



# **Patriarchy and Subordination of Women in Patricia McCormick's *Sold*: An Intersectional Approach**

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## **Article History:**

Received 30 July 2025; Reviewed: 18 September 2025; Accepted 15 October 2025

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.3126/awadharana.v9i1.86205>

## **Abstract**

This paper explores how female characters are dominated on the basis of gender, age, culture, religion, economic status as well as education in Nepal. This issue is discussed and analyzed on the basis of the textual analysis of Patricia McCormick's novel *Sold*, which is set in the context of Nepal. The novelist expresses multifaceted problems women are facing in rural Nepal in which the decision of the male is final and women have to suffer due to their decision. Many women and girls become the victims of male supremacy every year as they have undergone many tortures and discriminations in their lives. As a qualitative approach of study, it reviews some articles and books concerning McCormick's novel as a primary source using the intersectional approach through the study of patriarchy and subjugation of women. The finding of this study indicates that the protagonist Lakshmi experiences not only gender discrimination but also marginalization based on class and culture. It also shows that Lakshmi has a strong instinct and determination that enable her to come out of the brothel where she is *Sold* to work as a prostitute. At the end of the novel, she frees herself as well as her friends from that brothel revolting against all kinds of dominations women have faced in the society.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, human trafficking, marginalization, commodification of female body, women's subjugation

### Introduction

Patricia McCormick's novel *Sold* deals with multifaceted obstacles women have undergone from their childhood. In rural Nepali societies many girls and women are traded and supplied to many brothels of India due to illiteracy, poverty and lack of awareness. It exposes that social norms made by men create many kinds of bondages to limit the rights of women. It narrates the story of a thirteen-year-old girl, Lakshmi who lives with her mother and stepfather in a remote village. Being poor, she involves in activities like farming, raising goats and taking care of small children. She cannot get opportunities of attending schools. She faces difficult time when flood washes away all their crops. Her stepfather sells her to a lady named Bimla. After several days journey, she is taken to the border of Nepal and India. There Bimla sells her to a strange looking man whom she has to call uncle husband. Then she is taken to a brothel named 'Happiness House' run by Mumtaz. He also sells her to Mumtaz and she realizes the horrible truth how she is used as an object. Then, she plans to escape from the brothel and makes many kinds of strategies. She is not the only one trapped in that hellish state; there are many girls living miserable lives. The oppression faced by women in many brothels illustrates male supremacy over female. The events in the novel reflect that women undergo multifaceted challenges to live in patriarchal societies. Reflecting the oppression of women, Kristami et al. (2022) state that women are discriminated on the basis of prevailing social practices that promote supremacy of males and women are portrayed as inferior (p. 274). Thus, women have become victims of multifaceted discriminations existed in traditional societies in which gender roles are promoted as natural.

The novel highlights the reality of human trafficking that has flourished in poor Nepali villages where girls are traded for money even by their parents. It also explores the issue of child exploitation through the portrayal of traumatic experiences of Lakshmi who undergoes struggle for survival. Girls in traditional societies are brought up to follow the socially and culturally constructed gender roles that make them always inferior. In the novel mother of Lakshmi teaches her to act in such a way when she goes to work in the city. She says, "Get up early in the morning before anyone else in the house and be the last one to bed at night. Never sit down in the presence of your mistress or her husband or in front of the children. And never eat your meal until they have gone to bed. This will prove what hard worker you are" (McCormick, 2006, p. 56). Such orientation reflects how girls are indoctrinated from their childhood. They are not trained to be independent and strong enough.

In regard for the case of Lakshmi, everything goes beyond expectation. Her resilience to be free from the brothel can be taken as the expression of strong determination that women are expected from women not to be dominated in societies. The novel also portrays the factors like poverty and patriarchal domination bring women at margin. There are other women and girls living a miserable life before Lakshmi is sold and taken to the Happiness House run by Mumtaz. They all have been forced into sexual slavery and some of them are suffering from HIV. Her life is fully trapped in that brothel just like a bird in a

cage. She is acquainted with the environment and then she makes plan to escape from there. Women in rural, patriarchal societies suffer from various challenges, and it is quite difficult in analyzing their struggles from only one perspective. In this connection, Carbado et al. (2013) opine that intersectionality makes advocacy around violence against women, vulnerabilities of women, discrimination on the basis of color, and marginality of those women from immigrant and socially disadvantaged communities (p. 304). By analyzing the novel, manifold problems of women can be revealed and for the justice and freedom of women awareness can be created in the society.

McCormick depicts the dark side of human nature by showing the evil practices like human trafficking, prostitution, child labour, poverty, gender discrimination, class division, and violence and so on in her novel. Such evil activities degenerate the society and transformation and progress of the society cannot be achieved. For the smooth functioning of any society the role of both male and female should be equal and other kinds of inequalities should be erased by promoting awareness, morality, ethics, liberty, gender equality, social mobility, equity and education. This paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

- a) How does intersectional approach reflect all kinds of female problems?
- b) How are female characters discriminated and kept in the margin in the novel *Sold*?
- c) Why do women have to face multiple problems in patriarchal societies?

This study intends to reflect how women in the novel *Sold* are discriminated making them inferior and submissive. It also aims to portray the multiple factors like religion, culture, illiteracy, economy, social status, caste, class, and age have become the cause of the torture women have faced in the society. These factors have played roles in the process of making women inferior and submissive.

To answer the above research questions, this study applies interpretative and explanatory method to analyze the novel, using the intersectional approach. The novel has been taken as primary source and the reviews on this novel, by various critics and reviews based on intersectionality are taken as secondary sources. The secondary sources are different books, scholarly journals, and book reviews by different critics. By using both types of texts the issues raised in this study have been compared, evaluated, explored, and expounded to analyze the novels from multiple perspectives in terms of the domination and exploitation faced by women. Traditional practices, rituals, social status, and illiteracy in terms of creating obstacles in the lives of women have been also considered a major discussion in this article. Patriarchies, lack of awareness, prevalent of dogmatic values and poverty have become the methodological approach for the thematic study of the novel and how female character face multifaceted problems in their lives.

### Review of Literature

Numerous interpretations and views regarding the novel *Sold* are found. Some critics regard it as the interpretation of gender inequality and representation of the Nepali

cultural practices. In this regard, Fatmawati et al. (2017) report, “Gender inequalities are found in the novel by analyzing the text, cognition, and the social situation through sentences of the novel” (p. 110). They report that due to preference of male over female in the society many girls like Lakshmi have become the victim of sexual slavery and are used as tools to fulfill the desires of males. They only emphasize the issue of gender but they miss other aspects like economic factors, age, and race that have also discriminated and made women inferior in the society. Emphasizing human trafficking as evil in the society, Al-Zubaidi and Al-Mamoori (2023) argue, “McCormick wrote *Sold* to demonstrate how cruel, the practice of human trafficking is nowadays. She provides information about human trafficking and its prevalence in an effort to pique interest” (p. 61). They have raised the problem of human trafficking but women have been made inferior in the society by other issues like lack of education, property right, and participation in development activities. There are many factors working to promote such evil practices in the society and by analyzing them from multiple perspectives, they can be revealed.

In male-dominated societies women are made inferior in many ways. Alobeytha et al. (2018) include that the novel, *Sold* has shown the loss of identity of the girl or woman is caused by the traffickers and they replace them with new identity and the girls should need to make struggle to regain their identity as Lakshmi has done (p. 8). They have portrayed the problem of not having space of female in the society by decentering their identity. Females in patriarchal society always have to struggle for their identity but male have their independent state. They are discriminated in many ways. Kristami et al. (2022) reflect, “It deals with the kinds of oppression found on the character of *Sold* novel. The main character named Lakshmi is the representation of oppression toward woman in this novel; she struggles with the treatments that she gets in her life” (p. 280). They show that Lakshmi becomes the victim of male oppression. They have overlooked other issues like religion, race, social status, class, and economic status that marginalize women. All the critics have presented their opinions on the novel but none of them have analyzed it from the approach of intersectionality. For this reason, it is viable to use this approach in the novel to explore multiple ways of oppressions and discriminations women have faced in patriarchal and underdeveloped society.

### **Intersectionality: A Theoretical Perspective**

Intersectionality refers to the cumulative and complex ways of domination and the overlap of them in terms of the experiences of the marginalized groups either on the basis of class, caste, sex race, or gender. They all attempt to block equal access and opportunities in the society. Rather than emphasizing simple binaries of oppression women are facing, it widens complex and divergent issues of power exercises to limit the rights and freedom of women. It was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw who opines that various forms of inequalities operate regarding status of women and some issues are missing when people do not examine the sum of its parts. There is lack of examining the inequalities from the multiple perspectives for the thorough analysis. As being a lens, it sees all the ways in which

various forces activate to exploit women. It was first applied to raise the issues of the black women who were suffering from many problems. She reports the reason for using it as, "I will center Black women in this analysis in order to contrast the multidimensionality of Black women's experience with the single axis analysis that distorts experiences" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 1). Her main concern is to include all kinds of discriminations together for not excluding any issue. Single axis of analysis keeps the other problems in the shadow. For uncovering all kinds of discriminations women have undergone intersectionality is the very best approach as it reflects their problems from various lenses.

Women are also oppressed on the basis of caste, race, as well as religion. Women are still tolerating sexual harassment and other abuses confronting degradation and physical assault in many societies. Crenshaw (1991) in a speech in San Diego, California claimed, "...we will all have to work hard to see that race and other intersections are fully incorporated in to our understanding of women's issues" (p. 1469). Gender difference is not the single issue for the understanding of female problems. She further includes that to strengthen the women's movement the boundaries of separation made for the black women like racism, sexism, and other 'isms' never erase the experience of women and by intersectional sensibility the experiences of all women can be incorporated (p. 1475). For the empowerment of women, intersectionality plays a significant role. It is broadened to incorporate all kinds of issues of women. In this connection, Carbado et al. (2013) state, "...scholars and activists have broadened intersectionality to engage a range of issues, social identities, power dynamics, legal and political systems, and discursive structures in the United States and beyond" (p. 304). It empowers women to transcend the boundaries, build interdisciplinary bridges, and promote theoretical and normative debates. It can also be regarded an analysis-in-progress or work-in-progress. Agents of its movement have sought to adapt, refine and articulate to multiple disciplines arenas outside academia altogether. It also moves across national boundaries moving both men and women as a social movement. It is also a method, a disposition, a heuristic, and an analytical tool as well as an intra-disciplinary interrogation of social psychology. To sum up, it is an evolving framework which enables us to understand and address social inequalities by reflecting the interconnectedness of different forms of oppressions.

### **McCormick's *Sold*: Critical Analysis**

#### **Oppression on Women and Intersectionality**

Intersectionality also deals with the multiple issues of dominations women are facing in the society. The focus on the basis of gender cannot cover all kinds of problems women undergo. For raising voice against the domination on women, feminism, racism, and sexism fail to address the experiences and problems of women. Intersectional approach is greater than the sum of these theories. There are many forms like class, caste, economic status, social status, race, age, ability, power and many others and they create multiple identities as well as challenges for the people. Reflecting complexities of the society, Weldon (2008) reports, "The concept confronts an important dimension of social

complexity: the interaction between social structures such as race, class, and gender (among others)” (p. 193). As a cornerstone of promoting equality and fraternity for the oppressed individuals, it recognizes how multiple problems intersect the society. It also helps to recognize how marginalized groups face challenges and inequalities due to their inabilities. As a practical approach, it helps to create equitable and inclusive society by empowering and uplifting those who face unique challenges. Emphasizing its principle, Hankivsky (2014) states, “From an intersectionality perspective, human lives cannot be reduced to single categories, and policy analysis cannot assume that any one social category is most important for understanding people’s needs and experiences” (p. 9). It also advocates for social justice, power, diversity of knowledge, and equity.

Women have been marginalized in patriarchal society in many ways treating them as inferior. They are confronted by violence, unequal treatment, and discrimination. Poverty is also another evil for causing many obstacles in the lives of women. Patriarchy postulates various men’s traits and intentions as the cause of women’s oppression. Men enjoy privileged positions and feel more independent than women in the society. Men, like women, are social beings whose characteristics reflect the social formation within which they emerge as social agents. The unequal situations between men and women can be observed from unequal pay, unequal education and opportunities, domestic violence, and women’s main responsibilities for children and domestic work. Lorde (1998) talks about multiple ways regarding oppression on marginalized people. She mentions that the differences that are separating men and women refuse to recognize and to examine the distortions. She writes, “Racism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance. Sexism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over the other and thereby the right to dominance. Ageism, Heterosexism. Elitism. Classism” (p. 855). This way, there are cumulative dominations existing in the society and they require multiple lens to analyze them. Similarly, women have been oppressed in multiple ways mainly in underdeveloped societies.

### **Patriarchy and Suppression of Women**

Lakshmi is trapped in many ways because of the bondages and norms determined by male ideologies. In such societies the identity of the female is lost as her mother takes shelter with her stepfather after the death of her father. She is exploited and then is taken to a brothel. She is brought up in such a way in which the domination of male is accepted. She says, “Ama says we are lucky we have a man at all. She says I am to honour and praise him, respect and thank him for taking us in after my father died” (McCormick, 2006, p. 14). Women feel themselves inferior and take shelter in men’s protection. This shows that in traditional societies due to lack of literacy and awareness, women live in nightmarish reality and cannot distinguish between right and wrong things. The novel is realistic as it is based on the rural village in which people lack consciousness and are liable to commit crimes. Due to lack of awareness people do many illegal and immoral activities. In this regard, Johnson (2010) asserts, “*Sold* is a sensitive novel that gives readers the distance they may need to accommodate the reality that the world is both good and bad, and its people are both kind



and cruel. The author's note at the end gives more information about how the story reflects the vast number of youngsters *Sold* by their families into the sex trade throughout the world" (p. 22). The focus is on both sides of reality found in human nature as people are guided by both evil and good nature. Next, the body of women is reflected as the determinant factor in women trafficking considering it to have selling value. Thus, women do not have their real freedom of their own body.

Lakshmi's story is set against the predetermined rhythm of poverty, death, gender, age, illiteracy, and womanhood. Her drunken stepfather sells her for eight hundred rupees to a prostitution ring. She is convinced that she is going to work in a big city as a maid and thinks that her mother will finally have a tin roof when the rain comes. She is accompanied by aunt and uncle husband across the Nepal India border and finally she is resold in a red-light district, Calcutta in India. Reflecting what happened to her, Lakshmanan (2011) mentions, "Lakshmi is locked in a room, beaten and starved, but she will not give in. A vignette titled 'After five days' has only one line: 'After five days of no food and water I don't even dream.' The blank page beneath says it all. Finally, a drugged glass of buttermilk does what hunger and confinement could not, and her first customer 'rolls off' her" (p. 70). The trauma she has undergone is not only the result of gender discrimination. Many factors are responsible to bring her to such a state. Patriarchal norms and beliefs discriminate, suppress, exploit, and dehumanize females treating them as a commodity. Identity and self-respect of women are nowhere found in the social practices exercised in patriarchal society. The trauma faced by Lakshmi reflects the domination and marginalization faced by girls and women in rural societies. The life of Nepali women is arranged by their father before marriage as all regulations and authorities belong to fathers and women cannot determine any deportment. Lakshmi become the victim of such practices. Even after marriage they are controlled by their husbands making them limited inside the four walls of the house. Inside their homes they are controlled by fathers and husbands and outside their homes they are controlled by patriarchy. Due to social condition, Lakshmi is forced to confront horrible life without having the feeling of affection from her parents as well as from others. She gets manipulated and exploited in a brothel in another country until she escapes.

Reflecting how power is exercised over the identity of women by males, Lakshmanan (2011) states, "Yet, while analyzing *Sold*, I became aware that power circulates ubiquitously, both within the text and in the interpreter. In the book, Lakshmi's father, the brothel owner, and the American all exercised power over her identity" (p. 89). Lakshmi also becomes the victim of power she is *Sold* by her father as he used his power being a male in the family. When the people who hold power misuse and exploit the powerless the society is misguided. Many women like Lakshmi have been *Sold* by cruel people like her stepfather. Many girls and women are brought by selling in many red-light zones of both Nepal and India. The female characters in the novel become victim of many things and if we examine the domination and oppression felt by them from a single lens, the other aspects will be in shadow. Al-Zubaidi and Al-Mamoori (2023) include, "*Sold* explores numerous layers of meaning. Although the story brings up the subject of girl trafficking, it also touches on

native society, its poverty, and patriarchal discourse tradition with some distortion” (p. 67). Lakshmi, her mother and the other girls and women in the red-light zones have become the victims of poverty, illiteracy, economic crisis, age, caste, race cultural norms and values. Similarly, Joshi (2019) analyzes the novel from the lens of interdiscursivity and states it is a text written for the American readers reflecting the South Asian problems or the problems of third world countries like political injustice, prevalent poverty, subsistence rural economy, and women’s maltreatment in contemporary society (p. 19). The novel focuses on the problems of the underdeveloped countries in which lack of consciousness and progress creates many problems for the suppression of women.

### **Commodification of Female Body in the Novel**

The novel *Sold* reflects the hellish life many girls have undergone who are traded from different rural parts of Nepal. They have been struggling so hard to survive. The pathetic situation compels them to live a life worse than death. The suffering and torture imposed on women in Nepal and India are quite similar. Directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly, women are commodified in patriarchal society. Lakshmi remembers the horrible life inside the brothel and the mistreatment made by the owner of the Happiness House. She says:

Then Mumtaz flies at me. She grabs me by the hair and drags me across the room. She flings me onto the bed next to the old man. And then he is on top of me, holding me down with the strength of ten men. He kisses me with lips that are slack and wet and taste of onions. His teeth dig into my lower lip.

Underneath the weight of him, I can’t see or move or breathe. He fumbles with his pants, forces my legs apart, and I can feel him pushing himself between my things. I gasp for air and kick and squirm. He thrusts his tongue in my mouth. And I bite down with all my might. He cries out “Aghh!” and I am running. Running down the hall, past the other girls, losing my fancy city shoes along the way, until I am back in the room where I started, pulling my old clothes out of my bundle. (McCormick, 2006, pp. 109-110)

These lines indicate that it is the first attempt to rape Lakshmi. She escapes this time but the owner takes possession over Lakshmi saying that she has purchased her by paying a huge amount and she has to obey her as she is her property. The incidents of the novel resonate with the view of Oguiche and Abubakar (2024) as they report, “...woman as a victim of the patriarchal society, where she is constantly derided, oppressed, marginalized and assumed to be a second class citizen in the scheme of things, in comparison with her male counterparts” (p. 109). Lakshmi and other girls are victimized but males are not sold and receive no tortures like they face.

Mumtaz has purchased Lakshmi from Uncle Husband and she wants to exploit her. She wants to sell her body for earning a great sum. She says, “You belong to me,” she says. “And I paid a pretty sum for you, too.” She opens to a page in her book and points to the notation for 10,000 rupees. “You will take men to your room.” she says. “And do whatever they ask of you. You will work here, like other girls, until your debt is paid off”



(McCormick, 2006, p. 112). This way Mumtaz attempts to use the body of Lakshmi as a means of earning. She knows the truth behind she is brought there. She is scattered when she knows that she has to work as sex slave in her early age. She is extremely forced by Mumtaz to make her do whatever she likes. Lakshmi is transformed into the property of Mumtaz that is commodification as suggested by Hirschman and Hill (1999) that it consists of transforming people into others' property, as occurs in slavery or concentration camps, which shows that it is not limited to the world of objects (p. 394). Lakshmi and other girls are commodified by Mumtaz possessing them as her property and also using them in her brothel as means of earning money.

Mumtaz beats Lakshmi with leather strap half to death and left her inside the locked room. When she disagrees, she is left to starve. She rejects doing such disgraceful things. She is intoxicated by letting her drink a glass of lassi by Mumtaz. Then, she becomes unconscious and Mumtaz sends a man to her room who fulfils his passion taking advantage of her unconscious state. She describes the horrible scene after she is raped:

My head throbs. My mouth is parched. I stand on shaky legs, then collapse on the bare floor, the pain between my legs like a searing coal. I grab the bedsheet, struggle to my feet, and make my way to the little table, where someone has left a glass of water. Then I catch sight of a girl in the mirror. She has blackened tiger eyes and bleary chili pepper lips. She looks back at me full of sadness and scorn and says, You have become one of them. (McCormick, 2006, p. 128)

Lakshmi thinks that all the things they have done are not real because she cannot accept them as real. She cries but no one hears her. She realizes that she has become one of the sex workers in the brothel unwillingly. As commodification of her body, she is forced to involve in prostitution. She is used as object for the pleasure of men. It also shows the impoverished state of women in the brothel as their interests are at stake without the chance of resistance.

Mumtaz neglects Lakshmi that she is no more virgin and she cannot fetch a good price for her. She says Lakshmi to come downstairs and join the other girls of the brothel. But still she is not allowed to go outside. Mumtaz comes close, takes Lakshmi's chin in her hand and warns, "But if you try to run away," she says, "I will grind out chillis and put them in your private parts" (McCormick, 2006, p. 139). Now, Lakshmi is said to join the other girls each night. She has to find a man herself. As soon as Lakshmi leaves that room, the next new girl enters. It shows many girls are trafficked into a brothel every day. Girls are being sold so easily as if smugglers are doing a business of groceries. This way the novel reflects how the body of the girls are commodified for various purposes.

### **Manifold Oppressions on Women**

The novel displays sufferings of female characters through the multiple layers of problems. Due to poverty, Lakshmi is forced to move to town to work as a maid. Her mother teaches her to be obedient to males. Comparing the role of son and daughter it is reflected in the novel as, "A son will always be a son, they say. But a girl is like a goat. Good as long as she gives you milk and butter. But not worth crying over when it's time to make a stew" (McCormick, 2006, p. 14). It shows how girls are treated as a commodity. They are

dehumanized in many societies and are suppressed by males. These lines clearly indicate how girls in poor and rural societies are trained to be docile, submissive, and inferior to male domination. As Ama says:

Never look a man in the eye. Never allow yourself to be alone with a man who is not family. Never look at growing pumpkins or cucumbers when you are bleeding. Otherwise, they will rot. Once you are married, she says, you must eat your meal only after your husband has had his full. Then you may have what remains. (McCormick, 2006, p. 21)

Lakshmi's mother also teaches her to take care of her son and daughter in a different way and do many things to please her husband. In this regard, she raises some questions as, "I ask Ama why. 'Why,' I say, 'must women suffer so?' 'This has always been our fate,' she says. 'Simply to endure,' she says, 'is to triumph'" (McCormick, 2006, p. 22). Women are trained to endure tortures taking them as the matter of triumph. Due to this, several tortures are not reported at all! When they become chronic, only then they are made public. Due to such upbringing girls are oriented to be polite and submissive.

Lakshmi feels that she has been treated as a commodity by her stepfather from the very beginning. As she tells her mother, "...my stepfather looks at me the same way he looks at the cucumbers I'm growing in front of our hut" (McCormick, 2006, pp. 7-8). He thinks that he can sell her just like a cucumber. He also prevents her from going to school. Female body is different from males and women get dissimilar treatment and roles in the society. Similarly, female body becomes the matter of commodity for their domination. When he goes to sell her and there begins the process of bargaining. When he asks for one thousand rupees, Bajai Sita points out to the body of Lakshmi and says, "She has no hips,... and she is plain as porridge" (McCormick, 2006, p. 59). In terms of their body also, women are viewed as an object. Their price is determined how their body looks. In this regard, Lakshmanan (2011) reflects how women are dominated in multiple ways in the novel, "...the book's themes are directly related to the global Discourse on poverty, sexual exploitation, gender, and the tension between culture and modernity" (p. 71). Women become the victim of poverty and Lakshmi is *Sold* due to poverty, being a girl, male supremacy in the society, prostitution and dogmatic cultural values. Many cases either domestic or others concerning girls trafficking are not exposed. So real amount of oppression in Nepal is more than the data presented by the organizations that work in the sectors of human rights.

Women are subjugated in many traditional societies due to prevalent beliefs. Lakshmi has been sold in a conditional way that some amount her stepfather would get when she has proven her worth. The activities in the novel reflect that all the reactions of Lakshmi are realistic and courageous enough to explain the detail of her pain and sufferings she has undergone as being a poor and innocent girl. The harshness of life and the trauma, she has undergone in red line area, have made her to be stronger. Analyzing the novel, from the perspective of gender discrimination, Putri and Wahyuni (2020) have noticed five types of discriminations used in the text such as marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence,

and double burden (p. 147). In traditional societies women are dominated in many ways as they have been exposed as subordinate to males. Women cannot get equal status as males in such societies due to superstitious beliefs prevailed in traditional societies. Similarly, Pokharel (2008) reflects that Nepali women face discriminations in various aspects such as in mobility, property, occupation, and education and they that customary practices are the major factors responsible for the promotion of such discriminations in the society (p. 80). By the reflection of the domination and torture faced by Lakshmi, the readers are exposed to accommodate the reality of the world which is made up of both good as well as evil. She also becomes a victim of child labour. Thus, the novel depicts the multifaceted problems and tortures women in underdeveloped societies have faced.

### Conclusion

McCormick's novel *Sold* reflects manifold sufferings, tortures, disparities, and the pain faced by female characters as they become the victim of social problems. Examining the novel from multiple lenses, it is explored that women have been dominated from various ways making them dependent, inferior, indecisive, nurturing, docile, and submissive. It reflects that there are still disparities and segregations in Nepali society on the basis of gender. It emphasizes on raising consciousness against all kinds of evils of the societies concerning marginalization of women. Many girls in traditional and poor societies are tortured and become the victim of male supremacy. In terms of their bodies there is process of commodification and they are sold as Lakshmi is sold and brought to red light area of India. Many other girls and women in Nepal also are compelled to involve in prostitution and are living miserable lives in the brothels both in Nepal and other countries. Due to poverty, many girls and women are made like objects and women are also not conscious about their rights. Lakshmi and her mother become dependent to her stepfather due to poverty and social problems and become victim of double margin: one as being female and other as being poor. Women suffer not only from domestic violence but also from the torture of those who hold power in the society. In such societies there are many kinds of restrictions which help to subjugate women but many women are not aware about eliminating them. Due to promotion of such practices, many females, as in the novel, suffer in real lives. Reflecting the challenges faced by female characters the novel addresses power and oppression as the intersectional approach promotes. The struggle made by Lakshmi to come out of the brothel raises awareness to many women and girls to be conscious about the evil practices of our societies. Future research can be conducted about the quest for identity of female in male dominated societies like Nepal where women are treated as inferior. By raising voices against such serious problems of the society, attention of the government agencies and the humanitarian organizations can be drawn.

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