

THE PLACE OF GENDER IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL THROUGH THE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

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Abstract

This work analyzed the changing issues from the pre-industrial gender case through the industrial epoch. Here, issues of contemporary families are changing in ways that suggest decline in family attachments compared to the pre-industrial period when family was characterized by the family based economy.

Keywords: *gender, pre-industrial and industrial societies*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of oppression, exploitation, discrimination and subordination of women is neither a new phenomenon nor peculiar to a particular society both as a global problems and otherwise (Modupe, 2010). It appears that womenfolk suffer one form of discrimination, exploitation and oppression because of the issue of marriage and family role, which might have started from the early history of descent and family roles assigned to both sexes in various culture and tradition. Although historically the family was the unit of production where men and women participated fairly and equally in producing food, even though roles was based on sexes to lessen women burden in reproduction role but they maintained some equality. The domestication of animal and the rise of industries inevitably changed the status of women in the society into the role of subordination and homemakers (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010). This work tries to identify those gender issues in preindustrial and industrialized societies that act to affect women in the society.

THE CONCEPT OF GENDER

Gender is a social construct that defines the roles played by the male and female within each individual society. And each individual sex has specific roles to perform as well as socially determined ways of awarding merits to these roles (Duruji et al, 2014). In addition gender also shape the opportunities that men and women are offered in life, roles one play and the relationship one has in life in terms of marriage, work and family roles (ICAD, 2006).

Similarly Hazal and Sally (2000), explained that the socially classification of gender lead to how the society determine ideas and practices which define women roles to reproduction and unpaid work (child care, domestic work and subsistence production), while that of men to be in public affairs such as decision makers, head of family and bread winners of their family are shown. Thus gender role lead to ideology that one group (women) should be at disadvantage over the other (men) in terms of proper role for man and woman in the family. And this practice has been from the pre- industrial period to the age of machines or industries.

PRE- INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

Before the invention of machines and technology, the family is the unit of production in the preindustrial societies such as the hunting-gathering, horticultural, pastoral and agrarian or agricultural societies that was prevalent at that time. Most economic, social and political activities were organized within the family structures, since technology was limited and unchanging, coupled with life conditions which was harsh and resulted in high mortality rates and low productivity (Parente, Rogerson and

Wright, 2000). Family literally is defined as a group of people who are related by blood ties and traces their descent or lineage either through the patrilineal or matrilineal descent. Though a variety of marital patterns exist across preindustrial societies, virtually all forms of marriage establish a system of descent so that kingship can be determined and inheritance rights established. In preindustrial societies, family structures are often divided into a number of kinship system groups such as lineage which are groups descended from a common ancestor. Kinship systems existed in forms of patrilineal, matrilineal and egalitarian depending on the society, although patrilineal descent was widely practiced in pre-industrial societies. Right, privileges, class and power was based on the pattern of kinship system or embedded in web of kinship relationships. In addition welfare system was also practiced in these societies as the head of the kinship system were responsible for the aged parents while the aged parents take care of the young ones. Although gender inequalities existed in various ways in pre-industrial societies but it was at a minimum level (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETY

Hunting and gathering which existed many million years ago was prevalent in the Bushmen of Southwestern Africa and the Pygmies of central Africa. The family was the unit of economic and social production; they use simple technology for hunting of animal and gathering of food which was shared communally in the kinship group. Also private household (unstable home practice) was not in existence thus there was no right to inheritance since food was not surplus. Although division of labour occurred based on sex and age, food was based on extraction rather than production, the males were responsible for hunting for animals and fishes while the women were responsible for gathering of natural growing plants such as fruits and vegetables. The young children were responsible to contribute what they can to ensure food supply; in other societies of hunting-gathering both women and men gather plants and hunt wild animals, with women more actively involved in smaller animal nearby because it was difficult for women who are nursing children to combine these activities, as young babies could prove a considerable inconvenience.

Population size was controlled through prolonged nursing, social and cultural practices such as abortion and infanticide. Education, religion and political activities take place in the informal form where the kinship system was responsible for teaching children basic skills in hunting and gathering. Girls' education was channeled to gathering activities and domestic work while boys' education was channeled to hunting, religion was based on animism that spirit controls everything that interferes with human affairs, and decision making was a collective effort without any segregation based on sex (Kendall, 2008).

GENDER ISSUES IN HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETY

- Women sexuality was controlled in that when the kinship group needed more hands in collecting food women were encouraged to procreate, but when the population becomes high or they run out of food, abortions and infanticide was practiced.
- Pregnant and nursing women were restricted from risky tasks such as trading and warfare that could involve travel over long distances.
- Men were used as warriors to provide security for the group (Monneria, 2014).

HORTICULTURAL AND PASTORAL SOCIETIES

The period between 12,000 and 7,000 years ago marks the end of the hunting and gathering era and the emergence of the era of horticultural and pastoral societies. During this period there was a shift from food gathering to food production, a change that is attributed to the depletion of the supply of large game animals as a source of food, an increase in the size of human population to feed and the dramatic weather and environmental changes that facilitated food production. Horticultural and pastoral societies are found in some contemporary societies like Asia, Africa, Middle East and South America (Kendall, 2008).

Horticultural societies emerged in most fertile areas that were better suited for growing plants through the use of hand tools. Like the hunting and gathering societies, the family was the unit of production because they did not move as often as hunter-gatherers or pastoral societies, thus they established a more stable and permanent family ties and created complex systems for tracing family lineage (Giuliano, 2014). In simple horticultural societies, a fairly high degree of gender inequality existed because neither sex controls the food supply. Women contributed to food production in areas of weeding, harvesting, planting and marketing because hoe cultivation is compatible with childcare. Men

on the other hand hunt game, clear the land, work with arts and craft, make tools, participate in religious and ceremonial activities and engage in war.

Pastoral societies emerged in mountainous regions and areas with low amounts of annual rainfall. Pastoral societies are based on technology that supports the domestication of large animals (donkey, cattle, horses and camel) for food and economic purposes. In pastoral societies gender inequality was greater because the men were responsible for herding or rearing of the animals which required seeking new grazing lands and water sources for their animals, while the women contributed relatively little to subsistence production (diary milk). In some herding societies, women primary value is seen as their ability to produce male offspring so that the family lineage can be preserved and a sufficient number of males to protect the group against enemy attack. Thus women status became devalued (Kendall, 2008).

Horticultural and pastoral societies are less egalitarian than hunter-gathers, land was initially communally controlled through the extended kinship group but gradually changed when food became surplus. Families with the largest surplus not only have an economic advantage but also gained prestige and power, including to control slaves, and these families were usually headed by men (Monneria, 2014).

GENDER ISSUES IN PASTORAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Polygyny/Early Marriage: Marriage practices in most horticultural and pastoral societies was based on polygynous system (a practice where a man is entitled to many wives) and extended family structures. Polygyny as a form of marriage was seen as a sign for affluence, prestige and power. This practice was endemic in societies with shifting cultivation like horticulture since many wives and children were needed to supply the labour needed to operate the farm, that was invoked in that period and to provide old age support.

Women were seen to belong to her father and kinsmen and so it was expected that her father and kinsmen had right to choose or give their consent before any marriage is contracted. Husband is expected by tradition to provide goods and services in exchange for the sole right to a woman's sexual services and offspring, thus the husband assumes the role of the head of the family by providing for the family and taking care of his wives throughout their life. Wives on the other hand, are customarily bound to do all the household chores and to produce offspring that will preserve the family lineage and also assist in farm. In other words the men as the head of the family has the right to control procreation and women sexuality. In addition where exchange relationship existed daughters were used as a form of exchange in marriage to cement economic alliance or as a tool for acquiring more wealth from her prospective in-laws in addition early marriage became prevalent mostly in pastoral societies because of the religious belief. (Modupe, 2010).

Customs and tradition in horticultural and pastoral societies considered menstruation as taboo in other words menstruation placed women in subordinated position. Sometimes they are segregated into the hut during menstruation or defined as unclean and unfit to participate in public affairs and most societies of the primitive age view marriage as a rite of passage for the women.

Right of Divorce: Under the customary law in most primitive societies like Europe, America and Africa, women had no legal right to seek for divorce or to be in custodian of her children after a divorce. Because of the patriarchy nature of these societies' men had right unfettered and unlimited power for one reason or the other to divorce his wife and return her to her parents thereby putting an end to the marriage. This unlimited power of men to divorce his wife was, however, said to be subjected to certain social constraints.

In Africa where a woman had a male child, divorce was not always easy to obtain by men because the women will be regarded to have root in the family, and when there was a cause for divorce in this situation, it would be regarded as temporal separation because the children normally bring their mother back home, after attaining the age of puberty or are matured to inherit their fathers estate because Africa were mainly a patrilineal society, the children of such situation normally follow their father (Modupe, 2010).

Pattern of Decent and Inheritance: Even though a variety of marital pattern existed across cultures, virtually all forms of marriage establish a system of descent so that kingship can be determined and inheritance rights established. Pastoral societies were mainly unilineal descent, that is patriarchal (tracing of one lineage to the father side) in nature and it made possible for a male or legitimate son to inherit

his father property and sometimes his position upon the death of father thus denying women the right to inheritance, therefore the women cultivate their crop through the benevolence of their husband, brothers, son and kinsmen since they don't have right to inherit land (Kendall, 2008). Furthermore, on the farm the father – son relationship is also that of owner – employee, the father as the head of the family make important decisions such as whether to sell cattle and direct the activities of all the economic and social activities, he is head of family and director of the farm. Boys in pastoral societies are seen as permanent patrilineal family members but girls are seen as only temporary family members, girls tended to be considered more expendable than boys and often bypassed in terms of inheritance. In fact women were regarded as property to be shared at the demise of their husbands. (Widow Inheritance) and therefore men were elated above women (Modupe, 2010).

According to Kendall (2008), even with the less common pattern of matrilineal descent a system of tracing descent through the mother's side of the family which is common in horticultural societies; women may not control property. However, inheritance of property and position is usually traced from the maternal uncle (mother brother) to his nephew (mother son).

Power and Authority in Families: Descent and authority rights in pastoral societies were linked with pattern of power and authority in the families. The most prevalent forms of family power and authority is patriarchy, a patriarchal family is a family structure in which authority is held by the eldest male (usually the father). The male figure act as the head of the household and holds power and authority over women and children, as well as other members (Kendall, 2008), the men were the primary decision makers regarding domestics, economics and social concerns facing the family. On the farm, the father – son relationship is also that of owner – employee. The father as the head of the family make important decisions such as whether to sell cattle and directs the activities of all, he is head of family and director of the farm. Typically, the classic extended family consists of the male head, his wife and children, his ageing parents who have passed on the farm to him, and the unmarried brothers and sisters which together work as a production unit, producing the goods necessary for the family survival (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). The existence of patriarchal gives men the right to abuse women and children. Thus women choice in this practice remained limited by the patriarchal tradition, in which women lost the right for decision making (Kendall, 2008).

Socialization of Young Ones: Education, religious and political activities remained relatively informal in horticulture and pastoral societies. Boys were socialized by their kinship groups on how to plant and harvest crops, domesticate animals and fight, which was regarded as men's jobs. Girls learn how to do domestic chores, care for younger children and sometimes to cultivate the land. Religious belief also formed the basis for the oppression of women (Kendall, 2008).

Preserving Order and Cooperation within Society: Power is usually exercised by male clan leaders whose influence is based on greater wealth. The horticultural and pastoral society practice more extensive warfare than hunting and gathering society. The warfare serves as population control through the loss of life as well as female infanticide in other words clans may kill their girls in order to be able to devote more resources to raising boys to become warriors and to acquire more land for the clan thereby increasing the clan power and prestige (Monnier, 2014).

AGRARIAN /FEUDAL SOCIETIES

Agrarian society emerged about five to six thousand years ago in Mesopotamia, south American, Ancient Greece, Indian, Egypt and slightly in China. Agrarian societies used the technology of large scale farming including animal draw or energy powered plows and equipment to produce their food supply. Farming activities in this form made it easier for people to live in a permanent location, and food supply made it possible for people to live in cities. The use of animal to pull plows made it possible for food to be surplus. In agrarian societies social inequality was the greatest of all preindustrial societies in terms of class and gender. The two major classes in Agrarian societies were the landlords and the peasants, the landlords owned the fields and the harvests was produced by peasants. By contrast the landless peasant enters into an agreement with the landlords to live on and cultivate a parcel of land in exchange for part of the harvest or other economic incentives. Money system replaced that of barter in hunting-gathering and pastoral- horticultural.

Gender base inequality grew dramatically in agrarian societies. Men gained more control over both the disposition of the food surplus and the kinship system. Because agrarian task required more labor and greater physical strength than horticultural ones, men became more involved in food

production. While women were excluded because they were seen as too weak for the work or believed that their child care activities are incompatible with the full time labour that the tasks required. Thus agrarian society marked the degradation of the status of women since men are now in charge of plowing and animal which was central to food production (Kendall, 2008).

GENDER INEQUALITY IN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Marriage Rite: As businesses continued to progress and boom, the rule pertaining to marriage became stronger in agrarian societies and women lives became restricted as men demanded that women practice premarital virginity and marital fidelity so that legitimate heirs can be produced to inherit the land and other possessions. This believe was supported by religion and tradition, which was powerful force in agrarian societies. Customs and tradition in most agrarian societies view marriage as a rite of passage for the women, thus virginity was religiously and traditionally upheld and at such seen as a gate to marriage. In fact virgin daughters were used to cement economic alliance between the high classes. Single motherhood was seen as taboo and to ensure the virginity of women, female genital mutilation was practiced (the process of total or partially cutting of female clitoris and labia for the purpose of reducing sexual urge among women). Modupe(2010) identified that in some cases, the girl's vagina is stitched up until she is married. Women were not considered desirable for marriage if this procedure was not performed, therefore premarital virginity and marital fidelity were strictly enforced, failure to adhere to this customs amounted to severe punishment on the part of the woman which could be ostracized, abused or stoned to death in cases of adultery in Muslim societies, purdah practice was also prevalence in Muslim society to checkmate the fidelity of women. Polygyny as a form of marriage was also practiced for the sole aim of increasing population size and increase in numbers of communities as well as the development of urban centers which became the first identifiable large cities unified under single political authority or ruler (Kendall, 2008).

Socialization of Young Ones: In agrarian societies, the vast majority of the population was still composed of peasants, children work alongside adults in gender differentiated tasks. Men and boys were generally socialized by kinsmen to be in charge of plowing and of the animals whereas women and girls are in charge of weeding and seeds, as well as domestic chores.

Power and Authority in Society: Politically the agrarian era marks the beginning of a structured organization managing collective affairs in the state. The need for a single political authority came as the territories and population became so large and divest as a result of conquest thus this society was ruled by hereditary kings or emperors whose titles were passed to their heirs (son) because it was patriarchy in nature. Agrarian societies created professional armies (males) to defend the society against internal threat and also created the system of paying tax and first formal code. Rulers govern for their own public interest as they can acquire land and do as they please. In other words power of inheritance and exercising of vote or political participation was reserved for the men thereby depriving women of inheritance right (Monnier, 2014).

Control of Women sexuality: because of the dominance of agriculture and greater availability of food, both urban and rural families were interested in large family sizes, especially families with sons; thus sons were preferred over girls. During the period of drought or bad crops, children especially girls are often abandoned and killed so that available food can serve the population. In other words women served as reservoir of army to be used to produce workers in the farm and to control excess population through abortions and infant killings, especially in the period of drought or food scarcity (Monnier, 2014).

The three different types of societies examined so far are referred to as preindustrial societies, in all of them the main source of energy was human or animal which inherently placed limits on production.

INDUSTRIALIZED SOCIETIES

Industrialization originated in Britain and spread to other countries such as China, Japan, Mexico, France, Russia, Germany, USA etc. During the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, the mode of production dramatically transformed. Predominantly rural and agrarian societies changed into urban and industrial societies thus industrialization brought about capitalism, urbanism and liberal democracy. Industrialization involves the application of scientific knowledge to the technology of production, which made it easier for machines to do the things and work previously done by people and animals. Thus industrialization replaced the family as a unit of production to a unit of consumption. In

other words economic production shifted from labor intensive to capital intensive – production that uses a lot of initial investment in machinery and technology.

For the first time people became known for their status or profession than the kinship ties as was done in preindustrial societies. The extended family structure was replaced with the nuclear family structure, single- parent family, single person families and step families in some industrial societies. The influence of traditional religious belief tended to diminish in industrial societies, although it remained as a powerful institution for judging moral issue. An industrial society is patriarchal in nature and at such political activities is based on democratic and bureaucratic government and was controlled by men(Kendall, 2008).

GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDUSTRIAL SOCITIES

Although the standard of living rises in industrial societies (health care facilities extended longevity and the practice of contraception) social inequality remain a pressing problems for women in this societies in the following ways.

Domestic Work/Unpaid work: As societies industrialize, the status of women tends to decline further as it created a gender gap between the man and the women in that the passing to law child labour act relegated women to the home as home maker and care givers while men became much involve in paid work as breadwinners. In other words marriage in industrial society serve as a barrier to women low participation in paid job rather women are expected by tradition to find fulfillment in the identity of their husband and children (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

Lack of Educational Opportunities:The emergence of industries brought about formal education, withit gender bias, for instance boys education were preferred and so most technical schools were for the boys to train them into paid work and to manage the various organizations in the state while girls were trained into job segregated areas like nursing, teaching, cookery that was geared into becoming better house wives and makers. In most cases girl child education is not promoted because of the belief that she will get married and end in another man's home, this serve as a hindrance for women into technical and better education like their male counterpart (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

Discrimination:With the arrival of industries women were discriminated in most jobs especially high prestige jobs like Engineering, medicine, manager and executive positions because of the issue of sex, marriage, childbirth, pregnancy and religious practices (purdah) including ideal work norm. In other to keep them away from high paid job or in paid employment, men use violence in form of sexual harassment in work places.

Unequal Pay:Women were relatively paid less than men in a comparable work in most industrialized societies, simply because of the issue of sex stereotyping (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

Role Conflict:Women are often faced with the challenges of combining work as paid jobs, in that they have to work in the office and still comeback to do the domestic work. In addition violence against women increased with the rise of urbanization because paid jobs were insufficient(Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Task or role in the society came to be known as men work or women work in the society, both preindustrial and industrial through in three gender division determining factors such as the type of subsistence base, the supply of and demand for labour and the extent to which women child rearing activities are compatible with certain types of work. When analyzing economies, most activities during the pre-industrial age existed at the substance level, recognizing the work of men, women and children, and businesses were run from the home. There were little distinction between work and home and public life and private life. But a change in gender mostly began to take place after world war 1 and world war 11, many women still faced discriminations. But the pressure for women to have both a family and a career remains a major factor, however, there had been a whole lot of changes from the pre-industrial era to the industrial age between the gender issues.

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