

Emergence of Matriarchy: From A Philosophical point of view

Dipanjjan Das, Assistant Professor,
Sitalkuchi College, Cooch Behar, West Bengal, India

Abstract:

A woman has a progressive energy like a man but multiple disruptions do not let them to be bloomed. A woman is like the nature. She gives birth and fosters her child so carefully with love and affection. So, the role of a woman is very important for the growth of a society. But social barriers, suppressions, dominance by patriarchal society obstructed them to contribute the society positively era to era. Female power outburst at the end of nineteenth century in the form of feminist movement. They became vocal. According to Australian environmental feminist Val Plumwood the source of the environmental problems we face today, that is, the exploitative attitude towards women and nature, is the dualism deeply ingrained in Western thought where people are found outside the environment and nature. Eco-feminism bridged between woman and nature and made movements. Many thinkers, such as Vandana Shiva, joined this movement and fought against the domination on nature *i.e.* patriarchal domination. At the advent of social media women got the chance to convey their words, grievance more properly. But there is a matter of concern that every positive power can be converted into negative power. Woman may go astray for over involvement into social media. So, if women depend on social media carefully and cautiously they will be able to impart their grievances and demands much more properly.

Keywords: Women, Social Media, Feminism, Matriarchy, Patriarchy

Introduction:

It is a well-known fact that “*Jananī janmabhūmiśca svargād api garīyasī*”. After the child is born, the mother is unknown to it; it does not know its mother. Its first acquaintance with its mother was from the time it first drank milk. Gradually the child's steadfast conviction through breastfeeding becomes the child's firm conviction that the person is beneficial to it. This suffix gives birth to shelter-consciousness. Gradually the mother becomes the ultimate and absolute refuge of the child. The child becomes so dependent on its mother that it would

readily reject any toy, car, land, worldly object or even heavenly bliss given to it in exchange for its mother. It is because; the child falls in love with its mother and finds the whole universe in her.

But, the mother is a woman. We divide human society into two types - man and woman. The basis of this type-difference is the physical and biological disparities between men and women. But, the question is that whether this difference in society is based solely on physical and biological differences or not. It is simply put - no. In different eras, there have been instances of women being deprived of various rights in terms of concept of low power, weak nature, weak mentality etc. Reviewing the history, it is seen that masculinity has cruelly made women inferior and subordinate to men. As a result, the opposite reaction of the action has also been observed. The accumulated dissatisfaction and anger among women has taken the shape of a feminist movement. The question is of human rights; why shouldn't women be seen as human beings and given human rights for that? Two words that stand out are: 'Sex' and 'Gender'. There is no place to deny the sex difference, because it is physical. So the agitators did not make any movement about it. Gender difference is not but physical; it is social, imposed, so it is also undeniable.

A review of human history reveals that there were matriarchal groups at the beginning of civilization. Divinity was imposed on the earth and fertility in various primitive human groups. The earth was worshiped as a goddess. But gradually the advent of patriarchy took place. As a result, this matriarchal society became extinct. Gradually, the deityness began to be directed towards the sky instead of the earth which was within reach. Matrika-idols have been found in the history of India, but no male-god idols have been found. Then, when the Aryans arrived, the worship of mother stopped and the worship of male deities like Indra, Varuṇa and Sūrya etc. started. Yajñas began to be held for them. Then when the idol-imagination came, the imagination of male-idol also came and the idea of killing a woman or a non-human being by the male god began to be shown as the victory of masculinity or patriarchy over nature or women. Since the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are the oldest epics in India, the imprint of Vedic civilization and culture can be seen on these two epics as well. The slaying of Tārakā Rākṣasī by Rāma, the slaying of Putanā Rākṣasī by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, again, the insult of Śūrpanakhā by Lakṣmaṇa etc. are evidences of the above concept.

The nature of patriarchy is the same no matter where you go in the world. Now the question is, will that practice still continue? From the end of the nineteenth century, women became

vocal against it. There are three stages of this movement which are seen as three waves. From the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century was the early stage of the feminist movement, called the first wave of feminism. The movement was mainly focused on women's suffrage, legal rights over children, property rights, etc. The second wave of feminism began to roll in the salt from the time of World War II and it debuted in between the 1960s to 1970s. The demands of the movement at this stage were the right to decide on reproductive issues, the right to equality in the workplace, the establishment of equal rights in society and in the family. Thus, it can be said that the goal of this movement was to speak out against gender inequality and demand equal rights for men and women. The third wave of feminism began in the 1980s. Some environmentalism can be noticed in the speed of this movement. The movement manifested itself in determining the relationship between environmentalism and feminism, as well as between the environment and women, and was able to establish firmly its own individuality.

Simone de Beauvoir, French feminist thinker, wrote a book in French in 1949 called *The Second Sex*. There one of his sayings became famous. That is, "no one is born as a woman, but become a woman." With this statement, Beauvoir differentiates between sex and gender, saying that the difference between sexes is biological and gender is social and historical. She said the basic source of oppression of women is to view feminism as inferior from a historical and social point of view. In *The Second Sex* Beauvoir argues that men have made women "different" in society by applying a false aura of mystery around them. She further argues that men use it as an excuse not to understand women or not to understand their problems or not to help them. And this stereotyping was always done in the society up to the lower group of the classification under the higher classification. She wrote that similar domination by classification occurred in the identities of other classes, such as race, class, and religion, but he claimed that this was not truer than gender where men stereotyped women and used it as an excuse to organize society into patriarchy.

Despite her contributions to the feminist movement, especially the French women's liberation movement, and her belief in women's economic freedom and equal education, Beauvoir was initially reluctant to call herself a feminist.

However, after observing the resurgence of the feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Beauvoir said she no longer believed that the socialist revolution would be

enough to bring about liberation of women. She publicly declared herself a feminist in a 1972 interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*.*

Now the question is, what is environmental feminism? Simply put, the aim of this movement is to build protest and resistance against the underdevelopment and environmental degradation caused by the patriarchal society. Leading figures in the American feminist movement, Greta Gaard and Patrick D. Murphy, speak of environmental feminism - a practical movement for social change that focuses on the well-being of women, their families, and their communities.

Australian environmental feminist Val Plumwood thinks that the source of the environmental problems we face today, that is, the exploitative attitude towards women and nature, is the dualism deeply ingrained in Western thought where[†] people are found outside the environment and nature. She provides a large list of dualities in her texts, which were and still are prevalent in Western culture.[‡] They are –

Culture — Nature
Reason — Nature
Male — Female
Mind — Body (Nature)
Master — Slave
Reason — Matter
Rationality — Animality (Nature)
Reason — Emotion (Nature)
Mind/Spirit — Nature
Freedom — Necessity (Nature)
Universal — Particular
Human — Nature (Non-human)
Civilised — Primitive (Nature)
Production — Reproduction (Nature)
Public — Private
Subject — Object
Self — Other

The duality of reason and nature is probably the oldest of these dualities, and we find it in the writings of the ancient philosopher Plato in the history of our Western philosophy. It is this duality of his that later it seems that these different dualities have been formed by the flowering of leaves in different branches. In Plato's writings we find two worlds. One is the

* Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simone_de_Beauvoir

[†] *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Val Plumwood, p. 2

[‡] *Ibid*, 43

world of everyday experience and the other is the world of ideas. The methods of acquiring knowledge about these two worlds are also different. We gain knowledge of our daily world through the sense organs like eyes and we gain knowledge about the world of ideas through reason or intellect. None touches the other. That is, the world of ideas cannot be known by the senses, and the world of everyday sight cannot be known by reason or intellect. In this way we get another kind of duality - sense versus reason.

Plato's goal was to know the immutable. So to him the value of immutability was much greater than change. And this is why Plato has elevated the world of ideas and to him the world of the senses is much inferior. The relation of the world of senses with the world of ideas is very similar to that of shadow-body or sound-echo. Just as the shadow imitates the body, the echo survives by imitating the sound, just as the perceptual world imitates the world of ideas. The things of the perceptual world depend on the world of ideas, in one way or another, for their existence. This is why Plato has given higher status to the objects of the world of ideas than to the objects of the perceptual world. The Western thought and culture was strongly influenced by the duality introduced by Plato, which led to the devaluation of the perceptual world or nature. As a result, logic became everything and the progress of civilization continued for ages by subduing nature with the firm hand of reason.

The term 'Ecofeminism' was first used by the French feminist thinker Francois de Eaubonne in her book *Le Feminism ou La Mort*, published in 1984.[§] But her inspiration for this writing was elsewhere. In 1979, an accidental explosion occurred at the nuclear power plant on an island in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, affecting the environment. Since then, ordinary people have realized that preserving the environment is essential for their well-being. Then, in the early 1980s, the movement developed in various states of Europe and America through various formal negotiations, seminars. This movement is to maintain a healthy life flow in the world. The closeness of the relationship between women and nature is evident in history, but it has become even clearer since the 1980s when the issue of environmental protection became associated with the feminist movement.

[§] *Naitikatā o Nārīvād*, Shephali Moitra, p. 141

In this case, one's words come very naturally; she is Vandana Shiva. ** She is both a physicist and an environmentalist. She is best known for her support of biodiversity and her influence on the environmental feminist movement. The focus of his work is to critique the current form of globalization. This globalization seeks to integrate society as well as the environment in a harmful and neo-colonial form. Vandana Shiva, in her *Monocultures of the Mind*, criticizes the blindness of regional knowledge of globalization, noting that the dominant system is also a regional system with a specific educational class and gender social basis. This is how colonialization was created. She argues specifically against the current economic assessment; which disregards the ongoing power of society and the environment for life support, dispossessing a growing section of the world community by treating nature and women as passive raw materials. Shiva basically attacks the rationalities and processes that promote the myths of decolonizing, debt culture and improved consumption as the best possible development. As part of her work, she has co-funded various movements such as the Chipko movement and joined NGOs such as the 'Navadānya' and 'Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology'. Along with this, she has led campaigns against bio-piracy, patent business etc. and discrimination against women.

Shiva's main point is that environmental degradation also leads society to social degradation and degrades the condition of women in particular. She has sometimes called her eco-feminism 'subsistence feminism'. This type of feminism seeks to establish a stronger relationship between further participatory cooperation and "basic needs" (food, clothing, shelter) and "higher needs" (freedom and knowledge).

Although Vandana Shiva's work seems to have gone out of fashion, analyzes of her relationship between natural and social degradation remain worryingly relevant, perhaps due to the number of attempts to recreate the boundaries of nature-culture and the focus on 'inhuman bodies'.

Now, social media has come to bring to the people a broad opening. So it touches women too. It opens the door of the entire world to send their voices and convey their opinions. Social media offers societal marginalization of gender inequality in terms of information, education, profession, awareness, etc. paving way for a change in the traditional roles of women. Women of modern era perform a lot in the social media.

** Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vandana_Shiva

Ever since the advent of TV and Radio, the march of social media has begun. At that time various movies, news and entertainment were broadcasted on the TV or Radio. Even then, girls did not appear on social media. Later, in some movies and entertainment, the girls made their debut, albeit in a slightly veiled manner. But, when Dish-TV came along and the cable line went from house to house, the social media grew. That's when the number of TV channels increased, naturally generating more and more openings, and girls got a lot more work. Girls were able to go into journalism to a greater extent, became news reporters, and became news readers too.

As a result, more and more movies and TV serials began to appear, which made the need for actresses, dancers and singers much more. And now in the age of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter etc., lots of girls have got their jobs. Every human being, irrespective of gender, has talent. In news papers and TV news, the girls go to different remote places and bring the news to the world, which is a sign of great courage and endeavor, which no one could have imagined 50 years ago. The girls who are expert in arts such as song, dance, recitation, got a lot more opportunities to show their skills. They got a chance to sing, dance and recite on different TV channels. Those who excelled in acting and who were able to show their acting prowess to a handful of spectators in theaters or plays, got the opportunity to show their acting skills in the wider society and in the whole world.

It is a progressive aspect of society. But, inspite of such progression, still, the domination continues in many nook and corner of the world. Many crimes relating to female-torture is coming out in the news papers throughout the world. These are rape-case, kidnapping of women, insult to the modesty of women, dowry death, assault on women with intent to outrage their modesty, abduction of women, cruelty by husband and in-laws. Only a few of these are recorded in the crime – diary of police but many more are not at all reported and sink into the darkness of oblivion.

I think, there are some lacunas for women in expressing themselves in the outer world. It is because besides giving much opportunity to express themselves social media inspires women to be reckless and audacious which is very much harmful for them and for the society as well. The lion's share of the young girls of the society is inclined in the social media such as TV, Face Book, Whatsapp, Twitter etc. They spend maximum time of their daily life observing and surfing these ignoring their important tasks and studies. As a result they fail to build their carrier properly. When they are stopped to do so, they become arrogant and it

effects negatively on their personal life. Over usage of these devices related to social media turns them into inanimate creatures. These devices effect their physical and mental health negatively [such as obesity, Brain Tumor, loss of memory, anger etc.] for what they suffer in their future life. Moreover, beside good or positive things, they also watch bad or negative things in the social media. In effect, their custom changes and their aggression come. They are addicted in Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco. These are not the end. Social media provide pornography. Many young girls are being involved in this in different ways to satisfy their desires. Some girls are employing themselves in prostitution; some are uploading their vulgar (intoxicating) videos to attract the viewers and receive money from the site. As a result, rape-cases, women harassment, trafficking of women etc. are being increased day by day. Girls are being seen as the consumer goods, not as the human being – the carrier of intelligence and talent. Therefore, human-values are declining. Rather it is better to say that it is going to be collapsed. For the sake of the human-values girls as well as women should restrict themselves. Women should stop excessive use such devices to stop the ailment of the children for their future life and to stop women related crimes by alooing themselves and their children from these sites. So if women understand where to stop and social media helps them to do so, then this would be a fantastic platform for women to unfurl their talents.

Bibliography

1. Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*, Tr. by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage Books, London, 2011.
2. Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Routledge, London, 1993.
3. Singer, Peter. *Practical Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1993

Bengali Sources:

4. Ghosh, Shashvati. *Samatār Dike Āndolane Nārī: Pratham Parva*, Progressive Publishers, Kolkata, 2007
5. Moitra, Shephali, *Naitikatā O Nārīvād*, New Age Publishers Private Ltd., Kolkata, 2015
6. Mukhopadhyaya, Aparajita, *Vyakticaritra ebong Naitikatā*, Centre Of Advanced Study In Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, in collaboration with Mahabodhi Book Agency, Kolkata, 1421 (Bengali Year).

000000