PATRIARCHY AND EVERYDAY LIFE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Situations

- A three year old child in your house picks up a broom. Adults in the house uncles, aunts, parents appreciate it.
- Expressions and proverbs in our society-
- 'You are behaving like a women'.
- 'As meek as a woman'.
- 'Crying like a woman'
- 'Boys do not cry'
- 'Womanly colour'

Clarifications:

- Sex
- Gender
- Patriarchy

Concepts

- The term „sex" and „gender" are concepts used by academicians, researchers and feminist writers to make a distinction between the biologically different „male" and „female" and between the socially different „man" and „woman". Feminist sociologists suggest that there is a need to understand and distinguish between the two terms „sex" and „gender" in academic discourses and writings

Sex

- In a very broad way, „sex" refers to the biological and physiological differences between male and female sex. The term sex is a physical differentiation between the biological male and the biological female. Thus, when an infant is born, the infant comes to be labeled "boy" or "girl" depending on their sex.

- However, it has been argued that having been born into one sex or another, individuals are then socialized according to specific gender expectations and roles. Biological males learn to take on masculine roles. They are socialized to think and act in masculine ways. Biological females learn to take on feminine roles. They are socialized to think and behave in feminine ways. As the feminist writer Simone de Behaviour puts it „one is not born a man but becomes one", „one is not born a woman but becomes one

Gender

- The concept of gender in feminist writings and other sociological discourses became popular in the early 1970.

- In simple terms, gender explain the differences between men and women in social terms as men, and as what a man can do; as „woman", and as what a woman can or cannot do.

- Therefore, gender is a analytical category that is socially constructed to differentiate the biological difference between men and women.

- The term gender is also used to describe the differences in behavior between men and women which are described as „masculine" and „feminine". Feminist writings focus on this aspect and claim that these differences are not biological but are social constructions of patriarchal society

Patriarchy

- In casual conversation, whether in English or any other language the term implies "male domination", "male prejudice (against women)", or more simply "male power".

- Put simply, the term means "the absolute rule of the father or the eldest male member over his family". Patriarchy is thus the rule of the father over all women in the family and also over younger socially and economically subordinate males.

- Literally, patriarchy means rule by the male head of a social unit (like family, tribe). The patriarch is typically a societal elder who has legitimate power over others in the social unit.

- Since the early twentieth century, feminist writers have used the term patriarchy as a concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. Patriarchy has been a fundamentally important concept in gender studies

The term ‗patriarchy' has been used by feminists to make sense of how the unequal gender relations are produced and reproduced in society on an on-going basis.

History

. The feminist concept of patriarchy was first systematically set out in 1969 by the American feminist Kate Millett in Sexual Politics. According to Millett, the relationship between the sexes in all known societies has been based on men's power over women; it is therefore political.

This patriarchal power is, Millett argued, so universal, so ubiquitous and so complete that

it appears _natural' and invisible, until named and contested by feminists. It is maintained

by a process of socialization which begins in the family and is reinforced by education,

literature and religion; it also rests upon economic exploitation, state power and,

ultimately, force (particularly sexual violence and rape). This means that power and

politics are not confined to the public worlds of paid employment and government, but

extend into the most intimate relationships.

Patriarchy Defined

Walby defined —a system of patriarchy as a —system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women‖ and which has its base in six interrelated structures (Walby, 1990, 1997).

6 inter-related structures

- *Paid Work-* in which local traditions, states laws, and market policies either restrict women's access to paid employment or discriminate them in terms of equal pay, nature of jobs etc.

- *Household Production-* where men directly exploit benefits from women unpaid domestic labour.

- *Culture* which may hold different notions of femininity from masculinity, unequal access to cultural resources; language, literature, and folklore; honor and shame; and other cultural ideals sustaining unequal gender relations

6 inter-related structures

- *Sexuality which includes* compulsory marriage, and reduction of women's sexuality to procreation of children etc.

- *Violence or threat of* violence which helps men to keep women in 'their place' and discourage them from challenging patriarchy.

- *The State* which sometimes promotes patriarchy through legislation and public policy, and in some cases, does little to end gender discrimination or to protect women from patriarchal control of men.

Are women worst enemies of other women?

The patriarchal bargain –

How women living under patriarchy strategize to maximize security and optimize their life options. Women's responses to male dominance vary widely, according to the objective opportunities available under each particular variant of patriarchy. Such responses range from eager collaboration, whereby women act as devout guardians of patriarchal mores

and values, to skilful maneuverings to make gains while avoiding overt conflict, to different levels of passive and active resistance.

Are women worst enemies of other women?

Classic patriarchy- a characteristic feature of societies in South and East Asia as well as in the Muslim Middle East.

The foundation of 'classic patriarchy' is the _patrilocally extended household' in which a senior man has authority over all other members, the key source to control women's social, economic, and political participation and ensuring their continuous subordination and dependence.

- The cyclical nature of women's power in the household and their anticipation of inheriting the authority of senior women encourage a thorough internalization of this form of patriarchy by the women themselves. System that by and large works against women, some women (e.g., mothers, mother-inlaws) stand to benefit from the unequal gender arrangements, depending on their stage in the life cycle or on their particular familial status. Such women are more likely to strike a bargain with patriarchy (i.e., collude with men) than to resist the system..

Is Patriarchy Fixed for ever?

- Patriarchy is not stable, but ever-changing in response to resistance. It is also resilient. Patriarchal social structures have been tribal, monarchical, and totalitarian; dictatorial and democratic; nomadic, feudal, capitalist, and socialist; religious and atheistic; primitive and post-modern
- Examples?

New and Old way in which Patriarchy is reproduced

- Notions of Beauty?
- Objectification of Beauty
- 'Smell'
- Masculinity and Feminity in Films

Denials?

- Why ?
- Ideological ?

Reflections:

Recall certain experiences of childhood

- What you did as a child because you were a girl/boy.

- Think of an activity you dream of and want to do because you are a woman/man.

- Things you like to do that is typical for your gender

- Identify an activity you like doing that is considered non-traditional for your gender

- Share an activity that you really wish you could do that is non-traditional

- What issues pertaining to gender are found in your work spaces/situations?

Reflections:

Recall certain experiences of childhood

- How does being a woman/man affect my life and work?
- What changes would help me make use of my potential?
- What are your frustrations working with men, women in general?

Patriarchy?

Patriarchy?

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