

PATRIARCHY AND MATRIARCHY - IDEOLOGY PRACTICE AND WOMEN RIGHTS

WHAT IS PATRIARCHY ?

Many people think, patriarchy just refers to men in power but it goes far deeper than that. Patriarchy is a familial and social system whereby the father is the head of the family. The word literally means 'the rule of father' and describes a lineage where the father has total control over the women and children of the family, with this power being passed down through his male heirs.

A patriarchal system is a society in which men control all aspects from politics to morals to economics and even the actions of women.

PATRIARCHY IDEOLOGY -

- The first theoretical account of patriarchy is found in Engels' theory of women's subordination under capitalism. He argued that capitalism in the hands of fewer people which intensified the oppression of women as men passed on their wealth to their male heirs.

- Acc. to sociologist theory $\rightarrow$ patriarchy is commonly described as, a system of social structures and practices, in which men govern, oppress and exploit women.
- Patriarchy is a social structure and legitimating ideology in which men have more power and privilege than women, according to feminist ideology, patriarchy is the main source of violence such as rape, battering and murder against women in contemporary society.
- Patriarchy is a social organisation marked by the supremacy of father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line.

HISTORY OF PATRIARCHY -

Patriarchy has a long and turbulent history. It first emerged in ancient Greece and Rome, where it was used to oppress women. In India, there was a patriarchy that prescribed strict laws for how women should dress and behave. In a patriarchal society men are supposed to work outside while women are supposed to do household work.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF PATRIARCHIAL SOCIETY

All patriarchal societies, whether existing across the world share a certain amount of characteristics with each other. Those characteristics are Male Domination, Male Identification, Male Centeredness and Obsession with control.

MALE DOMINATION - Male domination in a patriarchy refers to the fact that men make all the decision in both their family unit and society. They hold every position of power and authority possible. They are considered superior in all ways. The position of power and authority in the political, economic, legal, religious, domestic, educational and military spheres are usually reserved for men.

MALE IDENTIFICATION - Male identification in a patriarchal society refers to the fact that men become concerned with identifying with qualities such as control, strength and competitiveness. The men in a society such as this become obsessed with being forceful, rational, and having a strong work ethic. $\rightarrow$ example of male identification in a patriarchal society would be a boy who was born with personality traits such as kindness and caring.

MALE CENTEREDNESS IN PATRIARCHY - It refers to the fact that all activities and progression are due to men and they also become the developers and focusers of all inventions and events. Men become heroes in all situations.

CONTROL OF FAMILY SITUATIONS - The last aspect of a patriarchal system is men's obsession with control. They desire to control all family and social situations. In a patriarchal society, women cannot obtain leadership roles, make decisions, show independence, or suggest change without permission from a man.

EFFECTS OF PATRIARCHY -

- Patriarchy leads to increase in gender inequality. The gender pay gap was 15.5% in 2020.
- Globally, women hold just 24% of senior leadership roles.
- Mothers are more likely than fathers to be spending an extra 20 hours per week on housework and child care, increasing the pressure on them and leading to symptoms of burnout.
- 1 in 4 women are now considering leaving the workforce due to the burnout they

experienced during the covid-19 pandemic.

- Women working in finance are being held back by mediocre men, who are often retained because they are seen as the breadwinners.

- Acc. to UNICEF India's report on child sex ratio, the birth of female's children is declining steadily. States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana have recorded more than a 50 point decline in child sex ratio.

PATRIARCHY AS AN IDEOLOGY -

Culture and traditions have bound the Indian society since ancient times. The patriarchal system and the gender stereotypes in the family and society have always shown a preference for the male child. Sons are regarded as a means of social security and women remained under male domination. Women live under the direct control of fathers and husbands with few cross cutting sources of support. Women as wives under this system were not social adults and women's lives were defined in terms of being wife.

In a patriarchal society men are supposed to work outside while women are supposed to do household work. As a result of which in a patriarchal society men have given more power and freedom than women.

PATRIARCHY AND WOMEN'S RIGHT -

- Patriarchy generally refers to the hierarchical power relation in which men are dominant and women are subordinate. The subordination of women is explicit in many ways, in both private and public spheres, where women are denied rights and access to many things that are easily available to men.
- In patriarchy women have been denied the opportunities for growth in the name of religion and socio cultural practices. At the social-political plain, women suffered from the denial of freedom even in their homes, repression and unnatural, an unequal and inferior status, and even untouchability.
- Under Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act - women are still not equal guardians of their children. A father is considered the 'natural guardian' of a child.

PATRIARCHY AND LAWS -

- 1) In CEDAW committee, Article 5(a) eliminates harmful gender ~~set~~ stereotypes generally. It speaks of modifying social and cultural practices which reinforce negative gender stereotypes about the roles of women in public or private spaces.
- 2) Article 15 of the constitution prohibits the state to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.
- 3) The Fundamental Rights, enshrined in the constitution provide Right to Equality to every person within the territory of India.
- 4) The apex court affirmed that there cannot

be an exception based on gender stereotypes in the application of Fundamental rights.

- 4) The first three words of the preamble, We, the people, gives sense of entitlement to every individual.
- 5) A National Commission for Women was set up to act as watchdog on the women issues in 1992.
- 6) The enactment of the Hindu Law Code in 1954-56 were assumed to confer new legal and social rights and guarantees for women.

WHAT IS MATRIARCHY?

Matriarchy is a hypothetical social system in which the mother or a female elder has absolute authority over the family group. It is a society where the female member leads a family is called matriarchy and the female head of the family is called matriarch. The concept of a society where women govern the political, social, and economic institutions.

Matriarchy is a system that revolves around the principle of mother rule in which mothers or females are at the top of the power structure. They dominate in roles of moral authority, political leadership, social privilege and control of property.

Acc. to Cambridge dictionary - a type of society in which women have most of authority and power.

Acc. to Oxford English dictionary - Matriarchy is a form of social organisation in which the mother or oldest female is head of the family, and descent and relationship are reckoned through the female line, government or rule by women.

MATRIARCHY AS AN IDEOLOGY

Acc. to Feminists - Matriarchy means the 'political rule of women' and is not a mirroring of patriarchy.

In general anthropology, acc. to William A. Haviland, matriarchy is rule by women.

Matriarchy is a social system in which women hold the primary power positions in roles of authority. It is totally different from the concept of patriarchy. In India, matriarchy is found in certain part of Assam and certain parts of Kerala. In India states like Meghalaya, Assam, Kerala and Karnataka stood witnessed to various tribes as they came to practice matrilineality in their families. Some of the most significant tribes are Khasi, Jaintia, Nair and Izhava.

Some of tribes practising matriarchy -

1) Meghalaya : Khasi Tribe and Jaintia Tribe -

Khasi tribe, which become widely known and appreciated as one of the matrilineal societies in India, gives primary importance to women of the family where eldest women function as the heads while the

youngest daughter inherits the property and the right to continue staying with her parents even after marriage. In case where a daughter isn't born, the family adopts a daughter. Men still hold influential positions in politics, it is only the economic and domestic spheres that are left to women.

The Jaro tribe, second largest tribe in hills of Meghalaya, is also one of few surviving matrilineal societies. Like Khasi, Jaro tribe also follows similar patterns of matrilineal inheritance and descent from the eldest woman, and they take their surnames after her, even the husband of daughters.

Kerala : Nairs and Ezhavas - In Kerala, the Nairs are one of the matrilineal societies in India from this group of castes and sub-castes lived under an older female member in a matrilineal household called tharavad. The husbands usually stay in separate rooms or altogether different houses and hold almost little or no responsibility toward their children. This responsibility along with taking care of the common property, as well as other decisions fall upon the eldest male member known as Karmavan.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MATRIARCHY -

- 1) Fathers are excluded - ~~Matri~~ Matriarchal societies are structured in collectivist families, without recognizing genetic paternity. Children belong to their mother's clan from which father is excluded.
- 2) Internal family affairs are handled by women - while external affairs are usually handled by men. Women elect and revoke male's chiefs and even have a veto over all their decisions.
- 3) The woman's body is deeply respected as a source of life.
- 4) Family property is inherited from mothers to daughters.
- 5) The husband is merely a casual visitor or stays with his wife at her residence. This type of family is called matrilocal family. (husband goes to live in house of wife)

MATRILINEAL FAMILY -

In a matrilineal descent system, an individual is considered to belong to same descent group as their mother. A woman lives with her mother and siblings;

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even after marriage, she does not leave her maternal home. Her brothers act "social fathers" and hold higher influence woman's offspring.