



Good Woman - Bad Woman - Male Labels for Exploitation: Looking at the Feminism Ethics

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Abstract

Stereotypes based on gender have hindered women's progress and development, as well as left society underdeveloped. Stereotypes about gender are pervasive, but they are especially prevalent in patriarchal cultures. This essay was written using a feminist perspective and ethical feminism. The scholar has tried to explain how gender stereotypes are formed by men with tend of women Exploitation. According to the perspective of feminism, gender is a socially constructed category that is shaped by power relations, and women have historically been marginalized and oppressed in society. Men have the majority of the authority in patriarchal societies, where stereotypes based on patriarchal beliefs oppress women. ethics feminism tries to illustrate gender stereotypes are harmful for women and whole society. This is a problem that society should be aware of and address with the assistance of specialists. The scholar suggests, Society's values should be reviewed and revised with feminism ethics experts and harmful stereotypes should to change or replace with alternative values. This analytical investigation was produced by utilizing the library's resources, publications, and previously conducted studies.

key words: Gender stereotypes; Feminism Approach; Ethic feminism; Women; Exploitation; Patriarchy

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INTRODUCTION

About half of the global human population is women. In every step, all over the world; women face inequality, subordination, and secondary class status. Often, they are victim of the oppression, marginalization and exploitation in the patriarchal societies. Before the First Industrial Revolution (IR), the human life was not men dominated, and both men and women contribute equally in the society. The IR began in England in about 1750-1760 that lasted to sometime between 1820 and 1840. The IR dramatically changed the global social order and consequently, a new gender system started worldwide that disadvantaged women (Mohajan, 2019). During this period men started to work in the industries and women were restricted to the domestic sphere. As a result, they remain vulnerable socially, politically, and economically. The industrialization also developed a new class system; aristocratic class (Anderson & Zinsser, 2000).

Deprivation of women in traditional patriarchal societies is a complex issue with multifaceted dimensions. Throughout history and across diverse cultures, women have often faced systemic discrimination, limiting their access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and basic human rights. This deprivation is deeply rooted in cultural norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality. In many cultures, women have been subjected to restrictive gender roles that confine them to domestic spheres, limiting their participation in public life and decision-making processes. This deprivation is often reinforced by traditional beliefs that prioritize male dominance and perpetuate harmful stereotypes about women's abilities. Gender stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. A gender stereotype is, at its core, a belief and that belief may cause its holder to make assumptions about members of the subject group, women and/or men. In contrast,

gender stereotyping is the practice of applying that stereotypical belief to a person.

WHY ADDRESSING TO GENDER STEREOTYPES ARE IMPORTANT?

Because they can be exploitative and dangerous. The United Nation has clearly explained about gender stereotypes and how they can be harmful for women. therefore, the researcher has brought the same text here because of the clarity of the issue.” The international human rights law framework is concerned with stereotypes and stereotyping that affect recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, rather than all stereotypes and all forms of stereotyping. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has explained that States Parties are required to modify or transform “harmful gender stereotypes” and “eliminate wrongful gender stereotyping”. A stereotype is harmful when it limits women’s or men’s capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans. Both hostile/negative or seemingly benign stereotypes can be harmful. It is for example based on the stereotype that women are more nurturing that child rearing responsibilities often fall exclusively on them. Gender stereotyping is wrongful when it results in a violation or violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. An example of this is the failure to criminalize marital rape based on the stereotype of women as the sexual property of men. Another example is the failure of the justice system to hold perpetrator of sexual violence accountable based on stereotypical views about women’s appropriate sexual behavior. How do gender stereotypes/stereotyping harm women? Discrimination against women includes those differences of treatment that exist because of stereotypical expectations, attitudes and behaviors towards women. Just to give some examples: - The Special Rapporteur on the rights to food pointed out that stereotype about women’s role within the family leads to a division of labor within households that often result in time poverty for women and lower levels of education. - The CEDAW Committee has highlighted how traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men perpetuate widespread practice involving violence and coercion. - Both CRC and the CEDAW Committee noted that harmful practices are multidimensional and include stereotyped sex and gender-based roles. - The Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on independence of judges and lawyers have stressed that the investigation of cases of violence and the sanctioning of perpetrators are underpinned by patriarchal notions and stereotypes that negatively affect their objectivity and impartiality” (United Nation, 2014).

Here are some cultural deprivations commonly experienced by girls, along with references for further exploration: Limited Access to Education: (UNESCO, 2018) “UNESCO e Atlas of Gender Inequality in Education.” This resource provides a comprehensive overview of global gender disparities in education, highlighting the challenges girls face in accessing quality education due to cultural factors. Child Marriage:(Girls Not Brieds, 2020) . “Child Marriage: A Violation of Human Rights.” Girls Not Brides is a global partnership working to end child marriage, and their resources shed light on the cultural practices and norms that perpetuate this harmful deprivation. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): World Health Organization (WHO). (2018). “Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).” The WHO provides information on the cultural aspects and consequences of FGM, emphasizing the need to address this harmful practice that affects the health and well-being of girls. Unequal Access to Healthcare:(Kabeer, 2005) “Gender equality and women’s empowerment: A critical analysis of the third Millennium Development Goal 1.” This article discusses the cultural factors contributing to gender disparities in healthcare access and outcomes. Discrimination in Employment Opportunities: (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2018). “Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture.” The ILO’s report highlights cultural barriers that limit girls’ and women’s access to formal employment, leading to informal and often exploitative work. Social Expectations and Gender Roles: (Connell, 2009). “Gender in World Perspective.” This book explores how cultural expectations and gender roles shape the experiences of girls and women globally, influencing their choices and opportunities.

But the basic questions are why these harmful stereotypes are created in the society? why do women accept this injustice and inequality? What makes women oppress themselves under this culture? In this article, an attempt has been made to address this issue using the feminist point of view and the ethics of feminism.

WHAT IS FEMINISM AND FEMINIST ETHICS DEFINITION?

In the 21st century there is no straightforward definition of feminism. At present, there are as many definitions of feminism as there are feminists depending on their own beliefs, history and culture, but gender equality is common to all. Feminism is a women basis socio-political movement and ideology, and supports the idea “women should share equality in society’s opportunities and scarce resources” (Delaney, 2005).

Oxford Dictionary defines feminism as “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim”.

The feminism is characterized by “the activism for the purpose of challenging and changing women’s subordination to men” (Ferree, 2006). Feminism is an ideology that demands an equal right of men and women in terms of politics, decision making, career, and having children. It consists of a number of social, cultural and political movements that take attempts for equal rights of women and men (Widya & Asnani, 2020). It is considered as a struggle to achieve same rights, opportunities and dignity as men have in the society (Raj & Davidson, 2014). It has raised much in the western upper-class society and the women have fought for women’s suffrage and reproductive rights (Ben, 1998). The rise of feminism in Europe occurred as “women of all classes became increasingly aware of the way in which their sex influenced their life chances and experiences” (Fuchs & Thompson, 2005). Paradigm Academic Press 3 Different disciplines, such as sociology- philosophy, economics, and politics, served as distinctive intellectual backgrounds of feminism (Herouach, 2019). Feminism explains and suggests directions for the change in social and environmental factors; tries to highlight the propose interventions for women’s intrapersonal and interpersonal concerns, and provides a perspective for evaluating social and environmental experiences of groups and individuals, regardless of sex or gender. It has changed the lives of millions of women (H. S. Anderson, 2016).

In the Encyclopedia of philosophy, feminist ethics is defined as follows, “Feminist ethics is a diverse and growing body of philosophy work, initially based in the recognition that most canonical accounts of morality neglected, distorted and trivialized women’s moral perspectives while either ignoring or defining unjust power imbalances between women and men.” Feminist ethic suspects traditional ethics which is male-bias by its explicit commitment. It is a specific experience of highly privileged men and women of lower economic class to enable them to pursue higher inquiry. The relationship of unjust privilege and group are based on the oppressions of the traditional disciplines. So, it may be said that these oppressive conditions shape people’s moral beliefs, values and characters at deep levels. In the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, feminist ethics is also defined as follows, “Feminist ethics is sensitive to the gender bias that may be implicit in philosophical theories (for instance, philosopher’s lists of virtues may be typically manly or culturally masculine), and social structures, legal and political procedures and the general culture. One controversial claim is that women approach practical reasoning from a different perspective from that of men. The difference includes emphasis on community caring and bounding with particular individuals in place of abstract impartially.” For feminist ethicists, one should live in a social world by understanding and evaluating one’s moral beliefs and responsibilities. But it can face

more complex issues because gender is one of many bases for the oppression and privilege. Many feminist ethicists have devoted attention to the intersections among different forms of oppressions. Furthermore, ethics will not be completed without the consideration of the moral experiences of women. It must be constructed by the different moral sensibility of women and men. In addition, it seems plausible to suppose women’s distinctive social experience as the implications of domination and especially gender domination. From a variety of philosophical differences, their divergence means that feminist ethics can never be identified in terms of a specific range of topics and methods. It will respect women’s moral experience and avoid rationalizing women’s subordination. It will also attempt to define precisely or substantively and prematurely foreclose feminist moral debates (Hmway, 2019).

Feminist philosophers criticize traditional ethics as pre-eminently focusing on men’s perspective with little issues regard for women’s viewpoints. The moral issues of private life and family responsibilities were traditionally regarded as trivial matters in traditional ethics. Generally, women are portrayed as ethically immature and shallow in comparison to men. Traditional ethics prizes masculine cultural traits like “independence, autonomy, intellect, will, wariness, hierarchy, domination, culture, transcendence, product, asceticism, war, and death” and gives less weight to culturally feminine traits like “interdependence, community, connection, sharing, emotion, body, and trust, peace and life.” But such traits can be found in both men and women. Traditional ethics has a ‘male’ orientated convention in which moral reasoning is viewed through a framework of rules, right, universality and impartially. The female approaches to moral reasoning emphasize relationships, responsibilities, particularity, and partiality. Feminist ethicists believe that there is an obligation for women’s differing points of view to be heard and then to build up a more inclusive and comprehensive view. The goal is to achieve gender equality and to bring about a transformation of societies and situations where women are protected from harm by acts of violence, subordinations and exclusion. When such injustices have been brought into clear view, feminist activists maintain they will continue their work of protest and action after careful appraisal and reflection to work for women’s empowerment. Traditional ethical theories include ethical norms which are applicable to all human beings. But the fault lies not in the ethical theories and their norms but in the failure to put them into practice. Thus, there is a need to understand not only how to theorize but how the norms and moral values may be applied in everyday life. To understand this, it would also be necessary to know the ethical issues that are special to women.

WHY THESE HARMFUL STEREOTYPES ARE CREATED IN THE SOCIETY?

Indeed, why do women accept this injustice and equality? What makes women oppress themselves under this culture? Feminism approach acknowledges that gender is a socially constructed category that is shaped by power relations, and that women have historically been marginalized and oppressed in society. (Delaney, 2008). clear example of this marginalized is in Afghanistan during Taliban Regime, women face with restriction under patriarchally Taliban regime. girls and women can't attend schools, universities and have freely activity in the society. The present research shows that women have had different level of their rights in different periods in Afghanistan as in the 20 years of democracy and the era before the first takeover of the Taliban in 1996, women had achieved their fair rights but during two round of Taliban regime, women lost their rights (Tawasoly, 2024).

Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations which are hierarchal and unequal where men control women's production, reproduction and sexuality. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. Patriarchy is not a constant and gender relations which are dynamic and complex have changed over the periods of history. The nature of control and subjugation of women varies from one society to the other as it differs due to the differences in class, caste, religion, region, ethnicity and the socio-cultural practice. Subordination of women in developed countries is different from what it is in developing countries. While subordination of women may differ in terms of its nature, certain characteristics such as control over women's sexuality and her reproductive power cuts across class, caste, ethnicity, religions and regions and is common to all patriarchies. This control has developed historically and is institutionalized and legitimized by several ideologies, social practices and institutions such as family, religion, caste, education, media, law, state and society,. Patriarchal societies propagate the ideology of motherhood which restricts women's mobility and burdens them with the responsibilities to nurture and rear children. The biological factor to bear children is linked to the social position of women's responsibilities of motherhood: nurturing, educating and raising children by devoting themselves to family. The first lessons of patriarchy are learnt in the family where the head of the family is a man/ father. Man is considered the head of the family and controls women's sexuality, labor or production, reproduction and mobility. In a patriarchal family the birth of male child is preferred to that of a female. According to Gerda Lerner, family plays an important role in creating a hierarchal system as it not only mirrors the order in the state and educates its children but also creates and constantly reinforces

that order (Lerner, 1986). Family is therefore important for socializing the next generation in patriarchal values. The boys learn to be dominating and aggressive and girls learn to be caring, loving and submissive. These stereotypes of masculinity and femininity are not only social constructs but also have been internalized by both men and women. While the pressure to earn and look after the family is more on the man, the women are supposed to do the menial jobs and take care of their children and even other members of the family. It is because of these gender stereotypes that women are at a disadvantage and are vulnerable to violence and other kinds of discriminations and injustices. Systemic deprivation and violence against women: rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, female feticide, infanticide, sati, dowry deaths, wife-beating, high level of female illiteracy, malnutrition, undernourishment and continued sense of insecurity keeps women bound to home, economically exploited, socially suppressed and politically passive (Bhasin, 1993, p.13). Patriarchal constructions of knowledge perpetuate patriarchal ideology and this is reflected in educational institutions, knowledge system and media which reinforce male dominance. More subtle expressions of patriarchy was through symbolism giving messages of inferiority of women through legends highlighting the self-sacrificing, self-effacing pure image of women and through ritual practice which emphasized the dominant role of women as a faithful wife and devout mother (Desai & Krishnaraj, 2004).

The role of belief and religious laws in the emergence of patriarchy should not be denied. Laws of Manu insist that since women by their very nature are disloyal, they should be made dependent on men. The husband should be constantly worshipped as a God, which symbolized that man is a lord, master, owner, or provider and women were the subordinates. It legitimizes that a woman should never be made independent, as a daughter she should be under the surveillance of her father, as a wife of her husband and as a widow of her son (Chakravarti, 2006). While in ancient India (Vedic and Epic periods), women were by and large treated as equal to men, the restrictions on women and patriarchal values regulating women's sexuality and mobility got strengthened in the post-Vedic periods (Brahmanical and Medieval periods) with the rise of private property and establishment of class society. Patriarchal constructions of social practices are legitimized by religion and religious institutions as most religious practices regard male authority as superior and the laws and norms regarding family, marriage, divorce and inheritance are linked to patriarchal control over property biased against women. A person's legal identity with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance are determined by his or her religion, which has laid down duties for men and women and their relationship. Most religions endorse patriarchal values and all major religions

have been interpreted and controlled by men of upper caste and class. The imposition of *parda*, restrictions on leaving the domestic space, separation between public and private are all gender specific and men are not subjected to similar constraints. Thus, the mobility of women is controlled. They have no right to decide whether they want to be mothers, when they want to be, the number of children they want to have, whether they can use contraception or terminate a pregnancy and so on and so forth (also see Bhasin, p.6). Male dominated institutions like church and state also lay down rules regarding women's reproductive capacity.

Patriarchy is a social and ideological construct which considers men (who are the patriarchs) as superior to women. According to (Walby, 1990) it is a social system in which the role of the male as the primary authority figure is central to social organization, and where males hold authority over women, children, and property. Patriarchy imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. According to Walby (1990), patriarchy is composed of six factors which are sources of exploitation and are interdependent in nature. They are the household, paid employment, the state, male-on-female violence, sexuality, and cultural institutions. The household refers to domestic environment where the housewife and her contribution in running the home are under-valued and looked down upon. Domestically, the husband is the expropriating class. Paid employment describes patriarchal relations on the job and refers to women being granted worse jobs and being paid less than a man for the same job. The state as an instrument of patriarchy refers to the state's support to its patriarchal, racist, and capitalist interests by choosing not to intervene or being slow in intervening in cases of injustice against women. The male-on-female violence is the ill-treatment (violence and discrimination) being meted out to women as a consequence of belief in inferiority and subjugation of women. Often it results in violence against women which is systematically endured and tolerated by the society and also by the state's refusal to intervene against it. Sexuality means that in a patriarchal setup, heterosexuality is and should be the norm. Other sexual preferences are seen as violation of patriarchal norms and therefore liable to be punished by society. It justifies the objectification of women and the male gaze and women being perceived as instruments of male gratification. Lastly, the cultural institutions represent the patriarchal relations in cultural institutions and regulate the behavior of women in public places. For example, their dress code in public places, and free movement in society. Historically, the principle of patriarchy has been central to the social, legal, political, and economic organization of many ancient civilizations like Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Indian, and Chinese cultures

(Weitz, 2003). The nature of control and subjugation of women varies from one patriarchal society to the other. Therefore, patriarchy is not a constant and gender relations which are dynamic and complex have changed over the periods of history.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

According to feminist ethics most misogynist notions social are the stereotypes that are made by men to continuing their dominant on women in patriarchal societies.

Families, culture, and religion all play a part in socializing these ideas, with religious teachings having the biggest influence. It's also clear how important politics and economics are. In a patriarchal culture, men hold the reins of power and these male-created stereotypes prevent women from participating in decision-making in these crucial domains.

In these societies, women are encouraged and most times forced to obey men otherwise they are not «good women». it is in the most optimistic case, that women are rejected from society, but they often face violence and even murder. And it is obvious that in order to be a “good woman», they must follow the rules and principles that are created based on patriarchal values, so they can be accepted as a good woman in the society otherwise they are “Bad women”

Feminism ethics say this kind of women's slavery is easiest way to dominant of women in patriarchy society by men. according to Feminist ethics, to elimination of all kind of discrimination on women, all misogynist stereotypes should to be identified and reviewed and revised all the social norms with the intervene feminism ethic philosophers.

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