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Sexism and Misogyny in Nepali Proverbs: A Psychoanalytic Feminist Approach

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Abstract

People use many Nepali-gendered proverbs in formal and informal talks. They discriminate and abuse women consciously or unconsciously in gender contexts. Gender inequality has been a challenging social problem. This study investigates the representations of the sexist, abusive and ingrained prejudices and hatred against women in Nepali Proverbs. It analyses the perceptions and psyche of patriarchy towards Nepali women. This study adopted psychoanalytic feminist theory to analyse sexism and misogyny in Nepali proverbs. Nepali proverbs related to gender discrimination were selected from different written sources. The collected proverbs were presented from the birth of a girl to young, widowhood and old age. The discussed proverbs vividly illustrate prevalent prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, hatred and contempt against women in Nepali society. These gendered proverbs disclose the discrimination and prejudice on gender issues from birth onwards. The proverbs expose the men's negative and aversive attitude, assumptions and psyche towards women. Patriarchal ideology determines 'good women' or 'bad women'; men and patriarchal women expect women should follow the traditional gender roles. Through the gendered proverbs, the patriarchal psyche is palpable as it seeks to subjugate women. This research will aware people, especially the new generation, about the misconceptions of gender in Nepali society, and motivate them not to use those gender discriminatory proverbs for the gender equality and reverence of women.

Keywords: Gender inequality, misogyny, patriarchal psyche, proverb, representation, sexism

Introduction

This article explores the portrayal of sexism and misogyny against Nepali women in gender biased proverbs. It discusses the social construction of gender discrimination and the psyche of patriarchy conveyed in the collected proverbs from the perspective of psychoanalytic feminism. The proverb has been a significant genre of textual studies in research areas. A proverb refers to a short popular pithy saying and states a general truth, advice or perception. "A proverb is a traditional saying which offers advice or presents a moral in a short and pithy manner" (Simpson, 2008, p. 1). Proverbs convey their meanings through descriptive epithets, similes, metaphors, images and symbols, Simpson categorizes proverbs into three:

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The first type takes the form of abstract statements expressing general truths, such as *Absence makes the heart grow fonder* and *Nature abhors a vacuum*. Proverbs of the second type, which include many of the more colourful examples, use specific observations from everyday experience to make a general point; for instance, *you can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink* and *Don't put all your eggs in one basket*. The third type of proverb comprises sayings from particular areas of traditional wisdom and folklore. For example, *after dinner rest a while, after supper walk a mile, Feed a cold and starve a fever, Red sky at night shepherd's delight, red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning* and *When the wind is in the east, 'tis neither good for man nor beast*. (pp. 1-2)

Proverbs have been created according to abstract ideas, assumptions, observations, perceptions and traditional wisdom and folklore conveying general truth in society. Proverbs are not promises, laws and naive. The proverbs state something commonly experienced or giving advice in a particular society; superiors and power holders in the community construct proverbs to express effectively some useful thought, commonplace truth and adage. Men use gendered proverbs to rule well over women.

As a German proverb "As the country, so the proverb" expresses, proverbs enunciate everyday norms, beliefs, values, culture and social life of a society. They carry the general impressions and truths of the culture and traditions, and the proverbs are perceived truths based on the cultural practices and experiences in a society. According to Katozai (2005), proverbs significantly impact on human life in every aspect. Therefore, the proverbs have been constructed as the people have attitudes to humans and non-humans. Tahir and Edwards (2006) state the meanings of proverbs construe a worldview and way of life. Proverbs express the perceived truths about men, women, children, caste, places, plants, animals, etc. in metaphorical and formulaic languages. Anderson (2012) states, "the gender conceptions found in the proverbs form a system of gender hegemony that supports masculine superiority and feminine subordination" (p.10). People use proverbs to make an argument about something or somebody in short, concise and pithy language. Adesida (2007) describes proverbs as social norms based on gender in society. The language of proverbs is generally metaphorical and alliterative for effective communication. The stereotypical language uses of masculine rationale create a negative psychological impact on women (Roya, 2011) and the proverbs lead to negative real-world consequences (Frank & Treichler, 1989). Thus, Nepali proverbs also exploit the gender bias language and misconception of the patriarchy against women.

The proverbs have been constructed based on social phenomena; they expose the general truths synthesized from societal interpretations based on sexist practices. Knowles in *Little Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* mentions an Arab proverb, 'To understand the people, acquaint yourself with their proverbs' (p 3). As to other issues, proverbs carry out negative psychological impacts to gender issues. The proverbs related to gender discrimination are also the product of a culture and beliefs. "Gendered proverbs refer to proverbs in which males or females are represented explicitly or implicitly. . . . The portrayal of masculinity and femininity in proverbs represent a society's perceptions of males and females from various perspectives based on the gender ideology that pertains to it" (Dzahene-Quarshie & Omari, 2020, p. 129). A proverb manifests literally or figuratively the perception of gender. Nepali proverbs reflect discriminatory gender values in Nepali language communities. Proverbs

exhibit the gender relationship between men and women in particular communities, and they portray gender inequality in Nepali society.

The proverbs not only transmit some general assumptions and truth but they also make readers think about the phenomena and identify the behaviours and their consequences in society. They encourage readers to think like intellectuals. If people continue to use the gendered and sexist proverbs, the proverbs leave people in uncivilized, traditional and inhuman society, but the gendered discriminatory proverbs are discarded in use, it may change the psyche of men against women and it assists in creating a justifiable society. Language and symbols illustrate men's unconscious.

The reasons for conducting this research are that Nepali proverbs are considered a part of people's everyday lives and a collective general wisdom and truth about women, but these false assumptions should be eradicated for gender justice. Exterminating the negative psyche and attitude toward women assists civilized society. This study highlights the misconceptions, misconstruction and misjudgement of women; this article barter it with social and gender justice. This study aims to investigate the gender inequality, ambivalence, sexism and misogyny portrayed in Nepali proverbs. Moreover, the study enquired the following research questions for the required data:

1. How do Nepali proverbs depict and characterize sexism and misogyny towards women?
2. How do Nepali proverbs portray gender inequality and injustice in the social context?

Literature Review

This literature consists of a theoretical review and an empirical review of proverb analysis. It provides first a theoretical literature review, and then an empirical review to justify and form the basis for sexism and misogyny in Nepali proverbs.

Theoretical Underpinning: Psychoanalytic Feminism

Gender study in psychoanalytic thinking begins with the concept of the Oedipus complex. Psychoanalytic feminism originates in the feminist critique of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Of two major schools of psychoanalytic feminism, Freudian feminism foregrounds male dominance and gendered subjects, and Lacanian feminism focuses on the association of language and gendered identity. The Classical psychoanalytic theory describes femininity as something lacking such as superego development, capacity for sublimation and moral judgement in women. Patriarchy has psychologically loaded the negative characteristics of women in the minds of men and traditional women.

Psychoanalytic theory asks us to examine the ways in which our personal identity is formed by our early emotional experience within the family. [...] Feminist theory asks us to examine, instead, the ways in which our personal identity is formed by our culture's definitions of what it means to be a man or a woman. [...] On the ways men and women are treated differently and on the way men are socialized to be masculine and women are socialized to be feminine. (Tyson, 2011, p. 175)

Women are oppressed socially and psychologically by patriarchal ideology. Karen Horney in *Feminine Psychology* states that gender is not biological development but the psycho-sexual development of the individual in the society. Personality and representation of gender are "the consequences of the impact of culture on people, regardless of their sex" (Horney 1973:

p. 19). “Freud’s male-oriented theory leads Horney ‘as a woman’ to ‘ask, in amazement, and what about motherhood? and the blissful consciousness of bearing a new life within oneself, the ineffable happiness of the increasing of this new being? and the joy when it finally makes its appearance? . . .’” (pp. 19-20). The concept of Freud’s penis envy is not unnatural but is a mutual natural envy of both man and woman because of the attraction of the sexes to each other. Horney argues that men diminish and underrate the self-personality of women. Horney further emphasizes that there is no reason to define men as sadistic and active and women as masochistic and passive. Freud’s psychoanalytic theory maintains gender psycho-social, but not biological. Gender discrimination and injustice have been rooted within psychic structures. Hindu cultural patterns produce different negative attitudes toward women. In the defence of Freud, Juliet Mitchell in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974) emphasizes “social and signifiatory rather than instinctual and hereditary forms of explanation” (cited in Grosz, 1998, p. 19). Gender is represented by the act or process of signifying by signs or other symbolic means constructed in patriarchal society and culture. Freud describes women as the patriarchal culture conjectures, characterizes and demands them. But Mitchell exploits psychoanalysis to interpret how patriarchal ideology is internalized and lived by men and women in the society:

In violently rejecting a Freud who is not Freud, I would argue that the only important possibilities for understanding the psychology of women that we have to date have been lost and that in misconceiving and repudiating psychoanalysis a crucial science for understanding ideological and psychological aspects of oppression has been thrown away (Mitchell, 1974, pp. 301-302).

Psychoanalytic feminism analyses the male dominated ideology that causes the consequences of the women’s struggle for their true personality. “Mitchell demonstrated the political and social relevance of psychoanalysis, its usefulness as an explanatory or interpretive model rather than simply as a therapeutic technique” (cited in Grosz, 1998, p. 20) as Freud describes women.

Nancy Chodorow in her book *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) utilizes psychoanalysis to describe gender discrimination and injustice as an interpretation of the patriarchal attitudes, behavioural patterns, tendencies and regularities of social life. Chodorow interprets the psychosocial meaning of the sexed body:

Research on the development of gender identity and gender identity disturbances further qualifies the Freudian clinical claim. These studies confirm that gender identity is with rare exception firmly and irreversibly established for both sexes by the time a child is around three. Gender identity receives its major input from the social ascription of sex that begins at birth and is cognitively learned concomitantly with language (Chodorow, 1978, p. 150)

Chodorow explains gender discrimination, sexism and inequality in social and family life from the viewpoint of psychoanalysis. Sexism and misogyny against women are repercussions of the underlying or unconscious patriarchal structures in family and society. Gender oppression has been not only in the context of male behaviour, but also seen in linguistic patterns. Gendered personality is the consequence of the Oedipus complex. Psychoanalytic feminists concerned with Freud describes gender discrimination and inequality as the ramification of male’s exploitation and development of gendered subjects. However, Lacanian

feminists explain sexism as the production of deeply engraved psychic patterns in language and gender identity.

Irigaray (1977) states that women are characterized of the basis on masculine parameters; they are described as penis envy, which signifies their defective and faulty subjectivity in the society. Kristeva (1974) focuses on the role of linguistic patterns in the formation of femininity and female identity. The unconscious psyche developed in patriarchal culture moulds the gender identity as the weaker one. Kristeva's concept of the symbolic and semiotic chora are the patriarchal norms that describe and exploit the men's needs. Ortner (1972) states that gender inequality exists in the patriarchal culture that perceives and addresses women's biology for men's demands. Psychoanalytic feminism focuses on the inscribed social psyche about the women's identity appears even in a language; the concepts or wordings impact the thought process and malpractices, and also underrate the women's subjectivity.

Psychoanalytic feminism discusses social, cultural and political factors affecting male and female subjects. It argues that men dominate women due to men's unconscious need for women's emotionality and rejection of them as potential castrators. It claims that men have an inherent psychological need to subjugate women. "As psychoanalytic theory tells us, we all encounter life events, as we grow up, that shape our psychological development, and these early experiences tend to play out in our adult lives" (Tyson, 2011, p. 101). The psychological theory calls psychological problems of individuals as dysfunctional behaviours. Patriarchal voice is constructed according to the masculine needs; so do the proverbs. Psychoanalytic feminism focuses on men and the social psyche that individuals carry in a patriarchal society; the language impacts the thought processes and practices against women.

Empirical Research on Proverbs

Proverbs carry out the social impressions and practices that people perceive in real-life experiences. Proverbs also present social, cultural and economic issues of the family and society. Lomotey (2019) analyses "the role of proverbs in the sustenance of gender violence within the Spanish context" (p. 324). Women are characterized as unintelligent and consumers. Belfatmi (2013) discusses how Moroccan women are represented and discriminated against in proverbs. Women are perceived as talkative and passive. Gebeyehu (2019) concludes that Awngi proverbs portray "the negative representation of women as incapable in household activities and poor home management, inferior in holding power and authority, stubborn, destructive and dangerous and unintelligent, passive, talkative and lazy creatures. Women are also depicted as they have greedy and selfish behaviour" (p. 479). Women are depicted as persistent/stubborn, vicious/destructive and perilous in the patriarchal family. Rubab, et al. (2022) explain the proverbs from Mewati language depict gender inequality, misogynist manner and ambivalence in Mewati society through the perspective of ambivalent sexism theory. The Mewati proverbs show the women in negative senses. By drawing language, gender and culture, Aleke (2021) analyses the women's representations in English and Igbo proverbs. Aleke also mentions the description of women as weaker and passive in English and Igbo social contexts.

Rasul (2015) examines the representations of women through English and Urdu proverbs and concludes that the stereotypical images of women are the same in English and Urdu proverbs using the method of sociolinguistic and critical discourse. Zheng (2018) explains the depiction of sexism and gender inequality in English proverbs, and also the causes

(historical, cultural and cultural roots) of sexism. The sexist language used in proverbs represents cultural and social values and practices. Lamichhane (2019) analyses man's superior attitudes and behaviour towards non-humans in Nepali proverbs from the perspective of anthropocentrism. He concludes that humans underrate the value of nonhumans in natural phenomena. Biswakarma (2020) uses the social dominance theory (described by Sidanjus & Pratto) to discuss gender inequality in Nepali society.

The above discussion of psychoanalytic feminism provides the base of gender discrimination, injustice, and inequality against women; gender discrimination is not the cause of biological factors, but the cause of linguistic and socio-cultural psyche that perpetuate the negative images and representations of women in society. The discussed empirical researches show that English and other language proverbs are examined from different perspectives, and Nepali proverbs are discussed from the perspectives of anthropocentrism and social dominance theory. Here, the departure point of the study is to analyse the prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, and hatred against women based on sex, typically represented by men, in Nepali proverbs through psychoanalytic feminism as the theoretical insight. This study may impact the negative psyche of the people against women and construct positive attitudes toward women's subjectivity. This study galvanizes people stop using such negative proverbs against women in their lives.

Methods and Procedures

The study exploits a descriptive qualitative research approach. The content analysis method is used to identify gender-specific proverbs. Nepali proverbs that explicitly or implicitly depict the perceptions of males and females were selected for analysis using a purposive sampling technique. Twenty-four Nepali gendered proverbs were sorted out based on the themes of gender, such as birth, marriage, gender roles, socio-cultural roles, beauty and power from Kesar Lall's *Proverbs and Sayings from Nepal* and Shiva Prasad Paudyal's *Nepali Ukhan Sangraha*. This study applied psychoanalytic feminism as a theoretical tool. Psychoanalytic feminism explains how women's discrimination and oppression as deeply rooted within psychic structures and reinforced by the continual repetition or reiteration of the proverbs; psychoanalytic feminists want to delete or modify the proverbs that represent women as weaker and otherness than men.

Results and Discussion

Proverb is a literary genre under the folklore. Proverbs encapsulate a society's cultures, traditions, beliefs and values based on perceived experiences towards humans and non-humans. People utilize proverbs to make strong arguments at somebody or something. The gendered proverbs quip against women. Here, the study interprets the selected Nepali proverbs relating to women and gender issues in society. The selected gendered proverbs are analysed from the perspective of psychoanalytic feminism. Culture cannot be inextricable from language, so cannot be people's psyche. Patriarchal culture marginalizes women and their work through the imbalance of power. Therefore, the study explains that the selected Nepali proverbs consist of patriarchal psyche to exhibit their negative attitudes towards women in society.

Gender discrimination begins from the womb in Nepali culture. The subconscious mind of males and patriarchal oriented females expects the births of sons in the families. "For psychoanalytic theory, our adult personality is the result of the emotional experiences we had while growing up" in the family (Tyson, 2011, p. 103). People's hidden interest is not

to give birth to girls; therefore, modern people take support of the medical test for gender selection although the practice of gender selection is an illegal work. They attempt to predetermine what sex a baby will be at birth. After the births of babies, again there is gender discrimination at their celebrations. Men get guided more by hidden psychological forces. The subliminal thoughts of parents can be expressed in a Nepali proverb- *Chhora pae khasi, chhori pae pharsi* (Mutton on a son's birth celebration, but a pumpkin on a daughter's birth). Here, 'mutton' represents the latent interest of having a son and being happier over the birth of a son than a daughter. 'Pumpkin' shows the dissatisfaction at the birth of a daughter. This is the unjust or prejudicial treatment based on sex. There is another Nepali proverb, *dhila hos tara chhora hos* (Let it be late, but be a son). This shows an unconscious desire to have a son rather than a daughter, and the son's priority over daughters in a family. Such desires may occur due to the cultural practices in Nepali society. The reasons behind the preference for a son are that a son carries a family legacy in society, opens the gate to heaven for his parents, and the culture provides different rituals and rights to sons. Men and the patriarchal women who do not give birth to their sons feel low self-esteem and insecure or unstable sense of self in the family and society. Men have the fear of abandonment which is "the unwarranted nagging belief that [their] friends and loved ones are going to desert us (physical abandonment) or don't care about [them] (emotional abandonment)" (Tyson, 2011, p. 105). Men have a fear of laughing at those who do not have a son. These proverbs expose the psyche of men's unconscious and repression of desiring sons. Daughters have been marginalized, segregated and exploited in the patriarchal society. The unconscious mind derives behaviours against baby girls, and the conscious mind performs discriminatory behaviours against women. Men are in denial when they believe that they do not have a baby boy in the family. The actions and inactions make victims of sexism.

Although men look for beautiful girls for their sexual satisfaction, men criticise even the beauty of women in society; men talk about the women's beauty rather than their wisdom and skill. They use dream symbols for women. There is a proverb- *Amilo jandako dher nigar, ketiko dher singar* (Sour local drink has more dregs, and a girl's more decoration and ornamentation). To be fair is good to everyone but patriarchal thought deprecates women to humiliate them. Men attempt to indicate the faults of women in a disapproving way. Men also cross-examine the character of women in the family and society. Men get concession to have relations with other women, nobody talks about their character. But women have to prove their purity time and again. A proverb- *Aphno poilai mkai phuti, natho lai roti* (Parched corn for the husband, but bread for the adulterer) disdains the mentality of women if a woman values other men with good food. Bread is considered better than parched corn, and a family member like a husband can sometimes adjust on food but it is a culture that a guest is revered at home. Therefore, a woman can give better food to a male guest. But the family and society surmise the personality of the woman. Women are characterized as temptress who destroys men; their physical beauty attracts men for sexual pleasure. The proverbs manifest women as mischievous, disorderly, amoral and unfaithful wife who have sexual relations with other males. Such behaviour torture and abuse and weaken women in families and societies, and women cannot establish their public personality in the societies. They have to be limited and dominated within the four walls of the houses. Men want to achieve their id and pleasure satisfaction from women by using patriarchal superego, ethics and morality.

Men exhibit unjust behaviour even to the mother because ‘the mother’ represents a woman, a proverb “*Ama, timilai ta bokshi bhanchan.*” “*Chup lagbabai, jasto dekhchan ustai bhanchhan*” (“Mother, people call you a witch.” “Shut up. They speak as they see”) smothers the identity, personality and purity of a mother in male dominated society by calling her as a witch. This proverb discloses the men’s discriminatory psychology and unjust behaviour derived from preconceived and unfounded opinions of women. People practice another proverb, *Kangalko jat chhaina, boksiko gaun chhaina* (The pauper has no caste and the witch no village) to describe women as witches. Male-dominated society uses the word *boksi* (female witch) but not *bokso* (male witch) in proverbs. Men assume that a *boksi* harms people with their evil wicked knowledge. Men are characterized as intelligent and virtuous but women as odious, wicked and sinful.

Patriarchal society treats a daughter-in-law as a servant at home. People make her do every household work. Unless the daughter-in-law shows her energetic behaviour to work, men and patriarchal women abuse her. The proverb, *kam paina buhari, padako chak kanyau* (If you have nothing else to do, daughter-in-law, go to scratch a calf behind) portrays men’s bully behaviour to women. Nepali society carries out other such gender abusive proverbs to mistreat daughter-in-law’s, such as *Argheli buhari giu chori khanchhe* (meddlesome daughter-in-law purloins ghee at home) and *Argheli buhari pahuna sanga sutchhe* (meddlesome daughter sleeps with guests). Alexander Pope states, “Most women have no character at all,” and James Thurber asserts, “woman’s place is in the wrong” (cited in Dobie, 2012, p. 103). Patriarchal society psychologically suppresses females by characterizing them as violators, disloyalty, infidelity and adultery. The proverbs depict women as an oppressed class.

People utilize the symbol of the amorous cow the active woman. The proverb, *uttauli gai, baghle khai* (The vain cow is eaten by the tiger) represents the male’s suppression motives to women and men do not entertain the activeness of women. Therefore, men describe energetic and zestful women as impetuous, coquettish, shameless, and showy. The Nepali proverbs, *chokta khana gaeki budhi jholma dubera mari* (the old woman who went for a piece/lump was drowned in the soup), *meri ama sarhai baathi, chamal sang pitho sati* (how clever my mother is, she gave rice in exchange for flour) and *bhale basnu kaha kaha pothi basne* (the cock does not crow but the hen crows) underestimate and misjudge women’s intelligence, knowledge, skills and personality in Nepali societies. Men catechize the confidentiality and intelligence of women. This men’s psyche is expressed in a Nepali proverb, *aaimaiko kilkile hudaina* (women do not have uvula or Adam’s apple). Other Nepali proverbs such as *aaimaiko kokhama danta hunchha* (women carry the teeth in their stomachs), *aaimaiko chal daibale jandaina* (God knows women’s deeds), *aaimaiko jaman hudaina* (women do not have honesty and reliability) reveal the offensive, unpleasant, deplorable and objectionable nature and attitude of men against women. These proverbs are the consequences of patriarchal social and cultural system and presentmen’s hatred and prejudice against women in Nepali society.

Men exploit women as commodities and house unpaid labour; therefore, they look for patriarchal cultured women that should be male-friendly. The Nepali proverbs *kulko chhori, mulko pani* (The daughter from a good family is like spring water) and *tirtha janu kasha, swasni lyaunu janchi* (for pilgrimage, go to Kashi, for a wife, look with care) disclose the men’s psyche how they forage women for their benefits. Men force women to be cultured

in the name of *kulghar* (prestigious family). The cultured women have been understood as the devout adherents of patriarchal norms and values.

Men and patriarchal women disparage widows in Nepali society; the Nepali proverbs, *gariblai dinchhu nabhannu*, *randilai lanchhu nabhannu* (tell no poor man that you will give him money, nor tell a widow that you'll marry her), *randilai dhog garepachhi mai jsto bhaesh bhanchha* (if you bow your head to a widow, she will say, "May you be like me"), *randilai poteko rahar* (the widow loves to wear glass beads) and *randika das wata poi, marne belama kahi na kahi* (the widow who has ten husbands has no one when she is about to die) contempt and devalue the worth of widow in Nepali society. Patriarchy looks at widow with abhorrence and anathema, and never behaves them as true humans. The superego of a person can establish gender justice, and sexism in the realm of the superego identifies what is wrong or right.

The Jung's concepts of the collective unconscious, myths and archetypes signify gendered proverbs as an expression of the experiences of men or masculinity. As Lacan states, "language shapes our unconscious and our conscious minds, thereby giving us our identity" (Dobie, 2012, p. 4). The language used in proverbs conveys the prejudice against women. The desires of the patriarchal psyche have been articulated by gendered proverbs through condensation. Patriarchal ideology has been latent in gendered proverbs; the invisible patriarchal ideology is more dangerous for women. "From a patriarchal perspective, women who adhere to traditional gender roles are considered 'good girls.' [...] In contrast, women who violate traditional gender roles are thought of as 'bad girls' (Tyson, 2011, p. 179). Men are in power and characterize women according to patriarchal stereotypes, such as unnatural, nags, immoral, unethical, gossips, seductresses, irrational, submissive, bitches (for violators of traditional gender roles) and virginal angels, selfless caregivers (for patriarchal ideology followers). Nepali-gendered proverbs are loaded with patriarchal ideology. "Patriarchy is based on sexism, which is the belief that women are innately (that is, by nature) inferior to men: less intelligent, less rational, less courageous, and so forth" (p. 180). Patriarchal men and women decide the good behaviours and personalities of women in society.

Conclusion

The gender issue has emerged as a significant theme in social and humanities research areas for a few decades. This study explores the sexism, hatred and prejudice against women resulting by patriarchy in Nepali proverbs. The language used in Nepali proverbs carries out the patriarchal psyche in Nepali proverbs that are the consequence of Nepali socio-cultural phenomena. The discussed proverbs depict women as weaker, lazy, passive, fragile, unintelligent, untrustworthy, disloyal, vicious, destructive, immoral, evil and greedy. The proverbs portray unique cultural values against women and expose the hidden and suppressed patriarchal psyche practiced in Nepali society. The selected Nepali proverbs carry out the negative representations of women. Men criticize, insult and mock women using gender biased proverbs. Female figures are depicted for fertility, abundance and nurturance of those around them. The Nepali gendered proverbs reveal the misogyny i.e. negative attitudes towards women. Women have been treated as secondary, inferior, passive and non-existent. Women should be free from their mental dependence on patriarchal images.

Such proverbs bear the patriarchal psyche and hatred and contempt against women; the negative attitude toward women can be transferred to a new generation. For gender equity

and reverence, the study recommends educated people should not utilize them at home and in public places, and authors must avoid such gender biased proverbs in books. Even the Nepali dictionaries must eliminate such gender discriminatory proverbs in new editions that the new generation can use in the future. It will stop the use of persistent stereotypes against women. It may have a great impact on the future of society to maintain gender equality.

Future research may compare Nepali proverbs with Newari, Tharu, Chinese, Japanese, English, etc. Nepali proverbs can be studied from the perspective of eco-criticism, Marxism, etc.; the researcher can link different themes of Nepali proverbs with the themes of other literary genres.

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