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STUDY ON GENDER VIOLENCE AND PATRIARCHY

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INTRODUCTION

In the topic, 'Study on Gender violence and Patriarchy', the researcher's statement of problem is how patriarchy and gender roles are interconnected and how this reproduction of gender roles has become a reason for gender-based violence. For understanding the topic, there needs to be a good knowledge of the terms 'Patriarchy', 'Gender roles', 'Gender-based Violence' etc. Although, we come through these terms in practicality daily, but the terms have become so common and obvious in our society that we even hardly think about their existence.

'Patriarchy' is the biggest truth of our society irrespective of the fact that it is bad or good, enabling or disabling, supressing or encouraging or be neutral. Basically, in general terms, 'Patriarchy is a social system that gives power and control to men rather than women'. 'Gender role' is a man-made term according to which a person is expected to act, speak, dress, behave or conduct based on the assigned sex. From these terms, another term came, Gender-based violence. The term is used when any type of harm is done to a person, and if looked deeply, the reason somewhere goes to the sex of the person or simply, when violence or harm is done to person on the basis of their sex.

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The terms are very much interrelated. We will discuss about the interconnections between them in coming chapters. But, if put in simpler words, Patriarchy is a system, where in the society, men are considered to be superior and they possess the control of all the activities. Since, having the control, the men assigned some tasks which they might prefer easier or would want to do to them and women were barred with number of rules and regulations to how to act, behave, speak, laugh, talk or even walk. That's how patriarchy defined gender roles. These man-made gender roles slowly became so rigid and got embedded in our subconscious that every woman today consider these roles as some Bible quote. They are considered to behave and live in a certain manner and within certain boundaries according to their assigned roles. Sometimes, when these limits break off or the expected behaviour differs, they are subjected to violence. However, this is not a justification as many women who always lived in their assigned boundary and did their assigned roles are also being subjected to violence. Whatever the fact or reason might be, one

thing which is unerring is that patriarchy leads to gender roles and these gender roles further is very much responsible to gender-based violence. The detailed relationships between them are discussed in the further chapters.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATRIARCHY & GENDER ROLES

We have already learned about the definitions and meaning of the term 'patriarchy' and 'gender roles' and matter to describe is relationship between them. 'We have often heard in our society, especially in Indian society, when a daughter is not good at cooking irregarding of the fact how meritorious she may be, she is not a good girl or she might not be a 'good' daughter-in-law or during marriage the bride, the daughter-in-law should be 'good'. The term 'good' includes many perspectives like in beauty, knowledge, experience, way of walking, talking or speaking.'[1] So, the question here comes, how do we define what is supposed to be good and bad. The answer to this is, the roles which society or to say the patriarchal society lays down for the women, when they behave according to it, they are good and when they are not in that laid dimension they are bad. This implies that gender roles exist in the society. For connecting it with patriarchy, let us consider the following examples.

'Let's consider the example of sexual desire. In the society, mostly in marriages or relationships, suppose if a woman talks about having sexual pleasure or discomfort in their relationship, most of the times they would be considered bad or ascribed with many other adjectives. Because, in our society, it is embedded to our subconscious that talking about sexual pleasure or dominating in the sexual knowledge is inherent right of man. A woman complaining about this discomfort poses a question to her and her character that how she knows about this. And, here she becomes 'bad'. This interprets that the same fact, same matter, same knowledge, but if known by men, it's normal and if by woman it's questionable and considered bad.'[2]

[1] https://feminisminindia.com/2021/11/04/gender-roles-patriarchys-manufactured-ideals-of-the-good-and-badwoman/ (last visited on 12th sep, 2023 at 10:30 pm)

[2] https://feminisminindia.com/2021/11/04/gender-roles-patriarchys-manufactured-ideals-of-the-good-and-badwoman/ (last visited on 12th sep, 2023 at 10:30 pm)

Let's consider another example of divorced person. In the society, if we see a divorced man, without even knowing about the facts, generally it is concluded by all that, 'wife might not be good, there would be problem with her character, he should marry again etc.' and is entitled to sympathy. Whereas, at the same place, if a woman is divorced, the thoughts which come to people's subconscious is, 'she might not be of good character, there must be any problem with her that her husband left her, etc.' and she is subjected to hate, suspicion and exclusion. Here also, same fact, same situation, but different judgments.

And the last example, which is very popular among teenagers and persons who are in relationships. Men having two or three girlfriends, double dating, or having some past relationships, makes a man 'cool' and their situation becomes considerate to all. But, if a woman would have any past relationships, she won't be considered 'good' or even 'pure'. Or if she would be double dating, she would be labelled as different adjectives like 'slut', 'scarlet', 'strumpet'. Here also, we saw same action, but different judgments and conclusions.

By referring to these examples, we reached to a conclusion regarding gender roles that, roles are defined according to gender. If a person doesn't do the assigned role, she won't be considered welcoming to the society. Here, we see, actions are not good or bad, it is the person who does it. If she does her assigned job, it is ok and if she doesn't it is not. Same action done by any man is justifiable and if done by any woman is a question to her character and moral. This means that there is something, which considers man as an enabling power and woman as a controlled, and that thing is 'Patriarchy'. However, this defining of patriarchy is not only problematic to women, men to some extent are also facing it. For example, men being considered strong, that they should not appear emotional. Because being emotional is weakness, and that is assigned to woman.

Therefore, now it is concluded that there is a relationship between patriarchy and gender roles and gender roles are defined by the patriarchy considering men to be stronger, superior and smarter and women to be shy, sensitive, caring, sacrificing.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND GENDER ROLES

We are clear to the connection and the relationship embedded between patriarchy and gender roles and patriarchy has defined gender roles. For men, the assigned nature should be dominating, strong, controlling, full of aggression, emotionless and same of kind whereas women are expected to be emotional, bearing, controlled, shy and most importantly sacrificing. These attributes are so deeply embedded in our culture that we don't even think of crossing the expected boundaries and if crossed, have to face the consequences. For example, if a woman, who is mother, if is inclined towards her career and bearing the family at the same time, there is always a better suggestion for her that is to leave her work and gets focused on her kids. If she refuses to do so, and continue to work, most of the times, she will be considered emotionless, which according to our society, is not good. At the same time, being involved in many kinds of problems, if a man would cry, he won't be considered masculine. As being masculine means being emotionless or at least can not express emotions. Now, these characteristics have been hammered in every person so deeply that one has cultivated oneself like that and here is how assigning gender roles in patriarchy leads to violence. The features inscribed to men give them right to do everything they want, in whatever they want because they are strong, dominating and controlling. And at the same time, a woman should bear everything as she is sensitive, weak and delicate. Then, this strong featured-person started to use the means of violence to prove their dominance, to get any relief and the delicate one started to bear these things.

This can be considered by examples, when a man who works at office, comes to home, whatever he has suffered or faced, it gives him the right to vent out everything to his wife. Many times, it is seen that in even small matters, men beat their wife and this is justified in the manner that a man is said to be 'aggressive' and thus this happens and then normalized. The same can't happen to woman because she is 'sensitive' and 'sacrificing'.

When a girl is walking on road or is anywhere and she is alone. If a man or group pf men saw her, it incites men to a level that end up committing a bodily violence, which is called as rape. Here, the mistake is attributed to the girl because she is not supposed to be alone and be in

protection as she is weak and if she doesn't adhere to that, these will happen to them. 'It's their nature' and 'this is how it happens' or 'they are made like this only'.

The society has become such that, the roles of women have been in such a manner that their roles are mostly limited to being an 'honour' object for the family, clan, tribe or state. This is how the reproduction of gender roles has been a major factor in the happening of violence based on gender. There is very recent example of 'Manipur Violence' where a girl had to face the humiliation of walking and then being gang-raped. The very idea of this incident can be explained thus. There was fight between two clans or tribes. Usually, it's the human nature or id, that, when someone wants revenge from someone, they might physically harm them or try harming the things or objects dear to him. Same idea was there behind the horrified incident of Manipur. There were clashes going on among the clans. In order to revenge the other one, they took the idea of naked parade, gangrape with the woman of another clan in order to devoid them of their 'honour'.

The incident is not new at all. There are plethora of incidents buried in the history where such horrible incidents had occurred where in order to take revenge or blurt out the rage, women have been used just an object or the weapon to satisfy human id. In the incident of partition between India and Pakistan in 1947, various incidents occurred which still give chills to everyone, however among all the mishappening, the gravest one, which is a taint on the history and its people are the mass rapes and gangrapes. Amidst the fight between different religions, it was a gender which suffered the most. In order to prove oneself superior and powerful, the weapon used by the society was assault, humiliation and violence on women of the other religion. It was not that Hindu or Sikhs or Muslims suffered, it was women, who suffered the most, where they were not even involved.

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The dreadful history did not end there, or was not limited to any geographical area. In every corner of the world, the incidents keep reoccurring. In the war going on in between Russia and Ukraine or Israel and Palestine, the reported events of rapes are quite high in number[3]. Whenever any side wins or attacks or is in a superior position, one of the first things to occur is rapes. The very ideology behind this is that, 'women's roles are limited to be object and be under the obligation of men who win them'. When, a state wins in war over the other state, along with the territory, materials, wealth, it will be women whose ownership changes. The question never arises of their identity, rather, the ownership keeps transferring. The Russian

[3] https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141417 (last visited on 27th September, 2023)

soldiers killed some men and raped with his wife, shows how the roles of gender are defined and deeply embedded in the minds of everyone. Various incidents like these even go unreported on daily basis.

These incident shows how any problem in the society leads to the direct or indirect suffering of woman. his suffering can be in the form of violence. Be it, domestic violence, rape, mentally tortured, threated by any stranger, by any friend, or even by her own family members.. However, if opposite happens, when a man does not behave in the limitations set by the society, he is too excluded and forced to mental torture.

These violences has become so normal in our society that, we accept it as reality and justified. 'The factors leading to this are normalization of violence and experience of and exposure to these incidents since childhood. The patriarchy has normalized these behaviours so deeply that we even fail to notice that these types of things are even happening and even when we see, we do not ache to think about it or question. Since childhood, many of us are exposed to this reality that women are a subject to bear and men can do anything. We get exposure of these things in such amount that without even thinking on this we get it in our conscious that this happens and is acceptable.'[4]

This happens daily, and when the gravity of violence is larger, it comes to our knowledge and we then, endulgu in the equality talks for the time being and the process continues. Also, higher the level of patriarchy exists, higher the gender-based violence is seen.

Therefore, it became clear that patriarchy is the base for defining roles to the assigned gender and these reproductions of roles becomes a factor for violence.

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[4] https://action.ourwatch.org.au/what-is-prevention/the-link-between-gender-inequality-and-violence-againstwomen/ (last visited on 11th Sep, 2023 at 9:49 pm)

CONCLUSION

After going through various articles, data and most importantly seeing it daily and even being through it, the researcher has tried to prove the relationship between patriarchy, gender-roles and gender-based violence. We came to the conclusion that patriarchy directly or indirectly leads to violence based on gender having the middle factor assigning gender roles. In a sense, patriarchy has defined roles for person based on their assigned gender and these roles further lead to the production of violence based on gender. This was understood through various examples proving how the terms are interconnected and how much deeply embedded in us. The research has come to the conclusion and proved the hypothesis that, 'Patriarchy defines gender role which becomes a reason for gender-based violence' through examples and theory.

The problem is deeply cultivated in our consciousness through culture. In every geography, time frame, society and religion of the world, the problem exists. And thus, for solving the problem, making of rules and regulations is not enough. The main idea is to implement it to the deepest sections of the society. There needs to be gradual transformation in the society and this can be only solved when the rigidity of the patriarchy structure comes to an end. Because, at last patriarchy is the root cause of the problems happening to both men and women in terms of the assigned gender roles. It must be cultivated to everyone's consciousness that no one is born with an assigned emotion or behaviour and further it is the nature of persons and circumstances of life and their experiences that define someone's behaviour and emotion. Men too can cry and women too can be strong and independent, men don't always need to work for his family and women need not to look after her kids as her primary duty. The roles should be flexible and can definitely be exchanged according to the need, situation and wants. Nothing needs to be hammered. Through this gradual transformation, the gender violence can come to an end and move towards more equitable society to all regardless of any discrimination on gender.

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