

<b>Block 1</b>	<b>Theorizing Gender Based Violence</b>	<b>7</b>
Unit 1	Patriarchy and Violence in Contemporary India	9
Unit 2	Caste, Culture and Religion	22
Unit 3	Violence against Communities	35
Unit 4	Violence within Communities	50
<b>Block 2</b>	<b>Crimes against Women</b>	<b>61</b>
Unit 5	Domestic Violence	63
Unit 6	Sexual Violence and Related Offences	75
Unit 7	Female Feticide and Infanticide	89
Unit 8	Women in Institutions	102
Unit 9	Cyber Crimes	115
<b>Block 3</b>	<b>Violence against Collectives</b>	<b>129</b>
Unit 10	Communal Violence	131
Unit 11	Caste- Based Violence	142
Unit 12	Political Conflict and Insurgency	157
Unit 13	State led Violence	171
<b>Block 4</b>	<b>Violence against LGBTIQI+ People</b>	<b>183</b>
Unit 14	Same sex relationship and Law	185
Unit 15	Institutionalized and Social Violence	197
Unit 16	Violence and Discrimination	207
<b>Block 5</b>	<b>Health Law</b>	<b>219</b>
Unit 17	Reproductive Health	221
Unit 18	Surrogacy	237
Unit 19	Mental Health Law	251
Unit 20	Occupational Health	268

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

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### Gender Based Violence

The eradication of gender-based violence in the society is one of the biggest challenges across the world. BGS-012 has been developed to understand gender-based violence, its multifaceted forms and patterns in the society. It engages with the theoretical underpinnings related to gender-based violence. It would demonstrate the connection between caste, religion, culture and patriarchy and its relationship with gender and violence. It will deal with violence against women across diverse communities and probes how it has prompted the policy regime to rethink about their perspectives on gender relations and communities. It has been observed that the community often creates an impression of harmony among its members. On the contrary, there are power relations that impact the social fabric of any community. There are issues related to hierarchies within a community. Thus, the impact of the internal and external power relations decides the nature of the communities. Such relations reproduce patriarchy in multiple ways. The Course discusses the question of domestic violence, its forms, legal measures, sexual violence and related offences. The phenomenon of female feticide and infanticide or missing girl child have been part of many cultures throughout the history. The sex-selective deaths are occurring across the globe. In this context, an attempt is to study its reason for origin and what are legal measures taken by Government of India. The Course focuses on women who fall into the category of 'criminals' as defined by law and understand the protective laws and policies that are in place to safeguard their interest. The modern world is changing falsely towards technology, as a result the cybercrimes are operating in the society. We will examine the nature of cybercrimes and its deleterious impact on the life worlds of women. The history of communal violence and the related laws in India with specific reference to women will be studied as well. As it is widely recognized that, Indian society is highly unequal society. Caste is central to societal ideology-practices that affect the human mind. We will be dealing with debates on caste and violence against women from the gender perspective. The role of the state is important and essential in dismantling hierarchies which are deeply rooted in culture-social structures in any society. The meanings of political conflict and insurgency, and theories of political conflict will be also discussed. The Course explores debates on legal recognition of same-sex relationships in India. It further explores the nuances of such legal and social questions. At the same time the prevalent forms of institutional and social violence against LGBTQI+ people will be discussed in the backdrop of discrimination. It is essential to distinguish institutional and social violence from other kinds of violence You will study about violence and discrimination against the LGBTQI+. The Course also analyzes the perspectives related to the reproductive health and reproductive rights. It engages with the debates related to reproductive health and its existence in the realm of human rights law. What kind of role courts are playing in ensuring access to reproductive rights, especially in the Indian context? The practice of surrogacy involves a woman who acts as a surrogate mother to bear the child for another person or couple. The legal and ethical dimensions of surrogacy are described in order to unfold the larger questions

related to gender and law. Finally, the Course also delves into the legal debates around mental health discourse. It also enquires the debates related to occupation health laws.

### **Block 1: Theorizing Gender based Violence**

In this Block, we will investigate the category of patriarchy that is central to the social and political struggles of women and marginal categories. At the same time, the concept of patriarchy will be read from different ideological perspectives. It further discusses the following conceptual quandaries. What is the nature of societal reproduction of patriarchy? Violence and patriarchy are intertwined with each other. The society that is based on structural inequality and gender subjugation is thus justified and therefore the social institutions of caste, religion, and culture, along with other institutions like family and state have to be studied in the context of violence. In this Block, our effort is to learn about the violence against women in communities, violence within communities and how structural and systemic violence operate through the manifestations of power and patriarchy.

### **Block 2: Crimes against Women**

In this Block, we will analyze the universal nature of domestic violence. It maps the history of domestic violence laws in India. Women from diverse class, caste, community face multiple forms of sexual violence. They are facing sexual violence within the private family spaces. They are also subjected to sexual violence in the public spaces as well. This Block discusses about the existing laws and nature of offences in the context of domestic violence. We will learn about the phenomenon of female foeticide and infanticide or missing girl child in the larger context of culture and sex-selective deaths. The question of female foeticide and infanticide will be discussed in order to unveil the complexities around customs and gender relations and consequential challenges for modern laws. We will also study about the legal initiatives taken by the Government of India. This Block also examines the legal constructions of the women criminals. It will also analyze the protecting policies and laws that address the various issues of such women. It further introduces you to the debates in order to understand cybercrimes and gender questions.

### **Block 3: Violence against Collectives**

In this Block, we will study about the history of communal violence and the related laws in India. A special attention is drawn to the most common crimes against women during communal violence like murder, rape, sexual assault and so on. Caste is one of the components that fragment human minds. It determines the social location and polarization. Therefore, the debates on caste and violence against women from the gender perspective will be discussed. We will learn about political conflicts and the way in which it undermines the democratic institutions. The role of the state is significant in debilitating hierarchies which are deeply ingrained in culture and social structures in the society. Broadly, it reflects on the nature of violence and its destructive impact for the law.

#### **Block 4: Violence against LGBTQI+ people**

This Block will explore how and to what extent same-sex relationships are conferred legal recognition in India, especially the progress made in the recent past. On the other hand, it interrogates why it is important for the law to recognise same-sex relationships or how the non-recognition impact such relationships. Further, the Block also explains the predominant forms of institutional and social violence against LGBTQI+ people. It distinguishes institutional and social violence from other kinds of violence. Thus, the aim of this Block is to reflect on the various kinds of subtle and overt forms of violence against queer people that emanate from structural or institutional dynamics of law, education, and health. We will also study about the discrimination against the LGBTQI + people. We will contemplate how LGBTQI + community face abuse, other kinds of violence in India due to their sexual identities. The violence and the discrimination persist despite the fact that the Supreme Court of India on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018 in *Navtej Singh Johar versus Union of India* has ruled that the consensual homosexual act no longer constitutes a crime. Thus, the Block also finds out that the law(s) alone is/are not sufficient to eradicate the proliferation of various forms of violence. But at the larger level, we need to map the structural and power imbalances between the social relationships conditioned by the patriarchal / male-dominated society.

#### **Block 5: Health Law**

The last Block of this Course articulates various debates on the category of reproduction and its embeddedness in biology. On the other hand, the law is conceptualised as an instrument to regulate the social realm. In the first instance, therefore, the concern of law with reproduction would appear to be counter intuitive. The debates that are central to reproductive health emerge as an important issue in human rights law. What kind of role courts play in ensuring access to reproductive rights, especially in the Indian context? This Block explains us about how the advanced and innovative medical developments such as Assisted Human Reproductive Technologies (ART) that help people to give birth to child/children. There are numerous types of ART such as artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization (IVF), gamete intra-fallopian transfer (GIFT), Zygote intra-fallopian transfer (ZIFT), reproductive cloning, intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), and forms of Surrogacy. The Block also informs us about the mental health factors that determines the mental health. It further discusses about the interrelationship between mental health states such as mental distress, mental health problem, and mental disorder. It also reflects on the signs and symptoms of common mental disorders. The Block deals with the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in the larger context of gender and law.



The image features a large, light gray watermark logo on the left side, consisting of a stylized 'U' and 'J' intertwined. To the right of the logo, the text 'UJiGNOU' is written in a large, light gray font. Below this, the text 'THE PEOPLES UNIVERSITY' is written in a smaller, light gray font. In the center of the page, the text 'BLOCK 1' is written in a bold, black font, followed by 'THEORIZING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE' in a bold, black font.

**BLOCK 1**  
**THEORIZING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

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# UNIT 1 PATRIARCHY AND VIOLENCE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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## Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Defining Patriarchy
  - 1.3.1 Liberals
  - 1.3.2 Socialist
  - 1.3.3 Marxist
  - 1.3.4 Radical
- 1.4 Relationship between Patriarchy and Violence
  - 1.4.1 Caste
  - 1.4.2 Religion
- 1.5 Changing Forms
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Unit End Questions
- 1.8 References
- 1.9 Suggested Readings

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The category of patriarchy is central to the perspectives and practices of the social and political struggles of women and marginalized sexual minorities. This unit attempts to explore the various dimensions of the category of patriarchy. It provides definitional understanding of the term, patriarchy. It also discusses about the liberal, socialist, Marxist and radical feminist understandings of patriarchy. Patriarchy and consequential violence are also discussed to demonstrate the specific nature of patriarchy. Caste and religion that reproduce patriarchy are also discussed to differentiate the ideological and practical ramifications of patriarchy. Transforming character of patriarchy is also reflected to show its variations. Contemporary online sphere is reproducing and mediating patriarchy in multiple ways. Those mediated constructions are also explored to mark the nature of current society.

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## 1.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- Know the definitional debates on patriarchy;
- Engage with the various forms of feminist interpretations of patriarchy;
- Learn the relations of societal reproduction of patriarchy and
- Reflect on the transformations of the ideology and various dimensions of

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## 1.3 DEFINING PATRIARCHY

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The term “patriarchy” has been undergoing multiple interpretations. Interdisciplinary approaches grounded in humanities and social sciences have widened the scope of such debates. It is the social organization that possesses predominant power. It also refers to the existence and operationalization of power via a community. The members of the families in that community have to live under the authority of the head of the family or patriarch. It is the rule of the father. This term was used initially to describe the societal systems with male heads. Feminists have used this term to refer to the male domination. There are ideological differences in the feminist ideologies related to the category of patriarchy. Therefore, they have diverse interpretations on the patriarchy. Patriarchal domination is central to all spheres of the society and polity. It has penetrated to the diverse realms of human life. It is also analyzed as the government, a family, church or society under the guidance of the fathers. The category of patriarchy is used to refer to the fathers of the tribes of Israel. Then, it was deployed to the honorific designation of the bishops of the church. It became the official designation of the heads of the eastern churches. Some feminist scholars have argued that patriarchy question the fixed nature of the sexual identity (Mitchell and Rose,1982). Rule of the father or patriarchy led to the subjugation of the women. Families and various forms of societies had to function according to the patriarchy. It is noted that the term patriarchy was applied to demonstrate the male domination till 1960s. Now the term patriarchy has the stigma attached to it (Steve and Steven,2006:227). The term, patriarchy has become antithetical to the spirit of the modern, civilized social and political realms. Patriarchy leads to the oppression of the women and children. Paradoxically, modern industrial societies were patriarchal in nature. In other words, patriarchy lurks in the backdrop to the (post)modern societies and its scientific-technological transformations. Debates based on race, class and caste have also challenged the universalist construction of the patriarchy. The following section discusses about liberal feminism and its understanding of patriarchy.

### 1.3.1 Liberal Feminist Understanding on Patriarchy

You have read the definitional understanding related to patriarchy in the above section. This section discusses about the liberal feminist perspectives on patriarchy. Liberal feminism departed from its predecessors of feminists through its distinct positions. It is analyzed that the liberal feminism came into picture with the development of capitalism. Alison Jaggar discusses about the ideological nature of the liberal feminism. Liberals argued for democracy and political liberties. Voices of liberal feminists are analyzed as “unheard throughout the 300-year history of liberal political theory (Jaggar,1983:27). There is an epistemological exclusion of such feminism in the context of the liberal political theory. Liberal feminists argued that principles of liberalism should be applied in the context of the women as well for the natural rights of men and women in the 18th century. They argued for

the utilitarian positions that support equal rights for women under the law. Liberal feminists asserted that state should introduce different social reforms for the equal treatment of women in the backdrop of the liberal theory of the welfare state. Liberal feminists questioned the dominant liberal premises and provided different understanding of the human nature. They argued that women should have the same political and legal rights due to their status as a rational being. Liberal feminists argued for the right to education, political participation, employment and complete equality before the law. Liberal feminism emphasizes on the rights in the public sphere. They do not examine the power equations that are central to the public life. Liberal feminists consider state/political institutions as neutral in its approaches. Conventional male world is positioned above the women in uncritical fashion (Bryson,1992). It is further argued that liberal feminism gains its strength through engaging with the plural strands within the field of liberalism. It is argued that the suppression of the women can be addressed through political landscape within the realm of democracy that both men and women can engage with the democracy. Thus, it challenged to the patriarchal, political perceptions related to women to an extent. It is critiques that such stream of feminism is not against the status-quo (Pilcher and Whelehan.,2004: 49). In other words, it is incapable to bring radical change related to the life worlds of women. Liberal understanding of the private and the public is also questioned by feminist scholars from other schools of thought like that of radical feminism. This unit also discusses about the radical feminist critique of patriarchy and its departure from the traditional-liberal feminist understandings. The next section examines the socialist feminist perspectives on patriarchy.

### 1.3.2 Socialist Feminist Perspectives on Patriarchy

Socialism is much discussed in the history of the global political thought. According to Valerie Bryson, socialism addressed the issues related to the mitigation of poverty. It also addressed about the different issues faced by working classes. It believed in the piecemeal reform than the Marxian ideal of revolution. It shared affinities with the feminism that explored social justice. It provided more focus to social justice than patriarchy. However, a working class-socialist and suffrage campaigner, Hannah Mitchell exposed the patriarchy of socialist men-activists as equal to that of their patriarchal political opponent-conservatives. There were conflicts related to the voting rights of the women and political parties. Socialist feminism in its early days in America was based on abolitionist tendencies. It initiated anti-prostitution campaign that was influenced by Edward Bellamy's book, *Looking Backward* (Bellamy,1888). Some among the socialist feminists emphasized on the idea of the moral superiority of woman. They also found women as the regenerator and reformer of the corrupt society (Bryson,109-111). In other words, those women who are part of such morally corrupted societal order should be reformed and so on. It is observed that some scholars used the term socialist feminist to denote those feminists who do not completely depend on the Marxist theories. For example, utopian socialist-staunch supporter of women's suffrage Charlotte Perkins Gilman belongs to that stream of feminism (Bryson,1992:234). Gilman argued that socialist feminism has

created its own path in the history of feminism. She emphasized that economic dependence and scientific care for the young children as important than the ballot (Gilman,1898:131). According to Bryson, Gilman introduced a perspective that centered around the women and connected female values with that of human progress and socialism. She believed in the gradual /evolutionary changes rather than the Marxian restructuring of the political institutions/revolutions. Gilman critiqued the oppressive nature of marriage and its impact on women. She criticized the degrading and exploitative nature of family and consequential psychological derangement of women. Socialist feminism is criticized for its focus on advanced industrial societies and its inherent racism that avoids the questions of racial discrimination and family of Afro-Americans (Barrett and McIntosh,1985). The following section engages with the Marxist feminist engagements with the category of patriarchy.

### **1.3.3 Marxist Feminist Engagements on Patriarchy.**

The earlier section discussed the nature of the socialist feminist approach towards the term patriarchy. This section explores the Marxist feminist understanding of patriarchy. According to Valerie Bryson, Marxist feminism is grounded on the premise that looks at the oppression of women and its relation in the socio-economic context. Marxism emphasized on the historical role of the collective class struggle. At the same time, there are criticism to Marxism that argue that Marxism reduced everything to the class. Therefore, the works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, August Bebel, Clara Zetkin etc are criticized for their economic reductionism. In other words, such perspectives sought economic basis of all social phenomena. Feminist scholars analyses the contribution of Alexandra Kollontai for her rigorous understanding of the Marxism. It is observed that communist societies after 1920s could not look beyond the traditional Russian official Marxist position that relates woman question to the capitalism. At the same time, communist and post-communist Russia witnessed various problems related to the lives of the women. It is observed that classic Marxist position emphasized on the economic autonomy and complete participation of women as essential for the liberation of the women. Marxists faced the radical feminists' criticism about the sexist and patriarchal approaches of Marxism. On the other hand, Marxists explained that such foregrounding of women's oppression as a divisive, bourgeois deviation that distracts the solidarity and class struggle of the working classes. (Bryson,1992:232-233). Scholars such as Catherine Mackinnon demonstrated the contradiction between the feminist framework that analyses the sexual exploitation with that of the Marxist framework on power. She also linked it with the feminism's emphasis on lived experiences and Marx's emphasis on concrete practices. However, Nancy Hartsock argued that feminists have re-interpreted the Marxist approach through integrating theory based on experience, personal and political changes (Bryson,1992:235-236). In response to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's argument that positions production and reproduction as the part of the material basis of the society, Bryson explores the theoretical possibilities related to the confrontation between men, women and economic relations. Debates extended to the domestic labour or the notion of women as the

reserve army of labour. According to Lise Vogel, work of the women in the home was assessed to achieve the socialist change. House work and the labour outside the home in the backdrop of the capitalism and the resistance against capitalism are part of the domestic labour debate. In addition to the work and patriarchy at home, women are also part of a larger exploitative-economic order. As mentioned earlier, debates on Marxist feminism also discuss about Marx's idea of reserve army of labor that is essential for the operation of capitalist economy. The stigma related to labour and skill of women and patriarchal positioning of the men in the context of the work and labour are contested in the debates on Marxism and feminism. Michelle Barret, a scholar who is influenced by the writings of French Marxist scholar, Louis Althusser, discussed about the role of pre-existing gender ideology and capitalism in case of the oppression of women. Heidi Hartmann argued that capitalism and patriarchy as central to the modern society. Ann Ferguson observed that semi-autonomous system of patriarchy persists, and patriarchy has a history that cannot be reduced by the economic change. Iris Young analyzed that patriarchy is grounded on the women's labour and; is very much part of the production process. On the other hand, Alison Jaggar also discusses about the inter-linkages between patriarchy and capitalism. Lise Vogel analyses that the women from the working classes have to endure sex-related oppression and it can be understood through the Marxist understanding. Vogel observes that working class women are thus oppressed by the capitalism. Bryson also discusses about some Marxist feminists who also engaged with the questions of the "private" and "non-political in addition to economic understanding. For example, Juliet Mitchell argued that feminists should analyses the family-grounded structures of reproduction, sexuality and socialization of the children in addition to the conventional Marxist understanding of structure of production. Barrett and McIntosh analyzed the ideological nature of the family in the modern capitalist society than its economic character. Foreman and Jaggar noted that historical specificity of the alienation of women than that of unaltered nature of gender questions (Bryson, 1992:232-260).

The terms such as Marxist feminism and socialist feminism are interchangeably used across disciplines. Socialist feminists addressed the issue of sexism in leftwing parties and trade unions, class, race, community, environmental questions etc. (Wainright, Rowbotham and Lynn,1979). While discussing the role of Marxist feminists, one has to return to their critical readings on the category of division of labour. It is observed that the category of the division of labour made an important entry in the academic circles in 1970s. Feminist deployed Marxist perspectives to expand their understanding on the nuances of labour. It is analyzed that the work of women in the home is never acknowledged as unpaid work or labour. It is not considered as productive in nature. On the other hand, labour of the waged men is considered as productive for the family and community. It is observed that domestic labour contributes to capitalism (Costa, Delphi and Leonard, cited in Pilcher and Whelehan,2004:31). Thus, class-based approaches have not addressed the question of gender (Walby,1990). Marxist feminists analyzed the lack of historicity in radical feminists' reading of the relations between

power and patriarchy (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004:116). Patriarchal mode of production categories-women as class and men as husband as another class (Delphy, cited in Walby, 1990). Firestone categorized men and woman as “sex-classes” on the basis of their relations to means of production (Firestone, cited in Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004:14). However, postmodernists have questioned the validity of the societal analysis based on class (Bradley, 1996). Barrett argued that postmodernism can eschew the racism in feminism’s homogenization of the background of all women (Barrett, 1988). Neoliberal phase of capitalism and its impact on the changing nature of patriarchy raise significant challenge for the Marxist feminists. Radical feminist inquiry of patriarchy is discussed in the following section.

### **1.3.4 Radical Feminist Enquiry of Patriarchy.**

Radical feminism departed from other feminist approaches due to its distinct theoretical prepositions and strategies. According to Valerie Bryson, there are diverse arguments exist in the rubric of radical feminism. Radical feminist theory is based on the experiences of women and perceptions and argues that it is not necessary to comply with dominant political frameworks and interests. Radical feminists consider the oppression of women as rudimentary and universal in nature. It further notes that the interests of women are opposed to that of men. These interests link them to sisterhood that is beyond class, race etc. They argue for the collective struggle of women to end their oppression under patriarchal order. One of the central features of radical feminism is that it has demonstrated how male power is able to impact the public realm of politics as well as the private arena of paid employment. These intrusions of both natures are mediating patriarchal feminism. Radical feminists were able to forge solidarities with marginalized groups including the Afro-Americans. The political nature of the ‘personal’ became central to their struggles through the much-celebrated motto, “personal is political”. Scholars such as Kate Millet explained the nature of conditioning inherent in patriarchy. It led to the internal colonization of women. Patriarchy is also studied as one that thrives on the economic exploitation and coercive force. Radical feminists also condemned patriarchy that induces sexual violence and rape.

Radical feminism is criticized on different grounds. The theoretical nature of the radical feminism is descriptive and not analytical. Therefore, it is not able to analyze the origin of male power. Thus, it fails to end the oppression of women based on patriarchy. It creates some false impression about man as an enemy and suggests counter-heterosexual practices. Radical feminist theory is also criticized as historical and one that creates false universalism to neutralize the conflicts and differences within the life worlds of the diverse sections of women. It also reproduces the image of the women as victim and thus denies their agency. In other words, it is not able to see the women as change makers. Radical feminists emphasize on the specificity of patriarchy and argue that it should not be reduced to economic power. They also exhort women to fight against the power of men that suppresses the interests of women. It is further argued that male power is constructed and it is central to

biological males. Radical feminists also read the state/political institutions as an oppressive manifestation of patriarchal power. Their understanding of state is different than that of the liberal feminists who read state as neutral institution that excludes women. Liberal feminists also think state can be positive in the case of the social and political mobility of women. State, for radical feminists, excludes women through their patriarchal institutions. State power is the patriarchal power for the radical feminists. Some of the strands in radical feminism like that of Christine Delphy analysed unpaid house work of women. Radical feminists consider exploitation of women more sexual than that of the domestic exploitation that happens inside the family. They argue that patriarchy is based on male violence. They assert that patriarchy is also based on the control of the sexuality of women. There are radical feminist critiques to reproduction. Shulamith Firestone argued that role of the women as a reproducer that has subjected them to patriarchal power. Therefore, she speaks against the child-bearing and child rearing role of women. Radical feminists condemned heterosexual conjugality as a form of rape. Radical feminist such as Andrea Dworkin also fought against the sexist and violent culture of pornography. Pornography is analyzed as a patriarchal form of power that distorts the sexuality (Bryson,1992). Radical feminists critiqued the socialist and Marxist feminists' approaches to women question as sexist and patriarchal in nature (Bryson,1992:233). Radical feminist argued that all political institutions are articulations of patriarchy and phallocracy. Silvia Federici discusses how inferiority of women, housework and patriarchy function in the backdrop of capitalism (Federici,2014). Radical feminists analyzed the power inherent in patriarchy. (Bryson,1992:181-231). Inter-linkages that exist between patriarchy and violence are discussed in the following section.

### ***Check Your Progress-1***

- 1) *What do you mean by patriarchy.*
- 2) *Write your understanding on socialist feminist perspectives on patriarchy*

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## **1.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATRIARCHY AND VIOLENCE**

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Fear was central to Victorian attitudes related to morality. It was linked to the fear associated with the male violence towards women, child prostitution and related sexually oriented diseases (Levine,1987). Some of the earlier writings that discuss the issues of women discussed about the prevalence of male violence and its impact on working class women (Mill,1983). Feminist scholars across the globe have discussed about the legal solutions to women who undergo marital violence. Radical feminists analyzed the patriarchy inherent in the violence of men and their regulation of the sexuality of women. The question of marital rape is contested across the globe. Violence

against women starts from the hatred for women. Rape and various forms of violence against women demonstrate the disastrous growth of patriarchy. Capitalism reproduces various forms of violence that also intersect with the violence against women. Scholars have analyzed the connections between patriarchy, sexuality and violence. There are different interpretations related to sexuality. Sexuality is analyzed as oppressive in nature. Sexuality is also read in relation to male violence. Valerie Bryson also analyzed how violence is integral to the institution of the marriage irrespective of the class location of the couples (Bryson,1992:75). Social stratification and its ideology also determine the patriarchy. The following section analyses the relations of caste and patriarchy.

#### **1.4.1 Caste and Patriarchy**

Caste operates through endogamy and patriarchy (Ambedkar). Marriage, outside the caste is controlled by the patriarchal power inherent in the ideology and practice of caste in India. Caste based patriarchy thus unleashes violence over those women who are at the lower strata of caste system. For instance, violence against the dalit women is rampant across the different states in India. Caste, customs and modern law conflict in strange ways. It further accelerates the violence against women. Honor killing also signify the violence determined by the caste and patriarchy. Lawyers have deplored that honor killing has not stopped even after the annihilation of caste after 75 years of independence (The Hindu,2021). Dalit women are oppressed by the patriarchy inside the community and outside, non-dalit communities-castes. Dalit women have challenged the external, outside community and internal patriarchy, within the community as well (Guru,1995). Atrocities against dalit women also show the various dimensions of caste and patriarchy. Caste, gender, and patriarchy affect the women's representation in the labor force (Bhattacharya,2021). In addition to caste, other religions also perpetuate patriarchy in different ways. The following section reflects on the complex relations of religion and patriarchy.

#### **1.4.2 Religion and Patriarchy**

Religions are considered as essential in the social bonding. At the same time, religion is also criticized on the basis of its vicious ideology and practices. It also leads to politicization of religion. Thus, it leads to the ideology and hate ridden practices of communalism. Religion also deploys women as a trope to circulate its patriarchal ideology. Women are conditioned by the religion. Therefore, they are also victim of the religion-based patriarchy and consequential communal violence. Various dimensions of religion are contested in such conflictual social spaces. Customs and personal laws that are part of the religions also affect the social and political mobility of the women. Thus, they are forced to live according to the religious patriarchy. Women from the dominant religions and marginalized religions equally have to bear the brunt of the religion. All regions therefore are patriarchal in multiple ways. Right to enter the religious institutions of women is also part of the debates on the religion and gender relations (Raj,2017). Therefore, the aspirations of women from those religions are curtailed through the



authoritarian structure of the religion. The next section discusses about the changing nature of patriarchy.

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## 1.5 CHANGING NATURE OF PATRIARCHY

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Patriarchy acquires diverse shapes and practices according to the global social/political/economic contexts. According to John Lie, there is a shift from the agrarian capitalism to that of the patriarchal capitalism. Patriarchal based oppression coexists within the division of labour within household and also within the industrialized spaces (Lie,1996). The term “patriarchal belt” refers to the regions with common societal characteristics. Kandiyoti deploys the term classic patriarchy to show the existence of patriarchy in such areas. It is observed that patriarchal societies possess same patterns of gender status of women. North African and subcultures in the Turkey belong to such gendered regions (Littrell and Andy,2013). It is analyzed that classic patriarchy exists across religions like Confucianism, and Islam (Kandiyotti,1988). Women’s status is marginalized in the patriarchal belt (Moghadam,2005). However, the tendency to connect patriarchal belt with underdevelopment is paradoxical in the case of the persistence of patriarchy in the industrialized areas. Neo-liberalism is shaping the gender relations through neo-patriarchy and the fight of women should be against the neoliberal neo-patriarchy (Campbell,2014). Patriarchy is regaining its new avatars according to the changing political scenarios and economic ideologies. Changing conceptualizations of gender and masculinity are skeptical of the use of the category of patriarchy. Judith Butler observed the theoretical imperialism in universalizing the patriarchy in the writings of Catherine Mackinnon (Butler,1991). However, patriarchy is being challenged through the entry of women and other genders in the different sectors of societal and political orders. People are also conditioned through the patriarchal ideology that is percolated through media and information and communication technologies. The following section deals with the contemporary social media and its constructions of patriarchy.

### **Social media**

Social media is also becoming the agents of patriarchy. The wide range of internet is manipulated by the misogynist and patriarchal male users to spread their malice against women through diverse online platforms. Communicative capitalism is thriving in the age of capitalism and information and communication technologies (Dean,2009). The free and democratic space of social media is being challenged through the development of patriarchy within the social media platform. Tweets have reinforced the patriarchy and gender relations in the context of social media platforms such as Twitter (Demirhan and Derya,2015). In addition to these surveillance on the women in the social media, censorship and surveillance of the conservative opposite gender/men often contribute to the various forms of patriarchy. Online and offline lives of women are being perturbed by the conservative, misogynist, online-offline patriarchies. Women across the globe are mistreated for their freedom of expression in the social media. Online hate becomes the mediator of patriarchy as well. Feminism is being

reread in the context of the diverse social media platforms. Women across different platforms are deploying the social media to assert their political interests and aspirations. Question of gender justice is being shown in the time of the various forms of gendered discrimination and sexual harassment (Powell, 2018). One of the important contradictions that have raised in the context of the online feminist assertions is that the feminist articulations in the social media lack critical reflection due to its spontaneous and larger space of the social media (Kamei, 2022). Political assertions of women are gaining its momentum irrespective of the patriarchal nature of the online sphere.

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## 1.6 LET US SUM UP

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This unit engages with the various debates on the category of patriarchy. It analyses the term patriarchy through theoretical and empirical insights based on women's-gender studies and related social science streams. It provides nuanced understanding of the term patriarchy in the backdrop of the liberal, socialist, Marxist, radical feminist movements and their ideologies. It also probes the changing nature of patriarchy and its persistence through caste and religion. This unit also revisits the debates on the patriarchy in the context of social media.

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## 1.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) Critically evaluate the concept of patriarchy.
- 2) Discuss the liberal and radical feminist perspectives on patriarchy.
- 3) Discuss the relationship between patriarchy and violence.

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## **UNIT 2    CASTE, CULTURE AND RELIGION**

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### **Structure**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 Caste, Religion, Culture and Patriarchy
  - 2.3.1 Caste
  - 2.3.2 Religion
  - 2.3.3 Culture
- 2.4 Patriarchal Violence
- 2.5 Institutionalization of Violence against Women
- 2.6 Women: Resource for Communalization
- 2.7 Cultural Impunity and Misrecognition of Violence and Suffering
- 2.8 Legal Terrain and the triad of caste, religion and culture
- 2.9 Let us Sum Up
- 2.10 Unit End Questions
- 2.11 References
- 2.12 Suggested Readings

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### **2.1    INTRODUCTION**

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Violence against women is a social phenomenon. Every year lakhs of women are subjected to a wide spectrum of violence, ranging from rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dowry murders, sati, witch hunting, dumping of harmful contraceptives, homophobia and lesbian suicides, to dispossession and displacement, denial of wages, rejection of authority as Panchayati Raj representative, caste and communal violence, atrocities during armed conflict and civil strife and so on. According to the National Crime Records Bureau in 2019, the rate of crime against women in India that mainly included cruelty by husband and his relatives, sexual assault, kidnapping and abduction, rape etc. was registered as 62.4 (per lakh women population). Such documented and undocumented forms of violence indicate intricacies of violence as social structure that controls and subjugates women repeatedly and with social sanction. The social institutions of caste, religion, and culture, along with other institutions like family and state are pivotal in instigating, shrouding, and justifying violence against women from different social groups. They make possible most egregious forms of violence that seem a blot on humanity. Even though law seeks to protect women and penalize violence against them, albeit limitedly, the structures of caste, religion and culture make justice and dignity elusive for women. In this unit we will deal with the above-mentioned issues and its relation with violence.

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## 2.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After studying this Unit, you are able to:

- Analyze the intersectionality between caste, religion, culture and patriarchy;
- Relationship between violence caste, religion and culture and
- Know the impact of caste, religion and culture on laws.

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## 2.3 CASTE, RELIGION, CULTURE AND PATRIARCHY

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You have already read about patriarchy and its ideological point of views in the unit 1. Patriarchy is a persistent system of exploitation of women upheld through coercion as well as consent of people, and even women. People accept patriarchal practices that oppress women, knowingly and unknowingly, and consider those as ‘normal’, as part of the culture. This masking of social power that underlies the violent patriarchal practices is a masterstroke of patriarchy. The social structures of caste, religion and culture facilitate such consolidation and naturalization of patriarchy. In this section, we would try to understand these institutions first.

### 2.3.1 Caste

Caste or *jati* is a pattern of hierarchical organization of society into units fixed by birth, and defined by endogamy i.e., marrying within the group. It is widely understood in terms of the dichotomy of ritual purity and pollution. This implies that the castes considered ‘pure’ are entitled to and have monopoly over varied forms of social interactions and resources, whether access to get water or to get knowledge. While those considered ‘polluted’ are confined to most degrading and dehumanizing occupations. Thus, caste is a system of graded inequality. It means that every caste loses some rights and entitlements as one goes downwards in the caste hierarchy. The sufferer at the bottom of this hierarchy are also divided because of unequal burdens and benefits. The idea of ‘dominant caste’ points out that in the local contexts, castes are ranked in terms of material wealth and coercive political power. A distinct marker of separation amongst castes is untouchability. Those marked as ‘untouchable’ are relegated to certain disabling differences: landlessness and bonded agricultural labour for survival, spatial segregation preventing access to common resources, and widespread practices of exclusion and humiliation. Caste exists in modern India not as a vestige of past tradition, but as an enduring, pervasive and adaptable social phenomenon, despite myriad changes over the centuries. The experiences and mobilizations of ‘lower castes’ have underlined caste as a system that institutionalizes humiliation (Jodhka, 2015). They have pointed out varied practices of everyday disgraces and humiliation of Dalits such as casteist insult and abuse, sexual shaming of women, assertion of caste power by denying them riding a horse or wearing shoes in upper caste localities and so on. Caste rests

upon the sexual regulation of women, and inscribes the ideas of chastity, honour and propriety of women. It disciplines women through endogamous marriage and differential rules of mating and lineage. Thus, women of 'high' castes are confined to irrevocable, monogamous, chaste marriage, and their relationships with lower caste men get severely penalized. While 'low' caste women are subjected to the secondary forms of marriages and sexual exchanges that mark them as available to the 'high' caste men. Caste further governs women, their sexuality and labour through the caste based sexual division of labour. It condemns 'low' caste women to the dehumanizing and forced sexualized labour that generates everlasting stigma. Thus, as pointed out by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, women are the gateways of caste system. The concept of Brahmanical patriarchy (Chakravarty: 2006) brings out how the hierarchical caste system and patriarchy reinforce and reconsolidate each other in complex ways by controlling sexuality, reproduction and labour of women. In the following section, you will read on the role of religion.

### 2.3.2 Religion

Religion refers to the collectively shared system of beliefs and practices of people concerning supernatural beings, sacred and spiritual things. It also includes moral prescriptions and world views about human relationships, rituals for symbolic communication, institutionalized knowledge and doctrines, and specialists dealing with philosophical as well as mundane issues. Religion is not merely a personal matter of faith and worship, as is popularly assumed, or a transcendental, mystical phenomenon. It enables people to pursue material interests, and steers economic and technological changes. Religion is rather interwoven into the very fabric of social life across different material domains such as food, arts, education, economy and law. It has not disappeared with the modern rational thinking; rather it has recast its strong hold in the society. It acts as a mechanism of social control in private as well as public realms by sanctioning dominant practices and ideas that seem sacrosanct and immutable being rooted in faith. Religion then becomes a conservative force that creates false consciousness, and mystifies the real material relations in the hierarchical social order. It makes virtue out of suffering in the unequal world through mystical ideas, and justifies it. Yet in the everyday lived social experience, religion has also been a pathway to social change and progress. India has a long and multi-faceted history of religious diversity that has existed with state secularism in modern times. There has been fluidity in religious faith and practices allowing for religious syncretism, and religious conversion (Robinson, 2004). Nonetheless, there has also been ethnicization of religious boundaries rigidifying communities and identities based on religion. Religion is expressed thus in exclusionary and partisan terms leading to communal divisions and discrimination, and the politics of religious majoritarianism dominates in the democratic society. Religion often exalts women as the bearers of its essence and purity, and prescribes norms that bind them in submission. It creates the notion of ideal womanhood that subordinates and regulates women, and sanctions patriarchal ways of life, and gendered divisions. The religious politics instrumentalizes women to produce communal tensions, sidelining the concerns for women's emancipation. At the same time, women across the



world have struggled to draw from spiritual and religious spaces to voice and pursue liberatory possibilities, like other socially marginalized groups. From Buddhist *Theris-Bhikkhunis*, and *Bhakti-Sufi* women saints, to women's groups reinterpreting Quran, women have found an anchoring point in the religious imaginaries to challenge the patriarchal norms. In the next section, you will read on culture.

### 2.3.3 Culture

Culture is a field of patterned meanings created by people as members of society. It is articulated diversely as arts and architecture, or customs and lifestyle. In such dominant terms, culture is perceived as civilization or heritage emphasizing unique and distinctive features of the society. Simultaneously, it is identified *as the* tradition that remains unchanging for time immemorial, and is passed down across generations. While the former definition distances culture from the so-called unsophisticated masses, the latter separates it from the present (Ghosh, 1996). However, culture is a vehicle through which people communicate meanings, make sense of the world, define values and norms, and construct their identities. It is not as static way of life or a bounded entity, as denoted by generationally inherited customs or 'high' refined traits. But it is a constantly changing, dynamic and heterogenous arena in which actors continuously struggle and reconstitute patterns of expression and creativity. Culture is not merely symbolic or mystical, but embedded solidly in the social world. It encompasses everyday quotidian life and ordinary practices and ideas. It denotes the production of a complex whole of symbolic and material relations through human agency. Thus, culture is placed in opposition to what is natural and biological. When framed as civilization or tradition, culture is considered as an inner, interior attribute of the society, as against the outer, exterior social world. It is then sought to be preserved against any change and diversification, sometimes leading to cultural fundamentalism. Historically, women across the world are treated as the torch bearers of culture, representing its essence. In India, given its colonial past, the claims about its cultural superiority have imbued the identity of the nation, as against the material progress of the west. Hence performance of culture in its so-called purest form against the forces of transformation has remained women's responsibility. This means women as the emblems of culture are celebrated in the singular frame and are subjected to stringent regulation and policing to ensure their purity. Women have to therefore navigate the cultural terrain, accepting as well as negotiating, modifying, mocking and even resisting the dominant cultural meanings. Thus caste, religion and culture are key social institutions impacting women and their lives. Caste has persisted as a discriminatory and exploitative system institutionalizing and justifying violence against women in general and Dalit and 'low' caste women in particular. The hierarchical division of caste is generated and legitimized by religion. Religion, in its communal articulation has continued to divide and oppress people, though it is also pursued for the possibilities of liberation of women and the downtrodden. Culture is a contested terrain of both normative and creative practices in which social power is consolidated as well as challenged. Thus, caste, religion and culture work in conjunction with each other and form a tried in reinforcing multiple

social hierarchies, by sanctioning its exercise in the everyday contexts. Let us read in next section on patriarchal violence.

***Check your progress-1***

- 1) *Discuss caste, culture and religion in your own words.*

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## **2.4 PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE**

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Like caste, religion and culture, violence is a social institution. It is not a random, individual phenomenon resulting from psychological perversion or derangement of some men. Nor is it an aberrant act deviating from social norms and values. It is rather an institutionalized feature of society that routinely recurs over time and space, and is permitted and made possible through social rules. It is a social structure, like family or state that upholds and makes acceptable the dominant social order (Walby, 1989). Violence thus can be defined as a constellation of social relations of force and coercion that produces hurt and injury to those who are at the bottom of social hierarchies in its exercise of power. Women restrict themselves, or get restricted even in anticipation of violence. Thus, violence impacts women's actions and lives even when it is not actively used by men against them. For example, women's mobility in public space is regulated as the public sphere gets marked as dangerous for them as the site of violence. Or Dalit women are confined to the stigmatizing low paid occupations like manual scavenging or agricultural labour, as transgression of the division of labour implies harsh penalty. Rather violence undergirds the very mechanisms of women's protection and safety. The protectionist approach is embedded in the cultural ideals of women's respectability and vulnerability that limit women's mobility, dignity and freedom. Violence manifests in varied forms as a tool of political, economic and cultural power. The state monopolizes on terrorizing people through police brutality and stringent laws. The cultural practices of non-elites are disparaged as trash and women artists as vulgar. A coercive control over land, resources and livelihood marginalizes Dalits, tribal and Muslims. Rather the systems of dominance oriented towards capitalist accumulation, exploitation and colonization are predicated on violence against women (Mies, 1986). The forces of modernity have reformulated blatant and horrific violence against women, notwithstanding the assumptions about its decline in the civilized societies, or its shift towards regimes of discipline and securitization, from that of retribution. In this section, we would discuss how violence in modern times is normalized and made acceptable through the triad of caste, religion and culture. In the next section, let us try to understand institutionalization of violence against women.

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## 2.5 INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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Caste, religion and culture justify, normalize and mask the violence against women as social institution. They play key role in normalizing violence in the collective consciousness of society by separating selectively only some forms of violence as reprehensible and therefore punishable as crime (Kannabiran, 2016). Many other forms of violence are vital to the dominant social order governed by this triad in its exercise of power. They therefore remain tolerated and unpunished by the society. The interplay of this triad unfolds in varied types of violence against women, spectacular and mundane, public and private, collective and individual, physical and psychological, material and symbolic. On one hand there is spectacular violence that is overt, immediate, and extreme and erupts into public visibility as horrific. This includes collective violence of riot, lynching, 'honour killing', gang rape and bodily mutilation and so on. It involves individualized forms of spectacular violence such as acid attack, or women' killing out of power relations and patriarchal reasons. Such spectacular violence is generally recognized as crime, though it may also be defended indirectly. On the other hand, there is every-day covert violence trivialized as ordinary, which may not get recognized as violence and crime at all. Even when it may be legally punishable, it is often socially tolerated or even sanctioned. It includes different practices of violence, from the private acts of wife battery, or coercion of detrimental birth control measures, to the public acts of sexual harassment at workplace, schools and colleges, or humiliation and harassment of Dalit *sarpanch* women. These different forms of violence are institutionalized through varied cultural practices.

Caste system is predicated upon reproduction within endogamous heterosexual marriages to ensure purity of castes. Though violence against women is mediated through cultural practices, violence is not merely cultural in a narrow sense. It has material underpinnings. The culturally sanctioned violence is constituted by the material conditions which are dynamic, and specific to time and space. For instance, the custom of witch-hunting branded women as witches or evil spirits is seen as an embarrassment for modern rational society labelling tribal culture as superstitious and backward. However, in central and eastern India is linked with the curtailing of property rights and sexual autonomy of women, especially of widows and single women, within the changing economy marginalizing the tribes. The violence against women is of intersectional nature. The intersection of gender with caste, class and community produces variation in the practices of violence experienced by women of different castes and religious communities. There are distinct patterns of violence that dalit women are subjected to within Brahmanical patriarchy, ranging from hateful and derogatory slur, eviction from their land, coercion of work without wages, to sexual violence, imposition of 'prostitution' and so on (Aloysious, Mangubhai and Lee:2011). Significantly, women from the marginalized communities have stood up with courage and resilience against this violence, asserted their right to be treated with equality and dignity, and refused to have their life and aspirations

restricted by caste norms. For their flouting of abusive caste norms, they however face retaliatory violence by the dominant castes. Ironically, when the issue of violence against women came to be politicized by the early women's movement, the shared common experience of women of violence came to be invoked. The specific and distinctive nature of violence against women from the socially marginalized communities remained obscured then. Thus violence, its myriad forms, and differences and similarities experienced by women of different social groups, emerge as a social institution governing social life and exercising social power (Rege, 1995).

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## **2.6 WOMEN: RESOURCE FOR COMMUNALIZATION**

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Women are seen as the symbols of caste and religious community, and embodiment of its honour. Their bodies have continued to be battlefields for shaming the 'other' community. Historically women have been routinely subjected to brutal violence during caste and communal riots. The horrific violence of partition that accompanied India's independence has been one of the major episodes of communal violence scarring the life of the nation. People became citizens of new nation-states experiencing trauma and pain of physical assault and bodily mutilation, sexual violence and torture, uprooting and eviction from one's own land and home, dispossession, loss of family and friends, betrayal from people considered one's own and so on. But the violence does not end here, as its memories have continued to trouble individuals and communities. The effects of such gruesome violence unfold in the everyday experience of pain and suffering of the survivors, in their subjectivities. The survivors cope with, endure, work through, break apart, and transcend, traumatic violence. Its traces are visceral in their local worlds, interpersonal relations, and individual lives, long after such tragic events (Das, 2006).

While this violence perpetrated by the 'other' community has garnered attention, the one employed by one's own family and community is erased. What one witnesses in the instances of communal violence is fear, not about women losing their home and lives. But even in the midst of most devastating carnage, there are specific anxieties about women losing their purity and honour, if sexually violated by men of the 'other' community. With such panic about defilement of community, women came to be killed by their own families and communities to protect their honour. The devaluation and elimination of women's autonomy and lives in this violence gets masked under the cloak of their heroism. This has led to a long silence about partition as people are unable to confront the horrors of partition (Butalia, 1998). It is not just due to trauma and shame about the violence and humiliation experienced by them, rather of their own entanglement in violence as passive bystanders or aggressors, even in case of their own intimate people. However, along with this victimization of women, their complicity and consent to the violence against the 'other' religion or caste is a significant, but neglected fact. In case of communal and caste violence, women are found to be not just passive witnesses of public violence, but also

active and direct participants and instigators. (Menon, 2012). Women are thus a crucial tool of communal violence. The invocation of violence against women acts as a relaying point leading to eruption of animosities across communities and violence of avenge. Rather violence against women, its memories and even rumour about it has become a resource for communalization, or the othering of castes and religious communities. The stereotypes about the 'other' community are constructed through women and violent regulation of them. As pointed out by Charu Gupta (2009) the deployment of women and their sexuality was central to the emergence of communal tensions.

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## **2.7 CULTURAL IMPUNITY AND MISRECOGNITION OF VIOLENCE AND SUFFERING**

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The triad of caste, religion and culture, by making violence against women 'acceptable' to the society, creates impunity i.e., exemption from punishment for even most gross acts of violence. One form of impunity that has remained largely intact over period is the one against violence within marriage and domestic arena. There is vehement refusal, both legal and social, to recognize marital rape, despite women's struggles to foreground it, even within child marriage or separated couple. This underlines how the institution of marriage is guarded as a bastion of husband's sexual right over wife. Similarly, the defence of father's right over unmarried daughter, even adult one, masks the familial violence in the name of honour, in case of elopement of daughter for inter-caste marriage and so on. Notwithstanding the legal punishment of domestic violence, the impunity to it persists through the cultural ideals of masculine desire and conjugal relationship shared widely across the patriarchal societies. (Geetha, 1998). Cultural practices and symbols bring alive the norms governing sociability across castes and religions. They uphold the social order that privileges 'upper' castes and majority religious communities, and mediate social relationships amongst them pertaining to food, spatial organization, sexual and affective intimacy and so on. These practices create boundaries of good and forbidden; attraction for and inclusion of the prescribed social relations, and then exclusion of and revulsion for what is prohibited (Geetha, 2016). For examples. caste specific food practices or endogamous desire are viewed as good, while the food practices of the 'other' or inter- caste marriages are considered forbidden. This interplay of desire and disgust is rehearsed in everyday ordinary contexts, and manifested in terms of routine discrimination and degradation against the social inferiors. Further any transgression of these boundaries meets with violent penalty which seems acceptable. The violence of both, the imposition of boundaries and punishment for its infraction gets misrecognized either as social rule or as socially appropriate penalty. It therefore masks the pain and torment of survivors of violence. The violence and sexual violence thus, have pedagogical function of socializing and disciplining people into caste norms. This means that the violence against women gets recognized in the dominant social order only when it is perceived as dishonour of women, family and community, as emasculation

and humiliation of men considered as their guardians. The everyday violence of boundary making remains illegible. So, in case of rape of Dalit women, individual crime may get recognized if it is spectacular and overt, but hardly as a caste-based atrocity, as a systemic issue. What is therefore needed is to detect and then to challenge the impunity to this everyday violence that undergirds the spectacular violence. We need to identify the seemingly innocuous practises of habitual cruelty and humiliation against social inferiors which are produced for consolidating boundaries of caste, religion and gender. An insidious outcome of this impunity is the division between 'good' and 'bad' women. While the former is seen as pure, innocent and violable, the latter are seen as promiscuous, uncontrollable and hence not-violable. Sexual violence is based on the logic that categorises women in misogynist fashion. The chaste women whose sexual violation is recognized as rape, and unchaste women whose sexual violation remains unrecognized as rape.

Pratiksha Baxi (2000) points out how the anti-rape law is imbued with an implicit sexual contract. This contract between men and the state entails that some women are made available exclusively to some men, their husbands, and hence their sexual abuse by other men gets avenged as a breach of this contract. While other women are treated as sexually available to all men, not just in marriage but also outside of it, and hence their sexual violation gets glossed over. This impunity to sexual violence against 'bad' women is produced through the double economy of caste that works in complex ways. This sexual circuit allows sexual appropriation of dalit women as the right of 'upper' caste men, while enforcing caste purity through intra-caste marriage especially for 'upper' caste women. This institutionalized sexual privilege of 'upper' caste men is a public secret, defined into dalit women's sexual subjectivity (Rao, 2009). Such impunity produced through cultural ideas and practices are harder to break. The impunity that operates widely through caste, religion and culture, thus entailing failure to restore justice to the survivors of violence needs further attention. Let us learn in the next section on legal terrain and the triad of caste, religion and culture.

***Check your progress-2***

- 1) *What do you mean by patriarchal violence.*
- 2) *Discuss the various dimensions related to institutionalization of violence against women.*

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## **2.8 LEGAL TERRAIN AND THE TRIAD OF CASTE, RELIGION AND CULTURE**

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Legal intervention into the relationship of violence with caste, religion and culture is complex and contentious. On one hand, modern law is a secular, universal tool to eradicate violence entrenched in caste, religion and culture. On the other hand, the law also reiterates, directly or indirectly, the violent

practices orchestrated by this triad. The caste and cultural norms further slip through law and produce impunity to certain practices of violence against women, while penalizing only some.

Firstly, even in democratic India, religion has retained its hold over law through personal laws. Religion based personal laws emerged in India in colonial times, to claim autonomy of the Indian tradition in private familial realm, without any intervention from the colonial state. As we saw earlier, anxieties for the protection of culture from western onslaught has been overpowering in the Indian society. Interestingly these personal laws are not a simple codification of religious commands. They are retained through a complex process of rationalization by the secular state. They are disempowering for women, keep many religious practices that dispossess, discriminate and degrade women that are also under challenged. Moreover, inequalities in these family laws are further translated into the inequalities in other legislation pertaining to nationality, violence (domestic violence and rape) and employment law. Such legal plurality where the secular universal law coexists with religious law is justified on the basis of group rights of religious communities. It creates an environment where group rights as caste or community are upheld at the expense of women, their integrity and autonomy, and even lives. Similarly, caste, religion and culture have held its sway through parallel informal system too. They govern social life through localized extra- constitutional bodies such as *jat* panchayat (caste council), *Khap* panchayats (clan-based council), or *shalishiadalat* (community council). A resurgence of such extra- legal entities and their moral pressure is linked with an attempt to create semblance of continuity and order in the globalizing time of fundamental transformations, uncertainties and turmoil. In such turbulent times, the upward mobile castes and religious communities seek to strengthen their unity and exercise their influence as the self-proclaimed arbiters of justice. Thus, very skewed sex ratio in north-western India has led to difficulties in finding socially appropriate, endogamous brides for men confronted with the crisis of masculinity. This has entailed re-emergence of *Khap panchayat* seeking stringent regulation of women and their sexuality in the region (Kaur, 2010). These Kangaroo courts exercises legitimacy in rural as well as urban environments across India, and function as regulatory mechanisms with somewhat formal structures of customary authority. In the process, they subvert the democratically elected *Panchayati raj* institutions. They impose their 'order' through social boycott and fines, and archaic punishments humiliating those flouting their orders, even sanctioning murders or 'honour killings' of runaway couples marrying across caste or within 'gotra'. These entities seek to impose repressive customs by issuing orders that govern the everyday life, such as ban on women using cell phones or wearing jeans. Their enforcement of orthodox customs like 'virginity test' of new brides became controversial, and came to be denounced publicly. However, their routine organization of matters regarding family or livelihood, such as stigmatizing sexual labour of erotic dancing and entertainment to which women of their communities are relegated, gets unnoticed. Although women and young people have dared to challenge the writ of these bodies, the state bodies including police, village, and even the

family have been complicit in their violence.

Certainly, law has aimed to eradicate culture specific practices of violence. In India, the specific violence intersecting with caste and religion is brought in the legal ambit through 'Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989'. This legislation is exceptional in spelling out and creating mechanisms to penalise common practices of everyday cruelty and humiliation of SCs and STs. However, there have been constant attempts to dilute such measures seeking to prevent community specific offences. Even the bill 'Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparation)' had to be withdrawn many times. This bill aimed at protecting religious and linguistic minorities including SCs and STs from the communally organized and targeted mob violence and hostile environment, but did not see light of the day. There are some central and state legislation that target harmful cultural practices such as dowry, forced child marriage, sati, devadasi or ritual dedication of women to the deity etc. Yet human rights activism advocates bringing many other practices such as witch hunting under the legal purview. The legal identification of cultural practices as violence is a complicated issue in India. This needs to be seen in the context of colonial politics when the cultural traditions of the colonized came to be implicated with violence against women. The practices of Sati, female infanticide, child marriage, devadasi, and so on came too highlighted, on one hand in the civilizing mission of the colonial state as the markers of barbarity and backwardness of the Indian culture. On the other hand, the project of modernization of the new middle classes strived to reform the socio-cultural practices in the process of making-of-the-nation. Ultimately, women, their status and violence against them were reduced to be mere ground on which the colonial politics played out. While the questions of women's survival, dignity and equality came to be over ridden. Even in contemporary times, the imperialist claim to be the saviour of 'third world' women have come to blame the oriental cultures and sought their civilizational upliftment. Such sensationalized and tingling narratives about the savage violence of dowry immolation, 'honour' killings etc. stigmatizes global south, and further leads to exclusion, policing and torture of its people. In the process the continuities and discontinuities that the violence experienced by the 'third world' women have with that experienced in the 'first world' remain unaddressed. The legal space addressing patriarchal violence is thus troubled by caste, religion and culture in subtle ways.

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## 2.9 LET US SUM UP

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The relationship of violence with caste, religion and culture is a tricky issue. What is distinct about it is not that this triad consolidates violence as an institution with social sanction, and incites specific forms of violence against women from different castes and communities. But that it justifies most inhuman and shameful violence, blames the victims, facilitates its repetition, normalizes it in the collective conscience, and even valorises it. The impunity crafted through the social relations of caste, religion and culture justifies perpetrators of violence by misrecognizing the quotidian violence, and



refuses to listen to the suffering of victims, isolating them. It is therefore imperative to name and foreground this connection of caste, religion and culture with violence against women so that the claims for protecting religion or culture can be nullified in the struggle against violence. In order to strengthen law as a subversive tool for elimination of violent practices, its underpinnings in this context need to be challenged. Thus, the ability to question these interconnections on time and again will help to justice and dignity for women to some extent.

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## 2.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) Discuss the intersections of caste, religion and culture and patriarchy. Give examples to support your arguments.
- 2) Analyze the impact of caste, religion and culture on law and its relationship to violence against women.
- 3) Discuss the impact of caste, religion and culture on laws.

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## 2.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

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## **UNIT 3    VIOLENCE AGAINST COMMUNITIES**

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### **Structure**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Conceptualizing Violence
- 3.4 Defining Community
- 3.5 Gender, Patriarchy and Violence
- 3.6 Ethnic Conflicts
- 3.7 Let us Sum Up
- 3.8 Unit End Questions
- 3.9 References
- 3.10 Suggested Readings

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### **3.1    INTRODUCTION**

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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.

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### **3.2    LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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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.

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### **3.3    CONCEPTUALIZING VIOLENCE**

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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.*

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### **3.4 DEFINING COMMUNITY**

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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’?*

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## **3.5 GENDER, PATRIARCHY AND VIOLENCE**

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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.

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### **3.6 ETHNIC VIOLENCE**

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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.

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### 3.7 LET US SUM UP

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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.

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### 3.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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

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## **UNIT 4 VIOLENCE WITHIN COMMUNITIES**

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### **Structure**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 Patriarchy and its Manifestations
- 4.4 Violence within Communities
- 4.5 Question of Honour
- 4.6 Resurgence of Norms and Customs and its Conflict with Modern Societies
- 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.8 Unit End Question
- 4.9 References
- 4.10 Suggested Readings

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### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

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You have already read in Unit 1 and 3 on patriarchy and violence in broader sense. In this unit, you will study about violence within communities. The community often creates an impression of harmony among its members. On the contrary, there are power relations that impact a community. There are issues related to hierarchies within a community. Impact of the external power relations to decide the nature of the communities. It reproduces patriarchy in multiple ways. Modern society coexists with its laws and customs. It exists with such contradictions. Such so-called societies have become modern is also need to be analyzed to differentiate modernity from that tradition. There are societal contradictions that impact the nature of relations among the members of the community. It is also impacted by the political economy at the national and international levels. Communities cannot exist outside such political and cultural orders. Communities thus are undergoing various forms of schisms and consensus across their members.

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### **4.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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After reading this Unit, you are able to :

- Understand the role of patriarchy that determine the violence within communities;
- Learn the categories of violence and communities;
- Engage with the debates on the category of honor; and
- Study the resurgence of norms and customs in the modern society.

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### 4.3 PATRIARCHY AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

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Before delving into the epistemological or knowledge-related dimensions of the category of patriarchy, one needs to have a rudimentary understanding of that category. The literal meaning of the patriarchy is the rule of the father. It was deployed to refer to the fathers of the tribes of Israel. Later it was used in the context of the honorific designation of the Bishops of the Church. Gradually, it became the official term for the heads of the Eastern churches. It was used in the context of the government of the family, church and society of fathers. It is deployed to show the social systems grounded in the authority of the male heads of the households. Contemporary feminist theories use this term to refer to male domination. It is observed that in “Durkheim’s view, the transition from clan to patriarchal family to conjugal family is connected to the fact that family solidarity rests on both persons and things” (Adams and Sydie,2002:109). While discussing the violence within the communities, one has to understand the various perspectives on the family. It is analyzed that the patriarchal family has increased the moral scope of the wife and the mother (Durkheim, cited in Adams and Sydie,2002:114). It is further noted that the increase in the family “intervene to occupy a man’s mind, the more he falls out of the habit of regarding his wife as inferior” (Durkheim, cited in Adams and Sydie,2002:114)). Some scholars analyzed patriarchy as part of the anti-status-quoist ideology and practice. Friedrich Engels analyzed that the abolition of the monogamous patriarchal family was needed for the emancipation of women. At the same time, there were critiques of the class-based enquiry that could not capture the unique nature of the class status of women within the patriarchal, capitalist system. It is critiqued that “a major difficulty is that Marx and Engels, blinded by the entrenched patriarchy of their day, did not identify women as members of the oppressed proletariat” (Sydie, cited in Adams and Sydie,2002:138).

Patriarchy also determines the women, work and gender (Standing, 1999:587). The gig economy in the neoliberal phase of current capitalism structures the nature of work and gendered labour. However, one should have a fundamental understanding of the patriarchal power while exploring the violence within the communities. What is the nature of patriarchal power? Power and domination, for Adams and Sydie, need to be understood in the context of Max Weber’s reading of social relations as conflict relations. Max Weber analyzed how the structure of domination determines the social sphere. Weber analyzed “diametrically contrasting types of domination” such as “the indirect form of the domination” and “the direct form of the domination”. Goods and marketable skills-related domination is part of the indirect form of domination. It is noted that the boundaries that mark these dominations are fluid (Adams and Sydie,2002:182). Weber argued that “clear-cut antithesis between factual power which completely out of possession and by way of interest compromises in the market and... the authoritarian power of a patriarch or a monarch with its appeal to the duty of the obedience as such “(Weber, cited in Adams and Sydie,2002:182). It is noted that all forms of domination need self-justification or legitimation.

Weber analyzed three forms of domination or the three principles of legitimation such as traditional, charismatic and rational-legal.

They are the ideal types of domination or legitimation. It is observed that such forms “occurring in historical reality constitute combinations, mixtures, adaptations, or modifications of these pure types” (Weber, cited in Adams and Sydie,2002:182). Tradition or custom determines the nature of traditional domination. It justifies or sanctifies the position of the ruler. Patriarchy is considered a form of domination. It is further noted that it is the patriarchy linked to the household or the clan. What decides the claim to legitimacy? Max Weber discusses the legitimacy grounded nature in descent, God or the divine event. It is noted that a claim based on divine connection can be male or female. It is noted that the claim is carried out through the male line. It makes the patriarch exercise personal power. Reverence for tradition and custom may force the subordinate to obey the patriarch. Patriarch may be replaced due to the hereditary lines of patriarchal succession. Patriarchal domination acquires various forms such as feudalism. Patriarch thus maintains absolute power over the subordinate sections. It is analyzed that the administration by the patriarch is personally held and it negates the borders between the public and the private. It is observed that women sometimes gain power in patrimonial systems. But they are analyzed as the “stand-ins for their male kin or offspring and their exercise of power are unusual and short lived. Patriarchal power is pure male power and derives from the bases of household authority -superior strength and practical knowledge and experience” (Adams and Sydie,2002:182-183). It is described as the power of “men as against women and children, of the able-bodied as against those of lesser capability of the adult against the child, of the child against the young” (Weber, cited in Adams and Sydie,2002:183). Women and children are the subjects who have to obey the patriarch. It is noted that “whether the woman is a wife or a slave regardless of the facts of paternity” (Weber, cited in Adams and Sydie,2002:183). Weber analyzed the nature of the patriarchal household organization. (Adams and Sydie,2002:182-183). Max Weber thus provides a nuanced understanding of the patriarchy.

There are various interpretations related to patriarchy. Social theoretical and purely social science-based perspectives proliferate the readings on the category of patriarchy. It is important to revisit those perspectives on patriarchy to revitalize the understanding of violence within communities. Henry Maine discussed the “totalitarian patriarchy”. Totalitarian patriarchy is “a primordial patriarchal despotism for the human race” (Amadiume, 2005:84). Maine’s perspectives are regarded as the general gender history and they are called the patriarchal theory. It is considered a fundamental theoretical premise that operates behind European philosophical and political thought. It focuses on the power called father and results in the denial of the motherhood kinship and structure (Amadiume,2005:84). There are othering and conceptual dilemmas in the such understanding of the patriarchy. It is observed that “Diop has argued that this basic patriarchal ideology was reproduced at the state level in the European model, but the actual concept of state came to the Europeans from Egyptian Africa as a result of the direct capitalism” (Diop, cited in Amadiume,2005:84). It is observed that Cheikh

Anta Diop thus disagreed with the generalized evolutionist scholars of marriage, kinship and motherhood like J .M.McLennan, L.H.Morgan and J.Bachofen. It is further observed that “...they postulated a progression from barbarism and savagery in primitive sexual promiscuity to matrilineal descent to matriarchy and mother-right, and finally to masculine imperialism in patriarchy, monogamy and the nuclear family (Amadiume,2005:84). Thus, the patriarchy and matriarchy are contested in the context of race and geopolitics of ideas. Scholars across various racial-global locations have generated diverse readings on the category of patriarchy.

Matriarchy is often analyzed as a social order that challenges the patriarchal society. It is the social organization in which mothers act as the head of the families. Friedrich Engels discusses it as the rule of women in hunter-gatherer societies (Engels,884). Those societies did not have the idea of property rights. However, patriarchy emerged as a consequence of the privatization of land rights. Patriarchy is also equated with that of conquest. The idea of matriarchy also challenges the universal nature of the category of patriarchy. Scholars have discussed this shift from the right of the mothers to that of the rights of the father. There are diverse critiques of the dominant understanding of patriarchy. It is noted that “the mother-child relationship, in Weber’s view, simply a natural, pre-social relationship that only became a social relationship when men organized households and acquired control over women’s sexuality so that the connection between (male) parent and child could be legally established. Weber claimed that great empires of the Far and Near East, India and the Mediterranean, as well as Northern Europe, all developed out of the patriarchal household organization. Weber asserted that the idea of matriarchy is inaccurate due to the lack of evidence “if any other form of kinship arrangements other than patrilineal relationships “ever since kinship relations ...(have) been regulated by law” (Adams and Sydie,2001:183). There are racial constructions related to the matriarchy as well.

For instance, it is noted that Patricia Hill Collins questioned the white scholar’s description of black women as powerful matriarchs who “allegedly emasculate their lovers and husbands”. Adams and Sydie observed that “...in this interpretation, the “absence of the black patriarchy is used as evidence for Black cultural inferiority “and Blackmen’s underachievement” (Collins, cited in Adams and Sydie,2001:570). W E B Du Bois earlier observed that “Black women’s centrality in black families “ was not a “cause of African-American social status” but an “outcome of racial oppression and poverty”(Du Bois, cited in Adams and Sydie,2001:570).It is analyzed that Cheikh Anta Diop “postulated four cradles or histories of kinship and gender: Africa as the agricultural matriarchal south, Europe as nomadic patriarchal north, the Mediterranean basin as the middle belt where matriarchy preceded patriarchy, Western Asia as the zone of confluence”(Diop, cited in Amadiume,2005:85). What led to such reductionist understanding of patriarchy? It is noted that “...in all the so-called scientific comparative reconstructions by the nineteenth-century theorists, African data were left out. Significantly, it was African data that effectively overturned the theories of a general evolution of kinship. The concept of matriarchy as a female rule

has been the main reason why the idea was ruled out as non-existent in history. Diop marshalled an array of empress and queens from as far as back as the nineteenth century BC and through into recent history, from Ethiopia, Egypt and the rest of Africa -to challenge this Eurocentric conclusion” (Amadiume,2005:85). Diop observed that “in pre-colonial Africa, there was no transition from matriarchy to patriarchy since the social structure was essentially matriarchal in the sense of female rule, the female transmission of property and descent, and man being the mobile element in marriage and sexual union. Fundamental changes in the African social structure began with Arabo Islamic invasions ...and became more far-reaching under European imperialism” (Diop, cited in Amadiume,2005:85). Patriarchy and its changing nature have been addressed by the scholars. It is argued that “...men and patriarchal ideologies control women’s reproductive and sexual capacities, and that as a result, women are trapped by their reproductive and sexual capacities, and that as a result, women are trapped by their reproductive anatomy and by a dogma of compulsory heterosexuality” (Rosaldo, Lamphere, Rubin, Rapp, Rich, Abel and Caplan, cited in Nfah-Abbenyi,2005:260). Capitalism radically impacts the social systems throughout the world. It is important to understand the patriarchy in the neoliberal phase of contemporary capitalism. Gendering, for Lorraine Green, can be located in the context of its intersections with capitalism.

Kate Millet analyses how the gendering of individuals is being carried out from the top to the bottom through the process known as internal colonization “...that operate in and through monolithic patriarchy...or via patriarchal and capitalist forces .as traditionally, explicated by radical and dual systems feminists” (Millet, cited in Green, 2004:35). Capitalistic patriarchy as a category unveiled the complex relations of capitalism and patriarchy. It is observed that “capitalism uses patriarchy and patriarchy is defined by the needs of the capital ...patriarchy (as male sexual supremacy) provides the sexual hierarchical ordering of society for political control and as a political system cannot be reduced to its economic structure; while capitalism as an economic class system driven by the pursuit of profit feeds of the patriarchal ordering” (Eisenstein,1979:28). Patriarchy as an ideological system thus limits the social mobility of the women. It is noted that “patriarchal, hegemonic power significantly limits and constraints individual agency and self-actualization, particularly that of women, whose significantly reduced life chances in comparison to men, are reflected in gendered inequalities in poverty, health...and in various other spheres such as unemployment” (Glendinning, Millar, Doyal, cited in Green, 2004:57). Systemic violence related to the gender relations thus undermine the spirit of an egalitarian society. The next section discusses the violence within communities.

***Check Your Progress-1***

1. *Write your views on patriarchy and its manifestations.*

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## 4.4 VIOLENCE WITHIN COMMUNITIES

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Power relations within a community often operate in overt and covert ways. There are visible power relations. Intergenerational differences may be caught within the overall structure of the communities. Social stratification redefines the community in multiple ways. It fragments and polarizes the community as well. The cohesive nature of the community may operate at an ideal level. Moral education and its relations with ethos/religion complicate the nature of ethics. The position of the individual is often questioned in plural ways. At the same time, an individual can not completely detach from the ethical space of the community. Actions and consequences of the members of the community question the nature of ethics as well. Violence within the communities challenges the existence of individuals in particular and communities in general. The community looks at the violence within the communities in a complicated manner. The community may have the idea of good actions and taboos. At the same time, the question is whether the community can derive an internal critique or not. It is observed that “violence against women among the Beba is considered as a taboo; indeed, beating one’s wife is as serious a crime as committing suicide through hanging...individuals are thus encouraged to seek other avenues within their families/society in solving their problems instead of resorting to suicide (Nfah-Abbenyi,2005:270). There are metanarratives or dominant constructions related to health and gender relations within the communities. Such projection of community often is uncritical of its ideology and practices. It is also not helpful to assess the relations across the members of the community.

Scholars in India have analyzed the methodological tensions that emerge while studying the violence within the communities. Social science-based research on marriage demonstrates the difficulties in unveiling such a conceptual world of internal community-linked tensions. It is analyzed that “the discussions on dowry have been particularly tied to the issue of ‘bride burnings ‘and has both enabled and obscured the issue of marital violence. Women’s groups have been active in both issues, though unevenly so, across time and place...Importantly, there has been a tendency for studies to focus on violence per se. Unwittingly perhaps, this feeds into the idea that violence is a pathology rather than embedded in the cultural and political economy of contemporary marriage, kinship and gender. A critique of the perceived normality of marriage and gender practices have entered the frame in some studies of ‘honour killings’ seen primarily in certain regions of the subcontinent such as parts of Pakistan and northern India” (Palriwala, Chowdhry, Hossain and Welchman, Saheli and Kaur, cited in Kaur and Rajni,2014:11). Religious and caste-based violence led to polarization based on diverse caste cum religious identities. There are dominant sections and subordinate sections within the community. Violence may erupt between the internal and hierarchical ranks before affecting the conflict at the external level. Racial intolerance too fragments the idea of the community. The next section discusses the question of honour and its embedded nature in caste and violence.

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## 4.5 QUESTION OF HONOUR

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Social institutions reproduce crime in peculiar ways. It assesses conformity and deviance in a particular manner. Honour killing is much discussed across diverse disciplines. It is observed that “reports of what is called ‘honour killings’-violent attempts to prevent self-choice or inter-caste marriage-are also frequent in North India and Pakistan” (Palriwala and Ravinder,2014:1). khap Panchayats have attracted people across the diverse streams of academics due to its primitive and diabolical character. There are popular perceptions and academic perspectives related to khap Panchayats. The nature of khap and its transition from tribal to caste council shows its various transformations. The norms, culture and morality of the region are governed by senior male members. This peculiar structure of khap shows its patriarchal nature (Singh and Gavit,2016:241-242). Punishment or honour killing by the khap panchayats questions the existing legal systems and civic sense.

Honour killing is usually analysed as the response to the loss of power when youngsters marry outside the caste or the community norms (Chaudhry and Kaur, cited in Kaur and Rajni,2014). The existence of honour killings shows the existence of barbaric practices in our society. The role of khap Panchayats is discussed in this context (Awasthi,2016). khap Panchayats operate through clans (Vati,2016). Honour killings are being carried out through the khap panchayats which control people through social boycotts and imposition of fines. Those who violate the dictates of khaps are forced to commit suicide. Thus, it challenges the modern laws and spirit of the Constitution. It is critiqued that the political system also is responsible for maintaining such retrogressive social organization (Awasthi,2016). khap Panchayat also gains its space through its social activities (Gupta,2016). Palvinder Kaur argued that it is important to read khap panchayats by their material role in society than dismissing their significance. It is further argued to seek the possibilities of modernization of khap panchayats (Kaur,2016). The lack of reforms converts such institutions to one that monitors the sexuality of women (Singh,2016). According to the local khap panchayat, those who marry within the same gotra and the same village are regarded as committing incest and, subsequently such a union is branded as unacceptable and invalid. khap Panchayats are criticized for declaring death orders for those couples who do inter-caste marriage (Singh and Garvit,2016:242). Marriage between diverse gotra people that belong to the same village is not acceptable to the khap panchayat. Sometimes, in the case of the same gotras, the bride from village is compelled to move to another village to join her husband. However, there should not be any kind of prior ties of kinship with either their mother-in-law or their sister-in-law. Therefore, all women and men of a similar clan and the same village are restrained by the morality of the brother-sister relationship. Norms and values codified by the khap panchayat are patriarchal. Social shaming and punishment of the khap panchayats show their withdrawal from modernity (Dwivedi and Sharbani,2016). Culture of the barbarity is not challenged by the economic development of those regions (Awasthi,2016). Capitalism thus is not able to annihilate barbaric, social practices.



Rise in the honour crimes show the persistence of the reactionary ideology, clan, caste and patriarchy. Scholars have studied complex conditions of the governance systems in such cases (Farhat and Nagendra,2016). Emotion, physical and sexual honour crimes are challenging the existence of legal institutions (Yadav,2016). Colonial engagement with the local level practices of resolution of domestic issues have maintained social organizations such as Khap panchayats are also explored to understand its strange survival (Sharma,2016). Such social organizations complicate the ideas such as “traditional “and “modern” (Hashiya and Yadav,2016).khap panchayat differs from Panchayati raj institutions and criminal courts and police to effectively reduce the issues of domestic violence and honour killing(Dhyani,2016). Patriarchal forms of traditional governance and traditional justice thus are caught within their ideology of clan and region. The politics around honour thus haunt the members of the community. It haunts the women and individuals who do not want to be governed by the community’s internal vicious ideology. Anti-modern cultural practices that harm communities thus are condemned by human rights organizations and development movements across the globe. The following sections attempt to grapple with the issues related to the revivals of norms and customs and their deleterious impact on modern society.

### ***Check Your Progress-2***

1. *Write your understanding on khap panchayat.*

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## **4.6 RESURGENCE OF NORMS AND CUSTOMS AND ITS CONFLICT WITH MODERN SOCIETIES**

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The politicization of religion has rechanged the nature of the traditional understanding and practices related to religion. The shift from spirituality to that organized religion happens in the presence of the religion and laws of the nation. Sometimes, modern laws of the nation are not able to circumvent the weight of the hate-mongering customs. Thus, customs often become counterrevolutionary in countries based on democracy and modern political systems/governance. In other words, it destroys the social change that emerged through the advent of modern laws and citizenship. Before discussing the larger implications related to the resurgence of norms and customs and their tensions within modern societies, one needs to understand the fundamental debates related to norms and customs. Norms are described as the expectations about proper conduct which stand for the same directions for social action. Human beings demonstrate some regular tendencies which emerge due to their coexistence with common norms. The action of human beings is rule-governed in nature. Actual behaviour may not be part of the social norms. Normative behaviour is not always in the existing pattern.

Norms correct human behaviour as proper. It also shows legitimacy, consent and prescription. Deviations from the norms are usually met with penalties. People encounter norms through internalization and socialization. The idea of norm is central to perspectives on social order (Abercrombie, Stephen and Bryan,2000:231). Customs are the accepted schemas of behaviour and belief. It signifies the day-to-day life and varies according to diverse cultures (Abercrombie, Stephen and Bryan,2000:84).

Female genital mutilation is contested due to its positioning within the identity politics and Western media gaze (Nnaemeka,2005:60). The rituals related to community lead to the oppression of women. Members of the (patriarchal) community often challenge developed countries 'civilizing mission for developing and underdeveloped societies. In other words, developed countries always judge developing and underdeveloped societies through the cultural and political parameters of developed countries. As part of their resistance to such foreign interventionism, they return to the cultural practices of the community. Such a return to one's own culture becomes the path for the oppression of women within the communities (Nnameka,2005: 61). In other words, the abuse of the female body in any culture or nation may be problematic for other nations. Policymakers and human rights activists often condemn such acts of barbarity as a way to abolish the oppression of women across the globe. Thus, policymakers have to transcend the circles of particularism and embrace the perspectives related to universalism. At the same time, these practices are read as patriarchal in their outlook. The question that arises is that if certain practices are patriarchal and others are considered non-patriarchal, how the cultural particularism of a social system/region/country can be addressed? It is critiqued that "the one-sidedness of the prevailing discourse on women would appear intolerably grotesque if it were suggested..." (Lazreg,2005:68). These debates are central to the perspectives on the decolonization of the dominant/Eurocentric/imperialist feminism. It thus challenges the geopolitics of the idea of (hegemonic) feminism and the question of women throughout the world. Politics across the globe are witnessing the revival of orthodox and conservative groups. The clash across political cultures operates around the internal logic of the community and its process of othering.

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## 4.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we have studied how patriarchy determines violence within communities. It also discusses the etymological and epistemological underpinnings of the category of patriarchy in the context of violence within the communities. It also introduces the debates on the relations between the categories and social practices related to violence and communities. The idea of honour that usually exists as a marker of violence within the communities is also discussed in this context. Questions related to the resurgence of norms and customs that challenge the spirit of modern society are also explored in this unit.

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## 4.8 UNIT END QUESTION

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1. Analyse the idea of patriarchy in your own words.
2. Discuss the various dimensions of the violence within the communities
3. Do you think that the revival of the norms and customs challenges the ethos of modern society? Illustrate with suitable examples
4. Write your understanding of the question of honour in contemporary society.

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