



GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN NOVEL SOLD (2006) BY PATRICIA MCCORMICK

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Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of a novel written by Patricia McCormick entitled *Sold* (2006). This analysis looks at the gender discrimination that is experienced by women who are victims of gender discrimination acts. This analysis is related to the feminist approach and the concept of gender discrimination by Simone de Beauvoir. The analysis focuses on the issue of gender discrimination. The aim of this analysis is to what extent the character, conflict (plot), setting and stage direction contribute to reveal the issue of gender discrimination. This analysis also depends a lot on the narrator to determine which parts of the novel are used as the data. The result of the study shows that Lakhmi experienced gender discrimination such as marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence and double burden.

Key words: feminist, gender discrimination, marginalization, subordination

A. INTRODUCTION

Amid a large number of groups and activists voicing the issue of gender equality, it turns out that there are still much unfair treatment and discrimination received by many parties, especially women. Nepal is one of the underdeveloped countries in the world where the majority of the population must survive in problems of poverty and gender discrimination. Although Nepal has ratified The Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). 1991, Nepal still puts aside women's rights and limits them. A famous Nepalese writer, Thapa (2016) stated:

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" I'm trough with being abused by my own-country. I can't accept the constitution's privilege of the male bloodline over the female, of semen over ova. I can't accept the empowering of the male body and the negation of the female body, the erasure of women's agency as full human beings. "

The majority of Nepalese society consider the position of women to be much lower than that of men. They believe that a woman's life is greatly influenced by her father and husband, which means that women do not have their own identity. This is in line with a Nepalese proverb that "women have no caste".

The waiver of rights carried out against Nepalese women can also be seen through the opportunities to get the education and work that they receive. Dangol (2010) explains that women have limited access to education and jobs. This is different from the fact that Nepalese women have a sizable contribution as a good workforce and mentors in the household. Mahat (2003) states that the position of Nepalese women is far behind men. Girls are not treated as well as boys from the day they are born. They also do not have the same opportunity to achieve development and develop themselves. This situation is commonly known as gender discrimination.

Gender discrimination is a term used to indicate the existence of unfavourable treatment received by someone due to gender. Discrimination is recognized as a form of inequality and a problem for women around the world. According to Fakih (1996), gender discrimination is a treatment of individuals differently based on gender, race, religion, and age. According to Theodorson (1979) discrimination is an unequal treatment against individuals or groups based on something. This is usually unique, such as based on race, ethnicity, religion, and social class. Meanwhile, according to Peplau (1999) discrimination is the behaviour of accepting or rejecting someone based on their position in society. In general, discrimination is an attitude that differentiates others based on ethnicity, religion, and race.

Victims of gender discrimination are generally women. This is caused by a lack of understanding in society about the natural and unnatural differences between men and women or what is commonly referred to as gender. According to Bhasin (2000) gender refers to the socio-cultural definition of men and woman, the way society distinguishes men and woman and assigns them social rules. Oakley (1972) states that gender is a difference or sex that is not biological and not natural. Meanwhile, according to Caplan (1987) gender is the difference in behavior between men and women apart from the biological structure, most of which are formed through social and cultural processes. Lips (1993) defines gender as the cultural expectations of men and women. For example, women are synonymous with gentle, beautiful, motherly, and

emotional attitudes. Meanwhile, men are synonymous with strong, rational, and powerful personalities.

Gender discrimination is influenced by several aspects such as religion, culture, ethnicity, and especially patriarchal culture which is hereditary. According to Bhasin (2010) patriarchy is a system of domination and superiority of men over women. Bressler (2007) states that patriarchy is a social system that places men as the main central authority figure in social organization. Societies that adhere to a patriarchal system usually think that men are always superior to women and women will always be under men's power, which causes many women to receive unfair treatment such as not being able to get a good education, unable to get a job and salary what is appropriate, even everything about women is controlled and determined by men. This proves that the status of women is considered low. Syed (2001) states:

"Women have always been seen as belonging to men. Only men are considered creatures who have wisdom. Women are considered unwise. Therefore, people consider women to be watched by men. Actions of discrimination are still visible today. Women are not allowed to build their own identity. Women are always seen as the daughter or wife of a man. So, their autonomy is taken away. "

Gender discrimination can manifest in several forms of action. Fakhri (1996) stated that there are several forms of discrimination against women, such as marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence against women, and double burden. Muchdi (2001) states that gender discrimination is manifested in various forms of injustice, one of which is stereotypes against women. Women are labelled as weak creatures, and can only do household chores. According to Pokharel (2008) Various forms of gender discrimination against women are carried out based on ethnicity, one of which occurs in the Brahmana and Chhetri groups. Brahmana and Chhetri are one group that is often forced to marry at an early age. Girls from Brahmana and Chhetri families are forced to marry at an early age without their consent (Luitel, 1992).

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The analysis of novel Sold (2006) written by Patricia McCormick based on feminist theory such as gender discrimination. The analysis of this novel is in descriptive way. The data based on the issue gender discrimination that experienced by women who are victims of gender discrimination acts. The based on preliminary reading of the novel, elements which will be looked closely are narrator, character and setting. The narrator, third person narrator, helps to narrate the situation that is happened to the characters and also give a clue to the setting.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the issue of gender discrimination from the novel *Sold*. The analysis is structured based on two main female protagonist of the novel who get discriminated treatment in society and family. The first one is Lakshmi, who gets discriminating treatment such as not getting education, being alienated when menstruating, and also being a victim of human trafficking. The second protagonist is Ama, Lakshmi's mother, who has to earn a living for the family. The analysis also relies heavily on third person narrator which narrates how events unfold in the novel as gives a clue to the setting of the events in the novel.

1. Marginalization

Marginalization is a process of marginalization due to sex differences that results in poverty. There are many ways that are used to marginalize someone, one of which is by assuming gender. One example of this marginalization is the weak opportunity for women to economic resources. This process results in women becoming the poor group because marginalization occurs systematically in society. In addition, in the family, the marginalization of women can be seen through customs or religious interpretations which state that men's inheritance rights are greater than women's. Marginalization of women occurs in a multidimensional manner due to several things such as government policies, religious interpretations, beliefs, traditions, and culture, or knowledge. The protagonist, Lakshmi, is one of the victims of acts of marginalization caused by beliefs and traditions, such as the act of isolating women who are menstruating. It can be seen from the quote below:

“ You must stay out of sight for seven days, she says. Even the sun cannot see you until you've been purified’. ‘ Now’. She says, ‘you must carry yourself with modesty, bow your head in the presence of men, and cover yourself with your shawl’. ‘Never look a man in the eye. Never allow yourself to be alone with a man who is not family. And never look at growing pumpkins or cucumbers when you are bleeding. Otherwise they will rot’. ”

From the quote above, it can be seen that the protagonist must follow several traditions that must be carried out by a woman who is experiencing menstruation. Some of these traditions, such as, she was not allowed to enter the house for seven days, she was not allowed to come out of seclusion before sunset. Apart from that, the protagonist is also not allowed to appear in front of other people and also cannot appear in the garden. As a predominantly

Hindu country, this tradition is usually known as the Chhaupadi tradition. This tradition is a tradition of seclusion aimed at women who are experiencing menstruation. This tradition is also accompanied by the belief of society that women who are menstruating are prohibited from being close to other people, animals and plants because they can bring bad luck. As experienced by the protagonist, being around other people, animals and plants is believed to bring bad luck. This situation also shows that women are always considered to be unclean and unlucky creatures.

In addition, this situation also makes women suffer. The protagonist who is exiled in a hut must face a hut filled with animal dung, without a mattress, cold temperatures, darkness and minimal ventilation. This condition can be disastrous for the protagonist because it is very easy to contaminate bacteria that cause various diseases. It also shows that the protagonist's situation is very sad. She must be exiled to a place that is not appropriate and must accept the perception of bad luck from the community.

Apart from having to be isolated during menstruation, the act of marginalization received by the protagonist can also be seen from several traditions that must be done when serving her husband. It can be seen from the quote below:

*“Once you are married, she says, you must eat your meal only after your husband has had his fill. Then you may have what remains.
If he burps at the end of the meal, it is a sign that you have pleased him.
If he turns to you in the night, you must give yourself to him, in the hope that you will bear him a son. If your husband asks you to wash his feet, you must do as he says, then put a bit of the water in your mouth.”*

From the quote above, it can be seen that there are several rules that the protagonist must follow when serving a husband, such as she can only eat when her husband is full, she must serve him well and must be able to give him a son. And the protagonist must also be willing to wash the husband's feet and drink the water if the husband asks. The many rules that must be followed by the protagonist show that women have limited movement. This is in accordance with the opinion of Bhasin (1996: 9-10) that women's movements have clear boundaries in a patriarchal society. Women do not have independence even in themselves. This can be seen from their sexuality which is still controlled by men. Women are only used as objects to satisfy male lust. This situation is also in accordance with Bhasin (1996: 8) that women are required to provide sexual services to men according to the needs of men, not

women. This means that men have power over their sexual desires but not women. In addition, women who are expected to give birth to son not daughter also show that the existence of women is never appreciated and expected.

Apart from having to be isolated during menstruation and only being considered as a sexual servant for the husband, not getting a proper education is also an act of marginalization that must be accepted by the protagonist. It can be seen from the quote below:

“ Let me go to the city,’ I say. ‘I can work for rich family like Gita does, and send my wages home to you’. Ama stroke my cheek, the skin of her work- worn hand as rough as the tounge of a newborn goat. ‘Lakshmi my child,’ she says. ‘You must stay in school, no matter what your stepfather says.’ “

From the quote above, it can be seen that the protagonist did not get permission from her stepfather to go to school so she decided to work in the city as a waiter so she could help her family life. This shows that in Nepalese society, women are always led to be close to poverty. Closing access to education for women is also the same as closing the way to break the intergenerational chain of poverty because education is closely linked to all development goals. Education really helps women to escape poverty because education also functions as a tool to spur economic growth and build peace and also to keep women from falling behind men in any aspect. The situation faced by the protagonist is in accordance with Isharat (2003: 67-72) that the status of Nepalese women in particular lags far behind boys. Girls experience discrimination from birth and do not have the same opportunity to achieve development.

One of the reasons why women do not get proper education in order to achieve development is because society still has a male-oriented view or actions that prioritize the education of boys over girls. Male oriented is also related to a culture that is deeply rooted in the assumption that women should not be highly educated because they will only go to the kitchen. Apart from not getting a proper education, the act of marginalization received by the protagonist can also be seen from the protagonist who will only work as a servant. This shows that apart from traditions and beliefs, economics is also one of the causes for the protagonists to get marginalized action.

2. Subordination

Subordination can be interpreted as an assessment or assumption that a role performed by one sex is lower than another. In other words, subordination can also be interpreted as the belief that certain sexes are considered more important or more important than other genders. This is also influenced by the values prevailing in society that have separated gender roles. This can result in a lack of recognition of women's potential, making it difficult to access strategic positions in their communities, especially those related to decision making. Subordination can also be exemplified by the perception of society which states that women are weak, unable to lead, and whiny which results in women always being in the second position.

Another public opinion that is included in the attitude of subordination is the notion that women have the main duty as servants to their husbands which results in women not getting the right to get higher education. One of the acts of subordination received by the protagonist is the belief in society that women are considered no more important than men. It can be seen from the quote below:

”He oils his hair, puts on his vest and a wristwatch that stopped telling time long ago, and goes up the hill each day to play cards, talk politics and drink tea with the old men. Ama says we are lucky we have a man at all. She says I am to honour and praises him, respect and thank him for taking us in after my father died.”

From the quote above, it can be seen that the protagonist is hearing advice from her mother that they should be grateful for the existence of her stepfather and they also have to respect it. This shows that the degree and existence of women are not more valuable than men. The presence of men in the family is highly valued, even though they do not have any contribution in improving the family economy. This also proves that the role of women is not more important than men and women are always considered as dependents even though in reality women have a big role in improving the family economy.

The above quote also proves that in society, women are always considered weak and unable to become leaders, so they always need men in their lives. This situation is the same as the opinion of Fry (1994: 5) that women have experienced violence and oppression by a network of power in various forms one of which is dependence on their husbands. The existence of a husband

seems to be very much needed to protect his wife even though in fact the husband does not do anything for his wife.

The same situation when the role of women is always considered not more important than men, is considered weak and unable to lead can also be seen from the quote below:

“ 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.”

Through the quotation above, it can be seen that the existence of women is always no more valuable than men. The existence of women will be of little respect as long as they can provide benefits for men as if they can serve and give male offspring to them. If women are no longer able to carry out these activities, women will no longer have any meaning in the view of society. Apart from the two quotes above, the quotations below also show some of the actions received by women which prove that they have received subordinate actions in their lives.

“If you have a son, feed him at your breast until he is four. If you have a daughter, feed her at your breast for just a season, so that your blood will start again and you can try once more to bear a son. “

From the quotation above, it can be seen the differences in the treatment received by son and daughter. Newborn son should receive milk until they are four years old, while newborn daughter are not required to be fed until the age of four. This is done in part so that after giving birth to daughter, mothers can still get pregnant again and hopefully be able to give birth to baby boys. This proves that from birth, women do not get their rights properly like men and their birth is as never expected. In addition, this also shows that the community still has the belief that daughter will not bring benefits to the family in the future. This is also one of the reasons why women's potential is never recognized.

3. Stereotype

This is labeling or labeling which is often negative in general and creates injustice. For example, women are often described as emotional, weak, whiny, and irrational. This stereotype then makes women always placed in domestic positions that are identical to matters of cooking, washing, and sex. O'Brien

(2009) argues that the stereotypical actions received by women can be divided into three parts. First, women are stereotyped as mothers who provide and support others and are weak. Second, women are stereotyped as childish and incompetent. Third, it is considered a sex object. One of the stereotypes accepted by the protagonist is that she is only considered a sex object. This can be seen from the quote below:

“Instead, she motions for him to step inside the back room with her. ‘She has no hips, I hear her say. ‘And she’s plain as porridge. I’ll give you five hundred.’ “

From the quote above, it can be seen that the protagonist is being traded by her stepfather. It seems that the price offered is adjusted to the protagonist's body shape. This shows that the value and self-worth of women will only depend on the body shape they have. Women are not valued like humans. They are only considered as sex objects and are used to satisfy male lust.

The same situation which shows that women are only considered as sex objects can also be seen through the quotation below:

“ In the weak morning light, I see that the girls are wearing dresses of every colour. They have heavy silver bangles on their wrists and ankles, and earrings of gold and jewels. Their eyes are painted with black crayon, and their lips are drawn on like red chillies.”

From the quote above, it can be seen that the protagonist witnesses the appearance of a woman in her new environment filled with luxury goods. The woman is also dressed up very pretty and charming coupled with lips covered with red lipstick. This shows that society values and shapes women as weak people who can only work as someone who serves men and become sex objects. Women will only be placed in positions that are not important and are always underestimated. They are always seen as weak and used as toys for men's happiness and they are always considered as sex objects.

4. Violence

Violence is an act of violence, both physical and non-physical, committed by one gender or by a family, society, or a country. Gender based violence. The violence that occurs due to an imbalance in the bargaining position or

power between women and men. Violence occurs as a result of role construction that has been influenced by a patriarchal culture that places women in a lower position. Examples of this violence are sexual exploitation, neglect of reproductive rights, trafficking, rape, and pornography. According to Fakhri (1996) violence against women can take the form of rape, beatings, murder, and harassment. One of the acts of violence accepted by the protagonist is human trafficking. It can be seen through the quote below:

“ My stepfather squints. He takes in the costly fabric of the woman’s dress, the baubles on her ears, the silver bangles on her wrist , ‘ One thousand rupees,’ he says. ‘ You belong to me,’ she says. ‘ And I paid a pretty sum for you too, ‘ She opens to the page in her book points to the notation for 10.000 rupees.

This quote shows that the protagonist was sold by her stepfather to the city lady and the money was used to fulfill his own happiness. He spends the money in the gambling place and the protagonist does not realize that she has been sold to rich family. This proves that women are never considered human beings who should be respected. They always consider women as tradable items. Women are trafficked without their knowledge and they end up working in brothels. Women are only considered as sex objects and toys for men.

Apart from being victims of human trafficking, another act of violence experienced by women is sexual exploitation. It can be seen through the quotation below:

“Then, all around me, the women lift their skirts, squat like crows, and relieve themselves on the open ground. I feel shame for them, doing in front of others what is rightly done in private. And I am almost ill, as the odour of so much waste swirls around me. But my own need for relief is so strong, I have no choice but to do as they do.”

From this quote, it can be seen that the protagonist witnesses how women are not treated well by society. Women are not treated properly as humans. They are always considered sex objects. This proves that in society the position of women is always considered weak. They are considered not defending and protecting themselves. This situation is in accordance with the

opinion of Lie (2005: 7) that women are placed below men and they are always used as sex objects, sacrificed and incapacitated.

The same situation that shows women being victims of violence can also be seen through the quotations below:

“As I walk back to the train, I pass a cluster of men yelling and shaking their fists in the air. At the centre of the group, a girl my age crouches in the dirt. Her scalp has been freshly shaved – pale and fragile as a bird’s egg – and hanks of her long dark hair lie in coils at her feet. In the weak morning light, I see that the girls are wearing dresses of every colour. They have heavy silver bangles on their wrists and ankles, and earrings of gold and jewels. Their eyes are painted with black crayon, and their lips are drawn on like red chillies.”

From the quote above, it can be seen that the protagonist witnesses how women are treated in their new environment. The protagonist sees a woman who is the same age as her being surrounded by several men with poor conditions. Her face was pale with a shaved head. Her appearance was really messy. This shows that women are very often victims of sexual harassment and are not treated as humans, they are hurt physically and non-physically. They are always victims of community crimes. They are only considered as satisfying male passions. This situation is in accordance with the opinion of Fry (1993: 4) that women have experienced violence and oppression by a network of power in various forms, for example, employment discrimination, wage discrimination, and sexual harassment. The existence of women is only considered as an entertainer and a toy for men. And they are also not considered valuable.

Apart from being victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, another act of violence that women accept is rape. It can be seen from the quote below:

“Then Mumtaz flies at me. She grabs me by the hair and drags me accross 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 cannot see or move or

breathe. He fumbles with his pants, force my legs apart, and I can feel him pushing himself between my thighs. I gasp for air and kick and squirm. He thrusts his tongue in my mouth. And I bite down with all my might."

From the above quotation, it can be seen that the protagonist is only used as a sex object and a man who satisfies male passions. Protagonists are only valued for their bodies. This situation seems to show that women are obliged to satisfy men with their bodies. According to Lie (2005: 34) that women are trained to lure men through their bodies because a pleasant and attractive attitude for men is part of the obligations that must be done.

5. Double Burden

Double Burden is the workload that one sex receives more than the other sex. This shows that the duties and responsibilities of women are heavier than men. Double burden can also be interpreted as the assumption that women are nurturing and diligent and are not suitable to be the head of the family, resulting in all domestic work being the responsibility of women. Double burden can be exemplified as a woman, besides serving her husband (sex), getting pregnant, giving birth, breastfeeding, she also has to look after the house. And there are even women who have the status of a wife who are obliged to earn a living for the family. The protagonist, Lakshmi, and her mother, apart from serving their husbands and taking care of all their domestic needs, they also have to participate in making money to support their family. This can be seen from the quote below :

"The leaves on my cucumbers are edged in brown, and Ama and I must each make twenty trips down the mountain to the village spring, waiting our turn for water to bring up to the rice paddy."

The quote above describes that the protagonist is a representation of femaless job in Nepal. She and her mother have to climb up the mountain to get firewood for cooking and water sources for watering rice field. This shows that apart from doing domestic activities at home, women also have an obligation to earn money to support their families.

The same situation when the protagonist and her mother, apart from taking care of a husband and taking care of domestic work, also has to work to earn money to support the family can also be seen through the quote below:

"In the morning, Ama bends down to stir the kitchen fire and to plait my hair before I go to

school. All day, as she trudges up and down the mountain, a heavy basket braced on her back and held fast by a rope around her brow, she is bent under the weight of her burden. In the cold months the women climb high up the mountain's spine to scavenge for firewood. They take food from their bowl, feed it to their children, and silence their own churning stomachs.

In the dry months, the women collect basketfuls of dung and pat them into cakes to harden in the sun, making precious fuel for the dinner fire. They tie rags around their children's eyes to shield them from the dust blowing up from the empty riverbed.

From the quote above, it can be seen that the protagonist has a double burden in the family. She not only acts as someone who serves their husband and family, but they also have an obligation to make a living for the family. She had to go to the hills to work and provide for the family.

Apart from the two quotes above, the quote below also shows women who in addition to taking care of their husbands and homes, they are also looking for money to support their families.

“ The leaves on my cucumbers are edged in brown, and Ama and I must each make twenty trips down the mountain to the village spring, waiting our turn for water to bring up to the rice paddy. My stepfather dozes in the shade, wearing nothing but a laincloth, too hot even to climb the hill to his card game. The baby wears nothing at all. Even the lizards lie gasping in the heat.

The quote above shows that the protagonist and her mother have to work watering the plants during the dry season, while the her stepfather is just busy playing gambling. The quote above proves that women are obliged to take care of all the needs of the house, including thinking about how to meet the needs and needs of the family. Meanwhile, men do not care about this and only focus on their fun. This proves that in the family, women have more than one obligation. They are not only obliged to take care of domestic affairs, they are also obliged to earn a living to support and feed their family.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This analysis looks at the form of gender discrimination from the novel *Sold* (2006) by Patricia McCormick. This novel is analyzed using feminist theory and related with the concept of gender discrimination by Simone de Beauvoir. This analysis shows that there are five types of gender discrimination such as marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence and double burden.

Through this analysis, we can see that traditions, beliefs and government laws are some of the things that cause gender discrimination that is accepted by women. The protagonist cannot get an education because of the society's thinking that women have a crybaby nature and cannot lead and do not need high education because they are only suitable in domestic work.

Protagonists are also alienated when they get their period because their tradition considers that women who are menstruating always bring bad luck to both the family and everyone they meet. The protagonist is also a victim of human trafficking. And also the protagonist has a double burden. They are obliged to take care of the house, serve their husbands and are also obliged to earn a living to meet family needs. In addition, women are always considered weak, weepy and not irrational. Women are always put in the second position. Women are also considered as men's toys and are always considered and used as sex objects.

In conclusion, even though there have been many forums fighting for women's rights, in fact there are still many women who get gender discrimination acts both from the community and from their families. This can be due to wealth, traditions, and government laws.

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