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**Conceptualization of Sexual division of labor, Patriarchy, capitalism and their link with special reference to Heidi Hartmann's book "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex"**

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**Abstract**

*Heidi Hartman in her book analyzed how patriarchy forms gender roles by assigning femininity and masculinity to the work. She says how it's done by social institutions at a subtle level. It can be experienced in our everyday life which divides us into two sexes. Again she stated women got further subordinated with the advent of capitalism. This too can be sensed as whenever there are any changes in the society it is the women who suffer the most because of the prevailing patriarchal culture in the society. But again if patriarchy is the forerunner of capitalism is debated and also lacks evidence. Nevertheless, she is true when she says that in all these processes men are the ones who benefit from every way as they get the superior position. Patriarchy is further maintained and strengthened through our gendered habits.*

***Keywords: Domination, Patriarchy, Capitalism, Job Segregation, Sexual Division of Labor.***

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**Introduction:** Socialist or Marxist women who were active in the new left, anti Vietnam War movement in the 1960s joined the women's liberation movement as it spontaneously emerged. Influenced by the feminist arguments raised within the movement they raised questions about their role in the broad democratic movement, and the analysis on the women's question been put forward by the new left on the critical role of the Soviet Union and China. Heidi Hartmann is one of the noted socialist feminists. Hartmann is the President of the Washington based institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), a scientific research organization that she founded in 1987 to meet the need for women centered, and policy oriented research. In the paper we briefly review the ideas of her on her book "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex". We further analyze her as a socialist feminist with a critical note on her ideas on her particular book.

**Sexual division of labour:** Sexual division of labour is the delegation of a different task between males and females. It is traditionally seen as a natural arrangement that forms the

basis of all economic specialization and social structure leading to the formation of kinships and family. The term sexual division of labour also refers to the specialized gender role of male bread winner and female house wife. Marxist Feminist speaks about international division of labour and liberal framework took it a very natural way. According to liberal feminist, there are two type of sexual division of labour.

1. Family/ domestic division of labour.
2. Wage labour.

Domestic division of labour refers to the distribution of those responsibilities and tasks necessary for ongoing maintenance of domestic home and people who live in it. According to traditional division of labour man has the primary responsibility for maintaining and doing financial matter of their family and women have the primary responsibility for the management and performance of household and carry works such as cleaning, caring and rearing children, cooking etc. Women work is associated with domestic sphere. It is men who dominate both public and private spheres. Whatever produce in public sphere is valuable. But in domestic sphere the commodity which is usually produced do not regarded as valuable. The question arises regarding the non-recognition of domestic labour. If the domestic task at home is done by another person outside from family (in the public sphere),it is valuable and he is paid; but if the same task is done by a woman then she is not paid. From that point of view women are dominated and deprived of their rights.

As it is said because of liberal thought the concept like free marketing competition came into exist. As a result economy is opened to all it helps the women to come out from domestic labour and participate in wage labour, Though many women are economically independent but still many of women is dependent on male members of their family as all the decisions of them is taken the male counterparts because of sexual division of labour.

**Patriarchy and domination of Women:** Patriarchy in a large sense a power relation exist in the society which is hierarchical in nature; so this relation is unequal where one section dominate the other section in the society. According to the Feminist Patriarchy is

1. An unequal relationship between Men and Women,
2. Through which men dominate women controlling over her production, reproduction and sexuality,
3. Dynamic in nature as its structure and practice is different in society to society,
4. So deeply constructed in the society that generally no one can realize its existence,
5. Promote and protect by the social structure.

Sylvia Walby points out six structures of Patriarchy in her book, '*Theorizing Patriarchy*'

1. Patriarchal mode of production,
2. Patriarchal relations in paid work,
3. Patriarchal relation in the state,
4. Male violence,
5. Patriarchal relations in sexuality,
6. Patriarchal relation in cultural institutions.

Thus, Patriarchy is the system of male oppression of women and it exists in everywhere in the society in various forms. One of the prominent thinker of feminism Heidi Hartmann defines patriarchy “as a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and women and solidarity among them, which enable them to control women. Patriarchy is thus the system of male oppression of women.”

All types of Feminism like Marxist Feminism, Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism etc. discuss on Patriarchy but regarding the origin and existence of patriarchy they all give their own opinions. Marxist thinkers focus on capitalism, socialist thinkers on culture, radical thinkers on sexual division and so one. But one thing is clear that the patriarchal system is a social structure through which men dominate and exploit women and it is the hardest from of operation as a girl has to suffer it till birth to death.

**Capitalism and domination of women:** Capitalism is an economic system in which means of production are controlled by the private owners with the goal of making profit. It is the product of the liberalism where individualism is given important, it believes on competition and capability so it demands that it gives equal right and opportunities to men and women. At present time most of the countries follows the liberal ideologies and work for women empowerment. They help the women come out to the privet sphere, give work equally as men, give wages, promote status of women, through technology help women to join in the heard works and so on. But the various feminist thinkers raise the question against capitalism regarding women empowerment. Because in recent capitalist set up we find-

1. Double burden of work
2. Lower wage to women
3. Work division within private sphere
4. Use women as an alternative employee
5. Discrimination at the time of appointment
6. Use as a commodity
7. Single family and burden
8. Harassment at the work place etc.

So at present time many feminist thinkers specially Marxist and socialist feminist criticized the role of capitalism in women empowerment and try to uncover the hidden link between Patriarchy and Capitalism.

**Link between Sexual division of labour, patriarchy and capitalism:** Patriarchy is a kind of domination, hierarchical and unequal power relation, which led to the practices in which men dominate oppress and exploit women. The system of control domination and oppression is not biologically determined and it implies men are not naturally superior to women. Gender differences between male and female is socially constructed. Socialization process actually constructed this stereotype notion of masculinity and femininity and also creates consciousness about women are only sited for domestic work. But now in the post industrial society these differences are comparatively less. According to Engels, female sex

was defeated with the evolution of private property. In primitive societies there was no concept of private property so then there was no class or gender division. But with the greater sophistication of tools, men started moving further afield to hunt while women stayed back to mind the children and take care of the homestead. This was the first instance of a sexual division of labour. Then gradually step by step women had to be controlled their sexuality regulated and monitored. In response of this patriarchy based on monogamy for women evolved. Control over surplus became a male prerogative and women came to be economically dependent on men. Then came the very notion of capitalism and suddenly women also became liberated as capitalism bring job opportunity for both men and women. It provides works for women in the public domain also which generally regarded as domain of men. But here also capitalists are with the motive of their own profit. They never give women equal wages to men. Though they provide job for women they also considered women are less productive than men still they try to make more production by using women labourer. Beside this, in capitalism create class division between women, according to Engels, under capitalism patriarchy plagued only the bourgeois woman and not the working class woman. These working class women are not oppressed directly in working place because oppression of women is linked to ownership of private property and here she is also the part of labour force. Again socialist feminist have tried to establish the connection between the sex class system and the economic class system. They contend that patriarchy interacts with the given economic system and in conjunction with other important factors, like ideology and culture, creates new and changing patriarchal ethos and practices. For socialist feminist relation of production are as important as relation of reproduction. They argued that the origin of procreation is very much a part of the economic foundation of a society. Within socialist feminism there are different ways of looking at the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy. Patriarchy provides the much needed framework of control and order within which capitalism flourishes. Heidi Hartmann argues that patriarchy benefits all men irrespective of their class because patriarchal relations are crucially located in the expropriation of women's labour by men in the household and paid work in the market. Women's disadvantaged position in wage work makes them vulnerable in matters relating to division of labour within the household. On the other hand their position and role within the household acts as an obstacle in the context of paid work. Thus, men are able to control and regulate women's labour power, both within the household and the market; control in one arena reinforcing the control in the other.

Maria Mies argues that patriarchy is not a consequence of capitalism, predates it. She argues that patriarchy is a world system with its own network of institutions and practices such as family, expropriation of women's labour, and so on. The lives of women in industrialized West, she argues, are dependent upon the exploitation of the Third World, specially the women in these countries.

**Heidi Hartmann's conceptualization on these three in her book "*Capitalism, Patriarchy and job segregation by sex*":** The division of labor by sex appears to have been universal throughout human history. In our society the sexual division of labor is hierarchical, with

men on top and women on the bottom. Anthropology and history suggest, however, that this division was not always a hierarchical one. Hartmann believed that the roots of women's present social status lie in this sex-ordered division of labor. ***According to Hartmann women are to attain equal social status with men and if women and men are to attain the full development of their human potentials then not only the hierarchical nature of the division of labor between the sexes must be eliminated, but the very division of labor between the sexes itself must be eliminated too.***

The primary questions are arises, first, *how a more sexually egalitarian division became a less egalitarian one, and second*, *how this hierarchical division of labor became extended to wage labor in the modern period.* Many anthropological studies suggest that the first process, sexual stratification, occurred together with the increasing productiveness, specialization and complexity of society; for example, through the establishment of settled agriculture, private property, or the state. It occurred as human society emerged from the primitive and became "civilized." In this perspective capitalism is a relative latecomer, whereas patriarchy, the hierarchical relation between men and women in which men are dominant and women are subordinate, was an early arrival.

Hartmann believed that a patriarchal system was established in which men controlled the labor of women and children in the family, and that in so doing men learned the techniques of hierarchical organization and control. With the advent of public-private separations such as those created by the emergence of state apparatus and economic systems based on wider exchange and larger production units, the problem for men became one of maintaining their control over the labor power of women. In other words, a direct personal system of control was translated into an indirect, impersonal system of control, mediated by society-wide institutions. The mechanisms available to men were (1) the traditional division of labor between the sexes, and (2) techniques of hierarchical organization and control. These mechanisms were crucial in the second process, the extension of a sex-ordered division of labor to the wage-labor system, during the period of the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe and the United States.

New institutions are established and it destroys the old institutions. If the theoretical tendency of pure capitalism would have been to eradicate all arbitrary differences of status among laborers, to make all laborers equal in the marketplace, why are women still in an inferior position to men in the labor market? Answers can be found from neoclassical views that the process is not complete or is hampered by market imperfections. The radical view that production requires hierarchy even if the market nominally requires "equality." All of these explanations, it ignores the role of men-ordinary men, men as men, men as workers-in maintaining women's inferiority in the labor market. The radical view, in particular, emphasizes the role of men as capitalists in creating hierarchies in the production process in order to maintain their power. Capitalists do this by segmenting the labor market (along race, sex, and ethnic lines among others) and playing workers off against each other. The male workers have played and continue to play a crucial role in maintaining sexual divisions in the labor process. Hartmann says Job segregation by sex is the primary

mechanism in capitalist society that maintains the superiority of men over women, because it enforces lower wages for women in the labor market. Low wages keep women dependent on men because they encourage women to marry. Married women must perform domestic tasks for their husbands. Men benefit, then, from both higher wages and the domestic division of labor. This domestic division of labor, in turn, acts to weaken women's position in the labor market. Thus, the hierarchical domestic division of labor is perpetuated by the labor market, and vice versa. This process is the present outcome of the continuing interaction of two interlocking systems, capitalism and patriarchy.

Anthropological Perspectives on the Division of Labor by Sex , and The Emergence of Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution in England and the United States regarding division of labor by sex. Some anthropologists explain male dominance by arguing that it existed from the very beginning of human society. Sherry Ortner suggests that indeed "female is to male as nature is to culture." According to Ortner, culture devalues nature; females are associated with nature, are considered closer to nature in all cultures, and are thus devalued. Her view is compatible with that of Rosaldo, who emphasizes the public-private split, and that of Levi-Strauss, who assumes the subordination of women during the process of the creation of society. According to Levi-Strauss, culture began with the exchange of women by men to cement bonds between families-thereby creating society. In fact, Levi-Strauss sees a fundamental tension between the family (i.e., the domestic realm in which women reside closer to nature) and society, which requires that families break down their autonomy to exchange with one another. The exchange of women is a mechanism that enforces the interdependence of families and that creates society. By analogy, Levi-Strauss suggests that the division of labor between the sexes is the mechanism which enforces "a reciprocal state of dependency between the sexes." It also assures heterosexual marriage. "When it is stated that one sex must perform certain tasks, this also means that the other sex is forbidden to do them." Thus the existence of a sexual division of labor is a universal of human society, though the exact division of the tasks by sex varies enormously. Moreover, following Levi-Strauss, because it is men who exchange women and women who are exchanged in creating social bonds, men benefit more than women from these social bonds, and the division of labor between the sexes is a hierarchical one.

The key process in the emergence of capitalism was primitive accumulation, the prior accumulation that was necessary for capitalism to establish itself. Primitive accumulation was a twofold process which set the preconditions for the expansion of the scale of production: first, free laborers had to be accumulated; second, large amounts of capital had to be accumulated. The first was achieved through enclosures and the removal of people from the land, their subsistence base, so that they were forced to work for wages. The second was achieved through both the growth of smaller capitals in farms and shops amassed through banking facilities, and vast increases in merchant capital, the profits from the slave trade, and colonial exploitation. The creation of a wage-labor force and the increase in the scale of production that occurred with the emergence of capitalism had in some ways a more severe impact on women than on men. To understand this impact let us

look at the work of women before this transition occurred and the changes which took place as it occurred.<sup>29</sup> In the 1500s and 1600s, agriculture, woolen textiles (carried on as a by-industry of agriculture), and the various crafts and trades in the towns were the major sources of livelihood for the English population. In the rural areas men worked in the fields on small farms they owned or rented and women tended the household plots, small gardens and orchards, animals, and dairies. The women also spun and wove. A portion of these products were sold in small markets to supply the villages, towns, and cities, and in this way women supplied a considerable proportion of their families' cash income, as well as their subsistence in kind. In addition to the tenants and farmers, there was a small wage-earning class of men and women who worked on the larger farms. Occasionally tenants and their wives worked for wages as well, the men more often than the women.<sup>30</sup> As small farmers and cottagers were displaced by larger farmers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their wives lost their main sources of support, while the men were able to continue as wage laborers to some extent. Thus women, deprived of these essential household plots, suffered relatively greater unemployment, and the families as a whole were deprived of a large part of their subsistence.

The transition to capitalism in the cities and towns was experienced somewhat differently than in the rural areas, but it tends to substantiate the line of argument just set out: men and women had different places in the familial authority structure, and capitalism proceeded in a way that built on that authority structure. In the towns and cities before the transition to capitalism a system of family industry prevailed: a family of artisans worked together at home to produce goods for exchange. Adults were organized in guilds, which had social and religious functions as well as industrial ones. Within trades carried on as family industries women and men generally performed different tasks: in general, the men worked at what were considered more skilled tasks, the women at processing the raw materials or finishing the end product. Men, usually the heads of the production units, had the status of master artisans. For though women usually belonged to their husbands' guilds, they did so as appendages; girls were rarely apprenticed to a trade and thus rarely become journeymen or masters. Married women participated in the production process and probably acquired important skills, but they usually controlled the production process only if they were widowed, when guilds often gave them the right to hire apprentices and journeymen. Young men may have married within their guilds (i.e., the daughters of artisans in the same trade). In fact, young women and girls had a unique and very important role as extra or casual labourers in a system where the guilds prohibited hiring additional workers from outside the family, and undoubtedly they learned skills which were useful when they married. Nevertheless, girls appear not to have been trained as carefully as boys were and, as adults, not to have attained the same status in the guilds. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the family industry system and the guilds began to break down in the face of the demand for larger output. Capitalists began to organize production on a larger scale, and production became separated from the home as the size of establishments grew. Women were excluded from participation in the industries in which they had assisted men as they no longer took place at home, where married women apparently tended to remain to carry on

their domestic work. Yet many women out of necessity sought work in capitalistically organized industry as wage laborers. When women entered wage labour they appear to have been at a disadvantage relative to men. First, as in agriculture, there was already a tradition of lower wages for women (in the previously limited area of wage work). Second, women appear to have been less well trained than men and obtained less desirable jobs. And third, they appear to have been less well organized than men. Therefore they are paid low wages.

Thus through these two explanations it can be easy to understand that women are segregated because of patriarchy and capitalism.

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