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Critique of Patriarchal Ideology in Rudra Raj Pandey's *Rupamati*

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Miss Mobina Dhungana has completed her thesis entitled “Critique of Patriarchal Ideology in Rudra Raj Pandey’s *Rupamati*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from September 2008 (A. D.) to April 2009 (A. D.). I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Abstract

In *Rupamati*, Rudraraj Pandey reproduces the patriarchal ideology by creating its protagonist, Rupmati as a wife who is portrayed as an “ideal” “goddess; one who is able to endure every kind of torture inflicted upon her by the society to win over all evil at the end. She is married at her childhood and forbears abusive and brutal Buhartan of her mother-in-law, is neglected by her husband in the beginning and takes the burden of keeping the tradition intact by bringing Ravilal’s family on tract at the cost of the peace of land bequeathed her father.

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I. Introduction

Brief History of Nepali Modern Fiction

History of Nepalese fiction, novel specially, is shorter than poetry. Nepali poetry, first started by Bhanubhakta, rapidly progressed taking both inspiration and the subject matter from Sanskrit literature. Later on, with the beginning of modern education, writers came in contact with English literature and philosophy which in turn influenced both Nepali poetry and fiction. Early twentieth century writers such as Guru Prasad Mainali, Bisheshwor Prasad Koirala and Pushkar Samsheer Rana had already begun writing short stories based on then contemporary social issues. Those like B.P Koirala, Guru Prasad Mainali and Pushkar Samsheer Rana inspired from philosophy of Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi and psychology of Sigmund Freud gave their writing political and psychological dimension whereas writers like Guru Prasad Mainali confined their writing within the periphery of rural life.

According to Dr Taranath Sharma, “Girish Ballabh Joshi and his contemporary Sada Shiva Sharma Adhikari are two names that stand out as the forerunners of the Nepali novel” (4). However, he argues that “[t]he first successful novelist on a purely social theme was Rudra Raj Pandey”(4). He further clarifies that although the novel, *Bir Charitra* was written even before the close of the Nineteenth Century and its first part was “published in 1903, all the four parts of the novel could be brought out together sixty two years later in 1965 only” (4). Rudra Raj Pandey’s *Rupamati* was published in 1934 AD which deals with the domestic life of Brahmins of Kathmandu during the first half of the Twentieth Century.

Similarly, Nepali literary critic, Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan has taken Rudra Raj Pandey as “the first practitioner of the modern Nepali novel to depict the social reality of domestic life in everyday language [My Translation]” (2028 BS Vol.

6). Professor Govinda Raj Bhattarai agrees with the view that “Rudra Raj Pandey’s *Rupmati* (1934) is considered as the first modern Nepali novel”. Professor Bhattarai argues that Nepali fiction has gone through different historical phases, viz. idealism, realism and new writing or experimental writing which he calls postmodernism. He also argues that Nepali fiction was immensely influenced by different schools of thoughts - psychoanalysis, existentialism, Marxism. When romanticism made its appearance in the history of Nepali literature, western literary influences began to infect the native trend in literature. Following the end of Second World War, school of pessimism and existential absurdity, certain kind of western literary influences began to produce parallel political influence. In addition when anti-Rana regime movement took momentum in a snail pace, similar search for freedom and spontaneity in expression occurred in it. But even during the practice of the following the establishment of stability in the political arena, young emerging artist saw a bright prospect of reviving the long valorized trend of telling puranic tale. Soon after the unification of inclination towards the cult of telling a puranic tale came in the scene. It paved the way for the rapid advancement of Nepali literature.

After the consolidation of Rana dynasty in Nepal, many literary artists were forced to take Sanskrit language as the major means of creative expression. Sanskrit was the sole and whole means of literary expression. However, certain coterie of scholars and readers with academic consciousness were drawn towards the English language. Even some of the leading Rana dynasts like Chandra Shamsher and Dev Shamsher had lived in Calcutta, the centre of British rule in India, for completing their study of English. Even some of leaders who fought against the Rana dynasty took English knowledge and education in India. Hence it is obvious that some of the leading personnels did not hesitate to orient themselves in English education.

Different critics have pointed out different sources of the Nepali fiction. Sanskrit literature, especially Pauranic stories were the early inspiration of the Nepali literature including novels. Dr Taranath Sharma, in his article “The Evolution of Nepali Fiction” mentions three different sources of inspiration of the Nepali fiction: “[T]he ancient *Puranic* and mediaeval literary traditions, the folktales, and the Western influence” (1). According to Professor Narmadeshwore Pradhan “[t]he post colonial values like patriotism, nationalism and search for cultural identity have been inspirational to the modern fictional writers” (3).

Rupamati, however, covers mostly the time period of first half of the twentieth century social, economical and cultural issues of Nepal. As the country was wrestling for the political and social change to come out of the clutches of the autocratic Rana regime, the period was full of ambivalences. The Western influences were creeping in mostly through the increasing foreign relation dominated by British East India Company despite Rana policy of isolationism. People learned in Sanskrit Vyakaran and literature along with expertise on performing rites were the only people who could understand the need for the social transformation. India was the place of learning English and getting English education. Some of the rana figures like Dev Samser, Chandra Samser and poets and novelists like Laxmi Prasad Devkota and B.P. Koirala were educated in English background. Perhaps their views on education and literary expression were perhaps shaped and sustained by Western liberalism and democratic vision. When people returned from India having their education in English they brought with them the ideas of the Western liberalism. At this juncture of history it was inevitable to have social and cultural conflict between traditionalism led by the convention and the Sanskrit pundits and modern worldview led by those who were educated in English.

In the conflict the emerging market economy played a greater role. Educated People employed in the government service were the most conscious about the need for the change but they could not come out directly. So they tried to give expression of their voice in literary texts. *Rupamati* is one of the representatives of that kind of expression.

***Rupamati* as a Nepali Modern Novel**

In the novel, there is a story of three Brahmin families, two from the Katmandu valley and the other from the countryside, Chepetar. The story covers the social, cultural and economic background of the time at around 1950 AD. The protagonist, Rupamati, is the daughter of Pandit Luintel who is married to Mr H. L. Sharma, the eldest son of Pandit Chavilal. Madam Pandit is harsh from the very beginning towards her daughter-in-law because in her opinion modern daughter-in-laws are rude and slack in household chores. Mr. Sharma is an educated man who after completing his university graduation ceremony becomes a civil servant at Kausal, an accounting office during Rana regime. Madam Pandit always treats Rupamati badly and is involved in gossiping of neighboring old mothers who whenever have time get together and talk about their daughters-in-law, especially about what they think is concerning their misbehavior. All of them are discontent with their daughters-in-law and find them lazy, and haughty. The chief attraction of their gossip is how they chastise their daughters-in-law.

Madam Pandit is proud of her younger son, Ravilal who turns out to be a complete wastrel. He spends time in gambling, smoking and wandering around with his friends like him. When the time of his marriage comes they have difficulty in finding a suitable girl for their son. At the end Ravilal is married with the daughter of Pandit Madhuvan Baral from the countryside; a nouveau riche. However, the Baral's

daughter does not fit into Madam Pandit's expectations. She does not care about the family etiquette and always boasts of her father's property.

When Pandit Chavilal dies the economic condition of the household brings about a drastic change into the family affairs. Ravilal continues to extort money from his mother and becomes more notorious in the neighborhood for his bad company and bad habits. Madam Pandit slowly feels short of money because of the death of her husband and the absence of the source of what used to be their earlier source of regular income. In the meantime the dream of Mr. Sharma to study English gradually fades away. In its place he comes to realize the importance of his wife's labour. Affected by the bulk of his wife's domestic labour, he sets his academic interest aside and then begins to show his love to her and realizes the honesty and the kindness of his wife Rupamati and begins to love her genuinely. Madam Pandit is also fed up with younger daughter-in-law and turns to her elder daughter-in-law, Rupamati.

When Madam Pandit stops giving money, Ravilal begins to extort money from his wife for his daily expense. Ravilal agrees with his wife and demands to live separately from his brother. When Ravilal and his wife begin to live separately he becomes more extravagant and wastes money unscrupulously. When his wife fails to bring money from his parents' house Ravilal goes wild causing suffering to their daughter.

On the other hand, after their separation, everything goes fine at Rupamati's house. Madam Pandit is changed and giving birth to a son Rupamati is satisfied except on Ravilal's ruined condition. In the meantime when the conflict between Ravilal and his wife worsens she goes back to her parents' house. However, she is not welcomed at the house and returns without knowing where to go just to spend couple of nights at her relatives in Kathmandu. When Rupamati knows all this she convinces

her husband to bring both Ravilal and his wife together and helps them to start over. After giving two daughters of Ravilal in marriage Rupamati does a further favour to Ravilal's family she asks her husband to give the piece of land she got from her father in Terai to Ravilal; a place where Ravilal's family live happily thereafter.

It is generally agreed by Nepali literary critics that Rudra Raj Pandey's *Rupamati* is the first modern Novel in Nepali literature. There are certain elements that make the novel modern. Krishna Chandra Singh Pradhan has noted that in the novel there are both the elements of idealism and social realism. However, he argues that the idealism is not there for its own sake but has helped materialize the establishment of an ideal society. His main argument is that "*Rupamati* emerges out of the ideal of an appeal for change" [My Translation]. In the similar vein, Indra Bahadur Rai has noted that "*Rupamati* contains the possibility of reformed Nepalese society but not the frame of radical reconstruction" [My Translation] (50).

Dr. Taranath Sharma views the novel from a slightly different angle: "*Rupamati* is revealing study of an orthodox Nepalese family going through a process of transformation because of the impact of Western liberal ideas" (4). His criticism has broader implications. On the one hand, Nepalese society could not remain untouched by the Western liberal ideas, which were introduced by the modern education in English, and the transformation brought about a cultural conflict between the orthodox traditionalists and emerging reformists on the other. Deeply immersed Nepalese culture and society was shaken by the waves of modern Western civilization.

Mr. Sharma, who is deemed to be the embodiment of an ideal modern man by Pradhan and Rai, has great fascination towards Western civilization. "Mr. Sharma, having been taken in by the delights of Western civilization, imbued with Western

thought and immersed in modern opinion, shivered to think of his home” (Pandey 19). Because of his awareness cultivated by the modern education detaches him from his conservative culture. This is reflected in his distraction from the poor sanitation: “He constantly got upset to see the rules of hygiene being broken” (30). Mr. Sharma “beg[ins] to cast contemptuous and scornful looks at uneducated women” (19). There is a vast change in the outlook of Rupamati. She clearly understands the adolescent age and forgives her brother-in-law for his delinquencies. She believes in change in thinking and behavior which is indicative of the modern consciousness.

Throughout the novel there is conflict between the traditional values and the modern influences. The conflict is manifested in different guises. The first is education. Though Sanskrit education for sons of a Brahmin was not new even that time, Pandit Chavilal allows his son to study English which according to Rupmati’s father is “an act of impiety” because Hindu code of law recommends: “Don’t learn the infidel’s language; don’t go to a Jain temple” (17). He is in a dilemma that “[h]ow could he worship this English addict of a son-in-law now?” (17). It is because he is a man of “old school, and [dosen’t] know how to cater to the times” (14). This skeptic attitude towards the English language which is called the language of Mlechhshya (impure) is one of the manifestations of the conflict between conservative outlook and the modern outlook. Similarly, Rupamati is taught to read Ramayana in Nepali and Arithmetic “up to multiplication and division” (16). Though she is denied formal and English education she is at least given the chance to learn Nepali and basic Mathematics. It is the privilege of her being the daughter of a Pandit Brahmin which would not have been possible if the case was otherwise.

Next manifestation is seen in Mr. Sharma’s search for an employment in a government office despite suggestions of becoming a teacher from his friends which

indicates the growing popularity of bureaucracy, one of the key features of the modern nation-state among the fresh graduates. His recruitment at Kausal (government accounting office during Rana period) is a witness for the case. In contrast, Ravilal who is prodigal and is engaged in gambling is looked down upon with contempt because of his unemployment.

Another important manifestation of the conflict is reflected in the graphic economic description of the society and the characters of the novel. Luintel family has vast land whereas Baral family has cash which they have invested in the village to get good sum of interest. Finally Baral family goes bankrupt because of the failure in business. Similarly, Ravilal also goes bankrupt because of his bad habits of gambling, drinking and expensive clothing. At his early age he had a passion to appear modern and fashionable:

He felt compelled to go about decked out with an embroidered cap, a chain around his neck, a woollen coat, a select pair of muslin trousers laced at the ankles, a silk shirt, the latest fashion in shoes, Japanese silk socks, a patterned handkerchief in his coat pocket, a West End watch on his wrist, a tuft of curly hair and a flower the size of a lotus leaf stuck into the buttonhole of his pocket. (34)

Ravilal's fascination with the fashionable cult of modernity gets manifest from the above cited excerpt from the text. In this excerpt the character Ravilal is eager unnecessarily and obsessively to adopt modernist attitude, ethos and spirit in every aspect of his life. At the cost of genuine regard for custom and convention he threw himself to the enticing appeal and attraction of modernism.

When Madam Pandit is enraged by Batuli's remarks she speaks about the lineage and their economic background. Baral's daughter comments on the whole

family members and their neighbors: “They are mad because I have money from my parents’ home and enjoy life. “I haven’t spent a paisa of anyone else’s money” (60). In her comment there is an emerging modern tendency to earn and spend money to enjoy life which is different from the wealth accumulating tendency of the traditional society. There is a fair competition of giving support to married daughters with money between Luintel and Baral family. And people are curious to know what Nepal family got in dowry from the Luintels and Barals. It means that feudalistic, agrarian economy has been gradually shifting towards modern capitalist economy.

Hindu Religion and Caste System: Gender Roles in Nepalese Brahmin

Community

It is commonly held that Nepalese society is deeply divided by Hindu caste system. Dor Bahadu Bista argues that “[Nepal’s] native Hinduism has not included a belief in caste principles, which remains a foreign importation with little popular support” (29). Bista takes Jayasthiti Malla as the one who introduced the caste system. But, the caste system is in vedic Hindu scriptures so caste system cannot be that new cultural aspect of Nepalese society. However, in Hinduism religion has wide implication as Bista himself has noted:

[W]ithin Nepal, religion is a very important aspect of human life. The Nepali [*Sic*] word for religion is dharma, which also means duty, ethics, morality, rule, merit and pious acts. Therefore, when Nepalis discuss religion they understand it with a broader meaning than is usually applied in the West. (29)

Religion has asserted say over every aspect of lines in Nepal. Even the culture and civilization are shaped by the core content of Hindu religiosity. Literature written in Nepal is somehow or other reflective of the close connection between religion and

other related aspect. Hence any endeavour to assess literary works from the perspective of the embeddedness of religion in other practices and activities is likely to yield fruitful consequence.

Caste system in Hindu religion is hierarchical. Brahmins are at the top of the ladder followed by Kshyattris, Vaisyas, and Sudras respectively. Caste system is based on the work people do in principle. According to the Hindu religion Brahmin's work is to read sacred scriptures, worship god and help people perform rituals and sacraments of life. Even within Brahmins there are many subdivisions. The one who is at the top layer and trained in Sanskrit is called a pandit. Below them in the strata are other sub groups like Kumais, Purbias, and Jayaisis.

For Bista, "Brahminism refers to that development beyond vedic traditions based essentially in the Puranans, which heavily emphasizes fatalism through its stress on karmic determination, from which has developed the social organization of the varna and caste system" (58n). Belief in fate is deterministic as it takes the present life *per se* as the result of the karma of the previous lives. This applies to a certain extent in the caste system also. But when it comes to the question of women belief in fate plays an insidious role. Whatever a woman has to go through is believed to be the result of fate. Belief in fate is used to justify women's oppression by men and society as whole. So in this case religion also plays ideological role that legitimizes relations of domination in the name of tradition and belief in fate.

Lyn Bennet, in her research *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters: Social and Symbolic Roles of High – Caste Women in Nepal* comes up with the view that "Hindu patrilineal ideology entails a deep ambivalence toward women" (Preface vii). On the one hand daughters and sisters are respected and worshipped (in some caste) but on the other hand married women especially daughters-in-law and wives are abused and

mistreated. Religion plays a greater role in this double standard. On top of that women's space and roles are circumscribed by certain prescriptions called *Naridharma* or womanly duties.

Bennett remarks that:

“The gender system which shapes the particular meanings which Hindu attach to male and female and to sexuality and reproduction is embedded deeply within the culture as a whole – its symbolic idiom, its value system, its social and economic structures” (Preface i).

In high caste Brahmin what is emphasized is women's purity – both sexual and spiritual. It is believed that husband's power rests on woman's chastity. The woman who keeps her purity intact is regarded as a goddess. This is how their sexuality is controlled by means of the discourse of divinity. However, a male is allowed to get married for the second or third time if they want. They won't lose chastity by this act.

Bennett has rightly noted:

With reference to women ... the social roles of women in patrilineal Hindu kinship and family structures are reinforced by their symbolic roles in ritual and myth, and that these, in turn, gain much of their conceptual impact and emotional force from the fact that they are so firmly grounded in the social structure. (316)

What shapes the social roles of women is not a matter of casual speculation. It has to be examined in the context of how women are presented in the structural framework of myths and rituals. The symbolic roles of women in myth and rituals gives a glimpse of social roles.

In *Rupamati* caste has played very important role. Both Havilal and Rupmati are from the pandit family who have followed their dharma – the whole way of living

- in the right way has good recognition in the society. However, Ravilal and Baral's daughter are also from the pandit family but they are disliked and disrespected because both of them fail to comply with their dharma as required by the society. The writer shows that the success, good reputation and prosperity of life rely on whether one puts one's own dharma into practice or not, by contrasting two couples of the same parents, pandit Chabilal and his wife.

Not only that when Madam Pandit, Dhai Budhi and Dahalni Bajyai talk at a leisure, Dhai Budhi says: "A good, upstanding family is what's needed, Bajyai ! You know what they say: Water from the source, a daughter from a good family" (27). This remark takes into account of civilized family manners and mores apart from the importance of caste.

When Baral's daughter retorts her mother-in-law, Madam Pandit angrily replies: "Just listen to this low-caste mouth! Always coming back at you" (60). Her rude manners of retorting or complaining about anything reduce the poor associated with her caste position. So, caste is also determined by the manners of the people which are ultimately tied up with dharma – religion.

Nepali Caste System: Brahminism and Gender Roles

The caste system plays an important role in determining the gender roles. The role of man and women differ from one caste to another caste. The social roles of both men and women tend to differ from one caste to another caste. Each caste has put forward its own conception regarding genders. For example, women belonging to the Brahmin class are assigned repressive roles. They are denied freedom in other sphere of life. They are confined in domestic household. They are given less and less amount of freedom. The culture, literature, religious assumptions and customs of the Brahmin caste are designed to keep women in the domestic locations of the household chores.

On the contrary men are assigned greater degree of freedom so that they could launch effectively in the external world. The norms and values women are instructed to acquire are less and less contributive to the promotion of freedom and individuality. Even the religion, custom and socio-cultural norms and values are oriented towards the propagation of female submission and subordination. Women are compelled knowingly and unknowingly to internalize and assimilate those values which tend to constitute the secondary and subsidiary roles. Besides this , the social role of women is slightly different in other classes. The Brahmin caste puts premium on the notion of virginity. Every Brahmin girl is unconsciously obliged to maintain the established standard of virginity. The internalization of absolute virginity reduces the sexual freedom of women.

Moreover, the Brahminism tends to make female beings accept their lot whatsoever. They are so trained that they easily accept their condition whatsoever as if it is caused by fate. Women are, in this way, compelled to play a subsidiary and fatalistic role. The subordinate and oppressed role of women is associated by the inherent spirit and essence of Brahminism.

II. Theoretical Modality

Ideology: An Introduction

Ideology is commonly held belief system in which the prevailing matrices of social relations appear so natural that we take those social relations for granted. In the book, *The communist manifesto*, Karl Marx proclaims that the ruling ideas of the society are the ideas of the ruling class. Karl Marx believes in class struggle as the driving force of history which is based on relation of production and different class consciousness. In Marx's view class consciousness is guided by the class ideology. So in every society there is class conflict based on class interests generated and regulated by specific class ideologies. In the struggle the vanquished is ruled by the conqueror with the help of ideology. Ideology works in such a subtle manner that people whose consciousness is shaped by ideology face things at face value. Instead of trying to see things as they are, they are trained to accept reality as it appears to be. Ideology is a false consciousness. Affected by this ideology, people tend to look at things at things as they are. They are no longer interested in how things appear the way they appear. So ideology works as a means of oppression not necessarily for a class based on economy but also other social institutions such as patriarchy, gender, race or ethnicity.

Discursive aspect of ideology has been emphasized by many critics. John Gerring writes: "Ideology, at the very least, refers to a set of idea-elements that are bound together, that belong to one another in a non-random fashion" (980). What bounds these 'idea-elements' together is discourse. Discourse here not only creates ideas or knowledge through discursive elements but also regulates it into a discursive formation. Terry Eagleton hints at constitutive role of ideology in social interests and links it with discourse: "Ideology is a matter of 'discourse' rather than of 'language'- of certain concrete discursive effects, rather than of signification as such" (223). While

talking about the relationship between ideology and discourse the role of 'critique of ideology' should not be missed. As John B. Thompson writes: "To study ideology ... is to study the ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations of domination" (qtd. in Eagleton 5). It means that only by analyzing the discursive effects we can study the ways signification maintains the relations of domination. In the similar vein Teun A Van Dijk writes: "Ideologies are expressed and generally reproduced in the social practices of their members, and more particularly acquired, confirmed, changed and perpetuated through discourse" (115).

Terry Eagleton, a prominent scholar of ideology himself reaches to the conclusion that ideology "refers to the ways in which signs, meanings and values help to reproduce a dominant social power" (221). But later on he contradicts himself by saying: "Ideology is a matter of 'discourse' rather than of 'language' - of certain concrete discursive effects, rather than of significations such" (222). So to a certain extent it can be said that ideology is not a discourse but it operates through discursive practices.

From the above discussion it is clear that ideology has a political significance and that is it serves a certain people in making the prevailing social relations in their favor. To accomplish this goal ideology legitimizes the existing social relations which allow certain portion of the population to exercise power and dominate the rest. In this sense ideology represents the dominant form of power. According to Terry Eagleton to legitimize such social relations ideology involves different strategies:

A dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing and universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; denigrating ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by

some unspoken but systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself. (5-6)

Ideology does not operate only in the political field but also in every single social relation which are backed by the power holding institutions that are themselves discursively formed. These institutions are mutually reinforcing.

When it comes to patriarchy many social institutions mutually reinforce the dominant power of men over women concomitantly. The discourses helping to forge those institutions regulate their operations continuously. In order to regulate the institutions and to sustain and empower their ideological functions in the service of a certain group the discourses form new sets of rules or new knowledge. The major function of the patriarchal ideology is to uphold the existing forms of oppression. To this end the discourse of patriarchy regulates and works together with other discourses in reciprocal relations.

Patriarchy stands firm on the pedestal of the gender relations. So the discourse of gender has an important role in generating and maintaining patriarchy. Gender discourse creates binary categories male and female and represents them in a hierarchical pattern. Every society has its own hierarchy. At the top of hierarchy men exist. The patriarchal system has allowed and authorized women to occupy the foremost position in the hierarchy. Men belonging to the privileged class have access towards the power which lies at the top of hierarchy. Even in the patriarchal system a few men possess the authority. It is justified in terms of the masculinity which defines a man categorically. Pierre Bourdieu calls this condition ‘masculine dominion.’

Gender discourse operates insidiously. Its major function is to normativize the unequal gender relations so as to make them appear natural. Its normative function supports patriarchal ideology. Gender discourse introduces various strategies

including scientific research to support its claims. Even if the differences are challenged a new set of differences are created. In this way patriarchy works in consonance with the other existing social institutions including those of family, marriage, religious practices, state's law, rituals and festivals. All these institutions work to reproduce the interest of the patriarchal ideology at their centre.

Modern Novel and Women's Representation

The advent of modernity was radical and shocking in terms of the fundamental human beliefs and values. "The events and ideas," writes Malcolm Bradbury, "fractured an older sense of real, valuable, human and the familiar. [Modernity] upset the liberal belief in history, the human value of the person" (ix). Modernism in literature challenged old social and cultural values. After the advent of modernism, the history of Anglo-American literature underwent sweeping change. Before the start of modernism poetry was the sovereign genre in the history of Anglo-American literature. Poetry as a sovereign genre was replaced by novel. What facilitated novel to replace the poetry is the pervasive and the original effect of modernism. The readership of novel grew larger with publication of novels. Women confined within the four walls of the houses constituted the growing readership of English literature. Bradbury has noted:

[T]he 'modern novel,' which was in many respects an attempt to overturn the Victorian novel, challenging everything from its patriarchal morality, its high-minded principles and its sexual reticence to its representations of human nature and its claim to depict 'the real'. (xii)

Modern novel is subversive. It turned topsy-turvy all the patriarchal and patrilineal norms and values. The existing norms and values are in complicity with the marginalization and subordination of women. Setting aside all these patriarchal

conception regarding gender roles the modernist novels presented the prevailing trends and experiences from the perspective of femininity.

Modernism flourished at around the First World War slowly emerging from the early twentieth century. One of the modern masters, Virginia Woolf in her essay, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' (1926) has written: "... All human relations shifted – those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, Parents and Children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature" (qtd. in Bradbury 8).

Once it is believed that individuals are able to promote and produce parallel change in other superstructures and system, the above-cited line becomes relevant. It is to some extent true that human relation can affect politics, culture and literature.

Lucy Nial : "More generally, the typical features of the modernist literary text are its multiple points of view, discontinuous narrative, fragmentary structure, generic hybridity and absence of a normal (or authorial) centre" (18).

It is already said that modernist work of art aim at breaking the normal and convention. Modernist literatures are bent upon revealing what is grotesque and the odd. To project the new changing view it is necessary for modernist arts to be experimental.

Female patterns of living and dealing with the world have produced in women a point of view different from that of their brothers. This point of view will not be easily accessible to men because it is conceived by them as being either odd or unimportant, since the norms of our culture are based on masculine experience and adapted to male roles and behavior (Janeway 342).

Because of the way of dealing with the world both men and women develop typically different mindset. In other words both men and women have different point

of view, perspective and problematics. Their different problem and perspective determine their social roles. In society women are compelled to adopt the masculine point of view and perspective. Instead of giving an outlet to the unrecognized perspective of females, the patriarchal ideology compels women to assume masculine roles.

Elizabeth Janeway "... masculine standards ... are part of the cultural background of women as well as men. (343)

In everything and in every sphere the masculinity is the standard. At the backdrop of this standard the femininity is defined. Lots of basic things appertaining to women are likely to be approached from the perspective of masculinity.

Patriarchal Ideology

Generally speaking, patriarchy is a social system in which the father is the head of the family and rules over it or a rule to which all other members of the family including younger males, are subordinated. More specifically, patriarchy is the social system of unequal gender relations which generates and maintains male domination over female. So, patriarchy signifies systematic inequalities in employment opportunities, recruitment patterns and the system of payment, household work, child-care provision for women. In every sphere the inequalities generated by patriarchy are pervasive. These inequalities are directly or indirectly, intentionally or accidentally propagated and promoted by some of the leading superstructures like art literature and media. Patriarchy can be defined as the structuring of society on the basis of family units. In this structuration fathers have primary responsibility for the welfare of, and authority over their families.

The concept of patriarchy is often used to refer to the expectation that men take primary responsibility for the welfare of the community as a whole, acting as

representatives via public office. Patriarchy is most likely a reflection of deeper expectations of formal male dominance in a wide range of social relationships. If you don't believe that consider the basics of how our society functions. Patriarchy is also found in family traditions like women taking the name of their husbands and children always carrying the father's last name. More women are choosing to keep their maiden names or hyphenate with their married name so they can retain their own identity. With reference of Mr. and Mrs. so-and-so, the man assumes the dominant role again.

In the majority of homes, the man is the figure who financially supports a family while the woman stays home and cares for the children. While there certainly is no harm in this arrangement for most families, it should not necessarily be a given. In the patriarchy women are given that level of economic assistance which is compatible with their daily subsistence and living. For Kamla Bhasin patriarchy signifies many things including ideological and institutional. She writes:

“Patriarchy is a social and ideological system which considers men to be superior to women, one in which men have [*sic*] more control over resources and decision-making. Patriarchy is historically constructed and its form, content and extent can be different in different contexts, and at different times. Like all societal systems, patriarchy too has an ideology and structure which together ensure that men are heads of households, inheritors of family name and property. All societal institutions moreover, are male-dominated.” (Exploring Masculinity 8-9)

The above paragraph makes a clear mention of what patriarchy is. It not only describes what it is but also what it does. Moreover the above-cited excerpt clarifies

how the system involved. By the same token it exemplifies who takes advantage in patriarchal hierarchy and who are deprived. At last it becomes crystal clear that the system facilitates the problem of subjugation and subordination.

For Judith Lorber: “ Rather, I see gender as an institution that establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and politics, and is also an entity in and of itself. (1)

In the above enumerated citation Judith seems to define what the gender is. She is obviously clear in the definition of gender. To her, gender is an institution. That means she is in favour for taking gender is a construction. To her the notion of gender is alterable. Furthermore she assumes that gender sets the pattern of expectations for individuals.

Beth B. Hess argues that “...the institution of gender continues to create and maintain socially significant differences between man and woman (Lorber 5). Similarly, Beth B.Hess comes to assert that gender and its concept came to maintain the gap between men and women. The gap aims at enabling men to assert their dominion over women. As a result women are compelled to accept their subordinate lot. John Acker argues that “Gender organizes social relations in everyday life as well as in the major social structures, such as social class and the hierarchies of bureaucratic organizations (qtd. in Lorber 6).

According to John Acker the notion of gender has a power to organize social relation in everyday life. Not only social relations but social structures, social class and social hierarchy are also shaped and sustained by the concept of gender. In similar vein Lorber further argues:

“The gendered microstructure and the gendered macrostructure reproduce and reinforce each other. The social reproduction of gender in individuals reproduces the gendered societal structure; as individuals act out gender norms and expectations in face-to-face interaction, they are constructing gendered systems of dominance and power. (6)

Lorber also comes to uphold the similar opinion. He is of the opinion that the concept of gender is socially reproduced. The social production of gender guarantees that gender is a matter of creation. The prevailing notion of gender is productive of societal structure. Individuals interact with this structure. This arises the gender roles.

Lorber further insists that “ As a social institution, gender is one of the major ways that human beings organize their lives The process of gendering and its outcome are legitimated by religion, law, science, and the society’s entire set of values (15).

By this conceptual claim Lorber means to say that gender is socially produced institution. It happens to be created in a consistent and conscious way. Entire spectrum of human life comes to be organized by gender, the socially produced institution capable of holding sway over our live.

Simone de Beauvoir writes in her famous book “*The Second Sex*” “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman ... it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... which is described as feminine (267).

Beauvior is bitterly critical of the patriarchy. She argues that women are not born but made. She furthermore seeks to maintain that women are deprived of getting any individual identity and the status of the subject. They are forced to act, react and feel the way they are instructed and educated to act. The feminine sense of belonging to the female sex is the sheer product of patriarchy.

Cranny-Francis et al. define patriarchy as:

A social system in which structural differences in privilege, power and authority are invested in masculinity and the cultural, economic and/or social positions of men”. For them “Patriarchy remains a contested term. But whether one speaks of patriarchy or hegemonic masculinity, conceiving of gendered differences in power and authority as structural allows scope to both men and women to for changes in social policy, for childcare provisions, for flexible working conditions and working hours, and for policies that monitor the abuse of power and violence. (17)

Cranny-Francis et al are sensitive to the definition of the term 'patriarchy'. Both Cranny and Francis have sought to define the term 'patriarchy' in relation to masculine hegemony. The patriarchal system has given males to exert authoritarian power over females. By the same token it has encouraged men to bring into the territory of masculine hegemony entire socio-cultural roles and expectations of women.

III. Textual Analysis

Buhartan as an Institution

In *Rupamati*, Buhartan¹ or the duties of a daughter-in-law has been projected as a social institution. The institution is generated by the patriarchy and is maintained by various institutions guarded by it. The religious discourse constituted by various scriptures has played a significant role in Rupamati's childhood marriage and slavery-like Buhartan. As Kamla Bhasin has said thus:

At the level of culture religion plays a very important role in constructing gender by constructing and informing our understanding of family, marriage, sexuality; by prescribing normative behavior and roles for women and men; by determining the status, rights and responsibilities of husbands and wives, sons and daughters. All religions have laws relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, guardianship, and so on. (20)

Pandit Luintel² takes to give Rupamati to give her in marriage at an early age his parental responsibility according to the religious indoctrination. He not only gives her in marriage but also prepares her for the role and responsibility through training and indoctrination. Rupamati "receive[s] training at her parents' house" (15). In the training her mother gives her "some idea of how to become a good daughter-in-law" so that she is "able to put up with her mother-in-law's excesses" (16).

To regulate the institution of Buhartan there is another institution - mother-in-law. The discourse of Buhartan inculcates total submission of daughter-in-laws to their mother-in-laws. Daughter-in-laws not only have to serve and obey their mother-

¹ Buhartan – a problematic situation in which a daughter-in-law has to endure all the challenges and troubles in the house of her husband from mother in law and other old respected members of the family.

² Luintel : a kind of caste which is supposed to be pure, pristine and powerful spiritually and culturally.

in-laws but also must bear the torture inflicted upon them. “Rupamati [has] to torture her back and shed bitter tears ... though, her mother-in-law [slaps] her for no reason” (11). It is indoctrinated to her that being a daughter of a decent family she should not retaliate such mistreatments. Whenever she is abused verbally or physically by her mother-in-law she remains silent because “coming from a good family she never open[s] her mouth. She [takes] on a somber look and [hold] her anger in check” (25).

The painful side of the story is that even when Rupamati tells about her experiences of suffering, battering and abuses to her mother, the latter does not have power to go against it. So she consoles her daughter by “comparing the story of her agony with other similar so that Rupamati would have the full power to endure her to torment” (13). Buhartan identifies all the difficulties which a daughter-in-law has to endure calmly and comfortably. She thinks that it is a period of trial for her domestic expertise. The more submissively she listens and endures, the more perfectly trained she appear to be. With a passage of time Buhartan took the form of institution. The patriarchs used this institution to promote the oppression of women. Rupamati’s mother is well aware about the social system in which they have to survive and why they can not go against the existing social system in the absence of any alternative.

“When Rupamati begin[s] describing, with eyes full of tears, the needless treatment she [has] to put up with from her mother-in-law” her mother wittingly shows indifference (13). This indifference is both ideological and institutional and is deeply ingrained in the social relations:

Showing indifference she “wants [not] to spoil her daughter with vain indulgences of ‘Oh, you poor thing!’ Yes she certainly [feels] unbearable anguish, but she [doesn’t] want to admit it and encourage defiance in her beloved daughter by supporting everything she [says].

After all, her daughter [can not] spend the whole her life in her parents' home. There [is] no other alternative but to go back to her husband's.

(13)

Actually Buhartan is the relationship between the daughter-in-law and the parents of her husband. This relationship is based on the hierarchical system of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in which the former has the higher position and controls the later so that its master institution is strengthened. When Dahalni³ Bajyai⁴, Dhai Budhi⁵ and Madam Pandit are talking. , Dahalni Bajyai says: "Daughters-in-law must be made to toe the line as much as possible; otherwise they don't regard mothers-in-law as humans" (28).

Daughter-in-law has to suffer not only from their mother-in-law but also from father-in-law and the brothers of their husband. Rupmati is no exception of this part of the story. Her father-in-law "[seizes] the chance and bellow[s] out an abuse at his daughter-in-law" But Rupamati, "innocent daughter-in-law [has] no recourse but to grind her teeth and [suppress] the anger that [arises] from the gratuitous reproof" (3).

Apart from the everyday household chores daughter-in-law is expected to give personal care to their mother-in-law. Rupmati is busy working day and night so even an hour's free time is a great thing for her. She wonders "if toward midday, after the first meal, she managed to lull her mother-in-law to sleep by massaging her legs, she might win one or two hours of free time" (1). In addition, she makes all the necessary provisions even for her father-in-law for his morning prayer. Every daughter-in-law is expected to please their father-in-law and mother-in-law just to be in their good books so that they can safeguard their conjugal life from their sides.

³ Dahalni : a form of identity of a woman belonging to the caste 'Dahal'.

⁴ Bajyai : a expression of endearment, which is used to show respect to an old woman belonging to the senior, respected Brahmin caste.

⁵ Dhai Budi: professionally respectful term of endearment used to call a midwife.

In this way Buhartan or wifely duties are always predefined and makes each daughter-in-law a slave in her own home. It is wholly a social construction. The tradition and religion fosters certain rules and code of conduct for daughter-in-law that are ultimately in the service of the patriarchy. They are treated just like a slave. Rupamati is slapped by her mother-in-law. The form of social institution called Buhartan encourages mother-in-law to take an aggressive advance towards her daughter-in-law. She derives a sense of superiority and dignity by abusing her daughter-in-law. In the chosen text the main character Rupamati falls a pathetic victim to Buhartan. Rupamati stands for how other daughter-in-law has been victimized by their mother-in-law. Rupamati's plight represents the plight of hundreds of other young daughters-in-law who are grinded in the grinding-mill of Buhartan.

Another important facet of this institution is that even after giving their daughter in marriage the parents can never be free from the worry for their daughter. Pandit Luitel and his wife keep on sending people to ensure that everything is alright with Rupamati. In the same way Pandit Madhuvan Baral and his wife always try to fulfill the demand of their daughter. They also take Ravilal's daughter so that their daughter's burden will be lessened. Daughters-in-law are never treated as one's own daughter even though they are well aware that their own daughter shall have the same plight.

Equally important aspect of Buhartan is dowry. If a daughter-in-law does not come home with expected dowry they are constantly nagged in the name of dowry and the status of the daughter-in-law. Although invitees in the wedding after "inspecting the dowry ... unendurable for the envy it caused" made a number comments concerning Rupamati's unsurpassed beauty her mother-in-law does not stop nagging. She pounces upon Rupamati when Ravilal spills oil and blames Rupamati:

“You hussy, you haven’t brought enough property from your father to be wasting things in this way” (8).

Social Representation: Techniques and Texture

Rudra Raj Pandey contrasts two extreme opposites to disclose the social reality and makes his readers to choose the one which he considers to be the best in the society. Through the embodiments of the opposite qualities in the characters, the novelist shows that how the good one is accepted in the society and ultimately wins over the bad. Ultimately it is the society which constructs what is good and what is bad. To use deconstructionist language, the novelist depicts the picture of then Nepali social and cultural milieu as it is by privileging ideal over real, modern over tradition, good over bad, educated over illiterate, tolerance over resistance, morality over money, prudence over rudeness, modesty over pride, responsibility over irresponsibility and forgiveness over revenge.

Rupamati, the protagonist is contrasted with the Baral’s daughter, the wife of Ravilal. Rupamati represents what the novelist thinks the bright side of the future. Though she lacks any formal education she keeps on reading books like Mahavarat and later on Hindi novels. Right from the first day of her marriage with Mr. Sharma she doesn’t spoken a rude word to any one let alone her family members. When Ravilal wants to break up with the family and live separately, she tries to convince him through her husband not to do so because she sincerely thinks that Ravilal will finish every penny and piece of paternal land. It is she who rescues Ravilal from the Kabuliwala by sending money overdue. At the end too, it is she who brings Baral’s daughter home and give her the piece of land at Terai bequeathed to her by her parents. In the sharp contrast to the tolerant manner and modesty of Rupamati, Baral’s daughter is unnecessarily rude and boastful. She is boastful of her father’s wealth. She

expend her resources unscrupulously. She is demonstrative and pretensions. Laziness and lassitude overwhelmed her. She was fond of cheating her sister-in-law jewels. She possessed no atom of sight and foresight. She appears to have been at the finger tips of Ravilal. Through their contrast the novelist tries to show that the winner is one who is always modest, has tolerance, does not stop the regular duty. Though their contrast happens within the dimensions of their family, it is representative of the similar contrast existing the then existing societies. If the novelist had any thoughts of showing Rupamati as the embodiment of the ideal wife and daughter-in-law he has done this with the contrast to Baral's daughter who is rude, irresponsible and carefree.

Mr. Sharma is educated, morally pure, modern and responsible in his official as well as family duty. In his opposition is Ravilal who though literate and modern is extravagant, irresponsible, lazy and above all incapable of choosing the right path. Pandit Chavilal who is happy with the modern education of his eldest son is contrasted with the Pandit Luintel who is embarrassed with the news that his son-in-law is learning English. Learning foreign language particularly English is a symptom of pride. Learning English language is cultivating good manners and reasonable behaviours. Those who are flexible and liberal in their taste and aspiration, can allow their sons to read English. Mr Sharma belongs to this category. There were some orthodox pandits who had anathema to English. They were jealous of young boys learning English and thriving prosperously.

IV. Critique of Patriarchal Ideology in *Rupamati*

Rudra Raj Pandey's *Rupamati* is a fine example of how patriarchy works as an ideological institution. Apparently we see a family undergoing transformation in which the traditional religious and cultural values have been challenged by the emerging modern consciousness. However, patriarchy, one of the most powerful social institutions of the society is further empowered in a new shape which adopts a new operational mode of 'disciplining' that operates through new sets of family values and cultural practices.

Patriarchy is the structural domination of women. It operates through various structural layers of social and cultural institutions. Patriarchy is an institution in itself but it also operates through controlling other social and cultural institutions such as: family, gender, marriage, and religious, cultural, and social practices.

In *Rupamati* all of the above institutions and practices are in operation. The first is the institution of social system of caste based on Hindu religion. Rupamati is married off in her early childhood according to religious belief that controls women's sexuality in the name of purity. "Pandit Luintel gives Rupamati in marriage at the age of seventy-two months, as required by religious texts" (12). Early marriage in childhood is deemed to be a way of putting a curb in the rampant expression of sexuality. It is a way of maintaining the sexual purity. That way her father agreed with the marriage of Rupamati with her groom. Marriage at this age when one does not even know how to eat properly is not only undesirable but also brutal and inhuman. Rupamati is "forced to become the slave of others from the age of seven" (15). This line, which is cited from the text, bring into light how marriage done in childhood innocence and ignorance turns out to be inhuman and harmful. This is clear evidence which proves the fact that the institution of marriage operates as an institution of

(child) slavery. Young Rupamati is battered and abused by her mother-in-law even for the slightest mistakes or with no reason at all. She also becomes the butt of the gathering of mothers-in-law which is called 'Sasumandali.' She is equally mistreated by her brother-in-law and later her brother-in-law's wife. She is not given even enough food to eat by her mother-in-law. She has no one to turn to, not even her husband, Mr. H. L. Sharma. "The tribulations faced by Rupmati as a daughter-in-law day in and day out ... [becomes] so unbearable that, in her anger, she want[s] to jump into Ranipokhari" (22).

In *Rupamati* patriarchal ideology is successfully structured in the form of a binary opposition. The binarization is inextricably linked to the binaries of other social institutions such as gender, family, caste, religion and rituals. Most prominently, gender binaries are neatly woven with other binaries so as to prove that for a good family and betterment of the society women should be devoted to their husbands despite all difficulties they have to face in that ordeal.

The control of female sexuality is at the heart of the politics of representation. Rupamati is given in marriage at the age of six so that she would be loyal to her husband throughout her life. She is trained by her mother to endure every brutality inflicted upon her at her home for the sake of her parent's honor and for the sake of her married life with Havilal which doesn't have any alternative. Immersed in modern opinion because of his fascination towards Western civilization, Havilal has "completely different aspirations and [feels] unease whenever he observe[s] Nepalese social life" (20). He has developed contemptuous attitude towards uneducated women. "The heroines of novels and films [swirl] about in [Havilal's] head;" so he cannot "take pleasure in his innocent gentle wife" (31). More than that "he [is] put off by the sight of her habits, attire, ideas of cleanliness, and the like" (31). Indeed

Havilal neither likes Rupmati nor takes her as a life partner. He thinks that wife is an object of pleasure which must be beautiful and attractive. Towards the end of his father's life he happens to spend sometime at his home. "Seeing her strenuous labours gradually [leaves] an effect on [his] heart" (35). Even if he has sympathy towards her it is not because he takes her as his wife rather as a servant strenuously laboring for his benefit.

When his father dies, his brother does not seem to improve; having seen the degeneration of his brother, he feels as if he has to face the responsibility boldly. After the death of his father he feels as if he has fallen from the world of freedom and fancy to the earthly world of duty and responsibility. Havilal gets job and begins to spend time at his home. In the meantime changes begin to appear in him towards Rupamati: "At the sight of Rupamati's burgeoning youth, a current of love course[s] through his whole body" (46). It is no surprise that if he takes notice of Rupamati it is only because he desires to have pleasure by her budding youth. His perception of Rupamati as an attractive thing renders Rupamati as an object rather than a human being. When Rupamati and her husband talk about the manners of Baral's daughter's spell on her husband Havilal flatters her with the shower of praise based on her physicality. He compares Rupamati with Ravilal's wife:

She may utter spells to herself and get things done. But you work your magic, too, with those doe's eyes of yours, with your upturned eyelashes and gentle smile with teeth gleaming like ivory, and that gentle voice like a cuckoo's. There's magic in your beauty; for her, its all in her mind. You have power to charm by your ways; she, only by her wealth! You give heavenly bliss; she only gives worldly pleasure!

(64)

The implication of Mr. Sharma is that both Rupamati and Baral's daughter are the objects for the use of their husbands because they are compared in terms of how they give pleasure to their husbands. Rupamati conform to the prevailing social mores and is also physically more beautiful. So the pleasure she gives to her husband is heavenly bliss whereas the pleasure Baral's daughter gives is mundane. So it is believed that it is Mr. Sharma's "great fortune to have such a beautiful and modest jewel of a woman as his wife!" (63).

Christa Knellwolf writes that "women are used too propagate the ideology of their own inferiority in a world of man" (203). Rupamati feels that "she could not please her husband" (32). She always tries to please and serve her husband as if he is the master and she is the slave. "She serve[s] her husband unfailingly around the clock, from the time he [gets] up in the morning till he [goes] to bed at night" (62). She always feels that it is her duty as a wife to take care of every thing her husband needs. Mr. Sharma never has to "complain about not finding something in its proper place" (63). When Mr. Sharma refuses to get married for the second time and is slightly changed in his attitudes towards Rupamati, she feels invigorated with a new kind of inner power: "A husband's love [performs] an elixir's work on Rupamati. Her sense of mission [grows] steadily" (46).

Not only Rupamati but also Baral's daughter becomes the victim of this inferiorization. Dahalni Bajyai tells Madam Pandit that "Baral's daughter doesn't measure up – even to his [Ravilal's] feet" (50). A woman compares another woman as an object in relation to her husband. The husband and wife relationship is not based on fully at the human level. If Ravilal counts his wife it is only because she is the source of his income. He says: "Why are you giving me crap over four rupees? On the one hand, you pride yourself on being the daughter of rich folk. Don't you have any

shame? As long as I lived I thought no one would have reason to mock me, and then my life would amount to something. This is utterly disgusting!” (122-23). Ravilal takes Baral’s daughter as a treasure, his useful and monetarily valuable commodity.

“Sexuality and reproduction [are used] for woman’s oppression,” writes Knellwolf, which treat “women’s fertility both as a symbolic and a material cornerstone in a male-dominated society” (203). Both sexuality and fertility are related to the female body. In a patriarchal society female body is used for their oppression both symbolically and materially in the name of religious custom and other socio-cultural practices. “Traditions such as dowry, polygamy, that in fact control the uses of the female body mystified as social custom with the weight of ancient, at times Scriptural authority (Katrak11). The cause of Rupamati’s early childhood marriage is the prime example of the use of female body mystified as social custom of religion. Body, particularly the female body is taken to be a site in which several factors collide and clash. The patriarchy perceives an unacknowledged threat from the body of women. Many social institutions which have been established to defend patriarchy takes an uncontrolled and uncurbed sexuality of women as a threat. That is why patriarchy prefers the childhood marriage as an instrument of controlling the body of women. In this case, as Katrak says sexuality is mystified in the “tradition of *Kanyadan*, that is, a virgin daughter (*kanya*) is given as a gift (*dan*) along with dowry to a husband” (11). In the patriarchal society women are treated as a reproductive unit by controlling their sexuality and body both interlinked with the fertility. Katrak insists:

Further, ‘traditions’ most oppressive to women are located within the arena of female sexuality – not only the glaringly violent ones such as *Sati*, but other more normative forms of objectification in customs like

dowry, multiple childbearing, as well as in fulfilling traditionally expected roles as daughter, wife, mother. (11)

Child-bearing is also a convention from which women feel and face the terrible possibility of oppression. In other words if a married women fails to bear a child, particularly a son, she is immediately taken as a curse of the genealogical line. She becomes a curse and cruises in the geneology of family if she can't beget a son. Her husband can marry another girl as his second wife.

When Rupamati does not give birth to a child that brings anxiety both in her parents and makes Madam Pandit suggests her son to marry another girl. So infertility is used by the patriarchal society to oppress women. Had she been unable to give birth to her only son the case would have been different. It is mainly because as Ketu K. Katrak argues, "women are expected to be the 'guardians of tradition'" (11). Baral's daughter has to bear multiple children because her first child is not a son. Rupamati has borne a son and is valued more than the Baral's daughter who has given birth to a daughter. In order to give birth to a son Baral's daughter has to give birth many times but without any success.

In the novel we see patriarchy makes use of every single constituency of the social to cover up the oppression of women by men. "Sociological parameters of womanhood," as Katrak remarks, "are grounded within economic, political, and cultural norms that consciously and unconsciously constitute an ideological framework" of the Nepalese Brahmin society. To cover up the inflictions meted out to Rupamati her gentle nature is overemphasized over her beauty so that Rupamati does not appear as a beauty object.

V. Conclusion

Rudra Raj Pandey's *Rupamati* is a genuine example of how patriarchy works as an ideological institution. Patriarchal ideology assigns woman and man in traditional gender role and thereby maintains male dominance. In every domain where patriarchy reigns woman is other, she is marginalized, defined only by her difference from male norms and values, which means defined by what she lacks that men have.

Pandey's *Rupamati* reproduce patriarchal ideology by creating his protagonist *Rupamati* and through her, Pandey has become successful in giving vivid insights of all the possible aspects of social realities. By presenting female character coming from the high caste communities the novelist is able to reflect the unequal inner social realities of Nepalese society. *Rupamati* is married off in her early childhood according to religious belief that control women sexuality in the name of purity. So that she would be loyal to her husband throughout her life.

Nepalese society is very rigid in its culture and cultural values. The culture itself has given more emphasis to male rather than vice versa, so, the rules have been heavily imposed on woman. Women in such condition have held secondary position and become silent victim of masculine authority in the name of religion, norms and values. Pandey's Protagonist, *Rupamati* demonstrated that women are used to propagate the ideology of their own inferiority in the world of men. Such as, *Rupamati* feels that she could not please her husband and always feel that it is her duty, as a wife to take care of everything her husband needs, it is all seems possible due to the patriarchal ideology.

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