

## Exploring How Patriarchal Systems Shape Gender Roles In Society



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**Abstract:** *Patriarchy is the concept of male dominance in society and his is considered as prior and dominant in various domains of society. Male member of house is given the right of decision making and holds all the power which ultimately leads to the oppression of women owing her to traditional roles. This creates a space leading to the gender inequality. Women has to face the oppression, inferiority and discrimination. In this paper we are going to unveil the patriarchal practices in district Sudhnoti Ajk, and how these practices have shaped the society over there. Paper is written after collecting the primary data by using qualitative method of research. Case studies , in-depth interviews and observation are used to gather data. This research paper aims to draw the picture of real consequences in Sudhnoti Ajk regarding patriarchy and to know that how the situation has changed and what are the impacts of male dominance in shaping the overall society. This research will help out the government and policy makers to make policies keeping in view the real consequences of area, which will ultimately help us in eradicating the racism , gender discrimination and biases*

**Keywords:** Male dominance, patriarchy, gender , traditional roles , Societal norms, Empowerment, power

### Introduction

Patriarchy is the most significant and dominating force in traditional as well as modern societies. In a Patriarchal society man is the one who holds the main power. Senior male is supposed to have main power and he deals with all the public affairs while senior female used to deal with the domestic affairs in classical forms of the patriarchy, it is practiced in traditional societies in the modern world. ( Sathar & Kazi, 2000; Isran & Isran, 2012).

Violence against the women is the open violation of human rights. Unfortunately it can be seen all over the world, in all the social classes, age groups and other segments of the society.

It is a very deep concept of power, dominance

and authority revolving around men only, which is being passed to the next generations by male and female members of the society. The sense of superiority makes a women dependant on man. Socialization of our generations incorporate the sense of patriarchy in their minds. Our culture, norms ,traditions in fact everything including media makes us realize that man is the central power of society. (2003, Walby).

Our socialization and re socialization in shaping our patriarchal society. Mothers and Mother in laws keep on stressing over the point of male dominance. This is the family institute which keeps in re enforcing the sense of patriarchy. The unseen division of femininity and masculinity has differentiated their roles within the society. This division of roles has not only created the hierarchy in society but also keeps

on maintaining and reinforcing it through generations(2007,Miller).

These norms of male dominance leads to the women's subjugation which results in the violence against women. Just because man has been considered superior and dominant , women has to face lot of discrimination. This matter in south Asia is considered to be very private and women have to lead their lives silently within the boundaries of their house.(Aruna, 2010).

Violence against women exists in many forms within Asia. She has to face physical, mental and financial, neglect , self neglect and sexual violence. Base of this violence can be social, cultural, financial and ecological.(Barker, 2016 & Billingsley, 2013).

Violence is used as a tool for suppressing women and give more power to patriarchy. In this way women is reminded that she is inferior and subordinate.

Our homeland Pakistan is also a patriarchal society where the man holds power and women is considered as a subordinate. The output of this system is violence. It has already been mentioned that it is women who enforces patriarchy into the society.Then she has to face the consequences in all ages.

Condition in Pakistan is even worse, it can be seen through the country's ranking as it stands 141 out of 142 countries in women participation in political and other economic opportunities. Violence against women is actually a social mechanism which is maintained with the help of power in order to suppress the status of women. This ultimately lead to the destruction of her private and public life.

Abnormal and the amoral conventional practices in our country include rape and sexual assault, honor killing,, sexual harassment, , being burned,acid attacks, kidnapping, dowry and domestic violence. Violence on women is the most rising issue in Pakistan. (2003,Human Rights Commission of Pakistan 2002;Amnesty International ; 1999,Human Rights Watch,).

According to the 2011 poll of the experts Pakistan is considered to be 3<sup>rd</sup> most unsafe country for women.Most of the cases goes

unreported because of the matter of family honor and dignity. Basically patriarchy needs violence for its own existence.

Patriarchy, is an enforced social system in which power and the privilege are most primarily vested in the men, it has actually left a lasting mark in our societies all over the world, setting the roles,norms ,expectations for the people according to their gender. At its center, patriarchy builds up a system of hierarchy which places male at top, allowing him to access all the resources, decision-making authority and opportunities, while putting women to the subordinate positions.

The results of male dominance are long lasting and multiple, effecting all parts of society from relationships to the structure of institutions.In family unit,the norms of patriarchy assign specific roles in accordance to the gender. Expecting men as the heads of house, and bread earner and the women as a care taker of her children and home maker. These limitations not only affect their freedom but also give rise to very harmful stereotypes leading to the discrimination among male and female members of society.

Moreover, patriarchy give rise to a significant influence on the economic systems, perpetuating occupational segregation, wage disparities, and the barriers to career development for the women and the marginalized genders. In these societies, females are often underpaid and undervalued at work place, which leads to the economic devolution and the cycle of poverty keeps on repeating.

In the section of governance and politics, the structure of patriarchy do not allow women to represent herself and participate in the decision-making leading to the ignorance of needs and interests of 50% population.Women goes through the systemic barriers in the political leadership which includes patriarchal attitudes, discriminatory laws, and the gender biases, which acts as a in the way of their opportunities to contribute for a meaningful change as well as the inclusive governance.

Similarly, patriarchy molds the social norms and cultural narratives , resulting in harmful

stereotypes along with the attitudes which normalize and justify the gender-based violence, discrimination, and oppression. These limitations not only effects individual's social well-being but also acts as a barriers to collective progress and social mobility.

In this paper we will try to understand that how society is shaped by patriarch, examine it's long term impacts on individuals , families , culture, and institutes we will delve into the intricate ways in which patriarchy shapes society.

So that we will be able to understand the root causes and propose solutions to set up a just society.

### **Literature Review**

Patriarchy, is basically a social organization in which man is powerful and he is supposed to hold roles of moral authority, political leadership, control of property and social privilege.it is the main driving force which is shaping societies over years.

By studying various aspects of patriarchy and its relationship with other oppression systems, I am able to draw following conclusions.it will explain that how patriarchal norms are putting hurdles in the way of women freedom, leadership, education and empowerment

#### **1. Patriarchal Ideologies:**

The building blocks of patriarchy are our norms, values and beliefs which aims to dominate the patriarchal practices within society.These norms, values and beliefs are strengthened by our social institutions, cultural practices, shaping attitudes, power dynamics, and behaviors within the society.

#### **2. Expected Gender Roles:**

Societies which are supposed to practice patriarchy impose very rigid and ranking gender roles. They use to prescribe specific traits, behaviors, and responsibilities for the individuals according to their gender. All these practices limits individual agency as well as self-expression leading to the in equalities in family dynamics, education and employment.

#### **3. Power Structures:**

Patriarchy practices a system of privilege and power that usually puts a men access to all resources greater than women. Women is considered inferior, man holds access to all resources, enjoy greater social status and hold decision making power. This ranking not only effect women and other genders but give rise to exploitation, oppression and manipulation.

#### **4. Intersectionality:**

Patriarchy also intersects with many other types of oppression i,e classism, racism,hetero-sexism and ableism.It aim to form a very different section of discrimination and marginalization for people with different identities. It is very important to recognize the connection of all these systems in order to understand differences and social inequalities, so that we will be able to advocate more equitable and inclusive solutions.

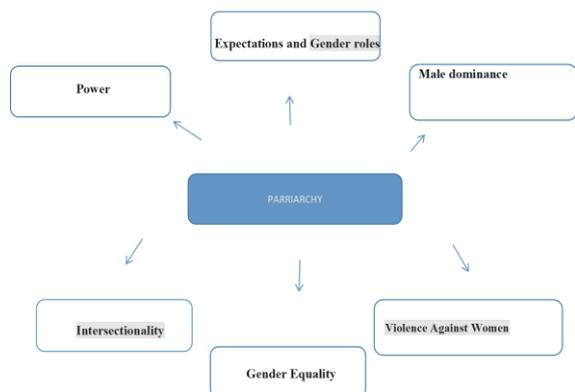
#### **5. Control and Violence**

Societies practicing patriarchy are mostly relying on coercion, violence, and control inorder to maintain their power and norm of male dominance.Women in these societies have to face violence, including femicide, sexual assault, and domestic abuse, it is a very strong tool for maintaining the gender hierarchy and the silencing dissent.

#### **6. Transformation and Resistance:**

Despite of everything patriarchy is not mutable.Feminist organizing Resistance movements, , and advocacy efforts are playing their role in challenging the patriarchal norms, promoting the gender equality and dismantling oppressive systems. By fostering solidarity, amplifying the marginalized voices, and most importantly advocating for the systemic change, all these movements found a way for a equitable and just future.

### **COMPONENTS OF PATRIARCHY**



### **Theoretical Framework :**

Patriarchy has many definitions according to different feminists. Some of them have addressed the historical concept of patriarchy , male power , elder women dominance, or young men (1979 Hartman; 1969 Millet ). Feminists explained its origin according to psychological , biological , social and other perspectives (2014, Atakan). learner say that it is family institution that give rise to male dominance over children and the women. Welbay mentions her writings that patriarchy is a source of exploitation of women and she characterized six main structures which include, housework,Paid work,violence, sexuality culture,along with state with the connections to make different ways to suppress women.we have few scientists according to them patriarchy is a main domain of their writings. i.e Marxist Feminist ,Socialist Feminist theory and Radical Feminist.

#### **1. Feminist Theory:**

Feminism favour the equality in society for both men and the women, and it opposes patriarchy and male dominance.(2012,Macionis).The burning argument for them is that “ Personal is Political”. The base for women’s oppression is considered to be patriarchy.Feminist schlorers have always played a very important role in addressing the role of patriarchy within the society. Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir have addressed that how women is treated as subordinate in private and public domains.

#### **2. Social Constructionism:**

These theories addresses the ways patriarchy is passed on to generations through socialization, culture , norms , values and specified roles.It is not something inherited or it has nothing to do with biology . we perceive all these concepts.According to Judith Butler gender has more to do with performance. It

is continuously injected with the help of our every day behaviour

### **3. Marxist Theory:**

Marxism talks about the macro level capitalists. They present their view that the manipulation of women intersects with the subordination of women in the patriarchal societies. Sylvia Federici, mentions that reproductive labor remains unpaid but they serve in reproducing the workforce still women is economically dependent on men.

**Figure 1**  
*Model of Feminist Theory*

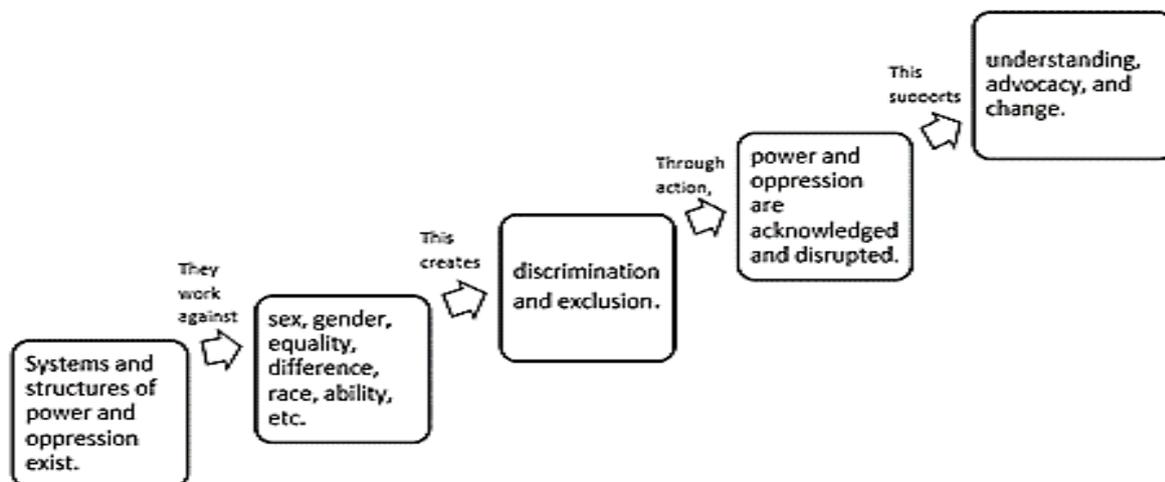


Fig : By [Frazier Forkeetim](#)

### Method and Methodology :

This research paper is written by using the qualitative method of research. Qualitative method of research provides us with in-depth understanding and the exploration of social phenomena, experiences and perspectives. Its main purpose is to explore the “why” and the “How” behind every action instead of only what.

It aims to find out the deeper meaning of every action within the society. It is highly flexible method which permits the researcher to delve deep and use multiple ways to collect data in a natural setting. Inductive approach is used in this research in which the data is analyzed and then theories are build up from them. So the basic purpose of research is exploration , explanation, description, contextualization and theory development. Over all it explores the process, explains the whys and reasons behind it and describe the context to develop a theory and place it in a specific context.

Three main tools for my research:

Semi Structured Interviews

Case Study

Observation Method

In-depth interviews were conducted with the people to know about their experiences and views regarding patriarchy. deeper analysis of any case can be explored by case study. It allows

the deeper understanding of persons life , experiences and context. then I have used observation method of research. Where I have collected data in a natural setting without interruptions. this method provides you more valid data.

### Findings and discussions :

In Sudhnoti Ajk, I have found very mixed views of people regarding patriarchy. Both extremes can be observed there. Trough interviews we came to know about the fact that most of the times women has been given the right of education, almost everyone had passed intermediate. Those who wanted to do the job within own city is allowed to do it but they are not allowed to travel out of city alone for job but most of them were staying in hostels for the sake of completing their education. Even some of them were allowed to travel across country to complete their education.

On the other side some families were so strict that they do not allow their daughters to go out participate in public affairs and seek education, they were asked that ultimately they have to get married so they need to stay at home and take part in household chores to help their mothers.

One aspect was very common all over the district that is the right of inheritance for women is not given to her. No matter which social class she belongs to, she always face deprivation. There is no concept of dividing land among all the children, land is considered to be for men

only.

The highly educated people don't give the right of inheritance to their daughters but there is an exception the cases where there is only one or more daughters and they have no brother. In that case this inherited land is divided among daughters. Similarly I found a very interesting case of woman's manipulation in Sudhnoti.

I met a woman in village Gorah Sudhnoti Ajk. She was almost 45 years old, she shared her story starting from very beginning when she was very small. She had two brothers and a sister, Father was in army, brother were sent to school they passed matriculation but she and her sister wasn't allowed to go school and get education. She used to work at home and help her mother in household chores and also in fields and managing cattle.

After doing all these tasks she was not getting any return in terms of money. Her brothers were more dear to parents and earning coming from all the agricultural fields and animals was taken by the males of home. There was no concept of giving money or cash to females, it was something which had nothing to do with females of home. Eventually I grew up and reached at the age of 16 years.

At that time I got married to my cousin, he was educated and was teacher. He was earning well but he never had any respect for me. Moreover he never gave me the right of living a life of dignity.

His family never considered me to be one of them, we were living in nuclear family system and I have to take care of his family. I have to cook for everyone, work in fields, take care of cattle and do all the household chores. Despite of everything I had to face violence. I came back to my father's home numbers of times. Then after two years of marriage our daughter was born.

My daughter was never so dear to anyone at home and her father never liked her. But when she grew up she was admitted in school and she started going to school. Time passed and she did her matric and then she was admitted in maddarsa to seek Islamic education. My daughter was given same status like me at home

but fortunately she was been given the right of education.

After completing maddarsa she got married. After few years of her marriage my husband got a heart attack. He was a Headmaster at government high school at that time. So he was earning enough to bear the finance of treatment and soon got recovered. All his siblings were married by now. So my daughter demanded her part in land, there was no concept of giving land to daughters and her father also passed away, so she was not given the land even the brothers of my husband asked me leave the house of my husband and go back to my brother's house. I refused to do this and told them that I will file a case on them but they kept on manipulating me. I alone was not able to fight this case against them. But the story didn't end here. Although they have taken a part of house but still I am living in other half with my daughter and her children, but I don't think that I will be able to resist for long time.

Following are the few key aspects of patriarchy which I have observed :

### **1. Expectations and gender roles :**

I have observed the traditional roles of men and women in the society. It is the women who has to cook for family, take care of children and her house but man is considered to be the main decision maker. Although the situation has improve much due to the awareness and education now women is also consulted before taking any important decision but still the lasting one will be taken by men.

If women is doing any job then she has to do double duty by doing house chores after getting back to home. One more thing which is strictly practiced there is that no worker is allowed to cook at home. If women is not doing other things then she has to cook for family.

### **2. Education:**

Situation is much better now than ever before, everyone must seek education up to intermediate level. Although disparities exists boys are being sent to better institutes to study in other cities but girls are not allowed to do so. Especially when it comes to go abroad for higher studies

### **3. Economic Participation:**

Mostly women, adopt the profession of teaching in Sudhnoti. But some also go for other professions. They usually face discrimination in wages and representations in various economic sectors. For example women's representation in business and entrepreneurship is zero. Business is highly associated with man in Sudhnoti.

### **4. Inheritance and Property Rights:**

Right of inheritance is not given to women in Sudhnoti. No matter which social class she belongs to or how much her family is educated, she is deprived of all these rights. In some cases where there is no brother and only daughters are the heir, land is divided among them. Otherwise there is no chance of getting the inheritance rights.

### **5. Political Representation:**

Like business the Political representation of women is also near to zero. Women candidates are not preferred and man has been given the right to rule. Leadership is considered to be the man's cup of tea only. Which leads to the under representation of opinion of women.

### **6. Violence Against Women:**

Violence against women still exists in some areas. She has to face violence from her mother in law and husband.

Honor killing, domestic abuse and dowry related violence mostly exists there.

### **7. Change and Resistance:**

Awareness brought up by education is the main tool of change and resistance. The situation is much better now than ever before and this is only because of rise in the level of education in this time.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Violence is the source for practising patriarchy within the society. Women is bearing very harsh conditions just for the sake of maintaining the tradition of patriarchy. Various roles have been given to man and women just because of their gender and they are expected to stick to them.

Women is considered to be the queen of home, her only domain is private one. She was not allowed to move towards public affairs and Man is considered to be the one who can hold all the public affairs.

Moreover women should be given the right of decision making, she cannot take part in business and political activities. In these circumstances it is crucial for the government of Pakistan to take steps for policy making in favour of women education, skills and participation in public affairs.

Otherwise 50% of population will stay out of the mainstream leading to the devolution of country in all fields.

The negative impacts of patriarchy can be controlled by working in various domains which are mentioned here:

#### **1. Awareness and education:**

Promoting the gender equality in educational sectors from very early stage and teaching your child about the gender equality and biases as well as stereotypes related to gender can help us in this regard. Moreover conduction of awareness campaigns in public can make a remarkable effect.

#### **2. Policy Changes and Legislation:**

Government needs to implement the policies which are gender responsive. Government should enact the policies and laws which aims to address the equality of gender in education, workplace and politics. Then it is very important to enforce these policies effectively. Government should implement the gender quotas in corporate sector and politics to ensure the representations of women in the process of decision-making

3. The Economic Empowerment: Participation of women in economic sector needs to be promoted. Women should be supported in business and entrepreneurship. The norm of equal pay for equal work should be promoted, eradicating all the discrimination.

4. Cultural and the Social Change: We need to bring up our men in a way that they encourage the women to take non-traditional role. Media

needs to play its role in accurate and diverse representation of women in entertainment and media. They need to make content that oppose the patriarchy.

### **8. Leadership Development:**

There should be some leadership programs for women to train women with various skills and help them to take on leadership roles

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