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**Research Article****Breaking Patriarchal Fences****Dr. Naresh Sharma**

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ABSTRACT

The doors of education were opened to women and they started breaking the patriarchal fences. But even then, the women were tagged with men as a secondary and subordinate phenomenon. This article is a clarion call that women is awake now.,

Educational opportunities for women have been broadened; more of them enter the portals of educational institutions. But enrolment figures of girls are lower than those for boys and the dropout rates are alarmingly high. New economic opportunities have been opened up and women are taking advantage of them. Invisible discrimination is still practiced against them and, in proportion to their size in the population; women are still seriously under-represented in the regular employment sector. This is also true of politics. In 1989, the ruling party (Congress I) had promised women 30 percent of the electoral seats contested by the party, this was not done. The record of the opposition was no better. In the 1989 parliament, the number of women was smaller than in the previous parliament.

Several forms of gender discrimination emerge from a contradiction in the Indian constitution. It ensures equality for all before law and prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, but it also guarantees freedom of religion- the right freely to profess, practice, and propagate religion. This provision of religious freedom takes away much of the freedom and equality extended to women by the constitution. Because family and personal law is rooted in religious and social codes, women do not have equal rights within the family, or to property. Many of them do not have the freedom to decide where they would live after marriage, some are deprived of the right to maintenance, some have great difficulty in getting a divorce, and some cannot legally adopt a child (Dube, 1990).

The women's issue is a socially vibrant question because the plight of women is as frustrating as it ever was in human history. Throughout different periods of chequered history woman remained engrossed in tackling only family

and secondary issues and the issue of her real identity was kept out of her purview and she therefore, entrenched herself in psychic timidity resulting in growth of profound sense of ennui in her personality. Women were hamstrung by their servile and secondary position in the family. The human values in all historical periods of civilization remained male dominated.

Still she remained ostracized in the literary world as well as in the world of power politics. The rising democracies in the capitalist systems opened a window to her to visualize the political world but she was denied the right to franchise in the male dominated democracies. She, therefore always remained marginalized from the process concerning decision making.

Marxist revolutionary interpretations of social dynamics took women's cause along with the cause of proletariat but she remained on the periphery of politics of power. In our country, the position of women was no better. A peculiar claustrophobia confined her within the premises of the household.

In this backdrop of history one finds that the feminine collectivity is continuously facing the same old crisis. Despite rapid growth and advancement of democratic ideology the existing institutions of political power are so apathetic and lethargic that they are still not able to define the independent entity of woman. Rather she is always tagged with men as a secondary and subordinate phenomenon in spite of certain exceptions.

The freedom struggle in India did result in an awakening of women to the possibility of their own emancipation, though in a limited sense. In 1931, the fundamental Rights Resolution of the Indian National

Congress stated that the freedom, justice, dignity and equality for women were essential for nation building. These ideas were also enshrined in the constitution of India.

However, in the decades after Independence, women found to their dismay that, as with other oppressed sections, the rights that were guaranteed in the constitution remain on paper alone, and mere right to vote didn't change their marginalized status or bring them the right to decision making or liberation from the traditional constraints of patriarchal society that doesn't yield easily to the lofty proclamations of the constitution.

Although Indian woman is by and by becoming visible on all the indices of social growth yet her upward mobility remains seriously restricted only to big towns and cities where women feel academically and economically independent and empowered. Economically independent women in big cities have acquired a modicum of individual liberty also as the urban environment accords them more space in comparison to closed rural societies. Even urban women find themselves in fetters as their families have a firm belief in patriarchal values. Rural women, however, have to follow the age-old routine: cutting fodder for cattle, giving shape to dung-cakes, milking cows and buffaloes, baking loaves of bread for the family members and looking after the children.

Domestic violence is the most hidden and tragic form of atrocity on women as it takes place within the sanctity of the home at the hands of their husbands. As a result of the deep-rooted patriarchal values in India, it is viewed as a private family matter that should be settled within the boundaries of home. Consequently, violence against women continues to assume epidemic proportions.

Kate Millet in *Sexual Politics* blamed the social scientists who helped create an ideology of sex roles disguised as scientific description (20). Freud limited female life not only to the sexual re-productive, but also stated that women live at a low cultural level. For Erikson, woman is "destined to bear the offspring of chosen men and with it, a biological, psychological and ethical commitment to take care of human infancy". According to Joseph Rheinhold, "Anatomy decrees the life of a woman". These views from men who are assumed to be experts reflect, in a surprisingly transparent way, the cultural consensus. They not only assert that a woman is defined by her ability to attract men, but they see no alternative definition. Seen in terms of a man backed with psycho-sexual incantations and biological ritual curses a woman's role is confined to that of a servant.

Family, the fundamental unit of society, can be seen as perpetrating the larger patriarchal power structure. The institution of marriage makes woman an object of barter and subverts the right of woman to name children after the man. In this way, an entire sex lost its identity, in terms of socio-political and economic position, and was vulnerable to exploitation.

Societal structure unfortunately is not broad-based, liberal enough to tackle the problems faced by women. It still prefers to huddle itself in archaic patriarchal laws and customs. Seen in relative terms to the male, she denied the opportunity to forge an identity of her own. If and when she dares, she comes face to face with the last weapon in the patriarchal arsenal: violence. In its most simplified form, violence is defined as abuse, and feministically speaking, it takes on many guises from physical assault to psychological domination to social subjection to cultural oppression. In

today's society violence is fast becoming a synonym for power.

Like all patriarchal concepts, exploitation includes the emotional, psychological and economic aspects. Since woman is an object of not only lust and ego, but of vanity as well, she is seen not only as a conquest and possession in the eyes of the other. Her value as a property is largely determined by her desirability in the market place at large. The concept of romantic love affords the male a means of emotional manipulation, whereby he is free to exploit, since love is the only circumstance in which the female is ideologically pardoned for sexual activity. And the conviction of romantic love is convenient to both the parties, since this is often the only condition in which the female can overcome the far more powerful conditioning she has received of sexual inhibition.

As long as patriarchy treats women as a sexual commodity gift-wrapped for capitalistic consumption. Patriarchy has instituted such phenomenon as clitoridectomy, clitoral incision, the enslavement of women through child-marriages, concubinage and prostitution and the patriarchal mentality has concocted a whole series of rationales that answer the purpose tolerably well. And these traditional beliefs still invade our consciousness and affect our thinking to an extent that few of us would be willing to admit.

In the past, control over women's sexuality was linked to hereditary rights. These days women no longer wear chastity belts. The control is subtler, more effective. The early feminists' emphasis was on the right to refusal of sex rather than the right for women to seek sexual satisfaction on their own terms. It is not only peeling the layer of social conditioning, but understanding how the body and its pleasures acquire a certain historical and cultural significance contrary to patriarchal belief, sex is not mere biological conditioning but is social specific.

Feminist research intends to challenge such assumptions pointing out how these ideas seem to 'naturalize' male sexual behavior. To view women as responsible for men's violence enables individual men to deny responsibility and insist that they were misled or provoked. A wide range of coercion practices are regarded as normal and a natural form of heterosexual behavior: the notion that women are incapable of deciding for themselves their state of sexual arousal, prompts the idea that they have to be seduced by a man into wanting sex. The linking of sex to not only the physical but also emotional aspect, or the assumption that sex is a bargain, the price women pay for men spending money on them, or as a 'duty' part of what a 'husband' expects of his 'wife' in return for the financial support he extends to her and the children. Within heterosexual relations, women service men emotionally and sexually and materially in the form of house labour.

The influence of patriarchy has a wider societal base. The use of birth control and economic liberation hasn't really helped women. It has only meant adding to the existing roles of woman without a corresponding redefinition of the rules of people whom they interact with. The inequality of opportunity for woman in work organizations lies partly in the competition for precious economic resources and the monopolization of privilege by men. The psychological barriers are equally awesome. For women are often perceived and perceive themselves as unsuitable for management tasks. The gender role in which they are socialized in the small social unit, the family, is carried over the larger social unit. Thus, woman

socialized into roles that train her to be co-operative finds herself in conflict in the work situation that expects her to be competitive. Development of women in India in particular is unequal, spread as it is over class, language religion and race. Thus, while in certain sections of society, women are progressive liberals, in certain others they are oppressed.

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