
UNIT 3 VIOLENCE AGAINST COMMUNITIES

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Violence against women across diverse communities has prompted the policy regime to rethink about their perspectives on gender relations and communities. Civil societal institutions, various forms of governance and human rights have been collectively working to address the multifaced nature of such violence. Society needs to be reframed according to renewed, healthy perspectives and practices. Such an understanding can only address the larger questions related to stigma arises from gendered hierarchies and violence. In this unit, we will study about the nature of the conceptualization of violence. It also discusses about the perspectives on ethnic violence, social stratification and so on. Further, it engages with the category of violence and its impact on communities.

3.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- Learn about the conceptualization of violence;
- Understand the meaning of community; and
- Know about violence against communities.

3.3 CONCEPTUALIZING VIOLENCE

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or communities, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, male development, or deprivation. Acts of violence against communities include,

but are not limited to riots, shooter attacks, gang wars, drive-by shootings, bullying, workplace assaults, terrorist attacks, torture, bombings, war, ethnic cleansing, and widespread sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. The idea of violence is contested. Thomas Hobbes analysed that people were by nature violent and evaded a war of all against all only by substantial cleverness and energy (Scott,2014:91). Violence is also conceptualized as the product of effective socialization and social control. The category of aggression is studied in the context of violence. Violence of a subculture and the dominant sections are analysed in different ways. Norm of violence deploys the force like that in the use of masculinity. Violence is also justified in the case of the life world of the gangs. Violence is accepted in such cases (Scott,2014:92). Violence is also justified in the debates related to the power of the political institutions (Scott,2014:102).

The hidden and secretive nature of violence is discussed in relation to the families (Scott,2014:166). Male violence is criticised as the reason for the oppression of the women. Violence against women shows the gender inequalities and its embedded nature in power. Capacity to do violence is analysed as part of the hegemonic masculinity. Adrienne Rich analysed misogyny as violence against the women. However, Erving Goffman analysed violence as central category in to day-to-day life. It is observed that some forms of violence against women such as sexualised violent approach to women is not considered as crime (Radford, cited in Pilcher and Imelda, 2004:174). It is analysed that men “predominate across the spectrum of violence” (Connell, cited in Pilcher and Imelda,2004 :173)). Women are afraid of the violent crime like rape (Simmons, cited in in Pilcher and Imelda, 2004:173)) Robert H Lowie observed that state is developed through legitimacy, territoriality and means of violence (Lowie,1927). Centralization of means of violence is also used to study capitalism. Acts of collective violence have also become part of the current political systems across the world. Violence thus is linked to deviant behaviour (Scott,2014). Thus, violence is theorized in multiple ways.

Violence, for Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan, refers to power in cultural and legal terms. It is observed that women’s accounts of male violence are ignored and male’s version of male violence is preferred in some of the legal systems (Less and Wright, cited in Pilcher and Imelda:2004 ,174) It becomes physical and emotional harm to others. Unlawful and lawful use of violence has raised lot of conceptual challenges across various disciplines. Scholars have discussed about the continuum of violence (Kelly and Radford, cited in Pilcher and Imelda,2004:175). For instance, it includes the physical acts of murder, sexualised/racialised use of language and rape. However, it is noted that normalization of the men’s violent behaviour is questioned among activists and academics. Masculine identity and different forms of violence such as that of violence between boys and men are reinforcing masculinity (Owen, cited in Pilcher and Imelda,2004 :175). Problematisation of masculinity is central to contemporary women’s studies. It has helped to foreground the policies related to international policies related to peace in the context of terrorism(Breines, cited in Pilcher and Imelda,2004 :175).Men’s approach to violence against women have various meanings(Hearn, cited in

Pilcher and Imelda, 2004:175). Violence is represented in films and media in different ways (Hatty, cited in Pilcher and Imelda, 2004 :175). Violence towards women is also studied through its cultural interpretations (Boddy, cited in Pilcher and Imelda:2004:175). Civil disobedience refers to nonviolent approaches and practices. Anti-immigration politics has strengthened the various forms of violence against the communities. According to Javier Alcalde, Anglo-American Pacifism has also opposed violence by linking by advocacy of personal nonparticipation in war by using nonviolent means (Alcalde, 2013). Violence against oneself has raised various debates related to self, identity, social body and its location within the larger political milieu. Violence against others have initiated various debates on the relations between communities and individuals. In this section, we have studied about basic concept of violence, let us study about community in the next section.

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) *Analyse the various debates related to the idea of violence.*

3.4 DEFINING COMMUNITY

There are different debates related to the idea of communities in social sciences. Such social science accounts have impacted the research on violence that emanates through caste and communalism. The idea of community refers to ideal and political arena that is enriched by care and friendship among human beings. One of the important principles of French revolution, fraternity is linked to the fundamental debates on French revolution. Ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity related to French revolution have also enriched the perspectives on community. Definitional approaches related to the community demonstrate the history of such idea. Idea of community refers to a group that survives on basis of mutual relations of its members. It is argued that a community has to transcend beyond the rudimentary social barriers. As a group, community provides certain cohesive frame to the society. Idea of the community determines the nature and existence of a group. It has to differentiate itself from the conflictual traps that are usually linked to a community. A community need to embrace the great values and it enable them to overcome narrow understanding of the political system. A community can survive without enforced obligations is considered as one of the essential perspectives on community. Social scientist observed certain typologies related to community like in that of tribal social spaces and extended type of family. The conventional form of community has changed after the introduction of modern political organizations remains as an important debate in the field of social sciences. The pre-state nature of the community had its own institutions. The central question raised is whether community has transformed with the advent of the state or not. Common good of the community needs to be explore with the other dimensions of the community. It is analyzed that common good refers to the

identification of the of the individual. Community is the collection of individuals that share values and experiences. It has to be situated within the meaningful dialogues and collective reflections.

Politics also is based on community-based exchange (Robertson,1993:96-97). Community thrives on distinct form of solidarity (Parsons, cited in Marshall,2004:97). Morals act as the core to the emergence of a community. Relations between human beings operate as the basis of any community. The migration from the rural to the urban areas also question the homogenous understanding on community. According to Ferdinand Tonnies, the idea of community can be understood through the categories such as 'Gemeinschaft' (community) and 'Gessellschaft' (society). Association is part of 'Gessellschaft'. It is conceptualized that 'Gemeinschaft' signified plural voices, social mobility, mechanization and mobility (Marshall,2004:249-50). Community is based on the communication. The idea of community includes villages and urban areas (Marshall,2004:97). Social harmony is the integral part of the community. Modern capitalist establishment, for Emile Durkheim, determined the nature/social division of the people. According to Durkhiem, social solidarity has to be understood as part of the division of labour. Durkheim theorized social solidarity as "totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of the society" (Durkheim, cited in Adams and Sydie, 2002:93). Collective consciousness emerges through the overall nature of the society and the division of labour. Mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity are the important Durkheimian categories. Those categories are important while discussing about the idea of community.

Mechanical solidarity thrives on minimal individuality. Mechanical solidarity in primitive society exists in the absence of individuality (Durkheim, cited in Adams and Sydies, 2002:94) Collective consciousness is also influenced by the religion. Specialization and individuality determine the nature of organic solidarity (Durkheim, cited in Adams and Sydies, 2002:94). Community also has certain symbolic power. Hegemonic values are used to deal in the case of the care and needs of the members in the society. Nation-state operates on the basis of these societal transformations (Marshall, 2004:98).Polarization and mutual agreement are part of the mechanism of the religion.Post-9/11 social-political transformations reveal the contours of religion (Mahajan,2010:1). Social capital or the various networks across the communities is affected by the moral decay and politicization centered around the religion(Putnam, cited in Mahajan, 2010:2).Voluntary organizations are emerging through the various channels of the church(Barber, cited in Mahajan, 2010:2).Clashes of cultures became central by replacing the earlier forms of conflicts among the countries (Huntington, cited in Mahajan, 2010:3).Conflicts that emerged through the Christian and Islamic assertions related to the twin towers in America have redefined the notions of insider and outsider related to the community(Mahajan, 2010:3).Thus, political and religious transformations have impacted the idea of community..Debates related to the religion in India have determined the political discourse in multiple ways. Intellectuals who were part of the debates on constitution analyzed the religion in different ways. Ethical concerns related to the religion were very much part of such understanding. Another way of understanding religion as "a sociological

phenomenon” was part of the perspectives of such intellectuals (Mahajan, 2010, p.9). Moral dimensions of the religion were part of such understanding and the polarization based on communal identities were also analyzed. Community is central in determining the ideology and practices related to communalism. Language, religion and ethnicity in the development of a society are appropriated by the communal forces (Robertson, 1993:92). Communalism have created major polarization across the country. There are groups that suggest inter-faith discourses as a mode to detach from the communal ideologies. Secular nature of the nation also challenged due to the retrogressive global religious-identity politics. It is analyzed that a state grounded in secular values has the potential to annihilate the reactionary ideologies related to the religion (Robertson, 1993:432-433). Communal groups also appropriate social movements. Post-secular societies were secular in the past. Liberal, western societies, for Mahajan, are moving towards the religion. In this section, you have studied about the diverse debates related to community and its changing socio-political character. The next section discusses about the relations between the gender, patriarchy and violence.

Check Your Progress-2

1) *Write your understanding about ‘community’?*

3.5 GENDER, PATRIARCHY AND VIOLENCE

In the unit 1, you have already read about patriarchy and violence. This section too revisits those debates and ideas in the context of gender, patriarchy and violence. The idea of patriarchy is contested. Gerda Lerner analysed that the day-to-day life of men and women prune the patriarchy and it took long period to emerge in its form. It is observed that “The basic unit of its organization was the patriarchal family, which both expresses and constantly generates its rules and values” (Lerner, 1986:212). Social roles are influenced by the tradition, laws, gendered roles, performances in the societal order. Lerner analyses the various dimensions related to the agricultural process in the Neolithic period to that of the inter-tribal exchange of women. This kind of social transformation led to proliferation of marriage and consequential rise in the reproduction. Those people turned to be the surplus labour for the hunting and gatherers society. It led to the excessive production and surplus accumulation through the over population of children and women. Men thus maintained the group rights over the women. Women were devoid of any right over the men. It is further analysed that women thus turned to be a resource. It was like the land controlled by the men. These power relations can be understood through the institutions of marriage and family. Women were exchanged within the families as part of the marriage. It resulted in sexual indebtedness and every day forms of labour. Lerner demonstrates the development of master-slave relations in the early tribal society. Class and patriarchy also are instrumental in strengthening the

patriarchy. Poor families had to sell their daughters in marriages linked prostitution to regulate the economic status of the family in Mesopotamian society in second millennium BC (Lerner, 1986, p.213). These forms of exploitation are very much part of the contemporary neoliberal societies across the globe.

Engels analysed that labour and economy as arenas of exclusion, dominance and sidelining of the women from the dominant society. Engels also thought about the political ways to overthrow the oppressive systems related to the lives of women. Class and gender oppress the women in peculiar ways. Those societal forms related of class and gender legitimized the oppressed status of the women (Engels,1884). Culture of patriarchy also created the stereotypes of the ideal womanhood to justify the oppression of women in subtle ways. According to Karen Sacks, evolutionary Engelsian approach failed to analyses the oppression of the women in the societies that were not based on class relations. Sacks critiqued the position of Engels by demonstrating that women were property holders in societies that were not based on class. There are diverse interpretations related to the category of patriarchy. Patriarchy, for Heidi Hartman, is “set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. Though patriarchy is hierarchical and men of different classes, races or ethnic groups have different places in the patriarchy, they are also united in their shared relationship of dominance over women; they are dependent on each other to maintain that domination” (Hartman, 1981:107). She further analyses the patriarchy by showing how it positions the superiority of women and how patriarchy defends the oppression of women. Such vicious societal order denies the intellectual capability of the women. It leads to the imposition of the domestic chores in the lives of the women. It further leads to the subversion of her individuality. Patriarchy, for Kate Millet, is part of the various dimensions of human life and related sexual division. Women are thus forced to be subjugated through such sexual division. Political framework of civilization, for Millet, is instrumental in determining the privilege of the men. Millet compared such societal order to that of patriarchal order. She probes the reasons behind the dominance of men in the discourse of the ideological and repressive facets of the nation-state. These social and political changes established the hierarchy of men as natural and pushed women to the exclusive realms of domestic life. Women and youngsters therefore are subjugated in the patriarchal order. Millet also examined how socialization in childhood and education nurture the culture of patriarchy. Patriarchy, for Millet, is the rudimentary part of the social systems across the globe. Rape is the primitive sexual violence that emanated part of the patriarchal society. Scholars have analysed the existence of the patriarchy at the level of the societal ideology. Such ideological aspect of patriarchy determines the sexes and gendered social spaces. Juliet Mitchell examines how the ideological realm of patriarchy operate in the society. Hartman critiques Juliet Mitchell’s lack of understanding related to the economic forces affiliated with the patriarchal societal order. Patriarchy thus is analysed through the diverse spaces connected to it. Debates on public and

private patriarchies emerged in such context of theorization. Sylvia Walby analyses how patriarchy works in paid forms of employment, the meagre violence, the political institutions, family, sexuality and culture. These arenas determine the ideological character of patriarchy. Sylvia Walby asserted that gendered forms of power operate through the paid and unpaid forms of employment. Women are getting less remuneration to such division of labour.

Women thus are pushed to the secondary position in the society. They are considered as incompetent when compared to men in the case of work. They are thus side-lined into gendered roles related to family. Their hard work is not appreciated like in the case of men. Culture of patriarchy operates at every level of the lives of women. Market also deploys the ideological spaces of patriarchy. Capitalist appropriation of labour is one of the important themes of Marxist feminists. Sexuality and violence, for radical feminists, are responsible for the oppression of women. Functionalist approaches analyse the role of household in the context of patriarchy. According to Sylvia Walby, private patriarchy happens through the control over individual moves to that of the public patriarchy. Patriarchy develops through the ideological and structural realms of the domestic spaces. Another scholar who provided valuable insights on patriarchy is Valerie Bryson. According to Valerie Bryson, patriarchy is one of the key terms in radical feminism. Radical feminists show how patriarchy has captured the public and private realms. Family in the realm of kinship is also studied in the context of the category of ideological state apparatus. Gendered duties based on sex roles create polarization and also decides the further dynamics of the family. Shulamith Firestone, one of the renowned radical feminists emphasized on the exploitative nature of the reproduction and household. Sexual exploitation of the wives in the absence of the husbands is also contested. Household and gender determine the pregnancy, menstruation, off-springs etc and it forces the women to surrender to the rule of the men. Radical feminists argued that scientific and technological innovations in the case of reproduction can challenge the patriarchal oppression of women. On the contrary, some among the radical position foregrounded the relevance of motherhood irrespective of its oppressive nature and children can not be seen as part of the patriarchy. Logic of patriarchy and consequential repression of sexuality are much debated within the theoretical wider spheres of radical feminism. Marxian feminists have constantly questioned the interlinkages of gender, class, capitalism and patriarchy. Women are read as the oppressed sections in the field of the family. They are also oppressed in the external field of labour. Various forms of subsistence and related labour get complicated in the era of capitalism. Therefore, feminist scholars also probed about the sex-blind nature of capitalism. Mode of production and its impact on the gendered power relations are central to the Marxian feminist discourses. Logic of patriarchy is interpellated through the social/political existence of women. The body of the women becomes the locus of patriarchy. Michel Foucault observed that discipline is central in the reproduction of gendered oppression. (Bartky, 2012:305). Those bodily stages detract them from thinking and acting against patriarchy. A kind of self-surveillance thus engulfs women and

strengthen patriarchy (Bartky, 2012:310). Societies that have achieved social and political equality too reproduce patriarchy in strange manner. Paradox of those types are very much part of the ideological perspectives and practices around class and gender. The ideologies that emphasized that class-based oppression needs to be addressed as a pretext to address the gendered oppression resulted in certain theoretical and ideological complexities. Let us study about the aforementioned debates in relation to ideas on caste, and gender. Dalit feminists in India challenge the partial understanding of hegemonic Indian feminism. Dalit feminists analyse the relations of caste, patriarchy within the dalits and the patriarchy in the larger caste-based society. Non-dalit men and non-dalit women, Dalit men are considered as the oppressors of the dalit women. In addition to that oppression, it is analysed that dalit women are oppressed by other, dominant caste-men/women (Guru,1995; Rege,1998) Uma Chakravarti analyzed the complex nature of class, gender and caste and argued that “class, caste and gender are inextricably linked; they interact with and shape each other; the structure of marriage, sexuality, and reproduction is the fundamental basis of the caste system. It is also fundamental to the ways inequality is sustained: the structure of marriage reproduces both class and caste inequality and thus the entire production system through its tightly controlled system of reproduction” (Chakravarti, 206:27). You have learnt the relations of caste and endogamy. Caste and its pernicious forms operate in the rural and urban areas in the midst of the legal interventions via constitution -Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities (Act) (1989). Caste operates in the form of day-to-day discrimination. It also operates in the form of direct violence. Caste based atrocities are part of the changing Indian society. Economic monopoly of the upper castes determines their dominance. It further leads to various forms of caste-based violence against those who are at the lower part of the caste hierarchy. Social mobility of the dalits is thus blocked through the vicious solidarity between the dominant caste-social and bureaucratic order. To know such complex social issues and violence against community such as dalits, you will read about caste and violence in Unit 11 in detailed manner. The next section discusses about the nature of ethnic violence.

3.6 ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Individuals who understand themselves and recognise others constitute particular ethnicity. They are different from one another in the society. They emphasize their own ethnicities. Ethnic groups differentiate themselves from others through foregrounding their religion, language and culture. They are different from social classes. They are part of certain social stratifications. Social discrimination is deployed as a yardstick to analyse the distinct nature of the ethnic group. Identities across ethnic groups show the complex functions of such groups. Violence is also central to the social areas of the ethnic communities. Injury and destruction are created through the act of violence. Structural violence determines the intended and unintended consequences due to the strange mental stage of the members of ethnic groups. Family and industrial spaces are the structures that hide the form of

violence ingrained across a community. Thus, it denotes the systems that reproduce structural violence. There are diverse interpretations to violence. Certain forms of violence are romanticised by certain community and certain forms of violence are condemned by another community. One needs to know the conceptual nuances related to the category of violence before delving into the larger questions of ethnic violence. It is important to understand the context that perpetuates the violence. For instance, femicide is analysed as a common in the Guatemala. It is recorded that five thousand girls and women were killed there since 2000. Diana Russel, one of the renowned sociologists introduced the term feminicide in the 1970s. Femicide, for Diana Russell, denotes the gendered nature of the terror activities that lead to socially accepted or regulated murder. Diana Russel analysed it as “killing of females by male because they are females”. It is a continuum of the patriarchal, oppressive, gendered social order (Russell and Jill, 1992). Patriarchal Military and political systems cum judiciary of Guatemala legitimised such primitive forms of violence against women. It is also justified through the patriarchal, customary rights as well. Mayan community for instance regards the hitting of women by men as their right. These instances show the strange ways that interlink patriarchy, gender, ethnicity and violence. Elders who ask the newly married husbands to control their wives among Mayan communities. Such act is customary in nature. These forms of anti-women practices question the citizenship and rights of the women. Uma Narayanan, a feminist scholar deployed the category of “death by culture” to refer to the culturally driven violence against the women (Narayann, 1997). Another scholar, Susan Okin described the such violence against women as something in household that challenges choices, well-being and lives. It is analysed that Tajik and Afghan women face brutal forms of patriarchal oppression. It is critiqued that the western countries eroticise the oppression of women in such countries. Women in certain countries are facing surveillance or they are pushed into asylum. Capitalism and labour relations in Guyana determine the oppression of women. Racial conflicts in Guyana also increased the violence against the women. War linked sexual crimes against women also raise serious issues related various ethnicities. Ethnic cleansing cum patriarchy creates stereotypes about the character of women. Sexual oppression of Bosnian women shows the barbaric nature of gendered-political crimes. Children who are born out of war-linked exploited sexual exploitation are called as “children of shame in Kosova”. These crimes demonstrate the relations of ethnicity and gendered-sexual violence. Catherine Mackinnon analysed rape with that of genocide. Race driven war and rape as the instrument of war, for Mackinnon, leads to forced reproduction. Allen criticised the forced impregnation as ‘biological warfare that is prohibited under Article 3 of the International Tribunal as a violation of the laws or customs of war’. It is analysed that killing of Kurdish women as the cultural-political practice linked to Kurdish nationalism. One of the crucial questions raised in this context is that whether human security is gendered or not and it is devoid of any perspective that recognises the issues of women. The violence against the women that also happen in the class, families and communities also need to be addressed. Women are usually analysed as actors in the case of the ethnic violence. They are victims as well. For instance, gendered violence in Timor

Leste is legitimised through the patriarchal community. It is justified through the culture and language. Women thus are subjected to forced conversion and loss of identity as well. Their oppression thus is not addressed in the larger context of the culture of violence related to the community.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have studied the various debates related to the category of patriarchy. It further explores the violence inherent in such patriarchal, gendered social stratifications. It also analyses the various forms of gendered violence through caste, race and ethnicity. It also analyses the larger political context of the community that does not challenge the violence of the community against women. It also discusses about the social-political establishment that legitimizes such gendered forms of violence and culture of othering.

3.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Examine the concepts of violence and community.
2. Evaluate diverse perspectives on patriarchy. Justify your answer with suitable examples.

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