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Gender and patriarchy

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Abstract
Gender and Patriarchy in the Indian Context Patriarchies all over the world assign certain commonalities, such as the rule of the male elder over most women and some men; men's legitimised control over women's production, reproduction and sexuality. Indian society is rather a complex one, because of its construction of a hierarchical social order on the basis of class, caste and gender. The patriarchy leads the women to accept male control by father, brother, husband as the worth of their protection from aggression by other males. It hinders the independence and equality for most women that prevent them to achieve their full potential in personal life and position in society. The political and social system across the world favors the men to exercise their control and authority over the women. This article tried to explain how the society purposely suppressed women in all walks of her life through different institutions.

Keywords: Gender, patriarchy, society

Introduction
The organization of society is very important to have a gender-neutral society. In every society, the kinship structure, patterns of marriage, family life, reproduction, and production vary over time. Generally, the biological sex differences are used to organize gender, kinship system, social roles and division of labour. Physiological sex differences are responsible for the absolute gender differences. Further that there is an assumption among the sociologist that women's roles have never been changed and it is unworthy and meaningless to study. This article tried to explain how the society purposely suppressed women in all walks of her life through different institutions.

Gender is defined as "the set of characteristics, roles and behavior patterns that distinguish women from men, which are constructed not biologically but socially and culturally" (Sen, 1999: 7). Gender on the other hand, is what is socially recognized as feminity and masculinity.

Gender role is a set of socially significant activities associated with men and women. The assigned social roles determine how people defined as female will act, dress, speak and get married. The same is the case for males. The assigned symbols and spelt out social meanings to being male or female are called gender ideologies.

Gender ideology of any society explains, justifies and legitimates male dominance over women through various institutions – caste, class, religion, marriage, politics, media, etc. The dominance and control of the males are operationalized through devices such as patrilineal descent, patrilocality, control of women's sexuality, ownership and inheritance of property, denial of educational, political, economic and religious participation. These are the major characteristics of a patriarchal society.

Patriarchy
Patriarchy as a trans-historical and universal, the postmodernists contend that patriarchy should be understood in the historically specific context. Different forms of location-specific patriarchy exist and they are micro-narrative and embedded in the interplay of diverse and pluralistic factors – sociological, psychological, intellectual, institutional, etc. To Susan Bardo, it is "choreography of multiplicity" (1990: 144).

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Patriarchy and Tamil Society

Patriarchy in the case of Tamil women should be located in the specific structures and ideology that make the Tamil society. The grand theories of the West do not adequately explain the gender issues of women in Tamil society. The capitalist societies of the West give paramount importance to class and patriarchy is understood in terms of 'the class' and the economic base on which the class differences are based. But an Indian society is built on the caste system which ties a man or woman to all kinds of inequities of birth. Every Indian is born into a particular caste and dies in it. Caste is deterministic and essentialistic. More than anything, castes are hierarchically structured and give a strong religious sanction. The traditional Tamil view about women is both functional and governed by an ideology which is both patriarchal and religious. Any feminist theory when applied to an Indian society, according to Papa (2000: 4) has to confront two major issues – the functionalism that marks the unchangeable caste structure and the hegemony of Brahminic ideology. It is the Brahminic-caste-gender arrangements that favour men over women. It is imperative to know how caste, religion, gender and other related social-cultural categories relate themselves to women's career. Caste hierarchy is an Indian phenomenon and assumes more significance structurally and culturally (Liddle and Joshi, 1986: 58). It cuts across every social structure. The infrastructure of the Indian society is built on the unequal hierarchical divisions of innumerous castes and sub-castes.

Features of Caste

Caste is a rigid deterministic category. One can never change the caste she/he is born into, by any means. Relating to women and caste, we find that women of the upper castes do not enjoy the same privileges that their men do. In the early days, they were more suppressed and were not allowed any kind of social mobility and freedom of operation except visiting temples and accompanying their husbands to social functions to exhibit their wealth and status. It is the women of the lower class, who out of economic necessity had the freedom to come out of their household and work along with their men. But the labour of that lower caste woman did not demand any educational qualification or technical skill other than the informally and traditionally transferred techniques and skills (Papa, Op. Cit: 6). Hence, women of the lower status earned only very little and that did not raise them above the subsistence level and enjoy the social privileges. The colonial regime brought education to the forefront. Men and women of upper castes had English education with different purposes – men to secure career under the British and women were addressed as 'gentlemen's wives'. But the educational facilities made available to women at the lower rungs of society created a revolution in the career of women. Educated women came out seeking careers befitting their qualification. How much they availed the opportunity and how high they could raise themselves depend on their being Christians or moneyed class. New social classes emerged out of the changes. Yet this class formation has not changed the caste hierarchy.

Marriage and Work

Marriage is the locus of strengthening the caste status because Indian marriages are in-group marriages. Married women are regarded as normal because marriage is the be-all and end-all of women's lives. Whether women go to work or not after marriage depends on their in-laws' approval. A marriage that gives a social status to a woman does not guarantee a career, however, qualified she might be. In marriages, the women are expected to be less than the men's level of age, height, education and employment (if the girl is employed.)

To married women, a family must be of prime importance. Everything they do go for consolidating and enriching the family and not the self. Self-actualization is ascribed to men alone. Career and Self-actualization are secondary for women and are to be sacrificed whenever they are at odds with the family's interests.

Purity and Religion

The concept of purity reigns highly in the life of women. The caste system insists on the concept of purity, as it the pivotal or central factor in its operationalisation especially when the emphasis of the analysis is on gender relations. Women's sexuality is directed, controlled and supervised by caste to maintain the purity of blood and body. (Liddel, 1986,; Papa, 2000;).

Papa (2000:6) has stated that the Aryan ideology is built on the 'religion-caste-gender' arrangements in Tamil Society that favour men over women turning it into a religion. In fact, the Hindu religion is a composition of the Brahminical codes, rituals and rites establishing hierarchical levels of purity. Castes are arranged in this hierarchy according to their purity. The Brahmins, as pure humans, are at one end of the purity scale and the 'Sudras' who do manual work at the other end. But, women are impure to whatever caste they belong to because of their biological nature. Their physical phases and mental attributes are defined on a purity-impurity scale. The menstruation is associated with impurity. Every occurrence in a woman's life is not experienced by men bears the stigma of impurity. Even delivery defiles women and they are treated as untouchables for some time. A woman gains more respectability only when she gets aged. A mother is divine, but not wife. Mothers are honoured and even worshipped but a wife is to be feared and suppressed. The Brahminical religion is full of myths, superstitious beliefs, rites and ceremonies through which women's servility and impurity are scripted and accepted as a normal way of living. Thus, gender discriminations are intrinsically woven into religion and the basic inequalities that are built into the caste hierarchy (Varnashrama). Hence, socialization and the sexual division of labour, which determine the career life of women in Tamil Nadu are to be understood against this background.

Private and Public World

Political thinkers and others say that the Government has no role or say in the private room. The relationship or argument, etc., among the family members, should be exempt from Government regulations. Because these matters are considered as personal matters and no outside intervention is encouraged. Hence inequalities and assaults on women at home are allowed to continue Wife battering marital rape, rape of girls by fathers or other relatives, psychological and physical torture of girls and women. General discrimination and deprivation experienced by girls are invisible and unchallenged even today.

Because, women and men are born into a society with an already given gender ideology. Since their birth, socialization and identification with the ideology continue.

In schools, in Colleges, in work, in the home, in the street and everywhere, both children and adults quietly absorb images of men and women as tow different species, women as weak, inferior, passive, fragile, soft, vacillating, dependent, reliable, intuitive rather than rational, castrated and handicapped; and men polarized as aggressive, controlling, strong, superior, proud, independent, venturesome, competitive, hard and athletic (Gelb, 1973: 376). Socialization of men prepares them for a world of management and leadership characterized by competitiveness, aggressiveness, risk-taking and long-term dependable commitment to the career. The 'macho-world' of business, management / or administration, or politics is not for women. Socialization goes on as a continuous process through various agencies – family, school, media, religion, etc. The roles and images supplied reinforce the gender ideology.

The experiences and socialization practices have been used to explain how and why women and men differ in their behavior and thought process. Our experiences influence our feelings and socialization process which makes us to behave in such a way according to the social context.

Girls and boys are treated differently by the family and society. We develop some characters that is what expected of us by the society. Mothers also inculcate the autonomous character in males and domesticated character in females and impede the development of autonomy.

Both boys and girls have internal and external pressure to conform to a gender-appropriate character, because society rewards the gender-appropriate behavior and punish the cross-gender behavior.

Sexual Division of Labour and Cultural Duality
A women's connection to the market and to the 'public' is derived from her connection to her husband and family. Similarly, a woman working for payment outside her home has been lowly valued and less respected. (Women in India: A Country Profile, Ministry of Labour, Govt. of India, 1997: 62). Due to the changes in the lifestyle, the number of middle-class women today is seeking jobs than even before. Very few are finding jobs to use their intelligence and talents, but for many women, jobs are very important in order to manage their daily life. There is no choice for dessert, divorced and widows, women, who have to look after themselves and their children as well.

Marginalization
Women experience marginality because of their low numbers and hence their invisibility in work. In other cases, women are marginalized through their concentrations in certain kinds of work, in an occupation or profession. This ghettoization reinforces and reproduces aspects of occupational segregation both horizontal and vertical.

Women behave in self-limiting ways not because they are socialized as females, but because of the patriarchal system they are locked into low-power, low-visibility, and dead-end jobs.

Dual Career Family
The commitment and pride often lead to some conflicts in other aspects of women's lives. In the case of dual-career families, personal needs for self-expression and autonomy tend to be realized for both spouses through serious career involvement.

Dual career couples will have the problem of distribution of resources and power. Parker, Peltier, and Wolleat, (1985: 80) lists two types of couples, viz., the contemporary couple and the traditional couple. The "contemporary couple" married with the understanding that both would seriously pursue careers throughout their lives. If the wife's career moves ahead of the husband's or if they decide to have a child, the couple experience struggle over the distribution of power. The "traditional couple", married with the understanding that the wife would quit working when the children arrived and would thereafter function as a traditional wife. This couple undergoes the problem of distribution of power when the wife decides to resume an active career outside the home.

In working women's families, the domestic services are not readily available to the family members. The gender division of labour makes, domestic robs, personal and sexual services for the husband, care for the elders and youngsters and the primary jobs for women.

In women are at home to look after the children, elders and the personal needs of husbands, it not only benefits the employers of their husbands. A male worker can spend his full day in the job and still will have time for recreation and other activities because he has a wife at home. Even though a working woman has a husband same is not the case for her.

Role conflict
The multiple roles performed by career women, many a time leads to a situation of role conflict. Women in administration or in any occupation have dual roles to perform. On the one hand, they are part of the working force and on the other; they play the roles of a mother and housewife. These two roles demand magnitude of worth, stress, responses, and adjustments. In any profession, it is expected of women that they should be sincere to work assignment and must possess a professional commitment. They also have to meet the demands and expectations of the members of the family - elders, husband, and children. A successful woman administrator is expected to be a superwoman who could manage both the roles simultaneously and to the fullest satisfaction of everybody. But, in practice, the multiple roles of wife, mother, and career sap all her energy. The domestic responsibility slows down the concentration of women as well as her career growth of women.

Conclusion
The structural and ideological factors are responsible for women's suppression further the structural arrangements in Indian society in Religion-caste –Gender which favours men over women. It is very difficult for a woman from a lower caste or poor class to climb the cadre as she has to confront a number of social and psychological barriers in a tradition-bound society. Traditional views have great power over our lives. In the contemporary society women are also entering into jobs which are valued by the society but that question their feminist. Women even today found it very difficult to enter into trades and business that do not fit the conventional pattern of division of labour in the society. Those women with greater determination can succeed, but experiencing lots of pain, which are posed to them by the society. Any married women, attempts to achieve her career goals, while performing domestic roles, she has to face server role

conflicts. If she ignores the social expectations she has to pay a price, maybe feeling of guilt, loneliness or misfit is the society. If number of women having higher education is the nontraditional areas and entered into 'men's work', they can help or another to avoid or eliminate the feeling of alone. Only through collectivism and an individual change woman can come out of gender ideologies and patriarchal values.

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