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The Role Of Patriarchy In The Growth Or Demise Of India's Economy In The 21st Century

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Abstract

The paper explores the multifaceted impact of patriarchy on India's economy in the twenty-first century, in terms of labor market prejudices, legal frameworks, societal norms, and educational differences. Highlighting its role in collectively contributing to gender inequality in political, social, and economic structures. Patriarchy creates a discriminatory system, learning to disparate economic statuses between men and women. According to studies, gender differences in power dynamics influence social influence strategies. French and Raven's seminal work on social power suggests that these dynamics vary significantly between genders, shaping distinct approaches to influence within various social contexts (French & Raven, 1959).In India, discriminatory practices persist in credit lending, property ownership, etc hindering women's economic opportunities. Lack of banking access, legal limitations on inheritance and property rights, discrimination against women in employment and promotion, salary gaps, and insufficient assistance for female-owned enterprises are some of the obstacles that stand in the way of women's economic empowerment. The unequal burden of unpaid care work, wage discrimination, and more further impedes female wage progression. Hence, hindering overall economic growth in the country. The paper stresses the importance of the pivotal role of education in breaking the role of patriarchy, and the cycle of gender inequality and emphasizes the need to address patriarchal attitudes and structures for sustainable economic development. Alongside the current challenges, there are ongoing efforts, including government policies, and women-led movements that strive to challenge gender norms and empower women economically in India's evolving economic landscape. To what extent has patriarchy (particularly through its impact on women's economic opportunities and participation) influenced the growth or demise of India's economy in the 21st century?

I. Introduction

The patriarchy is a deeply entrenched system that reinforces gender inequality by valuing and privileging traits and behaviors considered "masculine" while undervaluing and disregarding those seen as "feminine." This system operates within political, social, and economic structures and has close ties to capitalism, colonialism, and nationalism. Patriarchy affects the economy by creating a system of gender-based discrimination and unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. This leads to a disparity in the financial and economic status of women and men, with men often holding more power and wealth. This reinforces existing power structures and further perpetuates the gender imbalance in the economy.

There are comprehensive studies investigating gender differences in power and their impact on social influence. The research suggests that, on average, men hold higher levels of expert and legitimate power while women have a stronger presence of referent power. (Eagly & Carli, 2007)This power dynamic can be seen in the different approaches men and women use when trying to influence others, with women facing more challenges in asserting their influence, especially when using strategies that display competence and authority. The evidence supports the conclusion that the gender divide in influence is primarily influenced by gender disparities in power. These findings have important implications for understanding how gender affects power dynamics and social influence in various settings.

II. Literary Review

Patriarchy's impact on the Indian economy is a topic that can be considered a great debate when discussing gender and economic development in the 21st century. This literature review focuses on how patriarchy shapes the economic opportunities for women and the broader social consequences of the same. It overviews the developments, and research about the biases causing economic disparities and effectiveness of the policies implemented to mitigate the inequalities.

Development of the India Patriarchy Index (Singh et al., 2021): This study introduces an index that measures patriarchy across India quantitative. It identifies the variations in patriarchal levels in the various regions of India. The study further correlates this to the economic disparities that affect women. The index further explains the direct relationship between patriarchal values on economic inequalities, enriching the discussion on the distribution of resources and opportunities. Even though the study's strength lies in its rigorous methodology, the index may not include the socio-cultural nuances due to the focus on quantitative aspects. Singh, A., Chokhandre, P., Singh, A.K. et al. Development of the India Patriarchy Index: Validation and Testing of Temporal and Spatial Patterning. Soc Indic Res 159, 351–377 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-021-02752-1

Development, Patriarchy, and Politics: Indian Women in the Political Process (Kasturi, Leela., 2019): This paper is regarding the constraints patriarchy places on women's role in the political sector of India. It examines how patriarchal norms limit women's leadership. The study furthered deepens the understanding of how patriarchal power creates an imbalance extend beyond economics to even governance. However, the paper may reflect biases toward urban educated women. Kasturi, Leela. "Development, patriarchy, and politics: Indian women in the political process, 1947-1992." (1995).

Fertility, Dimensions of Patriarchy, and Development in India (Malhotra et al., 2000): This research explores the influence of patriarchal norms on fertility decisions, and the border impact (including economic) for development. It investigates the impacts between marriage systems, women's autonomy and demographic patterns. These findings draw conclusions about the control of patriarchy over women's reproductive decisions impact economic and social development. The study provides a link between social norms and fertility behavior but might be outdated given recent societal changes. Malhotra, Anju, Reeve Vanneman, and Sunita Kishor. "Fertility, dimensions of patriarchy, and development in India." Population and development review (1995): 281-305.

S*ocio-economic Development and Gender Inequality in India (Razvi et al., 2005):* The study explores the impacts of gender inequality, driven by patriarchal norms, on socio-economic development. It addresses the disparities in education and employment opportunities for women. This research underscores how gender roles due to patriarchal norms impact economic progress, providing significant insights for policy and reform. Its limitation may be the pace of updating data to reflect rapid economic changes and new policies. Razvi, Meena, and Gene L. Roth. "Socio-Economic Development and Gender Inequality in India." Online Submission (2004).

The studies on the impact of patriarchy on India's economy explores the relationships between gender norms and economic opportunities, development. Research such as the Development of the India Patriarchy Index highlights the regional disparities in patriarchal constructs that correlates with economic inequalities faced by women. The other studies mentioned and more also delve into the political and demographic effects of patriarchy, and further demonstrating how it limits women's participation in governance, and influences fertilities decisions, hence affecting socio-economic growth. These finding highlight the need for focused policy and educational reforms to dismantle gender disparities and and promote a more equitable economic environment in India in the 21st century.

III. Discussion

In India, systemic barriers and discriminatory practices significantly hinder women's economic participation. This can be attributed to the patriarchal system that has been prevalent in the country's economy for a long time. In India, particularly since the economic liberalization of the 1990s, women have been excluded from sharing property and economic opportunities, as they are often perceived as dependent on men to earn a living and support the family. This perception is principally prevalent in rural areas, where traditional customs have a strong influence in socio-economic roles.

Moreover, women still face a significant gender gap in the corporate and government sectors despite the government's launch of various programs and schemes aimed at providing equal opportunities for both genders. Reservation policies have helped to increase the number of jobs for women in the government sector, and this has led to changes in the corporate sector. However, the number of women in top-tier positions remains low compared to men.

These issues are often debated, and there is a widespread belief that patriarchy is the root cause of gender inequality in India. The patriarchal system is deeply ingrained in Indian society, and it presents a significant obstacle to achieving gender equality. Despite the efforts made to uplift women and provide them with the same opportunities as men, patriarchy continues to hold them back. Therefore, due to the deep-rooted nature of the patriarchal system, achieving true equality would require a gradual dismantling of a few of its aspects. Initial changes in specific areas (such as legal rights and access to education) could foster visible improvements in gender equality. Eventually, as these benefits become more apparent, wider acceptability and implementation of equality measures have a higher possibility to fall into place.

In India, despite significant progress towards gender equality in recent years, such as improved access to education for women, increased female participation in the workforce, and strengthened legal frameworks protecting women's rights, there remains a persistent disparity between women and men in a variety of socioeconomic outcomes.Increasing opportunities for women in areas such as health, education, earnings, civic rights, and political participation can help to reduce this inequality and drive overall social and economic development. However, despite these advances, there is still much work to be done to fully close the gender gap and achieve true equality. It is significant to highlight the importance of continued efforts to empower women and provide them with equal access to opportunities, resources, and power to create a more equitable and just society.

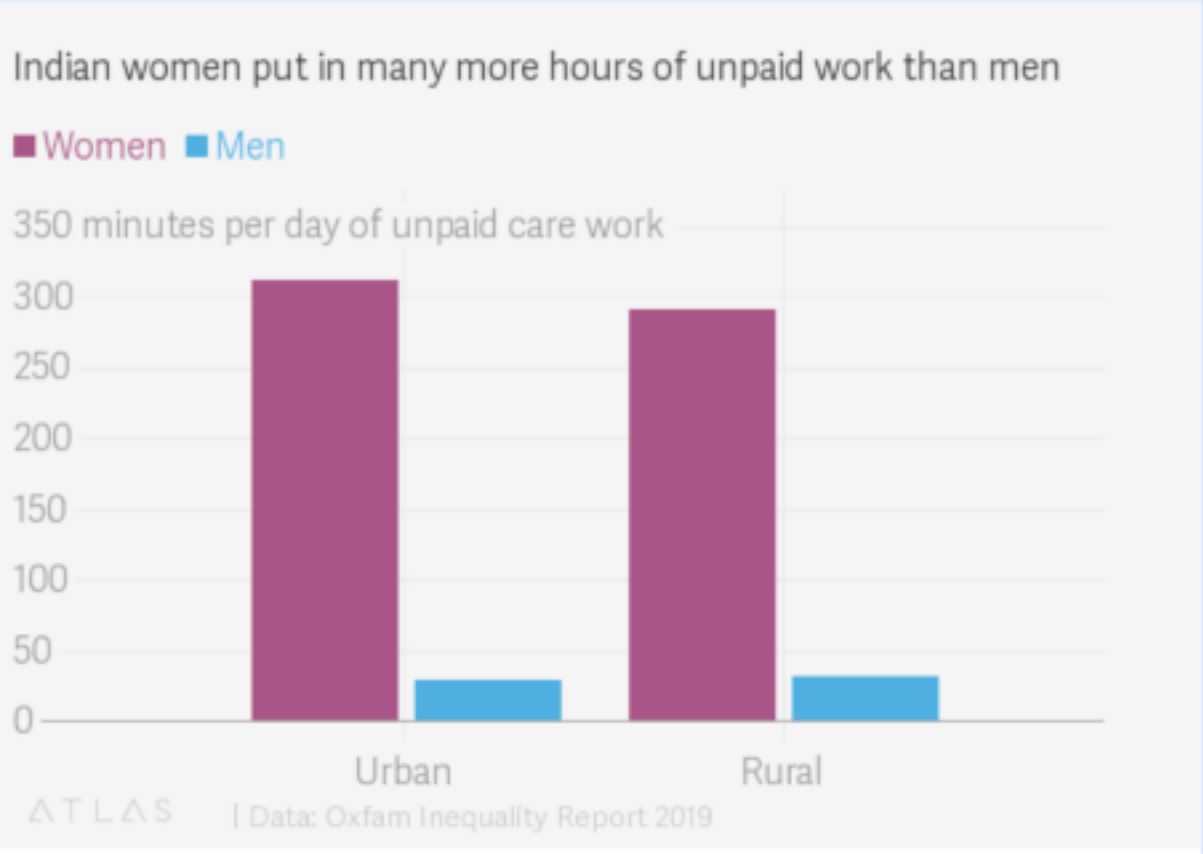

Figure 1: *"Disparity in Unpaid Care Work: A Comparison between Urban and Rural Indian Women And Men"*

As per the graph above, it can be observed that in India, the burden of unpaid care work falls disproportionately on women, who spend an average of five hours a day on such tasks compared to the mere half-hour spent by men. This unequal distribution of labor leads to significant consequences for women, including reduced opportunities for paid work and increased time poverty, which can negatively impact their overall well-being.

It would be best to address this issue and work towards a more equitable distribution of unpaid care work to empower women and promote their social and economic development. A few ways to do so is to implement policy initiatives that recognize care work and provide compensation, social awareness campaigns to promote shared household responsibilities, affordable childcare services, affordable elderly services, workplace reforms, such as flexible work hours and remote work opportunities, etc.

To tackle unequal distribution of unpaid care work in India and empower women, we need policy initiatives that recognize care work and provide compensation, social awareness campaigns to promote shared household responsibilities, affordable childcare and eldercare services, workplace reforms like flexible work hours and remote work options, and education programs that challenge gender roles.

Wage discrimination is a prevalent issue in India, where women are often paid less than men for performing the same job. This disparity is driven by various factors, including gender biases, a lack of legal enforcement, and a lack of representation in high-paying industries. The problem is particularly pronounced in rural areas and among unskilled workers, where women often earn significantly less than men. To address this issue, advocates are calling for stronger laws to protect women from wage discrimination and for increased efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace. Women's rights in the workplace have recently been strengthened through legislative initiatives in India's ongoing battle against wge discrimination. For example, changes to the Maternity Benefit Act,have extended the length of maternity leave in recognition of women's dual roles as mothers and workers. Hence, this has indirect effects on the wage party as well. It improved job stability before, during, and after pregnancy. The goal of placing these rules into effect is to reduce the pay gap and promote a more inclusive economy that values the contribution of women equally. Efforts are still being made to bolster enforcement and raise public knowledge of these legal rights.

Wage inequality and obstacles in the job market can hinder the advancement of female wages and subsequently impede the progression toward modern economic growth. These factors negatively impact the ability of women to secure fair compensation for their labor and restrict their opportunities for employment and career advancement. This can lead to a slowing down of the overall rise in relative female wages, hindering the economic growth of society as a whole.

IV. Comparison And Analysis- A Brief Overlay

In both less developed and more developed nations, men hold a significant amount of power over various aspects of women's lives. Men who hold positions such as political leaders, religious figures, judges, and village heads can create and enforce policies that may not align with women's needs and desires. Additionally, as husbands and fathers in the private sphere, men can have a direct impact on women's economic and social growth. Failing to include men in the formation and implementation of gender-focused policies can have negative consequences and may lead to further disparities instead of reducing them.

There is a crucial role that husbands and fathers play in the well-being of their wives and daughters, focusing on access to education and health institutions as well as social and economic arrangements that impact women. Some studies suggest that in countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tunisia, India, and South Korea, women rely on their husbands or male family members for decisions about their healthcare. ((Thaddeus & Maine, 1994)

Limitations on women's access to healthcare can have serious consequences for their health, particularly during pregnancy or childbirth. In many developing countries, men also hold power over women's reproductive health, serving as policymakers and service providers and perpetuating a male-dominated understanding of women's needs. As partners and husbands, men often have the final say in family planning decisions and the use of contraception, meaning that programs that only target women will not be fully effective. In order to effectively manage the population growth, and simultaneously address the patriarchal norms, the government can implement several measures. These include Nationwide education campaigns that educate both men and women about family planning and contraceptive options. Implementation of policies that are inclusive and healthcare providers that involve both partners in family planning discussions. Further enrichment of community engagement programs that help in challenging patriarchal norms by promoting gender equality in decision-making. Additionally, offering accessibility to free or subsidized family planning serves to ensure equitable participation in these decisions. This would further support the efforts to manage population growth as well as enhance women's autonomy.

Household allocation decisions are the outcome of negotiations among family members, each with their preferences, as they try to allocate the resources they control and are invested in. The bargaining power of each member is a crucial determinant of the outcome. Income is a significant factor in determining the distribution of power within a household, but it is not the only factor that affects the decision-making process. Changes in a household's economic environment, particularly those that alter the bargaining positions of its members, are also important to consider. Women are often paid less than men, which puts them at a disadvantage in the decision-making process and results in male-dominated allocation decisions. The preferences of each family member and the resources they control also play a role in the allocation process. It is important to consider these factors to better understand the dynamics of household decision-making.

Several factors have been identified as contributing to men sharing or giving up some of their traditional privileges and authority in favor of women over time.

- *Value Of Human Capital:* the increase in the value of human capital has increased men's incentives to share power with women and made polygamy less affordable.
- *Investment in Children's Well-Being:* Women tend to invest more resources in children's well-being, so a rise in bargaining power for women leads to greater investment in their children's human capital.
- *Technological Progress And Skilled Partners:* Men who are skilled value skilled women for their ability to raise skilled children, for their potential to raise skilled offspring, which increases the value of skilled women in the marriage market, affecting choices in the marriage market.
- *Educational Attainment And Pay Gap:* The narrowing of the gender pay gap, driven in part by increasing educational attainment for women (through policies ranging from scholarships, and financial incentives to outreach and education reform initiatives), has also contributed to reducing violence against women.

V. Gender Discrimination and Economic Efficiency: Mechanisms and Implications

There are two main mechanisms through which reduced discrimination leads to increased efficiency. Firstly, reducing discrimination leads to a better alignment of individual abilities and career choices, thus improving overall efficiency. Secondly, since discrimination is more prevalent in high-skill occupations, a decrease in discrimination results in higher investment in human capital and a greater supply of labor from women in these areas. The combined result of the improved allocation of talent, increased labor supply, and faster accumulation of human capital leads to a rise in aggregate growth and productivity.

An example of an economic model in India with regard to the current situation and what would be better:

In the first stage of economic development, both husband and wife focus on household duties and child-rearing while not participating in the labor market, leading to a high fertility rate. As the market wage increases in the second stage, men enter the labor market while women continue to focus on household and child-rearing tasks. However, as men reduce their involvement in household duties, women have to take on more, causing the cost of child-rearing to rise. This leads to a decline in fertility even though women haven't entered the labor market yet.

In the third stage, men only participate in market work and women only in household and child-rearing tasks. With a rising market wage for men, the positive income effect dominates, leading to an increase in fertility similar to the baby boom period. In the final stage, once there is enough capital, women enter the market as wage earners. The negative substitution effect of rising female opportunity costs leads to another decline in fertility, transitioning the economy from a "breadwinner model" to a "dual-earnings model".

The long-term economic development theories heavily emphasize the impact of two key factors: **the growth of population and the accumulation of human capital**. Both of these factors are mainly determined by decisions made within households, such as fertility choices influencing population growth and investments in child education and health impacting human capital accumulation. The gender gap in the perception of the value of time also has a significant effect on economic growth through two major channels. Firstly, when the labor market perceives the value of women's time as being low, women tend to take on the responsibilities of child-rearing and household chores. This low valuation of female time makes children relatively inexpensive, leading to a higher fertility rate and a slower pace of economic growth, both due to the direct impact of population growth on long-term economic performance and the slower accumulation of human capital due to the trade-off between quantity and quality. Secondly, if parents believe that there will be relatively low returns on investments in female education due to women being confined to domestic activities, they are likely to invest less in the education of girls.

The average number of years of education received by girls from the top 20% of families is nine, while girls from families in the bottom 20% receive none. In addition to financial constraints, a lack of proper facilities, such as toilets and menstrual hygiene management, results in the annual dropping out of more than 23 million girls from school. Social norms that dictate women's domestic roles, such as caring for young children and elderly relatives, further limit their opportunities for education and paid work. These factors contribute to a perpetuating cycle of poverty and inequality, and it is crucial to address these challenges to promote gender equality and education for all.

Moreover, these limitations in access to education and paid work also have far-reaching implications for the health, well-being, and economic stability of girls and women. Studies have shown that educating girls leads to positive outcomes for individuals, families, and entire communities. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to marry later, have fewer children, and provide better health care and education for their families (World Bank, n.d.). They also have higher earning potential and are more likely to participate in the formal labor market and make important contributions to the economy. Addressing the barriers to education and paid work for girls and women in India is not only a matter of social justice but also a crucial step towards sustainable economic growth and development. According to Harriet Martineau, one of the pioneers in identifying this issue, “as women have none of the objects in life for which an enlarged education is considered requisite, the education is not given”. This indicates that education is not provided to women because they are not seen as needing it for any specific purpose in life. This results in lower investment in human capital for girls, which slows down the pace of economic development in the long run.

VI. Gender Inequality as a Distorting Factor in Economic Growth

Furthermore, the patriarchal system can be considered both as a cause of inefficiency and a source of negative externalities in society. It leads to a misallocation of valuable resources like talent or labor, hindering economic growth and development. Additionally, gender inequality contributes to other societal issues such as higher fertility rates, imbalanced gender ratios, and reduced investment in human capital, leading to further negative consequences.

The most compelling argument for why patriarchy affects overall economic efficiency and growth centers on the unequal distribution of talent. When talent is randomly distributed among the population, discrimination that limits women's access to education, job opportunities, or specific careers results in a smaller pool of available talent compared to a society without these restrictions. Gender inequality can be seen as a form of tax that distorts the utilization of talent and holds back economic growth.

India's economy can be analyzed through three production factors: capital, manual labor (referred to as "brawn"), and mental labor (referred to as "brain"). Both men and women possess equal amounts of mental labor, but men have greater physical labor capabilities. In economies that initially have very low levels of capital per worker, women typically specialize in child rearing as their opportunity cost of forgoing market earnings is lower compared to that of men. Over time, the accumulation of capital per worker due to technological advancements leads to a rise in the stock of capital. The degree of complementarity between capital and mental labor is higher than that between capital and physical labor. As a result, the relative wages of women increase, causing the opportunity cost of childrearing to rise. This negative substitution effect overwhelms the positive income effect on the demand for children, leading to a decline in fertility for example.

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VII. Patriarchal Influence on Economic Dynamics and Women's Empowerment in India

Patriarchal attitudes and structures can limit women's access to education and employment opportunities, which in turn can hamper economic growth. Research has shown that gender inequality can lead to lower productivity and reduced economic output, as well as reduced access to credit and financial resources for women-led businesses.

On the other hand, patriarchy can also lead to a concentration of economic power in the hands of men, which can stifle innovation and economic growth. Gender bias in leadership and decision-making can result in a lack of diversity in the workforce, limiting the range of perspectives and ideas in the economy.

In the case of India, there are several factors that suggest patriarchy may be hindering economic growth. For example, while women make up roughly half of the country's population, they are significantly underrepresented in the formal labor force. Additionally, women in India face significant barriers to accessing credit and other financial resources, which can make it difficult for them to start or grow businesses. That being said, there are also many efforts underway in India to address gender inequality and promote women's economic empowerment.

For example, the government has implemented several policies to support women entrepreneurs, such as offering loans and training programs. Additionally, civil society organizations and women-led movements are working to change social norms and attitudes around gender roles and women's economic participation.

While patriarchy can certainly have a negative impact on economic growth, there are also many efforts underway to challenge patriarchal structures and promote women's economic empowerment in India. Ultimately, the extent to which patriarchy will affect India's economy in the 21st century will depend on a variety of factors, including the success of these efforts and broader macroeconomic conditions.

VIII. Conclusion

The inquiry into the extent to which patriarchy influences the growth or demise of India’s economy in the 21st century reveals that patriarchy plays a significant role. The patriarchal system reinforces gender inequality by valuing and privileging traits considered "masculine" while undervaluing those viewed as "feminine." This unequal distribution of resources and opportunities leads to a disparity in the financial and economic status of women and men, with men often holding more power and wealth. This perpetuates existing power structures and further entrenches the gender imbalance in the economy. To achieve true gender equality and promote social and economic development, it is crucial to empower women by providing them with equal access to opportunities, resources, and power.

This involves addressing issues such as wage discrimination, unequal distribution of unpaid care work, and increasing women's representation in high-paying industries. It is also essential to involve men in the formation and implementation of gender-focused policies and to consider household decision-making dynamics in policies' formation. By addressing these issues and promoting gender equality, India can achieve significant progress towards its overall economic growth and social development.

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