

## I: Introduction

### **Badi Women, Their sexuality and Question of Agency**

The Badi belong to an untouchable Hindu caste with a total population of approximately seven thousands (Cox, 51), who inhabit scattered settlements of mid western and far western regions i.e. Salyan, Rolpa, Rukum, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Dang, Banke, Bardiya and Kailali. The traditional occupations of Badi men are fishing , making drums and pipes (*Madal, Tabala and Bansuri*), which they sell to Nepalese in neighboring communities, singing and dancing as well as weaving fishing net etc. According to a researcher Thomas Cox "Badi women engage in prostitution beginning at puberty and continuing until they become too old to attract any more customers or get married" (51).

About the origin of Badies, there are multiple versions of history. According to some historians, Badi came to Nepal from India along with Lichchavis of then Vaisali (modern Bihar). This myth says that Lichchavi rulers had a system of keeping '*Nagar Badhus*' (but in reality Royal prostitutes) for their entertainment who after their defeat by Aajat Satru (the king of then Maghada), might have come to Nepal with them and later might have turned in 'Badis'. This view is based on the professional similarity of the '*Nagar Badhus*' of the then Baisali, and Badis of modern Nepal. Some other researchers' version of history states that with the impact of many ancient civilizations of the world ,there also were some singing and dancing girls in ancient Nepal who were Badis and Patars. They got the name 'Badi' only in the 14<sup>th</sup> century with the 'caste division' system of the king Jayasthiti Malla which gave caste according to the profession. As they were engaged in "*baadhya badan*" (playing musical instruments), they might have been named 'Badi'. Even next version of historicity of Badi focuses upon etymology of the words 'Badi' and 'Pater' (Badi

prostitute) for clarifying their origin. According to it, the term Badi comes from its root word '*Badaka*' of Nepali language which refers to one who plays musical instruments. Similarly the word '*Patar*' is derived from the word '*Patra*' which means a character or an artist who makes some stage performances like singing dancing and acting. Thus according to this version, the two words 'Badi' and 'Pater' refer to the class of singers, dancers and artists or actors who were in west Nepal.

Among these many versions of their origin, there seems an extensive and more reliable research of Thomas Cox entitled "The Badi: Prostitution as a Social Norm among the Untouchable Caste of West Nepal" which states that originally, the Badi had come to western Nepal back in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. First, they settled in Salyan later migrating to even Rolpa, Rukum and Jajarkot. From that time onwards until the rise of democracy in 1950's the Badi made their living as entertainers, traveling in groups consisting of three or more families from one community to the next, staging song and dance performances and narrating the stories from the great Hindu epics of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. That mobilization often took them out of their home districts as far east as Palpa, Baglung, Pokhara, Gorkha and Bandipur where they followed the same profession for their livelihood until it was gradually changed in to the prostitution due to the growing problem of subsistence.

Until the 1950's, the Badi were supported primarily by rulers of three principalities-Jajarkot, Salyan and Musikot and to a lesser extent by some wealthy high class landlords who lived in western Nepal in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These patrons provided the Badi with basic needs; housing, clothing and food. In return the Badi provided them with entertainment and sex. At this time however, Badi women limited their prostitution to patrons and some of their male relatives.

After the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1950 and the subsequent establishment of king Mahendra's Panchayat Government, rulers and landlords in west Nepal were stripped of much of their previous authority, and they lost the right to tax subjects and exact unpaid labor and rent (on agricultural land) from them. As a result, they lost much of their economic clout and were unable to continue their patronage of Badi. Madhu Sudan Sharma Subedi regarding the consequence of that political change on the profession and lifestyle of Badi women points:

[. . .]. The rulers' generous remuneration - for singing dancing and sexual favors-had spoiled the Badi; enabled them to lead luxurious life without having to work very hard. As they were not used to labor hard to do agrarian work, neither they had any skill to run some other business for their bread, they were in between the two difficulties i.e. they had either to starve or to jump down to the street as common prostitutes [ . . .]. (28)

Badi women in an effort to make up their lost income began prostituting themselves with increasing numbers of men. This growing reliance on prostitution was encouraged in the mid 1960's by new accessibility (facilitated by a malaria eradication program) to Tulsipur, Ghorai, Rajapur, Nepalgunj and other growing populous terai towns with large expanding markets for prostitute. At the same time that the market for prostitute was expanding, demand for singing and dancing was shrinking (as a result of radios, movies and tape players which became increasingly available throughout the 1960's and 1970's), making the Badi even more dependent on prostitution as a source of income. After 1960's and 70's the modernization widened the communication system, road networks were extending to the newer areas. The terai region, which otherwise was un-inhabitable had been opened to inhabitation after

the malaria eradication program. The increase trade transaction between India and Nepal and also the fertile land of terai attracted hill people for settlement in terai. Badi too were attracted to terai with the hope of increasing number of clients and possibility of taking high charge per contact. Even during the Panchyat regime Badi were used as instruments of singing and dancing by the feudal structure. But with the germination of the seed of democracy in 1990's it was terai where Badi, with the increased commercialization and modernization, changed their profession of entertainment into full-fledged prostitution. Madhu Sudan Sharma Subedi in his "Socio Cultural Strategies of the Badis for Adaptation. . ." puts:

[. . .]. Terai was now becoming a promising place for expansion of trade transaction and human settlement. With the increasing influx of traders and the urbanization of few centers, demand for prostitution gradually developed. The Badi community thus extended its area of entertainment to terai area [. . .]. The most determining factor for this transition was that it was socially accepted by their own community. Thus, the Badi prostitutes are more open, universal, carefree and prostitution has become the 'social norm' for their community in contemporary time [. . .]. (29)

Badi girls, from their early childhood on, know and generally accept that they ultimately have to lead a life of prostitute. Their parents and other Badi tell them that prostitution is and always has been the work of women in the Badi caste, and that to aspire to any other profession would be unrealistic and unacceptable. Badi girls see all the young women around them including their own mothers and sisters, leading the life of prostitute constantly. Indeed, they virtually never see any Badi women engaging in any profession but prostitution. Badi girls also thus are not exposed to

many ideas, values or beliefs that counter those in their own society. From their early age, they encounter the truth that the only one option of eking out their livelihood is not other than prostitution. About how the Badi girl starts her prostitution from a very early age Thomas Cox holds:

[. . .]. As Badi girls grow up, they learn from their mothers, sexually mature sisters and other Badi women all about sex and how to dress and act in such a way as to attract men. Within a few months after reaching menarche Badi girls begin to engage in prostitution themselves. Some girls start on their own, but most are prompted to begin by their parents [. . .]. (52)

A Badi girls' first episode of sexual intercourse is accompanied by a ceremony known as *Nathiya Kholne*<sup>1</sup>. The *Nathiya Kholne* ceremony is similar to Nepalese Hindu weddings where the groom bestows clothes and jewelry on the bride and exchanges *sindur* (vermillion) with her, prior to consummating the marriage. And in traditional Nepalese Hindu marriages, as in *Nathiya Kholne*, the girl is supposed to be a virgin. The major difference between *Nathiya Kholne* and a Hindu marriage ceremony is that the latter is meant to mark the beginning of a life- long relationship, while in the former the couple usually separates after having sexual intercourse, with the Badi girl going on to a career of prostitution with other men.

Mothers play a major role in initiating their daughters into prostitution. In the beginning, mothers often offer the services of their own daughters to prospective clients and personally handle the bargaining. After a few months the girl usually feels confident enough to approach clients and bargain on her own. Even at this stage, Badi

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<sup>1</sup> A rite that formally inaugurates the Badi girl's life long profession of prostitution. During *Nathiya Kholne*, One of the so called high class elite attending the ceremony who pays highest among them gives the Badi girl new clothes, jewelry (which usually includes an earring that is worn on the nose) and sum of money. Then the girl rubs a streak of vermillion powder (*sindur*) on to the man's head and he does the same to her. Then the man and Badi girl go off by themselves and he deflowers her.

prostitution is still a "family affair", with girls continuing to prostitute themselves in their parents' home. When a client arrives, he will sometimes sit and talk with the Badi girl and parents over a glass of *rakshi* (home made liquor). After a while he will then take the girl to some other room in the house and have sex with her. Since they work openly and congregate in specific wards they are easily found by the clients who stay from an hour to many days.

Badi girls are supposed to sustain their family and themselves selling their bodies to those clients from different walks of life (like engineers, truck drivers, teachers, policemen, farmers, students etc.), and cultural backgrounds (like Brahmin, Chhetry and Thakuri). On the other hand, though their traditional occupations are singing, dancing, making pipes, drums, and nets as well as fishing etc, they can't eke out their living with these works only. In the same way, they are even discouraged by mainstream society from getting education and entering the professions other than prostitution. So Badi women are compelled to carry out the stigmatized profession of prostitution as their culture and tradition. Though the family structure of Badi looks like matriarchal pivoting around Badi women, this exactly seems an illusion where patriarchal norms utilize women's sexuality by commodifying it for monetary purpose (earning the livelihood of all). Furthermore, they are even discouraged from marrying by their parents and brothers who act as the brokers of their sexuality (body). Even if they marry, it is forcefully broken by them, for they are "hens laying golden eggs", forever. Again the profession itself is believed to be an easy way which makes them meet their two ends without being exposed to heavy rain and sweltering sun.

In this way, this research is focused on showing how Badi women are doubly exploited: first from their own family that commodifies them (their sexuality) for

monetary gain, and second from mainstream culture and patriarchy that ostracizes<sup>2</sup> and humiliates them stigmatizing their cultural profession (though compulsion) as contamination, pollution and moral degradation (though it is the same high caste mainstream society that exploits their sexuality).

This research paper analyzes the sexuality (prostitution) of Badi women from the perspective of 'Stigma Theory' to show how Badi women are living the hellish life of double exclusion from time immemorial. And how they are losing their personal dignity and freedom on the red clutches of patriarchy because their body is exploited as a sexual commodity at two levels: social and familial. They are also being humiliated and ostracized mercilessly by the hypocritical mainstream cultural set-up/patriarchy (which itself is exploiter) for the so-called immoral and contaminating profession that they are forced to pursue, on the other.

The Badi community has been studied from various view points: cultural, religious, socio-economic and linguistics among others. There are some researchers and intellectuals who have studied it purely from ethnic, historic and anthropological perspectives.

Thomas Cox studied about the historical, socio-cultural, religious background and linguistic aspect of prostitution among the untouchable Badi caste of West Nepal. He says that gradually prostitution has become as cultural aspect of Badi community due to their social and economic background. About the socialization and day to day practice of Badi prostitution. He Opines:

Badi girls see all the young women around them including their own mothers and sisters engage in prostitution on a daily basis. Indeed, they virtually never see any Badi women engaging in the profession but

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<sup>2</sup> To deliberately exclude somebody from a group or to refuse to meet or talk to somebody.

prostitution. Badi girls also usually do not go to school, they have little contact with outsiders, and they thus are not exposed to many ideas, values or beliefs that counter those in their own society [. . .]. (52)

Cox found that the Badi girls, being encouraged by their elders, jump in the pit of prostitution because aspiring to any profession other than prostitution is undesired by the mainstream culture. The same high -class mainstream culture has stigmatized Badi as untouchable and impure caste because they don't want Badis in their proximity working with them. This rejection by the so called elite society is even further pushing Badi in pursuing prostitution as cultural strategy of earning their livelihood forever. Furthermore, he argues that the original profession of Badis of staging songs and dance performance and telling stories from old Hindu epics like *Ramayana and Mahabharata* gradually changed due to the political changes in the country that occurred in different times like 1950 and 1990s. About the historicity of Badi prostitution he writes:

[. . .]. From the time of their settlement in Nepal until the 1950s, the Badi made their living as entertainers traveling in groups consisting of three or more families from one country to the next staging songs and dance performances and telling stories from the great Hindu stories, the Mahabharata and Ramayana [. . .]. (51)

He finds that Badis changed their cultural profession of singing and dancing to full-fledged prostitution due to the problem of livelihood aroused because of the tupsy - turby in Nepali politics in the democratic era of 1950's. The patrons who sponsored Badi were themselves powerless. It compelled Badi in searching new areas for their livelihood. This fact dragged Badi women into the gutter of prostitution even further and farther. Even the trend of modernization in the field of communication and



entertainment outdated their cultural performances of singing, dancing, and narrating stories and yielded them to open flesh trade.

Another researcher Mr. Madhusudan Sharma Subedi has studied about the socio-cultural strategies of Badis for adaptation. He clarifies the different causes that make the prostitution as a means of survival in Badi community. Here he argues that their traditional norms and values, low social status, fragile income condition and lack of alternative options, discouragement and ostracism by the mainstream community to adopt other professions, low education and lack of awareness and low sense of modernization are the core causes for enforcing them to carry on prostitution as a profession. The root causes are shown in the following figure:

Fig: 1.Causes of Prostitution as a Survival Strategy.

He further clarifies about the nature of prostitution in Badi Community that has become their tradition and identity gradually changing from other professions. They candidly expose this profession to others. This frankness which is lacking in other

prostitutes, in his opinion, has come out of their habituation in this profession of prostitution from the long time. About it he opines:

[. . .]. It is so because the Patars (Badi prostitutes) have been accustomed to prostitution and carrying on this business in a very easy going way. However, it is widely said that originally Badis were not prostitutes. Badis in the past were recognized as singers and dancers but slowly they changed their business and side by side left the custom of singing and dancing. [. . .]. (7)

He further explores, Badi women, because of accepting the prostitution as their culture and tradition, are candid and outspoken unlike other prostitutes. But according to him it was not their culture previously. Due to their staggering condition they took to prostitution eschewing their cultural profession of singing and dancing. At present prostitution has been synonymous to them. Moreover, he gives the causes of Badi's for clinging only to prostitution avoiding other professions. The causes are nepotism, favoritism and ostracism on the base of untouchability by the people of mainstream culture. About the nature of their other strategies and profession in the mainstream society, he puts:

[. . .]. In Nepal people in high position often arrange jobs for their *afnu manche* (relatives and friends) [. . .]. Similarly, livestock rising is very limited among Badis because of limited landholding. But social factor like non-acceptance of milk products from the Badis (untouchables) and their food habits are also important causes [. . .]. The fatalistic accepting attitudes towards caste-based discrimination appears to be the most prevalent among Badis [. . .]. (101)

He even finds that because of limited landholding and rejection of their agricultural products, they are compelled to stick to prostitution. Consequently, they are pessimistic about the change in caste system that had been imposed by so-called high-caste elites in the past. The fatalistic attitude of yielding to the traditional bourgeois caste-system and caste-based profession is most prevalent among majority of the Badis.

Still, another researcher Sabitra Pokhrel points out the socio-cultural and economic life styles of Badis. About their socio-cultural state she points it out that they culturally designated different ceremonies that help them to promote their prostitution through their unmarried daughters and sisters. Even parents and brothers are not hesitant to push them in prostitution, for they are accustomed to it, traditionally. She says:

[. . .]. For involving the girls past menarche (puberty/13-14) years) in sexual profession, they perform a cultural rite called '*Nathiya Kholne*'.

[. . .]. Then after, they freely involve in prostitution. Moreover, they also give illegal children from their clients. So also almost all the Badi people have the same surname [ . . . ]. (27)

She even finds that the ceremonies like *Nathiya kholne* are perpetuating the life -span of their profession of prostitution, constantly .Now it has been their culture to sell their flesh for earning their two ends .It is also known that it is not abnormal and unaccepted but has become their habit to bear illegal children of their clients among the Badi people.

Still further, she analyzes about their economic state in the lines below and clarifies the fact that because of their low and irregular income from their traditional occupations like staging dance and songs, making drums and fishing, they have

adopted prostitution as their regular and full-fledged profession that gives them economic consistency. She further unfolds that:

[. . .]. Badis are also one of the ethnicities that eke out their livelihood being economically vulnerable. The main source of their income is prostitution. Though their traditional professions are dancing and making drums (*madal and tabala*), they are unhesitatingly carrying out an abhorred profession like prostitution due to their inability of earning their livelihood through their other traditional occupations [. . .]. (55)

She also encounters the truth that due to modernization in the area of entertainment, and gradual decrease in traditional occupations, they are even more parasitic on prostitution gradually day by day.

In this regard, it becomes clear that though the sexuality of Badi women has been studied through various perspectives and theories, Stigma theory has not been applied yet, to study the double exclusion and marginalization of Badi women resulting from commodification of their body as a sexual asset- within their family and outside -and stigmatization of their profession as immoral act. So, there exists a strong need to carry out research on this community from a new perspective using a new theory. Without proper study on this issue of stigmatization of Badi women, the study on this community will remain incomplete. Having taken this fact into consideration, the present research has been proposed for carrying out field study from the perspective of "Stigma theory" on the Badi women that will prove to be a further brick in the foundation of Nepalese cultural studies.

In our contemporary societies, Badi women have no way out other than selling their flesh/sexuality to the clients of divergent sectors, for their livelihood. Even the Badi patriarchy is blindly enjoying the sweat of its women and further exploiting

them at the family level, stigmatizing their femininity from time immemorial. This commodification of their body within homes and even outside has made their life flouted and has snatched their self -existence, self-esteem and freedom. Here, the patriarchy is acting as willful agent and Badi women are forced recipient or patients. Even further, the same culturally imposed profession for sustaining their family is stigmatized by the mainstream patriarchal society as moral decadence. This stigmatization is catalyst for their ostracism and consequent double exclusion.

In other words, due to their prostitution that they are compelled to carry on, they are doubly victimized-one because of commodification of their body/sexuality and other because of stigmatization as well as ostracism by the society. Because of this reason, sex practiced by them not only subverts the traditional notion of reproductive sex and demeans motherhood as gender construct but also exploits their body as a sexual commodity. Both of these nuances stigmatize Badi women's self and reduce their agency.

Here, the working methodology on the issue of prostitution practiced by Badi women is simultaneously a field based and text based. So intensive study of the texts on gender studies, stigma theory and Badi community and culture as well as field survey about their present status has been the core point of the research. The study of Badi community and culture, selection of the study area, descriptive as well as exploratory survey design of the area, data (primary and secondary) collection and analysis, case study, focus-group discussion, observation (direct and participant), interviews (structured and unstructured) with Badi community as well as intellectuals, prominent figures and social workers working for excluded groups like Badis of those areas have been carried out comprising some of the methodologies relevant for this study. Gender, sexuality and stigma theories have formed the base of the study.

In addition, library consultation and visiting authentic internet websites and extensive study of related researches and articles have been the invaluable assets. Moreover, field surveys, reports as well as suggestions, guidelines and interviews of the concerned people as well as cultural experts and teachers have been further inspiration to bring the thesis in to its complete shape.

This research work is divided into four chapters. This running chapter is introduction (first chapter) which comprises of the significance of the study, the problem in the issue raised and the hypothesis. Here there is also the discussion of related literature reviews.

The theoretical tools have been discussed in second chapter. Here an attempt is made to highlight the methodology employed during the study. For the explication and analysis of the issue of stigma of gender and sexuality (prostitution) of Badi women, a theoretical modality has been developed depending on the books, essays, articles, researches related to gender, sexuality and stigma.

In the third chapter, there is analysis of text (interviews, case studies, data, articles, questionnaires and research) related to the gender and sexuality of Badi women, which justifies the hypothesis of the research. This chapter examines, analyzes, and studies the state of Badi women regarding their abhorred gender and sexuality. Moreover, it supports the main issue of the thesis by providing textual evidences that have been gathered through field studies as well as many other sources. In the same way, the fourth chapter draws conclusion, recommendations and suggestions.

This research was done only focusing the Badi women of specific VDCs in Bardiya in a very limited time, with limited resources and materials with purely academic purpose. Moreover, since this research, also because of the nature of the

English course, did not require thorough field research of the issue, this may lack the whole and exact data, statistics and other information about those Badi women. Furthermore, as this research paper is in English language, and almost all the Badi women in the study area were illiterate, it was next to impossible for me to take interviews and views of those women without translating it in simple Nepali and sometimes in their own dialect. In the same way, some articles and literatures on Badi women were also translated from Nepali into English for this research work. Even more importantly, many technical words of research like 'stigma' and 'ostracism' could not be used without translating in and substituting with simple and sometimes slang Nepali. Likewise, for our convenience, the word 'prostitute' as derogatively perceived by mainstream people, has been used to refer to those Badi commercial sex workers who in reality, may not deserve to be tagged prostitute because they, for surviving their families, only sell their bodies not the souls which remain uncontaminated.

Even during interviews, most Badi women went aggressive and were reluctant to disclose the facts about their prostitution much fearing the past defamation by the journalists and subsequent raids and torture by police as well as insult by other societies. So, interviews, too, happened to miss much information about their stigmatized gender and sexuality vis-a-vis the effort it took and as expected before. Also, Because of unfamiliarity with the Badi people of study area other local person's as well as journalists' cooperation was a must. In the similar manner, this research has used stratified sampling method (for interviews, case study, group discussions and information collection) and secondary data and information for the analysis of the issue raised. Despite the limitations, the study has tried to meet the objectives as far as possible.

## **II: Gender, Sexuality, Prostitution and Stigma**

The mainstream patriarchal culture has different values in practice, among which gender discrimination is one. It refers to the activities and behaviors in which man and woman are treated differently. According to Anne Cranny-Francis, "If sex is biological given gender is a social construct" (3). In other words, gender divides human into two categories: male and female. Gender, in our patriarchal culture, treats man and woman differently. This not only divides the human race into two categories and treats them differently; it also privileges the males over females. Gender operates as a set of hierarchically arranged roles in modern society, which makes the masculine half of the equation positive and the feminine negative. This society is patriarchal so femininity and masculinity are defined as opposite poles. "Gender is the culturally variable elaboration of sex, as a hierarchical pair (where male is coded superior and female inferior)" (4).

Femininity refers to qualities and behaviors, judged by a particular culture to be ideally associated with or especially appropriate to woman or girl. Femininity principally refers to the secondary sex characteristics and other behaviors and features generally regarded as being more prevalent and better suited to woman, whether innate or socialized. Femininity is constructed around adaptation to male's power and domination. Its main feature is attractiveness to man, which includes physical appearance, ego-massaging, suppression of 'power'-emotion such as anger, nurturance of children, exclusive heterosexuality, and sexual availability without sexual assertiveness etc. This clearly shows that masculinity and femininity are societal euphemisms for male domination and female subjugation.

Masculinity is manly character. According to Cicero Man's Chief quality is courage that is a near synonym for masculinity. The positive stereotypes and



attributes like “practical”, “logical”, “courageous”, “decisive”, “confident”, “trustworthy”, “reasonable” etc. are given to men. Whereas women are given the stereotypes like “meek”, “helpless”, “sensual”, “illogical”, “graceful” etc. Men are recognized as "bread winner", "provider" and "savior" and antithetically, women are given the epithets of "domestic", "maternal", "nurturer" etc., regarding their functions. In the same way, if men are characterized as "sexually aggressive". "Experienced", etc. women as "virginal", “inexperienced”, "sexually passive", "seductive" etc. positive connotative words are used to describe masculinity but negative connotative words are used to describe femininity. Besides these, men are characterized as "success-oriented", "proud" and "competitive" and women as "unsparing", "prideless" and "fragile".

The attributes which are given to femininity and masculinity may differ from culture to culture. But most of the societies and culture share the same attributes in which masculinity is positive and femininity is negative. Cultural representation of female portrays her as inferior to males. Anne: cranny-Francis explores about the historicity of this representation even up to the classical Greek era where she finds Aristotle giving "Pythagorean table of opposites" in attributing masculinity with positive and femininity with negative shades of meaning. She further comments that "Aristotle took his curious set of binary oppositions even further in his *Economics* where he states that men were stronger, women weaker, men courageous, women cautious, men the outdoors type, women domestic, men educate children, women nurture them" (2). An examination of T.V. ads shows that ancient Greek philosophy continues to have its influence centuries later. Beer commercials show man shooting dangerous rapids, while a woman is pictured elsewhere decorating the home. Even our language is gendered: nouns which are feminine in English can in many other

languages more often than not have negative connotations. A buddy (a word derived from brother) is a good thing to have, but no one wants to be a sissy (derived from sister). In the same way, about the nature of female psychology Sigmund Freud puts:

Women's lives and personalities are prescribed by their biological and reproductive nature; that women are not only fundamentally different from men in character but inferior to them physically (in sexual capacity and equipment), emotional (instability and control) and ethnically (in the sense of honesty and justice). (125)

Here, Freud as a male chauvinist, designs man and woman in lopsided position and comments on woman as being biologically weak and passive which in his view is her identity and personality. In his opinion, woman is not only fundamentally different from men in character, but woman is inferior to men regarding physicality, emotionality and ethnicity. He stereotypes woman as being emotional and man logical, woman as sexually weak man as virile and strong: woman as dishonest and untrustworthy where as man as honest and trustworthy.

Our mainstream patriarchal society bestows the tag of passivity to femininity and activeness to masculinity. But these are the social customs and norms which want and make women "passive" wresting their assertiveness and aggressiveness from them in the name of 'feminine decency'. This is because of hegemonic masculinity which is supported by men and women of any particular culture. Masculinity always defines itself as different from and superior to femininity. This is because our society is patriarchal, which expects man to rule woman and woman to be subjects of man. Regarding the subjective and subjugated condition of a woman, Sheila Ruth Opines that our patriarchal set-up from the very dawn of her life impregnates the woman's mind with the different stereotypes about her. These stereotypes that woman should

be beautiful, tender, compassionate, loving and warm and so on are gradually naturalized in the long run. The same internalization inculcates a 'slavish' attitude in woman dehumanizing her, which is the motto of this cruel patriarchy. In her opinion, It does not want "to make woman humane, but to make us excellent servants" (12).

The patriarchal society puts a crest of 'foreign land', 'inscrutable', and 'mysterious' on woman. Making woman other the patriarchy expects her to manifest deep-rooted tendencies towards complicity. In this way, a woman accepts herself as a 'subject' due to the lack of definite resources. This is because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity and because she is often contented with the role of 'subject' and the 'other'. Even our education system expects man to be bread winner and only uplifter of their status and income. This tendency of excluding a woman from workplace and economy only reinforces the male value and impedes a woman's odyssey of self-reliance and self-assertion, according to Virginia Woolf. In a criticism of Woolf's *A Room of one's own*, Hazard Adams states her ethos as "Woolf addresses the question of why a sister of Shakespeare would not likely have been able to write anything, let alone a play. She would have had none of the material resources- breadth of human experience, money, time- to do so. She would have been discouraged by everyone" (817).

In earlier period, the hierarchy between man and woman was created and woman was brainwashed with her negative stereotypes that ranked man lopsidedly above woman. This same ideology by and by was internalized in such a way that it now seems natural which is actually cultural designed by patriarchal norms. Even Aristotle was as dogmatic and chauvinist as to say "female is female by the virtue of a certain lack of qualities." Besides defining woman as incomplete man, he further underestimated woman saying "donkey drum and woman in the world can be better

tuned only by constant beating." This shows that from the dawn of human civilization, woman was inferiorized constantly, giving her certain tags that helped patriarchy to ride its "chariot" pulling those "ropes". Freud later on, in modern period massaged the same chauvinist ethos to keep the woman under the sole of man's boot. According to Freud, "we attribute a large amount of narcissism to femininity, which also affects women's choice of object. So that to be loved is a stronger need for them than to love" (137). Freud buttresses the same "colonial" thinking on woman. He inferiorizes femininity and says that as woman is herself beauty - conscious and self-admirer. She always wants to be the 'object' of love and caress. In other words she always wants other's attention and 'caring eye' of love towards and on her.

The society has produced negative attributes and stereotypes on the basis of gender discrimination. Though Rousseau believes that femininity is innate, Simon de Beauvoir contrarily in her essay *The Second Sex* states that "womanhood as we know is a social construct that is the subordination of female to male" (64). In her view this patriarchal society has constructed many myths about woman and their sexuality labeling them "mysterious" and "other" not loving them "as they really are". In its view a woman is pure "alterity" not a "subject in her own light". In his criticism of Beauvoir Hazard Adams echoes her saying that the myth of this mysterious otherness has justified numerous abuses. Though men and women are indeed mysterious to each other, men see the world "from their point of view as absolute"(193). Beauvoir, further focusing upon the constructability and culturality/artificiality of gender, also argues that "one is not born but rather becomes a woman" (64). Here, she means that gender is man-made, which must be challenged for the assertion of the existence of a human. It means one is first a human than only a woman.

The feminine is most often associated with nurturing, life giving qualities and creativity. Though man and woman are human beings and have equal rights in this world and society, this patriarchal society behaves differently to both of them. This society has given different attributes to men and women, discriminately. Those that are negative in connotation are for woman and positive for man. Such term as "petty", "fickle", "coy", "sneaky", "shallow" and "vain" are very negatively charged in most of the societies.

In the history of western civilization women were taken as seductive, flirts just like the wicked Eve tempting poor innocent Adam. On the basis of gender role man and woman have been given different stereotypes. Even the woman is represented as passive indifferent media like television, newspaper and text books. These media are the representatives of our patriarchal culture where woman is depicted as dominated and subordinate. The patriarchy has always portrayed woman as passive character. This negative portrayal of woman has erected several hurdles on her way impeding her social, economic, academic, professional and overall development. Virginia Woolf further opines that "The patriarchal society has hindered or prevented women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities" (Abrams, 88). In the cultural, economic and educational fields, women are rendered disabled because this patriarchal society does not give them any opportunities to show their creativity. Even in the field of sports a man is ahead than a woman. In every sphere, the facilities, coaching and training for a girl continue to be inferior. This under estimation of woman in every sector causes her disability and stigmatizes her gender.

Gender represents a powerful normative system that both evaluates and controls the behavior of man and woman. This system entails socially constructed conceptualization of behavior intricately tied to social perception of "masculinity" and

“femininity”. Human gender is binary and is made up of two halves, which each define the other. The male side of the equation is generally coded as the positive one, and so becomes the standard by which all others are judged. It in effect becomes the norm. This privileging of the masculine is generally the case in western societies. Moreover, as Anne Cranny-Francis states "gender is not simply the gender one is, that is a man or a woman, but rather a set of meanings that sexes assume in particular societies" (3). The operation of gender in our society takes up these sets of meanings, organizes them as masculinity or femininity and matches or lines them up with male and female bodies. "For some theorists, gender and sex are overlapping constructs that differ in emphasis, where our understanding of biological sex is likely to be shaped by our culture's notion of gender. Other theorists argue that there is no body, no biological sex, outside gender; that in becoming human, one is always already gendered" (3).

Our society is patriarchal, therefore, a woman's position is discriminated or displaced by male on the basis of gender. Woman occupies a unique position in this system of gender norms. Not only does it define appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, but the behaviors sanctioned for woman are generally devalued in the broader society and often contribute to her subordination. The woman who engages in nontraditional gender behaviors capable of enhancing opportunities and self-actualization is subjected to various forms of social stigmatization. Widespread violation of gender norms by a woman constitutes a serious threat to the entire gender system. It is thus not surprising that a woman is stigmatized and labeled deviant when her behaviors challenge traditional gender norms. According to Elaine M. Blinde and Diane E. Taub, as Schur suggests, “stigmatization of behaviors not conforming to rigid gender- role expectations reinforces women’s overall subordination as it restricts

women's role and potential. Moreover, operating from a relatively disadvantaged position of power, women are more vulnerable to stigmatization" (551).

Stigmatization thus represents a means of social control as it preserves the traditional gender system. Fear of being labeled deviant keeps woman "in her place" and reduces challenges to prevailing gender norms. Not surprisingly the individuals who occupy positions of power or privilege, the "deviance –definers" benefit from continued subordination or suppression of the less powerful.

In this patriarchal system, the woman is defined as "other", "second", "lowly" making man "self", "first" and "highly". Furthermore, as femininity is always associated with femaleness, which is defined as "inferior", "weak" and "dependent", masculinity is associated with "maleness" meaning "superior", "strong" and "dominant". By giving these negative attributes to women, this society has stigmatized femininity. Although, all women experience devaluation and stigmatization by virtue of being female, some women occupy roles or engage in behavior that make them even more susceptible to deviant labeling, in the opinion of Blinde and Taub. This labeling is particularly indicative of women who violate multiple categories of gender norms, including "(1) presentation of self (e. g., emotions nonverbal communication, appearance, speech, (2) marriage and maternity, (3) sexuality (e.g., sexual behavior /orientation) and (4) occupational choice (Schur, 1984)" (552). By the same token, Badi women as a result, on the one hand, by virtue of being female or because of their general stigma of femininity, are forced to be "housewives", "caretaker", "nurturer" and "sexual commodity" or "plaything" to patriarchy which has stigmatized their femininity and exploited them perennially. Further, their sexuality or the profession of prostitution, which violates the accepted

gender norm, in the words of Blinde and Diane, has even doubly stigmatized them in the eyes of the society, on the other.

The term, "sexuality" in the words of Estelle B. Freedman and John D' Emilio, "is a modern construct which originated in the nineteenth century" (483). It is only in the modern times that the society became so "sexualized" that the term had clear meaning throughout the culture. In the contemporary era, we have come to use "sexuality" to refer to the erotic, that is a state of physical attraction to either sex. "In the past, however, there was no language of "sexuality" per se. Rather, in pre industrial America, what is now called sexuality was largely embedded within a reproductive language. In the nineteenth century, a language of passion and romance characterized middle class discourse" (483).

Furthermore, in his article "Clarifying Basic Concepts: Conceptualizing Sexuality" Dr Stephen L. Goettsch opines sexuality to be the individual capacity to respond to physical experiences which are capable of producing body-centered genital excitation, "that only subsequently becomes associated with cognitive constructs (either anticipatory for new experiences or reflective of past experiences) independent of ongoing physical experiences"(250). Sexuality belongs to the class of phenomena sharing body-centered, rather than cognitive, responses to physical experiences but is differentiated from other members of this class by a required genital excitation focus. "Sensuality belongs to the same class as sexuality, but it is differentiated by its full body pleasure rather than genital focus. Sexuality is defined as a capacity or potentiality, not as an inherent force"(250).The concept is differentiated from statistical frequencies or culturally engendered sexual manifestations which are identified as "sexual enactment". "Four aspects of this definition benefit from elaboration: (1) sexuality is an individual capacity, (2) sexuality is experiential, (3)



sexuality is body-oriented, and (4) sexuality is genitally oriented” (250). Each aspect clarifies assumptions and propositions inherent in this definition of sexuality.

According to these writers, sexuality is an individual capacity arising within each person, not originating from external sources. Constructionist interpretations of sexuality are incomplete in this regard. Norms provide the social parameters for sexual enactment, but cultures and norms channel, not create sexuality. Cultures construct the manifestations of sexuality, the sexual enactment, which includes norms, beliefs, values, and behaviors—all elements, that underlie the discourse and regulation of sexuality. “While recognizing cultural diversity in practices, desirable objects, and developmental sequences, it is simultaneously important to recognize that sexuality has basic uniformities” (250). One’s sexuality comes from within but is normalized by the discourse of sexuality. “According to Pillard and Weinrich, prenatal development regulates individuals’ masculinization and defeminization, which accounts for much of the subsequent variation in sexual patterns and orientation” (250). Sexuality is often experienced subjectively as externalized when awareness of one’s sexuality is raised by external tactile or socially constructed stimuli. Women’s manifest sexual arousal stereotypically depends more on contextual factors—such as the partner, flirtation, romantic cues, love, and commitment—than does men’s. These cultural scripts which identify appropriate sexual partners, contexts, and activities do not create people’s sexuality. External stimuli focus attention on individuals’ capacity, and they define the appropriateness of sexual arenas, but it is improper to confuse stimuli with the physiological capacity to respond.

Similarly, the most provocative assertion in this definition is that sexuality is restricted to direct tactile experience, specifically excluding the systematic thoughts that divide experiences into socially constructed sexual and nonsexual categories.

This is controversial, partially because of obvious sexual enactment interactions with cognitions, and partially because many theoretical and ideological orientations depend on this linkage. “But it is important to recognize that experiences can be sexual without the individuals involved perceiving them as such; for example, a young woman has a sexual experience if she achieves an orgasm while riding a horse, even if she does not define the situation as sexual, and even if she doesn't know about orgasm”(252). The significance of social definitions is that people must define situations as sexual before they will intentionally behave sexually, that is, intentionally manifest sexual enactment. This is evident in the differences in contemporary sexual constructions which define contact during breast-feeding and hugging relatives as nonsexual, while contact during foreplay leading to coitus as sexual. Despite nonsexual scripts and subjective definitions, all these contacts are sexual according to this definition.

Similarly, they buttress that “Sexuality is physical both in source and as it is experienced through stimulation of the body regardless of the source (such as the environment, another person, self-stimulation, or unconscious muscle contractions)” (253). Orgasms depend on muscular tension and the release of small amounts of neuromuscular energy that produce powerful physical and subjective sensations. This physical energy is provided by the body and is not cognitive or subconscious. Treating sexuality as nonphysical energy confuses motivation with sexuality. Furthermore, according to this definition, culturally imbuing specific body parts and activities with sexual meaning influences sexual enactment but does not change sexuality. Although the identification of sexual anatomy and behaviors is influenced by reproductive anatomy, sexuality and reproduction are distinct. For example, orgasm (pleasure) and ejaculation (reproduction) are distinct physiological processes,

most visibly when considering the functions of ejaculation and orgasm for women, and orgasm for male children. Further, only some structures, like the penis and vagina, are both reproductive anatomy and erogenous zones, whereas structures like the mouth, clitoris, and anus are erogenous zones but not reproductive structures. “Because stimulating no reproductive areas is sexual and can produce orgasms, sexuality and orgasm do not depend on coitus or reproductive anatomy” (254). Cultures regulate sexuality by restricting activities to reproductive anatomy and processes, specifically intercourse, at the expense of a broader physical sexual experience or repertoire. The maximum level of restriction possible in a viable community is to limit sexual enactment to coitus, insuring a replacement population. “Precluding non reproductive sexual activities shows the community’s reservations about sexuality and pleasure, and eliminating these acts does not destabilize the population” (254). In addition to pleasure, genital erogenous zones provide effective means of achieving orgasms and ejaculation during reproductive activities. By having eliminated non reproductive sexual activities, sexually restrictive cultures will have a strong association between genitals, reproduction, and sexuality, which provides justification for additional sexual regulation.

Research concerned with overt sexual behaviors is minimally affected by this definition. The most significant effect is the acknowledgement of the importance of sexual constructions in shaping sexual enactment, including the development of sexual behaviors. “This is consistent with Foucault’s (1978) argument that sexual constructions both control social behavior through confessions and, through the control of discourse, create sexual behaviors” (254). This definition reinforces the importance of culture in defining, shaping, and promoting sexuality, including maintaining socially stigmatized patterns.

Defining "sexuality" makes it possible to distinguish between sexuality and sexual enactment by making assumptions about the nature of sexuality explicit. Sexuality is not a powerful, potentially destructive form of energy. Sexuality uses physical energy to create and concentrate on pleasurable bodily sensations, and it competes with other activities. Similarly, sexuality and reproduction are distinct phenomena that share some activities and body parts. Reproduction is reinforced by the genital focus of sexual activity, but reproduction affects sexuality more ambiguously. Although cultural scripts and individuals' perceptions combine sexuality with emotions (e.g., love), sexuality and emotions are distinct phenomena; to claim otherwise is a value judgment. "There is no inherent morality in sexual activity. Moral issues are derived from social conventions regulating interaction, conventions whose objective moral status may be unverifiable" (255).

About the construction of sexualities, Joan Nagel in his article "Ethnicity and Sexuality" argues that, the production of ethnic differences requires social and often political recognition, definition, and reinforcement as well as individual and collective assertion and acceptance to become socially real. Similarly, male and female bodies do not automatically result in socially meaningful "men" or "women." Rather the gender identities, meanings, cultures, and social divisions between men and women are social constructions, arising out of historical conditions, power relations, and ongoing social processes. These same insights about the social construction of ethnicity and gender apply to sexuality. "Male and female genitalia do not automatically result in predictable types of sexual men and women, in particular forms of sexual behavior or practices, or in specific kinds of sexual desire. The early work of anthropologists, with all of its admitted flaws, unveiled as many different sexual practices and sexualities as there were cultures to inspect" (115).

Regarding sexuality, in his *History of Sexuality: Vol. One* Foucault says that up to the beginning of the seventeenth century our sexuality was still frank and “one had a tolerant familiarity with the illicit” (3). The codes and norms regarding the obscene were quite lax compared to those of nineteenth century. But, this frankness was gradually assassinated by the bourgeois culture which confined sexuality only to utilitarian purpose of reproduction. Every sexual transgression was penalized. There was general and studied silence about it which was repressive in nature. The same hypocritical, puritanical and patriarchal Victorian notion of sexuality which confined sexuality to a bedroom shared by heterogeneous sexes opting for reproduction is still dominating us. This has made us “other Victorian” according to Foucault.

“If sex is so rigorously repressed, this is because it is incompatible with a general and intensive work imperative” (6). Foucault doubts, in the time of exploitation of labor capacity how could the bourgeois system allow this capacity to be dissipated itself in pleasurable pursuit. Repression has been the weapon of ruling bourgeois class by which it is exercising power. In spite of that repression of sexuality, contrarily, the discourses of sexuality developed in this period. But more important was the multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself. In this way, the more power interfered in sexuality, the further intensification of discourse of sexuality was there. In modern societies sex is not in shadow existence but people have “dedicated themselves to speaking of it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*” (35). This transformation of sex into discourse was governed by the endeavor to expel from reality the forms of sexuality that were not amenable to the strict economy of reproduction. Actually through the various discourses, legal sanctions against minor perversions were multiplied. Foucault opines:

[. . .]. Sexual irregularity was annexed to mental illness; from childhood to old age, a norm of sexual development was defined and all the possible deviations were carefully described; pedagogical controls and medical treatments were organized; around the least fantasies, moralist but especially doctors brandished the whole emphatic vocabulary of abomination. (6)

All this garrulous attention which has us in a stew over sexuality is motivated by one basic concern: to ensure population, to reproduce labor capacity, to perpetuate the form of social relations: in short, to constitute sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative. But this power has been constantly challenged by heterogeneous form of sexuality in modern age, which is regarded as the 'breach of law' by bourgeois system. About the heterogeneities of sexuality he comments that "The nineteenth century and our own have been rather the age of multiplication, a dispersion of sexualities, a strengthening of their disparate forms, a multiple implementation of "perversions". Our epoch has initiated sexual heterogeneities" (37). The discursive explosion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries caused the movement of peripheral sexualities in this modern era. Previously there were two great systems conceived by the west for governing sex: the law of marriage and the order of desires. But the life of Don Juan in modern societies overturned them both. Still the modern society by building those systems of marriage and order of desires, has attempted to reduce sexuality –to the couple–the heterosexual and, in so far as possible, legitimate couple–for exercising power.

In modern societies, the knowledge of sex has given power instead of repression. Power and knowledge are joined together in discourse. According to Foucault, discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, renders it fragile

and makes it possible to thwart it. For example, the sex was once “the” great sin against nature but by and by it became natural and even basic. Foucault analyzes this double nature of discourse regarding sexuality and opines:

There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion pederasty, and “psychic hermaphroditism” made possible a strong advance of social control in this area of “perversity”; but it also made possible the formation of a ‘reverse discourse’: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or “naturalness” be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified. (101)

Sexuality is the very essence of the individual human being and the core of personal identity. In the nineteenth century the sexuality was deployed. Through the mediation of doctors, psychiatrists and others to whom one confessed one’s private thoughts and practices, it was possible to know the secrets of one’s body and mind. Anne Cranny-Francis in her *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates* says “This historically specific personalization, medicalization, and signification of sex is, in Foucault’s term the ‘deployment’ of sexuality” (190). By historicizing or saturating woman’s body with sexuality; by fighting against masturbation in children; by socialization of procreative behavior of conjugal couple and by psychiatrization of perverse pleasure, sexuality was deployed by Victorian bourgeoisie. This ‘deployment of sexuality’ had evolved as a means of “controlling the working classes and sub-proletariat” (191).

But according to Foucault, in the twentieth century the hypocritical repressive as well as reproductive sexuality which was even adult marital sexuality, turned in to liberated, free and frank sexuality. “One passed from insistent sexual taboos to a

relative tolerance with regard to prenuptial or extramarital relations; the disqualification of “perverts” diminished, their condemnation by the law was in part eliminated; a good many of the taboos that weighed on the sexuality of children were lifted”(115). Previously, the bourgeois were controlling the human sexuality by “the deployment” of sexuality. As sexuality has been the site of power, the previously marginalized groups now by practicing heterogeneous sexualities are controlling their sexuality in their own way and subverting the traditional notion of sexuality. This is also the counter to the bourgeois notion of Victorian sexuality in this modern age.

According to some historians, middle-class Bohemian pioneered modern sexual behaviors in the west and that trickled down gradually to the different regions including that of the working class. But, in their article “Problem Encountered in Writing the History of Sexuality” Freedman and D’Emilio unfold that, Kathy Peiss along with other scholars posits a different view in which "progressive era, urban working class and immigrant youths created new sexual cultures that gradually expanded to other classes, regions and ages" (484). In this way, sexuality in this modern age, is heterogenised and divergent. It is culturally constructed and changes spatially and temporally and according to how different societies affix meaning to sexual behavior. About the constructability and contextuality of sexuality Freedman and D' Emilio point:

[. . .]. Sexuality is not primarily a biological category; it is not an innate, unchanging “drive” or “instinct” [. . .] Instead, as social constructions maintain sexual behavior and sexual meanings are subject to the forces of culture.

Human beings learn how to express themselves sexually, and the content and outcome of that learning vary widely across cultures and across time.

Particular practices may have a universal existence but how men and women



interpret their behavior and desires, and the meaning that different societies affix to sexual behavior, are enormously diverse. (484)

Sexuality is not universal, unchanging condition but differs according to the “role” given by the culture and society. In this regard, the sexuality of woman had been shaped by the model of “Eve, the temptress” and male by “Adam, the innocent” when men were in power. This notion about gender and sexuality was different previously and now with repetition and representation it looks like natural. In the same way, Homosexuality, which is also a form of sexuality, has also encountered profound change in its social construction and recognition. About its cultural constructability, in their view, Foucault comments that “Sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species” (484). Even further, among the white middle-class, the definition of nonmarital child bearing is “illegitimate”, whereas “the same experience has held widely different meanings and consequences for African-Americans who have not stigmatized either the mother or the child” (485).

Although, all women experience devaluation and stigmatization, by virtue of their femininity, some women occupy roles or engage in behavior that makes them even more susceptible to deviant labeling. This labeling is particularly indicative of women who violate multiple categories of gender norm, including presentation of self, marriage and maternity, sexuality (e.g. sexual behavior /orientation) and occupational choice. Comparing these gender norms, the violation of sexuality by a woman is gravest one which stigmatizes her throughout her life. Among the heterogeneous forms of those sexualities, prostitution is one, which means offering of one’s sex to others in exchange for some monetary or non monetary benefits. Persons who engage in the activity are generally called prostitutes, harlot or whores. A variety of terms are used for those who engage in prostitution, some of which distinguish

between different kinds, or imply a value judgment about them. Prostitute is generally accepted as the least value-laden term; common alternatives with varying implications include escort, harlot and whore. Those seeking to remove the social stigma associated with prostitution often promote terminology such as commercial sex worker (CSW) or sex trade worker. A hooker or streetwalker solicits customers in public places; a *call girl* makes appointments by phone.

Prostitution is sometimes referred to as the "world's oldest profession". According to some theorists 'to prostitute' is etymologically, derived from a composition of two Latin words: (preposition) *pro* and (verb) *statuere*. A literal translation therefore would be: 'to expose', 'to place up front'. The legal status of persons engaged in prostitution varies greatly between different jurisdictions, from being punishable by death to being completely legal. It is still in practice in modern times, and also has got varied recognitions and constructions according to different cultures, temporally and spatially. In this regard Freedman and D'Emilio further state:

The common, popular understanding of a prostitute is simple and straightforward: a woman who sells her sexual services; is clearly set apart from other women, and stigmatized accordingly. Yet, studies of nineteenth and early twentieth century prostitution in both Britain and United States suggested a much more complex and variable picture. Many young working-class women moved easily in and out of prostitution and were not necessarily segregated from the rest of the society [. . .]. (485)

The definition of sexuality has changed according to the time because of which the same sexuality- prostitution- which is stigmatized now vehemently was not so spurned in nineteenth and early twentieth century America and Britain.

Representation and definition are subject to power. So the acceptance and rejection of prostitution are the matter of time and space or socio-politico-cultural context which is itself changing according to the change in power structure. Lena Edlund and Evelyn Korn in their article “A theory of Prostitution” define prostitution as “the act or practice of engaging in sexual intercourse for money. But a prostitute cannot simply be a woman who sells her body since that is done every day by women who become wives in order to gain a home and a livelihood”(183). Promiscuity has been proposed as another candidate. Medieval canon lawyer Johannes Teutonicus suggested that a woman who had sex with more than 23,000 men should be classified as a prostitute, although 40-60 would also do. “However, promiscuity itself does not turn a woman into a prostitute. Although a vast majority of prostitutes are promiscuous, most people would agree that sleeping around does not amount to prostitution” (183). Moreover, any threshold number of sexual partners, be it 40 or 23,000, fails to identify high-end courtesans or call girls as prostitutes, although a reasonable definition would.

Instead, “prostitution is the act of rendering, from the client’s point of view, non reproductive sex against payment” (183). This definition is consistent with the legal notion of marriage: a contract linking husband to children borne by the wife. “For instance, Posner (1992, p. 244) notes that temporary marriages (as short as one hour), allowed to Shiite Muslims, are real marriages since the offspring is legitimate in the sense that paternity accrues to the husband” (184). Hence, marriage is not prostitution, irrespective of duration, the number of men and women thus united, or money exchanged. This definition of prostitution classifies courtesans and other high-end forms of prostitution as just that, since sex with a courtesan are non reproductive from the man's point of view. If a courtesan were to bear a child, there would be no automatic link between the father and the child. The writers argue that a prostitute

sells non reproductive sex, which we shall call "commercial sex," whereas a wife sells reproductive sex (i.e., sex plus children).

Both women and men sell commercial sex. Buyers are, however, almost invariably male. Females outnumber males as sellers. Female heterosexual prostitution is conditioned by the following realities of reproduction: fecund women are scarce, a child has by default only one known parent (the mother), and marriage gives a man parental rights to the children borne by his wife. The wife provides the husband with children who are socially recognized as his, whereas the prostitute does not; and to the extent that men value social paternity, the willingness to pay for sex in marriage is higher than for sex outside. "Polyandry (i.e., simultaneous marriage of several men to one woman) provides a case in point (Korn 2000). Clearly, each husband can be a biological father only in an expectational sense, but social fatherhood accrues to all husbands, suggesting that men would rather share a woman in matrimony than in sin" (185). Obviously, marriage does not condition male (homosexual) prostitution in the same way. As might be expected, the stylized facts are also very different. For one, earnings are lower and so is the social stigma. Furthermore, about the varieties of prostitution Edlund and Korn opine:

Prostitution has been organized according to similar principles across different times and cultures. At the bottom we find street prostitution, followed by brothels, bars, and clubs. Call girls and escort agencies occupy the middle to high slots and kept women the top rungs. Higher-end prostitutes are better looking, younger, and healthier; charge more per client; and spend more time with each. Typically, both earnings and working conditions are better more up market: clients are fewer, venues more agreeable, and client screening more selective. (186)

Received wisdom has it that prostitutes are trapped in either economic or emotional bondage and work under slave-like conditions. While owners of brothels, bars, and clubs undoubtedly take their cut, there is little to suggest that the prostitute would not be left with substantial earnings. The extent to which street-walkers pay off pimps is also unclear. A priori, the spot-like nature of the transaction limits the role of middlemen.

About the subsistence of the prostitute both the researchers say that “there is, however, overwhelming evidence that prostitution can be considered well paid. Ellis noted in the early twentieth century that “we [have] to admit that no practicable rise in the rate of wages paid to women in ordinary industries can possibly compete with the wages which fairly attractive women of quite ordinary ability can earn by prostitution”(188). Furthermore, they say that Edin and Lein, in their contemporary study of U.S. welfare mothers, found prostitution “to be the most lucrative side income available to these low-skilled women” (188). Career-Prostitutes have their best earnings while young, as opposed to many other professions that have a flat or positive age-earnings profile. As they grow older, their income also decreases with the decrease in their beauty and attractiveness to their clients.

In the same way, Prostitution has been associated with poverty. Low potential for female labor market earnings is often taken to be an important reason why women go into prostitution, and in any society a higher proportion of poor women prostitute themselves. It also points to the possible role of low male earnings. Prostitution is more common in poor than in rich countries. For instance, the Global Program on AIDS/World Health Organization estimated the proportion of men using prostitutes in any given year to be 11 percent in the Ivory Coast, 10 percent in Lesotho, 8 percent in Togo, and 13 percent in Kenya.

A salient feature of prostitution is its poor reputation. Once a woman is identified as a prostitute, her ability to marry is reduced. Since this in itself is costly, anything that marks a woman as a prostitute forms a basis for stigma. In Roman antiquity, prostitutes were required to wear special attire that clearly singled them out, a practice that resurfaced in medieval Europe. Zoning laws are similar in spirit. Another aspect of stigma is that it works as a deterrent, keeping wives on the straight and narrow. However morally corrupt, prostitution has often been considered a necessary compromise. Thomas Aquinas likened prostitution “to a sewer that helped keep the palace clean: the lesser of two evils, a theme mirrored in the double standard, written accounts of which date at least back to the Old Testament's story of Judah and Tamar, by which the purchasing of commercial sex is condoned but the sale of the same is condemned”(207). Incidentally, the socio-economic profile of buyers also tends to be more "normal" than that of sellers. While attitudes toward prostitution have vacillated between condemnation and laissez-faire, the prostitute herself has suffered a consistently poor reputation in the modern times.

The legality of prostitution and the societal attitudes towards it vary considerably, from being perfectly legal and seen as a job like any other job, to being considered a form of exploitation of women, and to being considered an immoral act sometimes punished even with the death penalty. In some countries prostitution is illegal; in other jurisdictions prostitution itself (exchanging sex for money) is legal, but most activities which surround it (operating a brothel, pimping and soliciting in a public place) are illegal, making it difficult to engage in prostitution without breaking any law; while in a few jurisdictions prostitution is legal and regulated.

One of the most serious problems associated with prostitution is the fact that the sex trade is surrounded by illegal, abusive and dangerous activities. Many insist

that such situations occur because prostitution (or brothels and pimping) are kept illegal and the industry operates on the black market. Others, however, insist that legalizing and regulating prostitution would not improve the situation, it would only make it worse and it would increase criminal activities: women working in licensed brothels would still be controlled by outside pimps; many brothel owners would be criminals themselves; the creation of a legal and regulated prostitution industry would only lead to another parallel illegal industry, as many women would not want to register and work legally (since this would rob them of their anonymity) and other women would not be hired by legal brothels because of underlying problems (e.g. drug abuse); legalizing prostitution would make it more socially acceptable to buy sex, creating a huge demand for prostitutes (both by local men and by foreigners engaging in sex tourism) and, as a result, human trafficking and underage prostitution would increase in order to satisfy this demand.

There are many types of prostitution according to their nature. In street prostitution the prostitute solicits customers while waiting at street corners or "walking the street". Brothels are establishments specifically dedicated to prostitution, often confined to special red-light districts in big cities. Other names for brothels include bordello, whorehouse, cathouse, knocking shop, and general houses. Prostitution also occurs in some massage parlors, and in Asian countries in some barber shops where sexual services may be offered as a secondary function of the premises. In escort prostitution, the act takes place at the customer's place of residence or more commonly at his or her hotel room (referred to as *out-call*), or at the escort's place of residence or in a hotel room rented for the occasion by the escort (called *in-call*). This form of prostitution often shelters under the umbrella of escort agencies, who ostensibly supply attractive escorts for social occasions. While escort agencies

claim never to provide sexual services, very few successful escorts are available exclusively for social companionship. Even where this type of prostitution is legal, the ambiguous term *escort service* is commonly used. Further, Prostitution is associated with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as HIV. According to health researchers, one of the main reasons for the rapid spread of HIV in Asian countries is the massive transmission among sex workers and clients. The spread of HIV from urban settings to rural areas has been attributed to the mobility of farmers who visit sex workers in cities, for example in Ethiopia. In countries and areas where safer sex precautions are either unavailable or not practiced for cultural reasons, prostitution is an active disease vector for all STDs, including HIV/AIDS.

In this way, prostitution is that kind of sexuality in which one sells sex to the different clients in exchange for money or goods. Prostitution is not an interest but a compulsion. In this modern age, where there is a cut-throat competition for livelihood, it is very much difficult for uneducated and unskilled people to survive. Even particularly, it is far more difficult for women who are already gendered from time-immemorial by virtue of their femininity. As prostitution does not need any especial dexterity and is very lucrative in comparison to other jobs-even those very skilled ones-many such women all over the world are engaging in prostitution on a daily basis. This tendency is more in underdeveloped and developing countries like Nepal, in modern times. This profession has, on the one hand, mushroomed the possibility of venereal diseases like HIV/AIDS and has also rendered sexual violence and crime upon those destitute sex workers resulting in anarchy in social values. These all nuances are ultimately stigmatizing those women's self from many sides in our patriarchal society. They are stigmatized firstly by virtue of being females and secondly for being a so-called immoral prostitutes.



Stigma mirrors culture and society. Lerita M. Coleman says that "Stigma represents a view of life; a set of personal and social constructs, a set of social relations and social relationship, a form of social reality. It is a form of social categorization" (216). The Greeks, who originated the term stigma to refer to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places. In Christian time metaphorically that was defined in two ways: first referred to bodily signs of holy grace that took the form of eruptive blossoms on the skin; the second, bodily signs of physical disorder. Today the term is applied more to the disgrace itself than to the bodily evidence of it. Barbarin considers "stigma as a form of negative stereotyping has a way of neutralizing positive qualities and undermining the identity of stigmatized individuals" (222).

What is undesired or stigmatized is heavily dependent on the social context and to some extent arbitrarily defined. Goffman states that "Stigma is equivalent to an undesired differentness" (217). All human differences are potentially stigmatizable. "As we move out of one social context where a difference is desired, into another context where the difference is undesired, we begin to feel the effects of stigma" (217). Those possessing power, the dominant group, can determine which human differences are desired and undesired. Any "non-stigmatized" person can easily become "stigmatized". Human differences serve as the basis for stigma. Feeling stigmatized is virtually an inescapable fate because stigmas differ depending upon the cultural and the historical period. When we make comparison then we can feel different. Stigmatization or feeling of stigmatized is a consequence of social comparison. So, stigma depends upon many factors, e.g. geographical location,

culture, etc. There are some stigmatized conditions which appear escapable or may be temporary. Being a new professor, being 7 feet tall, having cancer being the AIDS-victim, being black or being physically disfigured or mentally retarded and being a woman and being a prostitute can all lead to feelings of stigmatization.

In specific culture or within particular social group some human differences are valued and desired and other human differences are devalued feared or stigmatized. The mainstream society defines which is desired or which is stigmatized/undesired. Our society is such society where a woman is stigmatized because of her femininity. Men have created different stereotypes about man and woman on the basis of gender discrimination/role and they give good attributes to man and negative attributes to woman on the basis of which categorization, they stigmatize womanliness/femininity. By defining the woman as passive dependent, emotional, man stigmatizes woman. This patriarchal society demands man to be independent and savior and in the same way expects woman to be fragile, emotional and submissive. One step further, if the woman is from a rejected group like that of sex workers, she is doubly stigmatized: one for being woman and another for being a degraded prostitute which is undesired and unaccepted in mainstream cultural set-up.

On the one hand, stigmatization is the feeling of being inferior or "looked down upon" by majority or dominant group. As prostitutes, because of their femininity/womenliness are given the stereotypes like passive, emotional, fragile and recipient by the patriarchy as a whole, because of this gender role they feel stigmatized in the eyes of patriarchy. On the other hand, as stigmatization or feeling of stigmatized is a consequence of social comparison that superiorizes and valorizes one group at the cost of interiorizing and stigmatizing other, they feel inferior and stigmatized because their sexuality is judged to be abominable and abnormal in

relation to the sexuality of mainstream culture which uses it only for reproduction. Furthermore, this stigma of a social group as Erving Goffman in his article "Selections from Stigma" opines, "can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family" (205). The same stigma, in the words of Lerita M. Coleman, also "help to maintain the exploitation of such groups and preserve the existing social structure" (22).

In this way, Society established the means of categorizing person and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories. While the stranger is present before us, his possessing attributes make him different from others. Because our society desires different attributes than his or her so, this person becomes bad, or dangerous or weak. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such attribute is a stigma. Its discrediting effect is very extensive: he is sometimes called a handicap. It constitutes a discrepancy between virtual and actual social identity.

In the 1960s Erving Goffman proposed taxonomy of stigma with three dimensions:

First there are abominations of the body the various physical deformities. Next there are blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, unnatural passions, and dishonesty and treacherous. For example, mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, unemployment and suicidal attempt. Finally there are the tribal stigma of race, nation, gender, age and religion. (205)

By these definitions, of course, we come to learn that the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption, society exercises varieties of discrimination.

Unthinkingly society changes one's life. Society constructs stigma theory, an ideology

to explain his/her inferiority and accounts for the danger he/she represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences. Describing the situation of a stigmatized person, Erving Goffman says:

In some cases it will be possible for him to make a direct attempt to correct what he sees as the objective basis of his failing, as when a physically deformed person undergoes plastic surgery, a blind person eye treatment, an illiterate remedial education, a homosexual psychotherapy where such repair is possible. (207)

Identity of stigmatized persons is also denied by the society. Society gives negative attributes to those people and later those attributes are stigmatized. Then that person who feels inferior and weak wants to go to repair centre. Physically crippled person undergoes plastic surgery. A blind person wants to go to eye treatment. Illiterate and homosexual persons are also stigmatized in this society. So, they are also in search for their treatment. To be accepted by this society, the stigmatized individual attempts to correct his/her condition.

One stigmatized (physically deformed) person even can't get human love. That is more tragedy than physical deformity. There are some people who are not crippled but think themselves as inferior than others. Such as women who felt inferior and different because of ugliness or inability to bear children, or helplessness in contacting people and many other reasons. Another example may be of prostitutes who feel inferior and unaccepted because of their so-called contaminating and immoral profession of prostitution which is causing ostracism by the mainstream culture. These stigmatized individual may find that s/he feels unsure of how the normal will identify and receive him/her. Uncertainty of status for the disabled person obtains over a wide range of social interactions in addition to that of employment. The

blind, the ill, the deaf, the crippled can never be sure what the attitude of a new acquaintance will be until the contact has been made. This is exactly the position of the adolescent, the light-skinned Negro, the second generation immigrant, the socially mobile person and the woman who has entered a predominantly masculine occupation. This uncertainty arises not merely from the stigmatized individual's not knowing which of several s/he will be placed in, but also, where the placement is favorable, from his/her knowing that in their hearts the others may be defining him/her in terms of his/her stigma.

Minor failings or incidental impropriety may be interpreted as a direct expression of his/her stigmatized differentness. Ex-mental patients are sometimes afraid to engage in sharp interchange with employer because of what a show of emotion might be taken as a sign of mental defectives. Erving Goffman adds a further insight to this point: "It also happens that if a low intellectual ability gets into some sort of trouble the difficulty is more or less automatically attributed to 'mental defect' whereas if a person of 'normal intelligence' gets into a similar difficulty, it is not regarded as symptomatic of anything in particular" (211). There is respect for normal. But in contrast, there is no place and position for stigmatized persons in our society. These stigmatized persons get no respect from others. It is because of discrimination between normal and stigmatized person. Minor failings may be interpreted as a direct expression of his/her stigmatized 'differentness'.

Stigma is typically a social process, experienced or anticipated, characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame, or devaluation that results from experience or reasonable anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or group. Lerita M. Coleman claims, "The degree of stigmatization might depend on how undesired the difference is in a particular social group" (217).for example as free sex is

unaccepted in our Nepalese mainstream societies, one social group like those of commercial sex workers Badi women, which is carrying out prostitution as its cultural profession is ostracized and rejected because of differences in cultural values. Here, they are regarded as abnormal because they use their sexuality for subsistence as opposed to mainstream culture which uses it only for reproduction. In the same way, a white American could feel temporarily stigmatized when visiting Japan due to difference in height. Bajhangi people could feel stigmatized with Kathmandu living people when they come in Kathmandu. Because there is difference in manner among those Bajhangi and Kathmandu living people. But the Bajhangi people in Bajhang don't feel the effects of stigma. Thus, the sense of being stigmatized or having a stigma is inextricably tied to social context. Moving from one social or cultural context to another can change the definitions and the consequences of stigma.

People who are stigmatized or acquire a stigma lose their place in the social hierarchy. Consequently, most people want to ensure that they are counted in the non-stigmatized "majority". Stigma allows some individuals to feel superior to others. In order for one person to feel superior, there must be another person who is perceived to be or who actually feels inferior. So, some people's attributes are stigmatized in order for the many non stigmatized people to feel good about them. Stigma is constructed by cultures, by social groups, and by individuals to designate some human differences as discrediting. The stigmatization process becomes a powerful social tool in which one group becomes powerful and starts dominating other group.

Some categories of stigmatized people (e.g., woman and prostitutes) can not easily alter their stigmas in the patriarchal society. For example, women and prostitutes feel permanently stigmatized in contexts, where their differentness is undesired and in social environments they cannot easily escape. Hence, "Power, social

influence, and social control play a major role in the stigmatization process" (219). In mainstream patriarchal society, men give different and negative attributes to women as a whole. Men become dominant group and women become dominated group. Men, the dominant group who have power in their hand make rules and they impose those rules upon women who are excluded in every aspect. Patriarchy is a social system in which maleness and masculinity confer a privileged position of power and authority, where man is the self to which woman is other. In the society having power in their hands, especially men, create negative images about women and give negative stereotypes/attributes to femininity. In the same way, it is also the case with the marginalized groups like Badi prostitutes who are stigmatized at the cost of the superiority of power holder mainstream people. Those people have created a discourse about reproductive sex and disseminated it all over. In this way they produce speeches, write books and newspaper and they create truth.

When these men produce a discourse, it provides knowledge. This discourse creates knowledge about something and this knowledge helps to create the truth. The power is generated in society by producing the discourses and by constructing the truths. Michel Foucault, in his *Truth and Power*, says that "Effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (1139). Truth, then, is itself a product of relations of power and of the systems in which it flows, and it changes when systems change. History is written to maintain power. History is a record of male leadership, has been used, perhaps subconsciously to reinforce the idea that women are insignificant and subordinate, therefore they belong to the private sphere. In this patriarchal society, in the name of gender discrimination men always dominate over women and they stigmatize the femininity. Even further Foucault, in his *History of Sexuality: Volume one*, analyzes that the present bourgeois

culture which is itself continuation of Victorian bourgeois culture has confined sexuality only to utilitarian purpose of reproduction. In Victorian puritanical era every sexual transgression was penalized. There was general and studied silence about it which was repressive in nature. The same hypocritical, puritanical and patriarchal Victorian notion of sexuality which confined sexuality to a bedroom shared by heterogeneous sexes opting for reproduction is still dominating us. This has created the discourse of reproductive sexuality to stigmatize other sexualities like prostitution, homosexuality etc. according to Foucault. In the nineteenth century the sexuality was deployed by Victorian bourgeoisie which stigmatized sexual heterogeneities other than reproductive sexuality. This 'deployment of sexuality' with powerful discourse had evolved as a means of "controlling the working classes and sub-proletariat in Foucault's view. In this way, the same discourse now has stigmatized prostitution.

On the basis of gender discrimination, patriarchy stigmatizes the activities and attributes of feminine traits. Gender is a social construction of sex. Sex is biological but gender is a social construct. Gender is the culturally variable elaboration of sex, as a hierarchical pair where male is coded superior, positive and female inferior and negative. Certain negative attributes are attached to femininity such as woman is emotional, dependent, needful, capricious and timid and is morally inferior, bad, sinful, and dirty. Even she is regarded physically, intellectually and spiritually inferior. So, stigma helps to maintain the existing social hierarchy.

Stigma emerges from three important aspects. They are fear, stigma's primary affective component; stereotyping, it's primary cognitive component, and social control; is primary behavioral component. It is difficult to eliminate the stigma from society. But changing political and economic climates are important to the stigmatization and destigmatization process. Stigmatization or stereotyping is not



automatic. In some historical instances, society appears to have recognized full human potential when it was required, while ignoring certain devalued traits, Terry describes one event in which stereotype or stigmatized individual/group is modified. He comments, "When women were needed to occupy traditionally male occupations in the United States during World War II, gender differences were ignored as they have been ignored in other societies when women were needed for combat" (222).

Stigmas will disappear when the society no longer legitimizes social exclusion and segregation. No stigmatized people play an important role in the destigmatization process. Stigmatized people have choices to accept their stigmatized condition or continue to fight for more integration into non- stigmatized communities. Women can counter with patriarchal tendency. Women can choose to ignore social norms regarding stigma. Women can raise their voice against patriarchy and can resist with the stigmatization process. Feminist Philosopher Judith Butler argues that gender was not an essence but a performance. It was a set of mandatory practices imposed from birth and repeated again and again in doomed effort to get it right.

This patriarchal society, giving negative attributes to femininity, tries to dominate women. Defining women as passive, timid and dependent, patriarchy stigmatizes femininity. But women who are conscious about their condition in the society are fighting with this ill thought of patriarchy. This patriarchal society has dominated female voice. So female are compelled to resist against the bad thought of this society. Kathleen Gough argues, "Male tries to use them as objects in male transactions" (69). Male considers that women is weaker in her reasoning, narrow in her vision, intellectually short sighted, aids no sense of justice. So, this ill thought of society should be changed. Femininity is a set of critically defined characteristics. Male owner is a myth that makes itself true. Beauvoir writes, "The work of men; they

describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth” (41). Power to create the world from one’s point of view is power in its male form. Woman through male eyes is sex object, and male is a subject.

Socially femaleness means femininity, which means attractiveness to men, which means sexually attractiveness. Good girls are “attractive” and bad girls are “provocative” .Women are defined by their powerlessness and sexual objectification. But through their awareness on these matters, women analyze their experience and understand their condition. Those who are powerful and brave can dig out and uproot the established codes of society. The women who are brave can oppose the established unjust rules. But those who are powerless can not strike back and suffer from many stigmas as Badi women are doing in present Nepali societies.

The above discussed discussion has helped this research work to unfold and delineate the doubly stigmatized position of Badi women in Nepalese patriarchal society of contemporary times. It has also helped to criticize patriarchal society’s discriminate behavior on Badi women. On the basis of their gender role and sexuality (the profession of prostitution), Badi women are stigmatized by the patriarchal society as a whole. Badi women, from the very dawn of their life, engage in the prostitution to sustain their family. Their sexuality is also enjoyed by their husbands, on the other. The worth noting fact here is that the force that commodifies their body/sexuality, by pushing them in this profession of prostitution on the one hand , and by enjoying their sexuality on the other , is the same, that is patriarchy as a whole whether it is the males from their own families or that from mainstream patriarchal set up. In this way, on the one hand, they are exploited sexually by the males of their society who have commodified their sexuality at two levels: familial and social. On the other hand, the same profession of prostitution that they carry on in the name of culture is stigmatized

by mainstream culture. Thus ,this study seeks to prove that the sex practiced by the Badi women not only subverts the traditional notion of reproductive sex and demeans motherhood as gender construct, but also exploits their body as a sexual commodity causing the stigmatization of their self, doubly.

This discourse has given this research a perspective and insight to observe and analyze the issue of Badi women's femininity and sexuality in a fastidious manner. It has enabled us to understand and analyzed the doubly stigmatized position of Badi women due to their gender role and sexuality, in the hand of man as a whole –whether their own males or those from mainstream patriarchal society. It has also helped the research to know and show the deplorable condition of Badi women in the contemporary times which is because of the 'stigma' of their femininity and sexuality.

### III: Sexuality as Stigma: A Study of Badi Women

Badi women from the very dawn of their life, shortly after first menstruation begin their sexual profession formally, which is traditionally inaugurated through the rite of *Nathiya Kholne*. This rite has in fact perpetuated the trade and transaction of Badi women's flesh. Badi girls are compelled to act as instruments of sustaining their family and themselves selling their bodies to the clients from different walks of life and cultural backgrounds including those from mainstream cultural set-up. Though the family structure looks like matriarchal pivoting around women for earning and decision making, this seems an illusion where patriarchal norms utilize woman's sex power by commodifying it for monetary purpose. These all nuances show that these Badi women lack agency because of which their gender/ femininity and sexuality (prostitution) have been stigmatized by mainstream patriarchal society. In this way, they are doubly exploited through the stigmatization of their gender and sexuality. It is first, from their own men who first enjoy along with commodifying their body/sexuality for monetary benefit and second, from mainstream patriarchal culture that warms their bed at night and at broad day light hypocritically ostracizes and humiliates them (which shows its double standard nature) stigmatizing their profession of prostitution -which is in fact a compulsion- as contamination and moral degradation. Furthermore, the discouragement from marrying by their parents and brothers for sustaining their family is even next instance of their being passive patients which is by the virtue of the stigma attached to their subordinated gender.

The social value of gender discrimination treats man and women differently stigmatizing one at the cost of other's superiority. Gender, which is social and cultural elaboration of sex, not only divides human race in to two categories and treats them differently, it privileges the male over female and stigmatizes the latter making

masculine half of the equation positive and the feminine negative. According to its gender construction, our patriarchal society expects women to wash, cook, clean, bear children, and be confined within domestic chores only. Here, women are rendered unable to revolt against patriarchal set-up and to refuse their appointed labours. They are also unable to challenge the old images and myths because of their lack of agency caused from the stigmatization by the patriarchy. The major requirement of traditional femininity: beauty, self-effacement, fragility and domesticity are still deep-rooted in the minds of people. Badi women are also undergoing the same deplorable situation in the present context of Nepal which is because of the virtue of their gender role or femininity. As stigma with negative stereotyping neutralizes the positive qualities of stigmatized individuals undermining their identity at the cost of valorizing other, it has dehumanized the Badi women and their self-existence for empowering and recognizing the males as a whole.

Furthermore, though the Badi community appears matriarchal giving a women central role, it is not so in reality. According to an old Badi Woman Sita Badi “They are given pivotal role not because of anything but because they are seen as the only source of income of their family. Badi women are ravaged before their males’ (fathers, husbands and brothers) eyes who instead of sympathy digest it by saying ‘it’s our culture’” (interview, own translation). This commodification of their body by their ‘males’ has created their pseudo-superiority in the family. Moreover, according to her “they have to satisfy their husbands’ desires; bear and nurture their children; take care of their families; do all the domestic chores; and sustain all the family members any how-even selling their bodies” (interview, own translation). Even before marriage, the Badi girls do the same works which are ascribed to them by the

traditional gender mechanism of this patriarchal society. As a whole, all these exploitations are erasing their agency and stigmatizing their gender day by day.

Another middle-aged Badi women Rupa Nepali, in the study area opined that “they, in any way have to sustain their family and children though their insensitive husbands lazily pass their days blowing the sweat of their wives in dust indulging in liquor and gambling on a daily basis” (interview, own translation). In spite of this, “they suppose their husbands ‘gods’ and respect their in-laws very much at the cost of their subjugation” (Pokheral, 37). Those possessing power, the dominant group of males has determined the stigmatizable features in women because of which they have become the scapegoats who have to sell them for others’ life. Rupa further shared that “They, in the course of sustaining their families through prostitution happen to be impregnated by their clients and give birth to those illegal children (bastard, as tagged by mainstream culture) whom they have to nurture on their own laboring hard through out their life (interview, own translation).” These are all nuances of their exploitation by patriarchy as a whole. It is because, on the one hand, their insensitive husbands, fathers and brothers act as agents for pushing their wives, daughters and sisters in the gutter of prostitution for eking out livelihood of their family while they themselves as parasite enjoy and blow out that money. On the other hand, the men from mainstream society exploit them sexually and impregnate them which become a life- long burden for Badi women. In this way, though both of the groups of exploiters are from different communities ‘socially’, they have a similarity of being “males” ‘culturally’ who are supposed to be superior than so called “petty” females” according to patriarchal gender norm that is trampling the femininity constantly.

Badi parents are much happier when they get baby girl because they will be the source of easy money. During the field study, some of the informants like Tila Badi and Uma Nepali unfolded that “they were sad and wept when they got a baby boy and were happy in the opposite case” (interview, own translation). This myth about Badi women’s role has been constructed by their patriarchy. Badi women, who are stigmatized or acquire a stigma, lose their place in the social hierarchy. Stigma allows those males to feel superior to females. As in order for one person to feel superior, there must be another person who is perceived to be or who actually feels inferior, so, Badi women’s attributes are stigmatized in order for the males to feel good about them. Stigma is constructed by cultures, by social groups, and by individuals to designate some human differences as discrediting. The stigmatization process becomes a powerful social tool in which one group becomes powerful and starts dominating other group. In fact, the same is the case with women as a whole and Badi women in particular. The so-called males of our society have stigmatized femininity for dominating them perpetually. One step further, Badi women as a whole are stigmatized by mainstream culture for their prostitution because mainstream wants to dominate them for asserting its supremacy.

Women are brainwashed with different myths of gender role from the very dawn of their life. This gradually inculcates slavish attitude in them. The patriarchy always tries to produce ‘servants’ not humans out of women. In the same way, as a young Badi girl Srijana Badi expressed “a Badi girl in her society, from very early of her life, learns that she is made only for prostitution and to aspire to any other profession except that is unnatural, unacceptable as well as heretical. She also learns the same discourse from her mothers and sisters who are already the victim of patriarchal gender mechanism” (interview, own translation). Moreover, she added,

“they are not even allowed to be in contact with the girls of other communities and deprived of school education” (interview, own translation). These all activities, as she said, if critically analyzed, “impede their personal development and brainwash them with only one thing-they have to preserve and carry out prostitution relentlessly” (interview, own translation).

This patriarchal society has designed many “myths” and “cultural logics” and “weapons” of stigmatization to perpetuate its domination and exploitation on women. For example, as stated by Srijana “even within Badi community the rites like *Nathiya Kholne* are perpetuating and authorizing the commodification of women’s body/sexuality and as a result the patriarchy is prolonging its domination on Badi women”(interview, own translation). Furthermore, the Badi mothers’ seeking the clients for their daughters indicates towards the psychological corruption, colonization as well as hegemonic rule of women by selfish patriarchy. In this way, this fact clarifies the internal colonization of Badi women in the red claws of its patriarchy which stigmatizing their gender promotes such activities like prostitution for monetary gain wresting their agency.

The traditional patriarchal society seeks to embed the male values and treats women rudely and cruelly. It defines women as passive, weak and silent and stigmatizes them. They are victimized by socio-economic realities of this society. Our patriarchal society is deeply rooted in male values because of which the values of female are suppressed. Badi women, because of their gender stigma, are also undergoing same situation and carrying many obligations in present times and their voice is also silenced cruelly. According to Gauri Badi “even their stigma is much more piercing because of their social strata also along with gender that undermines them as ‘Badini’ (a derogative and stigmatizing word for Badi women)” (interview,



own translation). Moreover, the Badi women are trapped according to males' desires. It means the gender role and prostitution have effaced their female subjectivity and identity. How pitiable situation of women in society is where patriarchal are deeply rooted? Patriarchy determines certain criteria for women and thus easily stigmatizes them. Badi women's attributes are also stigmatized by patriarchy. Their males suppose that they must sustain their families by whatever means they get.

The patriarchal structure starts criticizing these females who have undaunted character. By stigmatizing women, the men try to keep these women under their feet because they want to perpetuate their subordination. When they want to get rid of these cultural values which have plagued them so long, they are taken as heretical and are rejected by patriarchal milieu. First, Women, whether from Badi community or outside are considered heretical when they reject male myths and values. One step further, let alone those common patriarchal values, according to Gauri Badi they are even vehemently criticized and unaccepted if they merely reject the culture of prostitution imposed by their males from time immemorial" (interview, own translation).

The patriarchal society subdues women and stigmatizes their femininity through its gendered discourse of marriage for making them its subjects. In this regard, Badi women, because they are the wife of 'someone', have to be their obedient follower according to gender discourse of patriarchy. In Uma Badi's view "they have to respect all the family members (in-laws) and not only obey but also worship their husband by the virtue of being women" (interview, own translation). Their self-respect and 'ego' is subdued by their husbands who stigmatize their gender as inferior, petty and undesirable. This is a live example of how stigmatized people lose their respect and position in the society dominated by those so called 'normal'

people. The Badi women have thus, lost the sense of their agency, self- respect, self-existence, and identity. An informant Manisara Badi unfolded that “they even are not known by their own names rather they are known as their husbands’ wives, in their society” (interview, own translation). The daily business of maternity, marriage and domestic life are all defining features ascribed by patriarchy to femininity, which in return enable the same structure for its further stigmatization that is in the form of ‘power of images and images of power’.

The woman has various identities instead of only one identity, which is her ‘name’. She is known as wife, daughter-in-law and sister-in-law after marriage. Her earlier identity is lost. Society questions on her creativity and bounds her only within four walls of her house. This society does not give any chance to a woman and stigmatizes her giving different stereotypes like passive, inferior, emotional dependent, cunning and engaged in domestic affairs. The same is the condition of Badi women in present times, who are living a dead life. Manisara views, “even as girls, they lose their identity existence and name only to be used by their fathers and brothers as instruments at their vested interest and self-centered will”(interview, own translation). Furthermore, they are trapped by this patriarchy. Their subordination in their family and society is the visible instance of this trap. Their self-respect is doomed in this society. Their identity, subjectivity, and specific role have been subjected to their performances within the domestic arena. Women are forced on the domestic labor force and reproduction. A man thinks that the woman is the property of his own. The women’s right of freedom has been snatched by this society. In the same manner, as she holds “Badi men think that their wives are their property. They are even not allowed to choose their jobs freely and as a result imposed prostitution becomes their inevitable fate. While in fathers home they are deprived of outer

contact which could have been a milestone in their personal development” (interview, own translation). A local journalist as well as researcher Om Prasad Sharma who has an extensive study of this community, opines that “Badi women’s duty is to fulfill their husbands’ lust and also sustain their families by prostituting themselves day and night”(interview, own translation). This is because, in our traditional Hindu culture, women are expected to be self-sacrificing, for their family. Personal desires and dreams become subordinate to the good of the family. But nobody asks about their interests, desires, and dreams and cares their health. These all are the consequences of stigmatized condition of Badi women in their daily lives.

In our contemporary Nepali societies, women are kept in suffocative situation by men. Men and women are born equally free and independent members of the human race, equally endowed with intelligence and ability. So also, women should have equal opportunities to exercise their rights and liberty. Nature has given equal rights to them but this patriarchal society always discriminates between men and women. This society imposes male values upon women and this forces women only to live within the four walls of a house. There is domestic violence. The wives are not allowed to call their husbands by their names. Even marriage alters women’s life: their intellect, strength and courage are subdued by their in-laws and they don’t dare to go against the patriarchal values and remain silent accepting it as their *karma* (fate). These all above examples in fact are the male strategy for stigmatizing femininity as a whole. By the same token, Badi women also are stigmatized as well as subjugated by their husbands and in-laws. Sharma further added that “also, the fatalistic attitude of taking their miserable condition for granted is a much prevalent social malady in the psychology of the most Badi women” (interview, own translation). Moreover, he

further puts “they also lack the embryo of resistance and thus continue to be victimized by patriarchal agenda” (interview, own translation).

This society has portrayed different stereotypes about women. This stereotyping differs according to the direct benefit and convenience of the patriarchal system. Men tag their wives ‘angel’ when they are in jovial mood and instantly are not hesitant to tag them even ‘devil, in the opposite case. A wife’s duty is to please her husband. In this patriarchal society a woman’s place is at her husband’s feet. So, a woman is not allowed to suggest and control her husband let alone scolding him. She is supposed only the instrument of pleasure to her husband. This is also the case with Badi women who are only the instrument of pleasure for their husbands. According to Mina Nepali, still another Badi respondent, “They even are compelled to advocate and bargain about the prostitution of their daughters and daughter-in-laws though they don’t want to, now, because they are under their husbands’ feet being trampled and kicked as per their wish” (interview, own translation). Likewise, patriarchy always wants to keep women in ignorant position. Badi women, according to her, “are also kept ignorant being deprived from school education. They are tied with tradition and cultural belief that a woman should not interrupt the decisions made by male members of the family and society. So, they are blindly continuing their duty and profession of prostitution that has turned them mere recipients” (interview, own translation). In this way, they are even kept as assets and are commodified for monetary gain of their males. “Even in this case, the males don’t pay any attention to their pangs but only regard them as sexual objects stigmatizing them further” (interview, own translation).

Mina further explores that “in Badi community girls are not allowed to marry early and according to their wish because they are the only source of easy money which patriarchy does not want to lose. If they are beautiful the case becomes more

sever. Their beauty is their curse forever, because they are paid money according to how beautiful they are” (interview, own translation). She says “even the local elites give them debt if their daughters are beautiful. This fact allures the Badi patriarchy for captivating them until they are able to ‘lay golden eggs’. Even if they marry adamantly, they are forcefully torn apart from their husbands. In some cases, they are even penalized and forced for compensation” (interview, own translation). The most surprising point is that even the Badi men don’t want to marry from their own community as far as possible. It is because they don’t want to snatch other’s (that are like them) source of income. This fact shows that even the younger generations of Badi men are facilitating, fertilizing and empowering the mechanism of women exploitation deployed by patriarchal power structure. In this way, the suppression and stigmatization of women in patriarchal society has developed as culture and tradition.

Moreover, men think themselves superior to women. Women are made prisoners inside four walls as Badi women are made. They are powerless to step outside and choose other survival strategies though they are keen to. It is because the patriarchal structure- whether of their own families or of outside society- stigmatizes and subdues their gender killing their interests and possibilities. Even further, men take benefit from women defining them as passive, inactive and dependent. Their emotions and feelings become totally paralyzed being saturated with the stigma bestowed to femininity. This patriarchal society demands women to be gentle, submissive, coy and morally upright. Women’s overall development is blocked by the strict moral code of patriarchy which is even more active in backward Badi community.

This patriarchal society doesn’t allow women to express their desire and to be free from domestic bondage. It, creating stereotypical images about women, wants to

snare women in its claustrophobic hands. The patriarchal society from the very beginning gives negative and antithetical attributes to femininity in general and Badi women in particular, and forces them inculcate that femininity is the true nature of women. It says, women are inferior, passive, and domestic-minded and can't go outside from their homes. The patriarchal society in this way stigmatizes them cruelly, resting their agency. And because of this lack of agency they are unable to resist the inhuman treatment as well as stigmatization on them. According to Mina Nepali "these Badi women are undergoing this situation of disability from the long time which has stigmatized and exploited them from many sides- from their own family and mainstream society as a whole" (interview, own translation).

Patriarchy has a fear that if women are capable of doing something they will challenge the established system and its codes, so they must be kept under males' command. For this, the patriarchy stigmatizes the women with all the negative attributes it has ever known. One step ahead, the Badi women, being so-called untouchable and harlot are regarded doubly dangerous for mainstream patriarchal power structure. So, it naturally wants to retard their potentialities and possibilities, relentlessly, for perpetuating its superiority and immortalizing its longevity. In this way, because of this discrimination of patriarchy Badi women will never succeed to come out of the dehumanizing pit of gender stigma.

In the same way, not only gender but also sexuality of Badi women who practice the prostitution as their survival strategy, has been vociferously repudiated, rejected, ostracized and stigmatized by this mainstream patriarchal society. It is because it has adopted the heterogeneous reproductive sexuality as its kernel norm from time immemorial. Because of this stigmatization, Badi women are undergoing a trauma that has been making them living dead. As stigma is the result of the feeling of

being rejected and unaccepted not only the feeling of difference, here what is so emotionally traumatic for Badi women is not the physical act of prostitution which is different from the reproductive sexuality of mainstream culture, rather the stigma that it places on it. What is undesired or stigmatized is heavily dependent on the social context. Stigma is equivalent to an undesired differentness and all human differences are potentially stigmatizable. As we move out of one social context where a difference is desired, into another context where the difference is undesired, we begin to feel the effects of stigma. Though, there is no stigma on prostitution inside Badi community- and in fact it is a cultural norm- it is vehemently stigmatized outside their society by mainstream patriarchal set-up. It means, the same prostitution may be dangerous in the Nepali societies, but can be normal and even necessary in western societies where prostitution is legitimized and is valid. So, stigma is contextual that depends upon the conceptualization of any particular society.

Furthermore, those possessing power, the dominant group like mainstream patriarchy in this context, determines which human differences are desired and undesired. Any "non-stigmatized" person can easily become "stigmatized". Feeling stigmatized is virtually an inescapable fate because stigmas differ depending upon the cultures and the historical periods. When we make comparison then we can feel to be different. Stigmatization is a consequence of social comparison. So, stigma depends upon many factors, e.g. geographical location, culture, etc. In the same way, Badi women's being a prostitute leads to feelings of stigmatization. Her being a prostitute is an inescapable stigma in our Nepali society which is very stringent about sexuality. In this regard according to a Badi woman Junamaya's experience, "when she compares herself with the woman of mainstream culture that practices normal sexuality unlike

her prostitution which is tagged ‘deviant’ by mainstream culture, she feels abnormal, excluded and stigmatized”(interview, case study, own translation).

The mainstream patriarchal society demands us to practice heterogeneous reproductive sexuality as its long-cherished norm. The bourgeois system, for exercising its power and control over working class and sub-proletariat has limited sexuality to the bedroom of the legitimate couples opting for reproduction from long time back. As they, as Permila Nepali narrates, “are because of compulsion (of patriarchy and their stomach) practicing deviant sexuality of prostitution different than that of mainstream culture, they are as a result, stigmatized and ostracized by this society pejoratively being lashed and labeled as Badini, Beshya, Pater, Randi and Bhalu (common derogative and slang words for prostitutes used by this society)” (interview, own translation). According to some Badi women, like Dhana Badi and Homkala Badi, “some people tried to evict them from society blaming them of corrupting their youths while some stopped them from entering the temple not to infuriate the gods, in the past” (interview, own translation). As a result, they, for their existence, even further use the same prostitution as the means of retaliation to subvert the notion of reproductive sexuality long-cherished by mainstream bourgeoisie culture. So, by practicing prostitution, Badi women are also striking back and shaking the mainstream cultural foundation to draw its deaf ear and black eye on their miserable condition with the hope of subsequent relief and rehabilitation from the side of power-enjoyers. This reaction may be also their endeavor for repairing their stigma.

Moreover, as the society, denying the identity of stigmatized persons gives them negative attributes which are again stigmatized further, those individuals suffering from inferiority complex, go to repair their cause of stigma. In the same way, Badi women also in present times want to repair their stigma by leaving the



prostitution. They, according to Dhana Badi, “leaving this, want education, training and employment opportunity from the side of the government”. According to Badi women like Manisara and Permila, “ they will leave prostitution if they get these all for being self dependent” (interview, own translation ). Moreover, The old Badi parents also are realizing the discrediting effects of stigma now and want their daughters to leave that. But, after all, it is only their dream, which is overlooked by the indifferent state mechanism. So, as Manisara adds, “being helpless and hapless they have again taken to prostitution as their survival strategy because of their stark poverty” (interview, own translation).

In some cultures, some human differences are valued and desired at the cost of subduing and inferiorizing other human differences. Our mainstream society which is high-caste elite governed, determines the scope and definitions of stigma. In our society where even a woman is stigmatized because of her femininity by giving her different stereotypes how can the woman from a lower and abhorred caste like Badi community escape it? She is even stigmatized from many sides: for example, for being woman and for being untouchable and a degraded prostitute which is undesired and unaccepted in mainstream cultural set-up. In this way, Badi women lose their place in the social hierarchy due to stigmatization. As for one to feel superior there must be another who is perceived or feels inferior, so their attributes are stigmatized in order for the mainstream people to feel good about them. The stigmatization process has become a powerful social tool with which the mainstream culture is dominating the weaker group like that of Badi women through the stigmatization of their prostitution though it hypocritically enjoys it at night, secretly. Even further, according to some Badi women like Gauri Badi, “they torture them sexually and in the case of their retaliation they threaten that they have bought them and they can treat

them in whatever way they like and enjoy. If the case becomes severe, they intimidate them in the name of police trial and journalists' defamation" (interview, own translation). In this way, the double standard dealing of the mainstream patriarchy has even doubly stigmatized Badi women: first through exploitation of their sexuality and next through their ostracism and rejection as well as constant intimidation.

In a patriarchal society, a woman is viewed and judged in terms of masculine value system. It is the man who defines her according to their needs and conveniences and she is kept in stigmatized position and feared to resist against her position. By the same token, Badi woman on the one hand, is stigmatized because of being a woman in her society. She, as Dhan Badi poignantly states "has to accept what role she has been given by the men of her society. As Dhana Badi poignantly states, even going out of her society and culture, she has another stigma of being so called untouchable and immoral prostitute. That is vehemently unfavoured, undesired and stigmatized by the so-called high-class mainstream society" (interview, own translation). This may be because of the power that those stigma definers relish. They fear of losing their domination. Because of this they give little encouragement to those women for education and pursuing other professions.

Similarly, stigmatization is the feeling of being inferior or "looked down upon" by majority or dominant group. As Badi women because of their femininity are given the stereotypes like passive, emotional, fragile and recipient by the patriarchy as a whole, because of this gender role they feel stigmatized in the eyes of patriarchy. On the other hand, as stigmatization or feeling of stigmatized is a consequence of social comparison that superiorizes and valorizes one group at the cost of interiorizing and stigmatizing other, Badi women feel inferior and stigmatized because their sexuality (profession of prostitution) is judged to be immoral, abominable and abnormal in

relation to the sexuality of mainstream culture which uses it only for reproduction. As a result, Badi women also are suffering from the tribal stigma of prostitution which has been transmitted through their predecessors and is equally contaminating all of them still today. This stigma of a particular social group is very much deep-rooted in the traditional societies like that of Nepal as we are experiencing on a daily basis. Because of the same stigma, according to her “many schools have refused to enroll the Badi girls in schools by blaming that they would corrupt other students by their deviant behaviors. Furthermore, due to the same reason as some Badi women told, friendship and proximity with them is seen negatively by orthodox mainstream culture” (interview, own translation).

Although, all women experience devaluation and stigmatization, by virtue of their femininity, some women’ because of their role or behavior become even more stigmatized. Among those heretical behaviors prostitution is considered the gravest one which in our societies has stigmatized Badi women throughout their life. A prostitute is a woman who sells her sexual services to the clients in exchange for monetary or other gains. According to Dhana, “she is set apart from other women and stigmatized in our society as promiscuous, lecherous and abominable. Badi women are also undergoing the similar fate of stigmatization in contemporary times because of their prostitution” (interview, own translation).

The Badi prostitutes are trapped in either economic or emotional bondage and are under slave-like condition. While asked about the causes of their prostitution they responded that “they are in prostitution because of two reasons: first, their empty bellies that are a direct result of their ostracism by mainstream society and their husbands’ parasitic nature. Next, even if they, by chance got to work, their labor market earning is often much lower than what they earn from prostitution, on the

other. This fact also has dragged them in the gutter of prostitution as their only survival strategy, in spite of the constant stigmatization by mainstream society” (interview, own translation). Furthermore, this society has constructed many myths and stereotypes about them for their further stigmatization. According to one of the myths, if only Badi women touch the land also, it will be accursed and flouted with barrenness and sterility. This is because, according to this myth, as Tila Badi narrates, “the first ancestors of Badi had cultivated fried seeds on their lands which yielded no fruits and made them ill omen for fertility. Because of this dogmatism, they fear to allow Badi women to work in their lands as laborers” (interview, own translation). Similarly, according to her, “another myth of curse of lord Mahadev to his butler of being entertainer forever because of his negligence in cooking is accepted by most Badis as inviolable” (interview, own translation). This fatalistic attitude of Badis also shows the easy compliance of stigmatized people to their abhorred state, which further intensifies their stigma benefiting those in steeple of social hierarchy. Moreover, according to Srijana Badi and Permila Nepali, as they experienced also in the past, “the mainstream people also fear the potentiality of venereal diseases like HIV/AIDS in their prostitution and so stigmatize them” (interview, own translation). Stigma emerges from many aspects like fear, stereotyping, and social control. So, the mainstream patriarchal society, because of fear of probable health hazards, social contamination, and most importantly, because of fear of losing its grip over the helm, wants to reinforce its own discourse of reproductive sexuality up to even its last gasp, stigmatizing prostitution of Badi women

In this way, the mainstream society has created many myths and stereotypes about the Badi women and their prostitution to perpetuate its social control over this group. Gauri Badi further added that “because of the same stigmatization of

prostitution, the Badi people as a whole have fled to Indian cities for their anonymity. There, they work as house maids, house-keepers and manual laborers and eke out their respectful living unlike in our societies where they are stigmatized” (Interview, own translation). So, it is difficult to eliminate this stigma on Badi women from this society until the social structure changes completely. This stigmatization will disappear when the society no longer legitimizes social exclusion and segregation on Badi women and their prostitution.

But prostitution according to these women, “is not an interest rather compulsion” (interview, own translation). In this modern age, where there is cut-throat competition even only for subsistence, it is it is very much difficult for uneducated and unskilled individuals like Badi women to survive, who are once already stigmatized by the virtue of their gender. According to Dhana Badi, “as prostitution does not require any especial dexterity and is very much lucrative in comparison to other jobs- even the very skilled ones-many such women from all over the world are engaging in the prostitution on a daily basis” (interview, own translation). This tendency is more in underdeveloped countries like Nepal in modern times, where the individuals like Badi women are practicing it on a daily basis. This profession has, on the one hand, mushroomed the possibilities of venereal diseases and has also rendered sexual violence and crime upon those destitute sex workers like the Badi women of Nepal, resulting in social in anarchy in social values. These all nuances are additive in the stigmatization of Badi women’s self from many sides. In this way, along with their gender stigma they have another stigma of being so-called immoral prostitute. Here, we can see the double standard nature of mainstream patriarchy which exploits them by bathing in their sexuality at night and again exploits them by stigmatizing and ostracizing them from the whole society.

As stigma with stereotyping neutralizes the positive qualities of stigmatized individuals subjugating their identity and existence, at the cost of neutralizing and overlooking their pious motive of sustaining their family by selling their bodies, the mainstream society has championed others' qualities and has tagged them immoral and contaminating prostitutes. Though they have sold their bodies for the survival of their family, they are keeping their soul pure, which means it is saturated with the sense of duty and benevolence. But, it has only one-sidedly focused the drawbacks and dangers it posits to society with its biased microscopic vision. It is because it fears of their infiltration in power structure that it is relishing from time immemorial. As it wants its own descendents to enjoy the power, there is acceptance and even respect for what it designs as 'normal' and in contrast, there is no place, position and respect for what it tags as 'abnormal' individuals suffering from stigma.

Stigma is typically a social process, experienced or anticipated and characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame, or devaluation that results from experience or reasonable anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or a group. This degree of stigmatization might depend on how undesired the difference is in a particular social group. For example, as unproductive and untamed sex is unaccepted in our Nepalese mainstream society, one social group like that of Badi women who are carrying out prostitution as their cultural profession, is stigmatized, ostracized and rejected by the virtue of differences in cultural values. Here, Badi prostitutes are regarded as abnormal because they use their sexuality also for subsistence as opposed to mainstream culture which uses it only for reproduction. Thus, the sense of being stigmatized or having a stigma is inextricably tied to the social context and moving from one social context or cultural context to another can change the definition and the consequences of stigma. Furthermore as stigma

establishes social exclusion, many Badi women like Dhana unfolded that “because of their stigma they are even not invited in the religious and cultural ceremonies of so called elite people” (interview, own translation). This fact clearly delineates the marginalization and rejection created by stigma.

Power, social influence, and social control play a major role in the stigmatization process. In mainstream patriarchal society, men give different and negative attributes to women as a whole. Men create negative images about women and give negative stereotypes to femininity. In the same way, it is also the case with the marginalized groups like Badi prostitutes who are stigmatized at the cost of the superiority of power holder mainstream people. Those people have created a discourse about reproductive sex and disseminated it all over. In this way they have produced speeches, written books and newspaper and they have created truth about Badi women and their sexuality.

History is a record of the leadership of powerful groups like mainstream society. In this patriarchal society in the name of gender discrimination men always dominate over women and they stigmatize the femininity. Even further, the present bourgeois culture which is itself continuation of Victorian bourgeois culture has confined sexuality only to utilitarian purpose of reproduction. The same hypocritical, puritanical and patriarchal Victorian notion of sexuality is still dominating us and has created the discourse of reproductive sexuality to stigmatize other sexualities like prostitution, homosexuality etc. for controlling the working classes and sub-proletariat like the Badi women. In this way, the same discourse now has stigmatized the Badi prostitution and has been helping to maintain the existing social hierarchy. In this way, it was the reason why the marriage between high caste men and these Badi women were aborted. In the view of Permila Nepali (who herself was the victim of

this norm of mainstream society) “the mainstream society rejected them only for maintaining the hierarchy and domination of one group over other. Because they did not violate the norm social hierarchy, the marriages between Badi women and other lower caste men were accepted by all and as a result were successful” (interview, own translation).

In this way, we can say that, the stereotypes about stigmatized Badi women like, passive, emotional, inferior, submissive that are related to her femininity/womanliness; the stereotypes like immoral, lecherous, debouched, contaminated, degraded, whore etc. that are related to her sexuality or profession; and the stereotypes like dirty, untouchable, impure, ill-omen that are related to her caste or social strata are helping to maintained the exploitation and stigmatization of such groups like Badi women and preserve the existing social structure.



#### IV: Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions

##### Conclusion

The present dissertation attempts to study Badi women's life style and social position in relation to their gender and sexuality, to show how they are stigmatized by the people of mainstream cultural set-up.

On the one hand, because they are women, they are stereotyped by patriarchy with many myths and images that stigmatize and subjugate their position inferiorizing their self. They are seen as 'passive', 'emotional' 'domestic' 'illogical' and 'slavish' by the patriarchal society as a whole-whether by the men within their community or that of outside. Because of the stigma of femininity, as women, they have to take care of the family and not only obey but also worship their husbands blindly along with bestowing reverence to their in-laws. Even particularly, in Badi community, they are also thrust with the economic burden of sustaining their families any how –even by prostituting themselves- while their shameless husbands enjoy their sweats insensitively. They have accustomed in blowing the earning of their wives in liquor and card from time immemorial. Even as girls they sacrifice themselves for their families. It means they have turned in to 'money-yielding' plants for their fathers, brothers and husbands. So even their parents prefer to have daughter to son.

Furthermore, even the mainstream males exploit and torture them sexually along with constant intimidation and defamation by misusing their power. Besides their deprivation from education due to the stigma of femininity, even the patriarchal cultural logics like *Nathiya kholne* are authorizing and turning permanent their sexual exploitation and snatching their freedom by cutting their wings. Moreover, their freedom is limited by their selfish males even further by wresting their right to marry. It is because they are 'milking cows' of their own male relatives. Along with sexual

violence by their clients, while quenching their thirst, their coincidental pregnancy further adds ghee in the fire of stigma by producing ‘bastards’ as named by mainstream society. Moreover, because of the stigma of their gender, they are so colonized that they their forgetting their agency, act as ‘weapons’ of bargaining for pushing their kind in the ranking gutter of flesh trade.

On the other hand, because of their sexuality or the profession of prostitution, they are rejected and stigmatized further. Because of this, they are ostracized everywhere: they are not invited to cultural ceremonies like marriage, Bratabandha (sacred thread ceremony of Hindus) and even discouraged from entering temples and other religious places let alone their restriction from entering the houses of mainstream people. Furthermore, Sometimes they are even mercilessly evicted from the society as the stigma creates social exclusion. Because of the same reason, many of them have hard times when being enrolled in schools. It shows that even the pure intellectual places are not free from these kinds of discriminations and hello-effects. In the same way, even if by chance they study, because the stigma of sexuality still persists, they are not selected in jobs for the mainstreams society fears that they may contaminate the social environment. This is because stigma creates fear and consequently exclusivist mentality in the so-called normal people. Because of the same stigma, they are regarded as service groups or even servants who have to tranquilize the thirst of mainstream males.

Even further, the marriages of Badi women and the males from outside their society are bound to be aborted. Because the stigma creates hierarchy and the normal people always want to perpetuate it for permanence of their power, they don’t accept those marriages which are the embryos of challenge to these kinds of social exclusions. Likewise, most of the Badi women take the ‘myths’ designed by

mainstream society for granted. This is because their stigma makes them fragile and receptive of the values of the so-called normal and they themselves though unknowingly, happen to perpetuate these kinds of theories. Because of the effects of stigma, they support the 'cultural logic' of mainstream patriarchy which conceptualizes that people must be ranked hierarchically according to the degree of normality and abnormality. This fatalistic attitude has made them pessimistic about their emancipation, relief and rehabilitation.

This study with the help of illustrations of many cases and facts from field study and literatures attempts to reveal whether the text holds the evidences enough to support the hypothesis assumed by the present study. The illustrations lucidly depict that Badi women's gender and sexuality have been stigmatized.

These kinds of exclusions, abhorrence, subjugations, evictions and ostracisms are all the examples of stigmatization of their gender and sexuality. The rigorous textual analysis traces in the text evidences enough to prove that Badi women's gender and sexuality are stigmatized by the mainstream patriarchal society through the commodification their bodies as sexual commodities at two levels: social and familial, on the one hand, and through the steady rejection of their unproductive sexuality of prostitution, on the other.

In all, the present study has clearly established two major aspects of the text under consideration: first, it shows the gender of Badi women as stigma and second, it also shows their sexuality as stigma.

Badi women are thus, living the hellish life of double exclusion from time immemorial. On the one hand, they are losing their personal dignity and freedom on the red clutches of patriarchy because their body is exploited as a sexual commodity at two levels: social and familial. They are also being humiliated and ostracized

mercilessly by the mainstream cultural set-up for the so-called immoral and contaminating profession that they are forced to pursue, on the other.

In this manner, the present study supports the hypothesis that Sex practiced by the Badi women not only subverts the traditional notion of reproductive sex and demeans motherhood as gender construct but also exploits their body as a sexual commodity both of which nuances stigmatize Badi women's self and erase their agency.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

The Badi women are compulsively carrying out the profession of prostitution as their survival strategy. This fact shows that their body has been commodified relentlessly from long time back through their stigmatization. After the intensive study of Badi women's stigmatized condition regarding their gender and sexuality, like any research work, it has some recommendations and suggestions that can be very useful in policy as well as administrative level for further improvement in their deplorable condition. In other words, after analysis of the problems, for improving their excluded position, the appropriate suggestions have been supplied in the proceeding paragraphs regarding necessary change in their economic social and cultural life.

Badi children especially girls must be encouraged and enrolled in schools for free education. Moreover, the teachers and educated persons of the society can act decisively for creating feeling of harmony and solidarity among the Badi and high caste children within the school as well as society. Even the Badi parents must be provided with elderly education and awareness programs that will give them knowledge of causes of stigma and will help in changing their concept about and treatment to them. In this case, particularly the Badi mothers can be the emissary of change. Even further, along with education, the Badi people particularly women who

want to leave their prostitution, must be provided with land, shelter as well as skill-based income generating trainings and suitable jobs from the side of government, NGOs and INGOs that can rehabilitate them and change their economic status faster and relieve their wounds of stigmatization and ostracism. This must also be accompanied by integrated programs of health providing check ups and knowledge of venereal diseases. Likewise, rather than prohibiting their prostitution forcefully by intimidating, attacking, defaming by using local administration, police, and hooligans, the mainstream people and the government itself should consider for their rehabilitation and enactment of laws completing prohibiting flesh trade. In the same way, they must be psychologically diverted from prostitution as their profession to pursue other jobs and careers. For effectively diverting them from it, the panacea will be enlightening their own sisters and helping them for establishing the social organizations for counseling and helping their kind.

Along with the above mentioned remedies, the brainwashing and teaching of Badi men for equal treatment to their women is also important one. They also must be provided with education, skill-based trainings, and employment along with this that can help in reducing their insensitive treatment to their wives, daughters and sisters. They can also be encouraged for advancement of their traditional occupations by making provision of incentives that can be more lucrative in the present context. There must also be laws and acts punishing those persons forcefully leading their females to prostitution and rewarding those who cooperate in this Endeavour. Further, there is also the need of law working against exclusion, stigmatization and ostracism. To accentuate it successfully, even inter-caste marriage must be encouraged and rewarded. Moreover, the schools and colleges must be provided with the curriculum that is against discrimination and stigmatization.

In this way, besides these measures for uplifting Badi women and making them free of stigma, there is the need of further study on this community and more particularly on Badi women for the recognition and analysis of their pangs that have germinated due to their stigmatization, domination and consequent exclusion and ostracism by mainstream patriarchal society.

**APPENDIX-I****Questionnaire**

- i. What is your academic qualification?
- ii. What is the cause of your low educational status?
- iii. Why did you leave school?
- iv. Have you also been rejected while trying for enrollment in schools?
- v. With whom do you live in the family?
- vi. What are the sources of income?
- vii. Why did you adopt prostitution?
- viii. When did you adopt prostitution from?
- ix. Is your earning from it sufficient to survive?
- x. Who led you into this profession?
- xi. How do your male members treat you?
- xii. When unmarried how did they treat you?
- xiii. What do they do for eking out livelihood?
- xiv. How do they deal with your hard-earned money?
- xv. What is your role and position in the family? Is your identity recognized there?
- xvi. How do you feel being in this abhorred profession of prostitution?
- xvii. How do you the people of mainstream culture behave with you?
- xviii. How do they address you? By what name?
- xix. How do you feel when you are tagged with different derogative words?
- xx. How are you dealt in religious places?
- xxi. Why are you not allowed to work in the fields of mainstream people?
- xxii. Is there any myth about why are you in this profession?

- xxiii. Are you satisfied with this profession?
- xxiv. Do you want to leave this profession? Have any one left the profession and even the society? (if yes)Why?
- xxv. How do you feel when you go out side of your society?
- xxvi. Is Nathiya Kholne also one of the causes in turning your life hellish?
- xxvii. Who is preferred in your society? A son or daughter?
- xxviii. Why are the parents happier with baby girl?
- xxix. What do your family and society expect from you?
- xxx. How do you feel being a woman in your society?
- xxxi. Why is a daughter married too late in your society?
- xxxii. Does the outer society cooperate with you? (If yes) how?
- xxxiii. What do you expect from the society?
- xxxiv. What is your parents' opinion about your profession now?
- xxxv. What was their opinion then?
- xxxvi. How do you feel about your daughters' profession? Do you like them to follow it?
- xxxvii. How do other people treat you in public places?
- xxxviii. Are you invited in religious and cultural ceremonies of mainstream people?
- xxxix. (If invited) for what are you invited there?
  - xl. Who and what compel you for prostitution?
  - xli. How is your relation with outer society? How do they look upon you?
  - xlii. Are the relationships with the males of mainstream society consistent and successful?
  - xliii. How are your relationships with the men from your strata like?
  - xliv. What is other people's reaction when you go to the local religious places?



- xliv. Don't you have interest in profession other than prostitution?
- xlvi. How do the police, journalists, and the local administration treat you?
- xlvii. Who are your customers?
- xlviii. How do they treat you?
- xliv. What is your husbands' fathers' and brothers' reaction when you are having sex with your clients before them?
  - i. Have you ever come in contact with venereal diseases?
  - ii. What was the reaction of others from society when you were affected from it?
  - iii. Are you sometimes also be impregnated by your clients?
  - liii. How are those children received by this society?
  - liv. What should the government do to emancipate you from this pit of profession?
  - lv. How can it totally change the mentality of prostituting Badi women?
  - lvi. Are intimidation, torture, and defamation good or should it try for their psychological transformation?
  - lvii. What do you want to suggest to other women and girls of your own community about prostitution?

## **APPENDIX-II**

### **Case Study: Checklist**

#### **1. The Respondent**

Name: Present age: Age at entry in prostitution:

Marital status: Number of children:

#### **2. Respondent's background and present condition regarding prostitution**

#### **3. Details about the prostitution**

- i. Income from Nathiya Kholne
- ii. Maximum number of clients per day
- iii. Minimum number of clients per day
- iv. Types of clients
- v. Behavior of the people outside the society
- vi. Marriage with higher- caste men
- vii. Health hazards due to prostitution (if any)

#### **4. Her feeling about herself and her profession of prostitution**

#### **Some relevant case studies**

##### **1. Case Study One**

##### **i. The Respondent**

Name: Permila Nepali Present age: 22 Age at entry: 15

Marital Status: Eloped No. of Children: Two sons

## **ii. Respondent's background and present condition regarding prostitution**

Permila had a sad history of unsuccessful elopement with Mahesh, a chhetri boy who was working under an NGO in the rural parts of Bardiya. Mahesh first came to Parmila as a client, and soon began visiting her regularly. After a few months, he proposed marriage and Permila accepted. Permila's parents, however objected to the marriage, as they did not want to lose the income from her prostitution. Permila and Mahesh eventually eloped, marrying in a private ceremony in a local temple and subsequently moving to Mahesh's rented house. Mahesh and Permila lived together in Bardiya for four years and they had two sons Pankaj and prem. At the end of this time Mahesh's project came to an end. But Mahesh's plans to return home to Sarlahi were ruined when his parents refused to accept Permila, pankaj and Prem which was only because of her stigma of prostitution deep -rooted in our society. She said, "if it was the marriage of Badi woman and a lower caste boy it wouldn't have been the victim of ostracism and rejection for it doesn't challenge the discriminative value of the society as such". Mahesh, after remaining there in Rajapur for two months, eventually returned to his home alone. After Mahesh fled, Permila took Pankaj and Prem back in to her parents' home and began her prostitution again.

## **iii. Details about her prostitution**

To sustain her family consisting five members major portion of income is generated through her prostitution. Permila alone earns Rs. 30,000 per annum. She entered into this profession seven years before at the age of 15. In the past she had earned Rs. 500 at her Nathiya Kholne.

The rate per contact is not fixed. It depends on the number of arriving clients and climatic variations. During rainy seasons, the income level drops to less than one-fourth due to poor transportation problem. Major income is hence generated during

winter season. Likewise the rate is determined by bargaining power of Permila herself and customer. During the leisure time, the rate falls even to Rs. 10 and if more customers come, the charge goes up to 80. Furthermore, for evening or night period, the charge goes as high as Rs. 150. Minimum number of clients per day is 0 to 1 and maximum number of clients per day is up to 4 to 5 Persons. According to her, the clients are from varied sectors and cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, the clients, according to her, while keeping sexual relationship with her, become aggressive and torture her physically using deviant styles of sex. In the case of her retaliation, they sometimes intimidate, rebuke and even crossing their limit beat them up brutally. Furthermore, the people out of her society look down upon her and address her with the very derogative words like Randi, Bhalu, Beshya and Patar (slangs for addressing a prostitute). Because of exclusivist nature of mainstream society, her marriage with Mahesh was itself a fiasco. Likewise, regarding her health, in her experience, she was once affected from some venereal disease but it was cured with medication, later on. In her experience, many women of her society who suffered from these venereal diseases due to prostitution were looked down upon and stigmatized vehemently and evicted from society.

#### iv. Her feeling about herself and her profession of prostitution

Because of these all reasons, she feels very much depressed and pessimistic about her stigmatized condition. Her pessimism also comes from the fact that they are looked down upon and sometimes evicted from the society by the same people who relish her sexuality at night. So, she now wants to leave her profession and if she gets any chance wants to take some skill-oriented trainings so that she can run her own small-scale business in her locality.

## 2. Case Study two

### i. Respondent

Name: Gauri Badi                      Present age: 16                      Age at entry: 14

Marital Status: Unmarried              No. of children: None

### ii. Respondent's background and present condition regarding prostitution

In Gauri Badi's home, major contribution is through her prostitution. Because her father and brothers have much lower income through their traditional occupations of making drum, pipes and nets, she entered into prostitution for fulfilling her duty of sustaining all, having no options. It is also because she was unskilled for other jobs in case she found, which usually doesn't happen. Through her sex business, she earns Rs. 50,000 per annum. She had entered in to this profession, two years ago at the age of 14 leaving her school. In school she was humiliated by other students as *Badini*, *Beshya*, *Bhalu* and *Randi*. There she was excluded, discriminated as well as stigmatized and was not allowed to come in contact with mainstream high-caste girls because they feared that she would contaminate them also. This also catalyzed in her leaving school. Moreover, she was motivated by her mother to adopt this job.

### iii. Details about her prostitution

In her first sexual intercourse that was during her Nathiya Kholne, the family earned Rs. 1500. Since she is of much younger age there is her high demand by customers. Even during lean seasons, she has 2 to 3 customers each day and during the peak period, the number of clients goes up to 6 to 7. The price rate of contact is determined by her mother and sometimes by herself. The average rate during day time is Rs. 50 and during evening or night time is RS. 200.

In this way, because of their joblessness her father and brothers indulge in liquor and card day and night carelessly blowing her sweat in dust. One interesting

thing to note is that it was they who had first brought the clients for her. In this way they helplessly watch their women being raped and digest it by saying “it is our culture”. It means the Badi patriarchy expects them to continue with this kind of abhorred profession and sell their flesh to fulfill its needs. Furthermore, the clients, who come to her sometimes, torture her much. It is also because of her young age that they ravage her to the fullest. Once she was severely bruised by her client who threatened that he has bought her so could do whatever he liked to. In the same way, regarding her reception by outside society, she opined it be very negative and defaming. She says, sometimes she is defamed even at the midst of market square by some hooligans related to mainstream society who also vomit pornography upon her.

#### **iv. Her feeling about herself and her profession of prostitution**

Like other Badi women, she also wants to leave prostitution and the Badi even her community itself because of the stigma attached to it. She unfolded that because of the same ostracism many Badis from there have fled to near about Indian cities where they are living the life of anonymity working as house maids, servants, gatekeeper etc. In this way, like others, she wants to flee from the Badi community and start her new life in some distant place marrying someone from her own strata

### **3 Case study three**

#### **i. The respondent**

Name: Homkala Badi	Present age: 33	Age at entry: 16
Marital status: Unmarried	Children: 3	

#### **ii. The respondent's background and present condition regarding prostitution**

Homkala, though still unmarried, has two sons and one daughter who are the gifts of her clients. As this is a normal case in Badi community to be impregnated by clients, bear them as well as nurture them in their own stake, Homekala has

undergone the same. Her sons are undergoing their study in local high school and primary school. Her daughter left the school, after grade three, due to psychological set-back at school and within the society which stigmatized her. The school friends and high caste community members tortured her often reminding that she is a daughter of untouchable and a prostitute and is a bastard. In the past, Homkala's father has died in her childhood and mother died when she was 31 and was still continuing her prostitution. After her mother's death two years ago she left prostitution. But as a survival strategy for her family, her daughter is prostituting herself from two years.

### **iii. Details about the prostitution.**

The whole family is depending upon sex business. Homkala entered this profession at the age of 16. In Nathiya Kholne ceremony, she received Rs. 600. The ceremony was accompanied with a feast. For fifteen years, she was continually involved in this profession until only two years back when she retired from this job and her daughter took over her role. Her daughter charges from 20 to 80 per contact in day time. In night time, she charges 50 to 200 per contact. Furthermore, regarding the number of clients, the maximum number per day is 4 to 5 and the minimum number per day is 1 to 2. In the same way, when she is called in hotels or lodges, the charge will be even higher than Rs. 300. Referring to the type of clients, she expressed that the local landlords, businessman, officers, foreigners from donor agencies etc. are their customers. Likewise, as seasonal customers, police and army personnel occasionally visit them. Moreover, according to her, many of them are from so called high-caste communities -like Brahmin, chhetry and thakuri.

Moreover, Homkala and her daughter also expressed that local non-Badi members had tried to evict them from the society even not to talk of the matter of restricting them in many places. As a risk against insecurity and for the fear of tension

with client's family, Badi women, according to them, try to discourage the local men especially under 15. But, it, in reality, is the local men who demand for entertainment and in return Badi are accused.

**iv) Her feeling about herself and her profession of prostitution.**

In addition to social pressure to evict them, Homekala's family responded that some individuals and some group of local hooligans (goondas as locally known), boast about their political connection and intimidate them of eviction, if their sexual demand is not met. Because of all these reasons as well as social stigma attached to prostitution, they also went to leave their society and start their own life somewhere in a very secluded place doing some other works. In this way they want to overcome their feeling of inferiority caused due to the stigmatization and ostracism, by fleeing from this community.



**APPENDIX - III**  
**PHOTOGRAPHS**



A Badi woman waiting for clients in her home.



Badi women expressing their pangs caused due to the stigma on them.



Badi women waiting for their clients in day time as their daily routine.



A Badi woman narrating about their social reception.



A middle-aged Badi woman narrating her past ostracism by the mainstream society.

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