sexuality through the Schooling System

As a member of a so-called high caste Hindu community, I was nurtured in the orthodox religious environment. I learnt so many do's and don'ts advocated by different religious texts during my childhood. My first experience of schooling started from the *nishedh* (not allowed) culture. Being a female member, reading Veda or reciting *Gayatri* mantra was strictly prohibited for me. Despite some restrictions, I received an opportunity to learn many more religious books along with my brothers. I was told to memorize many of the chapters of the *Bhagabatmahapuran,* a popular text from the

Mahabharat era. I still remember the main stories of different mythical characters portrayed in the Bhagabat. Stories of Radha, Goppinis, Rukminis (Lovers of Lord Krishna) who were predominantly representatives that belonged to the village culture being perfected with feminine characteristics domain.

They were imaginary celebrities for me. The text also described the life stories of ill-fated women who had challenged male dominated hetero-patriarchal system. The story of the Bhagabat commenced from the story of a woman, named Dhunduduli, portrayed as a female villain who had denied bearing a child for continuation of a patriarchal family of Atmadev (*Bhagabatmahapuran,* 1997: 15-36). The story foretells that, due to the denial by a woman to bear a child it eventually became the *prima facie* cause for the destruction of the family cultural ethos.

In the same way, I have repeatedly recited the text, *Swasthani.* This text abounds with stories of ill fated women (like Goma, Chandravati etc). The essence of this text was that being a woman, she is compelled to develop a habit to be tolerant while encountering in any sort of misfortune. In my childhood, I used to compare my great mother with the Goma of swasthani, working in the kitchen, making rice and flour using *janto (a hand mill) and dhiki* (foot mill). She seemed so weak that her malnourished body, sympathetic face, resilency, and extreme belief upon God, religion and cultural activities used to appear, as she was like a carbon copy of Goma. One of my great mother's life story co-incidentally matched with the life story of Goma, who married at the age of seven years age, brought her at the back of the man from the hill side and so on. She skillfully used to recall her memory and took our time to tell about all events. At that time, my great mother was Goma; and Goma resembled my great mother. Likewise, the terrorizing story

of *teej brata katha* still strikes my mind with fear of committing sin and that we are endured to face it, if we did not strictly follow the rules during the menstruation period.

Self-reflection and Self-Controlled Sexuality under Hindu Hetero-patriarchy

In this research, as mentioned earlier, I have tried to 'analyze my own position as educated, middle class professional' as personality researchers should understand it (Stewart, 1998). In doing so, I have reflected my childhood days I spent in a strict hetero-patriarchal environment where do's and don'ts confronted into each step ahead in my life. I was always conscious on my father's truly priest like personality. For me, he was a source of inspiration to make me realize my gender boundary. The environment created by the influence of my father about sexual purity compelled me to realize my father's intention about maintaining my virginity, as per the notion of hetero-patriarchal standard (Channa, 2003: 293). Herein, I have highlighted some causes why my father gave so much priority into maintaining purity of my virginity.

The first cause might be for maintenance of genetic purity because being a father of hetero-patriarch family; it was his obligation to find a good husband for me which was possible, only if I maintained my characters related to sexuality in a right track (Manusmriti, 2/33, 10/6). If I breached his rule, then the chances of polluting my sexuality became higher. If I became polluted through premarital affairs, I might loose to enjoy an equal privilege as other virgin girl or woman used to be granted. So, to assure sexual purity, my father made me compelled prevent myself to mix up with the outsider

male members because of the fear of an incorporation of an outsider's gene (Bennett, 2005).

The fear of potential daughter's pregnancy before marriage was a shameful situation for the Hindu family (Channa, 2003). There might be three or more reasons behind this notion. The first could be the fear of continuation with transmittable diseases. The second and the most important could be the fear of being an unmarried mother which was a serious threat to the hetero-normative ideal family where "the meaning of a family means a nuclear, two heterosexual parent families" (Brown, 1998:169). Thus, as argued by Brown, due to fear of social deviation, my father might have restricted me to mix up with the male friends, from which the chances of producing hybrid children of unidentified father became high before the marriage. The other causes might be the problem of the economy for rearing child, crisis of future identity of the child, fear of producing genetically disabled children or so on. There could be other reasons as well that are yet to be researched.

To prevent all these unwanted hazardous, my father might have controlled my sexuality in sophisticated ways. But these sophisticated ways of controlling sexuality, finally contributed a woman like me to construct a subordinated gendered subjectivity for ever.

To clearly dwell and compare my behavior and thought, I disseminated a SMS message from the mobile to different persons asking the same question. The question was, 'what do you do if you encounter a young and beautiful woman in a lonely place?' for male and 'what do you do if you encounter a young and a handsome man in a lonely place?' for a female respondent. I dispatched this message to eight persons of different

age and castes and ethnic background. Among them, three were females and five of them were male. Actually, I could not get appropriate female counterparts who possessed their own mobile scenario and courage to which I could retrieve candid answers. Among eight, six of them replied to the answer. The table below presents the SMS responses.

Table no: 20 Attitudes of the male and female towards the opposite sex

	SMS co-researchers	Attitude of the co-researchers
1.	45 years, married male, MA passed.	Exchange, we want.
2.	40 years, married male, MA passed.	I will thank God for providing me such a wonderful moment.
3.	27, unmarried male, MA passed.	Complex question but my simple answer is I'll present according to her willingness so far I can and possible in the frame of our social norms.
4.	41 years unmarried female, MA passed	I don't expect such a moment. Why do you ask such question to me?
5.	34 years, married female, MA passed	I would act according to tendency.
6.	30 years, married female, BA passed	I will just stay indifferent if he does not give any attention. If he tries to harass me, I will defend.

Source: Mobile SMS

From the above response dispatched by SMS informants, I discovered some similarities and differences in the response of a man and a woman. It clearly showed that a man and a woman had differently valued his/her body in connection to the relation with each other. Here, each of the three men did not tell that he feared with an unknown woman when he encountered to meet her in a lonely place. On the other hand, each of three woman's response was attached with some fear in relation to an unknown man in a

lonely place. Analyzing the table above, I found some fundamental tendencies were differently inherited in a man and a woman as "culture and context are an essential part of the behaviour" (Landrine 1998:88).

From the response, it could be claimed that male's cultured body was more individual in nature and free from the pollution, if he came into contact of a woman. Moreover, each of them seemed more curious to find a woman in a lonely place. This also showed that a male's lust towards a female was equally possible in a lonely place as they cannot control their desire, as noted by some Islamic scholars (Umri, 2004). If the woman showed her inclination towards him, he looked to be ready to make any type of undisclosed relation with her.

On the other hand, each woman's response was consciously or unconsciously directed towards the protection of her *patibrata dharma*, inherently enshrined in her mindset (Reay, 1998). These instances have magnified upon how a woman herself tried to protect her gendered sexuality in the absence of her father or her husband. This factor also helped to clarify how a woman gets influenced through inheritance of patriarchal value to rule the self by own self.

Despite some of the similarities in the attitude of male and female, some differences also could be noticed out there. For example the response of 27 years unmarried man differed with the response from other two married men of age 45 and 40. The man seemed more concerned about his social prestige. Most probably, being an unmarried person, he might have kept some margins to rescue himself from social accusation in case, if his relation with a woman was supposed to be aired in the public.

He also did not say that he would remain indifferent, if he happended to meet a *patibrata* woman with a strong faith in it.

Unlike an unmarried man, 40 years old married man felt comfortable to be nearer with a woman in a lonely place. He did not care that the woman was indeed a *patibrata* one; but assumed that he can enjoy with her as she was an individual woman with an individual body. For him, relation with new women seemed always to be old and experienced. It was also predictable that he had already encountered such occasions, and this was also the other chance to enjoy in the relationship.

Likewise, the response of a 45 years man appeared somehow abstract to derive a sensed meaning. The exchange, as he wrote, between a male and female could be physical, psychological, emotional, or all. Although he seemed positive to exchange the wants within her consent, he did not intend to respect her *patibrata* faith from his side.

From the views of the males received, I also became clear that a man actually plays a dual role in the issues of a woman, specifically in relation to sexuality, which was also seen to be reflected in the popular work of Vatsyayan's Kamasutra (Burton & Arbuthnot, 1971). On one hand, like my SMS senders, they were not serious to respect other woman's *patibrata dharma*, on the other hand, like my father; they always became strict towards their kinswomen to protect their *patibrata dharma* at any cost. Such a duel character of a male had always compelled women to be terrorized both in private and public places. The fear tendency or indifference tendency of a woman in relation to a man encountered in a lonely place signified that men are always overseen as the source of fear for women because they can pollute her hetero-patriarchal body (Manusmriti, 8/354); and and then produce hybrid children. In this point, I would like to present a view of a co-

researcher of age 21, from the Muslim community. In a telephone talk, she told, "The system in Islam of covering head or full body is good for a woman herself because it protects her from the lust of the outsider males."

The Muslim girl's response seemed relevant in the condition in which the man played a duel role towards a woman, one protector's role for the kinswoman and the other a sexually inticed role for the other woman. I think, my father's obligation to monitor my social sexuality was due to the cause of the Hindu man's dual role played towards the outsiders and kinswomen. What I realize now is that, in my reading, my father was well aware towards the reality that the hetero-patriarchal culture has provided a man enough space to entertain such roles. Due to a a man's pure patriarchal body, he did not need to be worried any sorts of relation with the outsider woman because there were no any parallel system of rules or *patnibrata dharma(*unconditional loyality towards his wife) for him to be observe like a *patibrata dharma* for the woman. In contrary, for a *patibrata* woman, observance of *patibrata* dharma is her whole essence of life. To find out a cause, why a woman feels great to be recognized as *patibrata*, I had enquired with co-researcher Gita (46), who also belonged to a driving profession, in a local route of Kathmandu. I asked her why she did not remarry after more than fifteen years of her husband's disappearance. In a reply she told,

> I did not remarry because of my children. Although, my husband has disappeared since fifteen years, there are three children as his representative he had left for me. In his absence, it is my duty to protect his children. I am hopeful that one day he will come to meet his lovely children. In each *teej*, I stay fasting in his name. It is my belief that, one day he will definitely come.

It is the unflenching duty of a woman to be self controlled, although man tries to

abuse her. In my understanding, a frozen ghee (men) always melts when it comes

near the heat (women). That is why, a woman must always be conscious to protect

her sexuality in presence or absence of her husband.

Gita's case had amplified that children also helped a woman to continue her

patibrata dharma, in case she is not controlled by any male member. This step also

reiterates that women always valued their children as a means of social security, as I had

described it in the case of Ushana in the previous chapter. Gita's view also reiterated that

she did not wish to create a deviant family different from a hetero normative social notion

(Jeffreys, 1998, Riggr, 1998, Hare & Marecek, 1998, Carabine, 1998). In this respect her

self-controlled sexuality did not differ with the sexuality controlled by my father as well.

Like me, Gita is a representative one; who has full faith on *patibrata dharma* system,

consciously or unconsciously. Still now, I fear with unusual circumstances in which I

have to be nearer with another man in public life.

Knowledge Obtained

From the discussion above including my knowledge of the construction of

gendered sexuality in relation with the SMS informants, I have drawn the following

issues for further discussion incorporating the Muslim girl's view and the view of the

driver woman Gita.

1. Hetero-patriarchal system has highly valued women's sexuality. The cause behind this valuation seemed to put her limit on size within the *patabrata dharma* periphery and to produce a genetically pure children (preferred a male one) in a male line.

2. Hetero patriarchal socialization systems like enculturation pattern, medication system, orientation from religious texts and or formal schooling were mechanized in such a way that it has always directed towards maintaining women's sexual purity.

3. A Hindu man's (it might be the same for Muslim or Christian too) dual behaviour in connection to the kinswomen (as a protective like my father) and women in outside (as a consumer like my SMS respondents) has played a significant role to suppress a woman's sexuality in a private and public spheres. Sometimes, the same person can be a protector and a consumer in which his role becomes more controversial as well.

4. All sorts of social system in hetero-patriarchal society have contributed to suppress a woman's sexuality. This is why women's subordinated gendered habitus automatically functions towards nurturing and maintaining the Hindu hetero-patriarchal value. The case of Gita, myself or even the Muslim girl proves that a woman is nurtured in such a way that she always tends towards self-control.

5. Modern education system is a good way to make a woman self-critical; and to think over the customary practices which remained as an unrealized agenda since many centuries.

6. In my experience, men like my father stayed in the forefront to reinforce hetero-
patriarchal ideology through the control of social and religious institutions, whereas,
women are in the forefront to reinforce it into practice.

Chapter VIII

Findings, Discussions and Implications of the Study

In this chapter, I have presented the theoretical findings as well as practicl
undertakings from field experiences separately. In order to compare the findings with the
research problems, I have also generated a discussion section for each theoretical and
field finding, in order to recall the issues I have already discussed in previous chapters.
This section commences by analyzing the theoretical finings in the following paragraphs.

Theoretical Findings and Discussions

I reviewed different religious literature that conversed on women's different cross-
cutting issues related to gender roles. From these literatures, I derived some of the key
pointers that played dominant role to portray a woman in a subordinated light. From the

viewpoint of religious literatures, what I uncovered is that Hindu woman's subordination character cannot be understood only from the modern Western literatures; in the course of at least viewing through the feminist lenses only. This is because a Hindu woman is recognized by birth of her social entity rather than that of an individual or independent self. Although, a Hindu woman possesses subordinated status in the society, but her subordanization ethos is specialized and confirmed one within the perimeter of some distinct socio-culturally dignified characteristics.

Primarily, Hindu religious philosophies have highlighted her glory for two reasons: one is inherent and imbedded in her *patibrata* faith expressed towards her husband; the other is associated with her role played during bearing and rearing of the children. A Hindu woman's these basic inherent characters are entrusted at the cost of her linkage role played towards continuing male lineage system. Thus, existence of a woman, as highlighted by religious texts existing in a high social order, is expressed and exposed, either in the form of a *patibrata* wife or through a glorious mother. What I uncovered from the literatures, was that they hesitated, in fact, failed to recognize the free existence of a woman as an individual independent person. Taking this major thesis, I have presented some key pointers that described Hindu women's intrinsic existing value system functioning under hetero-patrarichic culture within the following fold.

Embedded Hetero-patriarchy in *Patibrata Dharma S*ystem

1. The first and foremost prominent feature of Hindu hetero-patriarchy is an adherence of the system of *patibrata dharma* that is inherent in the *sanatan dharma* (eternal religion).

Patibrata dharma system has created sufficient space for putting control control over woman's sexuality characteristics. For this, religious text offered different rules and provisions that are specific to interpret it in relation to women centered issues. *Patibrata dharma* has identified a woman as a social person, carving a dwelling as a subordinate companion of her husband that lasts for ever, as it was also advocated by the Old Testament in Christianity. Like Roman Catholicism, this system did not enjoy any behavioural provisions to undertake a divorce (Bottomore, 1986).

2. For maintenance of the *patibrata dharma,* Hindu system practiced *sati* system, in which women were brutally killed in the pyre of their dead husband. This system also signified that Hindu domain did not recognize an individual's character in terms of adoption of an absolute independent existence of a woman. They clamoured to judge a woman expecailly through social lenses.

Embedded Hetero-patriarchy in Male Lineage and *Niyog* System

1. The other social image of a Hindu woman is portrayed and guided towards performance of the role of a glorious mother motivated for continuation of male lineage. This system also controlled itself towards enhancement of women's sexuality characters in the name of establishing pure male lineage. This phenomenon is only possible by protecting a women's sexuality behaviour from the contamination of extramarietal affair that takes place with any other male.

2. From contextual texts deciphered from religious literature, it uncovers that Hindu system contained a practice of *niyog* system to bear children even in remembrance for the deceased or for a disabled husband, who cannot contribute his gene for procreation. This provision contradicts highly with the notion of *patibrata dharma* attached keeping it within the realm of the woman's sexual purity. This account inculcates that the *niyog* system unveiled an extreme selfishness characters imbedded in a male dominated Hindu hetero-patriarchal system. This practice even encouraged to induce a *patibrata* wife to bear a child for her dead husband, whereas, she does not deserve any rightful religious nor a lawful domain to establish a lineage commanding her authority as expressed from her side.

3. Like the Hindu's *niyog* system, the Christian's Old Testament also seemed positively concerned and inclined for continuation of a male lineage. For this, they also offered a *niyog* system sanctified for bearing into children from the *dewar* entrusted to continue a male lineage for the dead husband.

Varied Forms of Gender Relation in Religious Texts

1. Although, religious provisions continue to portray in its doctrine of *ardhanarishwor* to explain blended existence between men and women in a synthesize notion, but in practice, time and again, they hesitated to value the inherent essence of it, while ritualizing it in different ways. With the analysis of a wife as a devotee (slave) of her

husband, these texts all promoted the practice of unbalanced gender relation between a man and a woman existent in everyday life.

2. Besides Hindu religion, Islam and Christian religion had also portrayed woman as a subordinate companion of a man. The Christian's Old Testament portrayed the first woman Eve, as a restless woman who could not control herself for eating the prohibited fruit. In the same manner, Islamic rule also (Umri, 2004) devalued a woman by saying that she is one grade inferior than her male counterpart. These rules advocated by the religious texts have authentically contributed towards contexutualization and universalization of patriarchal values in the Eastern and Western society where women are portrayed in a subordinated light.

Textual Sexuality and Reflection

1. Like Hinduism, the intention of Islam or Christian religion was also directed towards steps followed to control over woman's sexuality. Like Islam that has developed a *burka* (covering a body by a veil) system to control women's sexuality. Hindu's *patibrata* system and *Ghumto* tradition (covering the head through the veil) to sanctify one's elders and even Christianity religion also followed this system, but not that stringently as in Islam. In this connection, Christian religion encouraged women to be involved in religious institutions. A woman is a created form of a man, but a man is not a created form of a woman. A woman is created for a man, but a woman is not created for a man

(*Kurinthinio,* 11/6-16). In the same way, Buddhism has also encouraged young girls to be involved in a *sangh* (the religious institution) to earn religious merits.

Discussions on Theoretical Findings and Experienced Challenges

The theoretical findings of my research focused on how the society and the individual have nurtured Hindu hetero-patriarchy system from religious provisions. From the analysis of different texts, I uncovered that the core values of hetero-patriarchy became situated in the stereotypic rules expressed along the religious texts. For example, the provision of *patibrata dharma* had contributed Hindu patriarchy to become more specific than follow the practice of universal form of patriarchy, as argued by Brown. Borrowing from Brown's patriarchal characteristics and adding in *patibrata dharma* in it, I termed Hindu patriarchy as hetero-patriarchy. Likewise, Hindu religious rules have contributed adequately to enshrine upon patriarchal features, like establishing descent patrilineal, marriage patrilocal, inheritance in the male line and family patripotestal as proposed by Brown. In totality, a Hindu woman's valued *patibrata dharma* system and her image of glorified mother (*Manusmriti*, 2/227-236) almost contributes to satisfy the demands of a patriarchal culture. The theoretical findings explained above also denoted that the core values underlying in hetero-patriarchy system seem to be absorbed and disseminated more from religious codes.

In the same manner, the findings of the theoretical review supported that hetero-patriarchal culture has contributed considerably in producing a bipolar gender culture (Powell, 2003). Women centric *patibrata dharma* and its ritualized provisions have

separated distinctly a male culture from a female one. *Patibrata dharma* system itself

portrayed a wife as a slave and her husband as a lord (Poddhar and Goswami, 1990). This

relation of slave and lord is further specified by following the *bhakti* path in which no

knowledge is required for achieving salvation. This situation privides enough space to

make a man a dominant force and a woman as a subordinate one followed in a practical

life style.

From the above theoritcal findings, I came to understand that religious provisions

of the West and East have sufficiently contributed in the construction of the universal

form of patrarichy that shared some fundamental similarities and some textual differences

on the issues of women. It provided some conceptions on "How and when patriarchy did

come into existence, and what have been its historcial forms" as argued by (Uberoi,

2005). In the same way, an analysis of different Hindu religious texts also offered an

overview that women related social rules have undergone great changes in different

religious and historical eras. Consequences of this have also provided a space for

committing further discourse and discussion in course of interpretation, reinterpration or

even in rewriting the textual subjectivities for the present context.

From the theoretical findings, I also internalized that Hindu women's issues

should be problematized regarding her as a socially individual one because her status

resided on her *patibratha* faith or glorified motherhood. Interpretation of her status from

the Western feminist lens did not focus her cross cutting social issues that are grounded

beyond a set of universalized patriarchal system. In such a context, Western feminist lens

in gender and sexuality provides one-lensed theoretical background where Hindu

women's micro gender practices could be overviewed. These feminist ways of

interpretation of gender and sexuality themes seemed to come under challenges because of its insufficient propositions to interpret discriminatory gender relations that encompass a *patibrata* woman under Hindu hetero-patrarichy. But, critical theories like deconstruction, psycho-feminism and the cultural theories appeared as alternative theoretical closures to interpret *sasu-buhari* relations, although these theories have their own limitations to adopt it in a hetero-patrarichal background.

What is my proposition in this context is that, in order to analyze and interpret Hindu women's cross-cutting problems, Western feminist's ideas should be used into defining the core problematic areas, but its remedical measures must be explored within the same Hindu cosmic context where subjective knowledge like the *bhakti* path of understanding the self of the women is grounded.

After discussing the theoretical strength and limitation of Eastern and Western school, in relation to the research question, the field findings of the study is presented in the succeeding paragraphs.

Field Findings and Discussions

Findings on the Issues of a *Patibrata W*oman under Hindu Hetero-patriarchy

In the course of analyzing the field data, I presented field findings into three different chapters. In one chapter, I incorporated Hindu woman's perception in relation to the different social and cultural aspects (like sexual behaviour, lineage generation, social security or so on) of a *patibrata* woman. Some of the findings in the field are presented along the following points.

1. A principal characteristic of *patibrata dharma* system is the unconditional loyalty of a wife bestowed towards her husband. A *patibrata* woman is confined to get sexual satisfaction from her husband. But, from the experience of *patibrata* women, their sexual relation with their husband did not appear to be satisfactory. The hurdles to get sexual satisfaction comprised along the practice of age gap existing between a husband and wife, lack of sexual orientation, and male-centric hetero-sexual methods related to the sexual behaviour; which in the lens of some feminists is inherently problematic (Richardson, 1998).

2. A *patibrata* woman was acknowledged as a license holder to reproduce children for continuation of male lineage. Due to this capacity, a woman's social life turned out to be more secure. Specially, a woman bearing a male child was a most fortunate countenance because these sons were supposed to provide social security at her old age. A country like Nepal, where there is no guaranteed social security (economic security, health insurance etc), is available, a *patibrata* woman deserves no alternative to be followed, except to surrender at the hands of her son, that exactly is reflected in its value system in the social practice.

Findings Related to S*asu-Buhari* Relation

The chapter is comprised of the problemitized issues of Hindu kinswomen, like the *sasu buhari* was a new one; and a deviated topic from the mainstream agenda from

the religious provisions. Due to the lack of sufficient religious literatures, the field experiences of the co-researchers under this theme were presented put under the umbrella of different Western theoretical closures. Some of the key pointers achieved in this connection are presented along the following points.

1. The existence of a hierarchical relation between *sasu* and *buhari* is uncovered to be a most problematic area in a Hindu hetero-patriarchal family. From the deconstructionist's standpoint like Derrida (Powell, 2003), the relation encountered between *sasu* and *buhari* appeared to be functioning more as binary opposites; where free interaction was disturbed due to the prevalence of hierarchical attributes (like age hierarchy, generation hierarchy, economic and cultural power) and behaviour system.

2. From the perspective of psycho-feminism, conflicting relation existing between a *sasu* and *buhari* surfaced within a cause of unconscious psychic condition of a repressed mind. From the psycho-analyst view (Minsky, 1996), a woman's eternal desire to get a penis will be fulfilled only after she received a son. Analyzing from such a view point, it is assumed that the relation existing between mothers is the relation directed interrelated to the physical and emotional temptation. She always desires her son to keep with herself and exchange love as it used to be in the child age; even if he marries another girl. But a mother's intention discontinues, when her son starts to love his wife. Naturally, a *sasu* becomes jealous against her *buhari* who has stolen her son and his earnings from her forever.

3. This psycho-analysis assumption has also supported the Hindu *patibrata* system, wherein the prestige of a glorified mother's attachment with her son compliments her as a supplement of the social security for her future living. In this context, the *sasu's* greediness over her son's income seems to become a serious attempt to curtail power domain overlapping over the *buhari's* interest.

4. As I have already discussed above, both *sasu* and *buhari* must fulfill their demand in the same cultural and economic context. In this situation, *sasu* being a member of the older generation endeavours to maintain hetero-patriarchal values as much as possible. On the other hand, *buhar*i, being a member of the younger generation, gives light attention to the orthodox cultural matters. In such a condition, *sasu* could feel insulted and disappointed on the *buhari* by calculating threatening *behaviour* against hetero-patriarchal values.

Self-researched Findings

To reflect the gendered subjectivity of a woman, I revisited my own gendered subjectivities and tried to analyze them form different theoretical closures. In doing so, I tried to revisit my past associated with the gendered sexuality, its implication in shaping my gendered mindset. From this section, I have generated the following points as the findings.

1. When I revisited my past, I found myself captured on the ideology and practice of my mother. First of all, I learnt different values related to the purity and polluted sexuality during her menstruation period, when she used to stop her routine work, that I learnt all these things through the enculturation process (Harris, 1995).

2. The other way of construction of gendered subjectivity was from the indoctrination of the provisions of dos and don'ts in the religious texts and its practices in a ritualized form.

3. The traditional medication system also reinforced for me to imprinting the gendered knowledge in the mind. For example, my father interpreted and reinterpreted the codes of manusmriti and allied literatures regarding normative steps taken during the menstruation period. He used to argue that, if a woman does not observe seclusive character during the menstruation cycle, she would land on hell for a charge committing a sin. When I came to observe my mother's activities, I found that she was very much concerned towards the fear of landing in hell, after her death, if she had committed any mistakes while observing menstruation. Latter on, a clear reflection appeared in my gendered thought and behaviour; and I also started to repeat the same normative behaviour.

4. Traditional medication system also helped to perceive myself to construct gender consciousness. It also supported to value men and women's world relations differently, because the treatment practice concentrated highly within the problems of women. In the same way, tantrik medication system also pressured me to create self-humiliation towards women's existence, due to its "mythical interpretation" to understanding body mysteries

(Koirala, 1996:120). I contemplated that, indeed, women's body is the synonym of the bundle psycho-physical problems and issues related to menstruation, pregnancy and children related tensions.

5. Formal schooling also pressured me to internalize myself that women are inferior. It is because; the intellectual sphere was controlled by the male elites "having cosmogenic vision" (ibid.). Due to the breeding on the heavy influence of women dominated village culture, I felt very much alienated me from the man dominated classroom culture. Consequence of this produced a dilemma for me to which I gave priority.

Discussing on the field findings in contrast to the feminist theories, I reflected upon the proposed research questions. They have intensively focused on religious way of controlling sexuality, conflicting relation of women and their consequences and the ways of gendering process in construction of gendered subjectivity. To address these questions, I had generated some thematic chapters which were based both on the knowledge of literature and the field reality. I have used religious literatures, for the analysis and interpretation of the field data, the literatures from qualitative school like poststructuralists feminist theories, including psycho-feminism.

While analyzing the empirical information gathered from the co-researchers, I internalized those Western literatures; although they are from woman and for woman, and are insufficient to interpret based upon Hindu women's historical-cultural specificity. For example, *patibrata* woman does not say like "my husband leaves me and the children; so I remarried with another man for me and my children". A Hindu *patibrata* woman like Gita[1] lamented that her husband disappeared before sixteen years. I did not

remarry for my children and for preserving my *patibrata* dharma. Gita's way of understanding life makes a significant difference in cosmology of the Western's individual self and a Hindu woman's religious self. A Hindu woman, like Gita, although her husband leaves her, discards her, ignores her, bits her, discriminates her, but the ultimate relation does not end.

It remains in a symbolic form, the *saubhagya* (the decorating way of a woman in her husband's lifetime). A woman, decorated with vermillion powder in her forehead, glass beads in her neck and bangles worn in her wrist symbolizes that her husband is still alive. A Hindu woman's honour to upkeeping post-marriage decoration of her body portrays that she is always with her husband, wherever omnipresent he is. In the context of such a belief system and practice, I found it difficult to interpret Hindu women's notions related to sexuality, lineage system or so on. What I uncovered from the field information, is that the Hindu woman's gender relation, which is heavily influenced by the guidance of spiritual and religious notions, should be addressed differently within the limitation of the same notions. For example, a question on why a Hindu woman did not take a divorce with her immoral husband might look to be rational to the Western society, but it sounds absurd for a woman who is oriented from the Orthodox Hindu culture. This is because; a *patibrata* Hindu woman values highly her husband because she honours his religious, social and cultural well-being as well as upkeeping for an economic importance gained by her husband.

On the contrary, a value honoring culture existed in a Hindu woman with her husband; however there is no value laden religio-cultural doctrine in relation to a *buhari* with her *sasu*. There are no popular religious literatures of sin and virtues written that

adjudgs a *buhari's* behaviour for or against her *sasu*, and documented lists of punishments after her. What I tried to amplify is that if a Hindu woman loses her husband from his death; it would become an irrecoverable loss for her because she becomes a widow losing her *saubhagyabati* status. On the other hand, if she losses her *sasu* from death, she just looses an emotional or economic attachment with her *sasu*, but she should not loose any economic or symbolic privileges she has been currently enjoying.

On the contrary, being a female member of a hetero-patriarchal family of hierarchical nature, *buhari's* status, sayings and demeanor increases in the death of the *sasu*, a senior rank female member in the family. The proverb, *'pohor marin sasu, ahile ayo ansu' (sasu* died last year, tears were shed this year), most probably represents an oppressed *buhari's* emotional reaction on the death of her *sasu*, who was bound to tolerate discrimination for non concrete benefit derived during her *sasu's* life span.

The conflicting relation of Hindu *sasu-buhari* was more individual, but hierarchical in nature because of the silence of religious provisions in it. Unlike the gender attachment between a woman and her husband, this relation appeared in a value free context; but theoretical interpretation from the Western lens again appeared uneasy because of the dominance of the content on these literatures that have extensively focused on the relations existing between a man and woman, but not with a woman and a woman in particular. It was the cause that, I had to take a support of those theoretical approaches that were flexible for an interpretation of the grounded data (Charmaz, 2005).

Researching on the self, I have incorporated in this research thoughts precisely that helped me to understand the ways how a woman constructs her sense of the feminine self, sense of gender discrimination during the socialization process in a given Hindu

hetero-patriarchal cultural system. To reflect myself, I noticed that, I was significantly impressed from both my mother and father in my childhood. But being a female member of the family, I inculcated my mother's habits translated upon me, but my father's direction also supported to pave my intellectual self although it was expressed from the traditional way. Although, my education system instantly supported me to be critical on traditional value system, but as noted by Sharma (1992), it could not be supported by me to escape into performing the gendered role. The close guidance of my parents might be the chief cause for me for controlling me from extreme deviation.

After discussing both of the literatures and empirical findings, I have focused my final effort towards it's educational implications. In this connection, I tried to uncover some unrealized agenda on the women's issues explained above all for inculcating further discussion; and to bring forth educational implication in multifaceted areas in the following paragraphs.

Areas of Academic Discussion and Implications

Reflecting the theoretical and empirical findings and my own intuition, I came to acknowledge that notion, from the feminist's lens, Hindu women possesses an inferior standard in the society with respect to the man. Such inferiority character was nurtured from both the religious provisions and ritual/cultural practices. Obviously, to change her situation, educational support might be considered a proper way to bring forth her issues in the discourse. In this connection, I am now suggesting a particular frame that education can abolish her subordination characters. What I reiterate is that, before taking any

measures, some of the sensitive aspects should also be taken into considerations to

deconstruct (Powell, 2003) the construct of all the family members.

The first issue is a Hindu woman's belief on the issuance of *patibrata* dharma

system. I have already brought forth the notion that this system has oppressed an

individual woman in various ways. In order to challenge this system, it is really difficult

to suggest a typical formula. It is because, Hindu women highly valued *patibrata* dharma

system and in response, it has also valued her existence; although it is not equal as men.

Patibrata dharma system is so intrinsic in women centric culture in Hindu hetero-

patriarchy that offering any alternatives against it might be void and dangerous in

practical level. At the same time, it would be wise worthy to review and compare the

status of Hindu women with those particularly in the Western society who have various

socio-cultural ethoses. I think, we can cross-cut the dichotomies in the situation of the

Hindu *patibrata dharma* concerning women; and the others so that the barriers as well as

opportunities could be diagnosed in the formal as well as non formal education

institutions. Some of the dichotomies generated that are supposed to be presented for the

discourse are mentioned in the following lines.

1. A *Patibrata* Woman versus Individual Woman

Patibrata dharma has recognized a Hindu woman as a social person rather than

an individual. At least her value is counted in two notions: a *patibrata* wife and a glorious

mother. It was also clear that *patibrata* dharma system remained problematic for so many

reasons. In this situation, the discourse could be whether a woman should be understood as should be analyzed as a *patibrata* woman or an individual woman?

2. A Particular Religious Culture versus Mosaic Culture

Ideally, religious rules are made for the welfare of the human life (Bottomore, 1986); although it might have its own limitations. In this research study, I discussed mainly three types of women under three distinct religions, Hindu, Christian and Islam. There existed some similarities and some differences among or between these religious provisions too. Each religious system possessed some good and discriminatory provisions too. Here the topic for the discourse is how can education address these similarities and differences in order to develop a mosaic culture for women?

3. Change for a Woman versus Change a Man

From the above discussions, it is revealed that the women's problem do not exist in an isolation. They are related to and/or attached with the notion of the male culture too. Can education organize a discourse of *patnibrata* dharma for a man also to bring forth a changed attitude?

4. Religious Provision versus Legal Provision

There are some practical evidences, in which a woman does not find an amicable solution, although the Court decision favoured her side. For example; the case of Rasina of forty seven years was severely beaten by her brother Manojit Malla when she asked her parental share of property, that the has declared it as her share (*Rajadhani* Daily, 5/10/2008). In this situation, can a legal provision bring forth a change in a woman's situation? How can we make a legal provision effective so that a woman gets real justice as per the code of law?

5. Religious Institution versus Family Institutions

Some of the religions like Christianity have proposed an idea to enter into religious institution for those women who are at the risk of deviation who have achieved socially stigmatized status (like widow, divorcee, separated woman or so on). This provision has offered an alternative pathway of a family life that a widow or separated woman can adopt in her life. Likewise, Buddhist religious philosophy also valued an alternative pathway to become a nun and monks, devaluing the family or sexual life. Can Hindu women also undertake more progressive practical steps to entertain widow marriage, assist singled women, divorcee, etc. and blend them towards a more normative family life structure or they to be told to stay in the religious instition moving from their homes ?

6. *Sasu* Culture versus *Buhari* Culture

Both *sasu* and *buhari* are the female members reproduced from the same Hindu patriarchal system in the first and second generation. Actually, both of them have developed their gendered knowledge in an oppressive patriarchal culture, dominant to the interest of male. At the same time, due to the ego, or for accumulating the access of the economic resources; an overriding conflict between the *sasu* and *buhari* conflict outbreaks frequently. To address the conflicting relation of *sasu buhari,* how can education address to their cross-cutting and overlapping issues?

1. Modern Education versus Traditional Thoughts.

Studies have indicated that the modern education system seemed more inhospitable to the girl's family culture. In the same way, modern education system became more alienated to the traditional system of thoughts and beliefs. In such condition, how can the educational implication bridge the intergenerational gap between the *buhari's* formal school knowledge and the *sasu's* traditional knowledge, so that the gap could be reduced by developing a *sasu-buhari's* blurred congenial culture?

Querries like these could be floated from the grassroots to the national level of discourse.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Eleven Types of Son (*Manusmriti,* 3/7)

They are, auras (a child born form own sperm according to Vedic rule), *chetraja putra* (a son born from *niyog* system by a widow or the disable man to contribute a gene), *dattaka puttra* (a son given by other parents), *kritrim,* (a son adopted from the same clan), *gudhotpanna* (a son brought by a woman whose father is not identified), *apabiddha* (an adopted orphan), *kanin* son (a son born by a virgin girl in her father's house and adopted later by her husband), *sahodha* (a son born by a unmarried pregnant), *krit* (a son adopted by paying some money), *swayamdatta putra* (an orphan son who behaves as father mother to the parents wherever he stays) and *parasav* son (a son born from a relation between a high caste man-*brahmin* with an untouchable women-*sudra*).

Annex 2. Introduction of the Religious texts

Manusmriti: This is the rule of Manu, which represents as a guiding principle or code of ethics of the constitution of that time representing the pre-historical, the ancient and the medieval period.

Garudpuran: This book is recited for 10 days during the 11 days of the mourning during the death of a person. This book contains the code of ethics to be followed; and the consequences one is obliged to face, if one does not adhere to the rules before and after the death. This book has coded the state of a dead soul, the ways it has to pass through, pain and torture in the hell according to his or her virtues.

This book has reconfirmed the rules given in the Manusmiritui. This book is actually conscious on the rules that are to be followed by the male and the female during the period of menstruation, birth, death, sati faith, *patibrata* faith and so on. This book provides a deep insight for women to construct subordinated gendered knowledge through the reflection encountered with the experiences depicted from various texts or first hand real life experience. Women from the family and the society gather together and listen to this book in the course of the consoling of the family of the dead people.

Purushottammmahatmaya: This book abounds the rules and suggestions that should be followed by the ideal family and social life. This book is recited during the purshottam month, the month dedicated to the lord Krishna (*purushottam*). This book consists of different stories related to various different mythical characters.

I used this book to bring out an exceptional case of marriage of Draupadi with five brothers. In the same way, the running context of this book has instantly emphasized woman to become a *patibrata* and encouraged to go towards the state of, burning her with her dead husband in the funeral pyre.

Gita: This book is also depicted from the Mahabharat. This is the most popular and holy book especially concerned with Hindu people. This book contains a lot of the code of ethics, dos and don'ts delivered by Lord Krishna to his great devotee Arjuna during the Great War of the Mahabharat. I used this book to describe lineage purity and bad faith of the produced by cross children.

Swasthani: This book is a quite popular book amongst the Hindu women. This book consist different stories related a reflected to mythical men and women. The popular stories of Satidevi, Parbati, Lord Shiva, Goma, Brinda etc. are really heart pinching stories this book contains. Women, during the winter season recite this book with a great enthusiasm and stay fasting in home or in the river bank of Salinadi situated at the Eastern corner of Kathmandu Valley.

I used the stories of Goma and Brinda form this book. Goma is a typical girl who was compelled to marry at the age of 7 with a man of 70 years old. The other prominent female character Brinda is portrayed as a most holy and a religious person for her *patibrata* faith and her sati going act.

Bhagabatmahapuran: This is the text from the Mahabharat Era. This text has included the childhood accounts of Lord Krishna and other associated stories in different trajectories of his life.

Nirnayasindhu: This is the great text edited by Kamalakara Bhatta. This text has included almost all views to clarify different practical and religious issues related to

different occasions in the life. This book has summarized the views of different holy texts, purans, smirties, Vedas and the views of different sages in each issue.

While reading this text, what I found is that, this text has widely accepted the arguments of the Manusmiriti. Sometimes it seems that the main content of this text are revolved around the provision of Manusmriti. But, there are some important different views also, that contradict with the provision of the Manusmriti.

I have used some of the exceptional provisions stated by the book that is different form the rules of Manusmriti. In the one of the most contradictory argument of the book with manusmriti is to reject *niyog* system completely in this era. This has reinforced *patibrata* faith in a stronger way in this kali era.

Satyathaprakash: This text is edited by renowned critical thinker, Dyananda Saraswati. In this text, Saraswati has elaborated religious codes included in different *sruties* and *smrities* and also has proposed his own progressive interpretation suitably for the twenty first century.

Kamsutra: This text seemed to have been composed between the first and 4rth centuries AD. It has highlited on the third purushartha, namely related to the sexual behavioural pattern, among the four purusarths; viz Dharama (religious deeds, Artha (economic prosperity), Kam (sexual pleasure) and Mokshya (salvation). This book is more radical that contradicts with the *brahmacharya* and *patibrata* dharma ethos.

Chandi: This book has depicted the warrior image of Goddess Durga. This book is a typical book that has highlighted female god's power in a warrior light. This text is very popular among Hindus and is recited it during the Dashain festival for nine days.

This text has highlighted the women's power enthusiastically. It also has portrayed the virgin girls of different ages as the form of different forms of Goddess. This has argued that, the girls of age two to ten should be worshipped placing them in a holy seat. The two year girl as Kumari, Sarbasakti Swapirini, three year old girl as 'Tripura' in the form of Gyanarupini, four year girl as Kalyani, in the form of Karunyaridaya, five year girl as a Rohini, in the form of Ananta Shakita, infinite power, six year girl as Kalika, in the form of Kalchakra sworupini, seven years as Chandika, in the form of Chandabira, eight year, as Sambhawi, in the form of Sarbabhutatmika, nine year as Durga, in a form of Durgatinasinim, ten year, Subhadra, in a form of Sukha Saubhagyadayani, (p.35/36).

This text includes the stories of the wars between Good power (Gods) and Evil power (Danav). The Goddess Durga has taken the leadership of the war from the God's side to fight with different demons (like, Mahishashur, Shumbha, Nishumbha, Chanda-munda) etc. In each war, she had defeated the demons power from her great female power.