

6-2015

Understanding the Nature and Scope of Patriarchy in Sri Lanka: How Does it Operate in the Institution of Marriage?

Dinishika Sumuduni Vithanage
St. Cloud State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/socresp_etds



Part of the [Other Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vithanage, Dinishika Sumuduni, "Understanding the Nature and Scope of Patriarchy in Sri Lanka: How Does it Operate in the Institution of Marriage?" (2015). *Culminating Projects in Social Responsibility*. 3.
https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/socresp_etds/3

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Interdisciplinary Programs at theRepository at St. Cloud State. It has been accepted for inclusion in Culminating Projects in Social Responsibility by an authorized administrator of theRepository at St. Cloud State. For more information, please contact rswexelbaum@stcloudstate.edu.

Understanding the Nature and Scope of Patriarchy in Sri Lanka: How Does it Operate in the Institution of Marriage?

by

Dinishika Sumuduni Vithanage

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Science in

Social Responsibility

June, 2015

Thesis Committee:

Tamrat Tademe, Chairperson

Nimantha Manamperi

Nadeesha Lihinikadu Arachchige

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the nature and scope of patriarchy and ways in which it operates within the institution of marriage in Sri Lanka. Patriarchy, as a strong social element along with religion, gender, and division of labor, has been operating in the Sri Lankan society, pushing women to the household system. One of the main social institutions that has been affected by patriarchic oppression is marriage. Marriage, operating as a social institution, has limited the role of woman in Sri Lanka in certain occupations and behaviors, and even molding the woman's role in how society expects her to be a daughter, a sister, a mother, and a wife. Though the majority of women do a considerable amount of household work, take care of their children and husbands, and sometimes in-laws, their efforts are not appreciated. The fundamental reason for this is the common myth that a woman is to restrict her role to household tasks. Cultural ideas connected to the idea of patriarchy and marriage support this marginalization as an accepted norm. Therefore, women in Sri Lanka seem to take a double bind of marginalization.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	4
The Statement of the Problem	12
The Purpose of the Study.....	13
II. THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE	15
III. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN	29
Report 1: The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality: A Report on Sri Lanka.....	29
Report 2: Breaking the Glass Ceiling? The Paradox of Female Leadership In Sri Lanka	34
Report 3: Social Transformation, Gender Inequality, and Violence Against Women in Contemporary Sri Lanka	37
IV. RESULTS OF THE DATA	42
V. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION	48
References	53

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“If the women of a country are slaves, the men can never be free.” These words were quoted by the editorial of *Voice of Women*, a Sri Lankan magazine in 1980 (as cited in Vinding, 2015). Recently, the Groundviews, a leading and unbiased news site in Sri Lanka, incorporated the above quotation in their article *Gender Paradox in Sri Lanka* (Vinding, 2015). Sri Lanka has a long history of women activists fighting for women’s rights to stop abuse, exploitation, and well-being of women in Sri Lanka since 1970s. However, things have changed since then due to the ethnic war, globalization, liberalized economic development, and new media culture in the country (Osman, 2013). As a result, the dialogue of women’s autonomy has been shifting with socio-cultural changes.

In every society, women continue to grapple with socio-economic, politico-cultural elements that marginalize them, and women in Sri Lanka are faced with the same predicament. Socially constructed institutions such as marriage, religion, and patriarchy have been in the core of oppressing women in both private and public sectors to a certain extent. The manner of control and suppression of women differs upon different societal structures, class, caste, traditions, religion, and societal practices and this oppression of women is different from global south to global north. In this study, I address the topic of understanding the nature and scope of patriarchy in Sri Lanka and ways in which it operates within the institution of marriage. This study carefully looks in to the changing nature of patriarchic elements with the socio-economic and political nature of the country. Violence, domestic abuse, and spousal rape are some of the elements which need to be added in the dialogue of how patriarchy operates within marriage.

Thus, the study will look to the question of what is patriarchy and, if that existed in the context of marriage in Sri Lanka, how it operates.

The London Feminist Network (n.d.) defined patriarchy as follows:

Patriarchy is the term used to describe the society in which we live today, characterized by current and historic unequal power relations between women and men whereby women are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed. This takes place across almost every sphere of life but is particularly noticeable in women's under-representation in key state institutions, in decision-making positions and in employment and industry. Male violence against women is also a key feature of patriarchy. Women in minority groups face multiple oppressions in this society, as race, class and sexuality intersect with sexism for example. (¶ 1)

In the above definition, a broader perspective of patriarchy is brought forward stating, "patriarchy is the society in which we live today," meaning, women are being oppressed systematically by men on different levels. It is more focused on women in minority groups facing oppression, violence, class struggle and race discrimination.

Lerner, a renowned feminist, (1986) explained patriarchy as a "relationship manifest from a dominant group over a minor group" (p. 217). Therefore, 'patriarchy' can be explained as the systematic male dominance over women in society, coming in many forms. He stressed that men are equipped with power in all essential social institutions of society where women are disadvantaged of having access to hold power in these institutions. In Lerner's point of view, this system of patriarchy can function only with the consent/assistance of women. This cooperation is

protected by means of lack of education, gender discrimination; often in the form of cultural barriers, and depriving them of having access to resource and power.

Before the colonization period, Sri Lankan society enjoyed the values of patriarchic and matriarchic values operating hand in and in the institution of family and marriage. However, societal norms recognized and uplifted patriarchy as a 'norm' and women as a group subordinate to men.

As Sri Lankan society is believed to be formed upon the norms of patriarchy, women were often treated as subordinates in making her voice and opinion on matters in both private and public. Even though it does not happen in every occasion, a man's decision is more accepted. In the article, *Caste System and Rodiya Community in Sri Lanka* (Human Rights Watch, n.d.), Sri Lankans in a caste valued society believe that, born in to a certain caste establish that you take up a certain occupation, which goes along with the notion of birth in to a specific sex. Therefore, in this manner, women are more marginalized than men are because the occupation is very much gender segregated, though the caste-based employment is almost non-existent. However, the situation in Sri Lanka how patriarchy operates compared to India is not severe in practice.

As noted in the document *Patriarchy the Indian Experience* (Sarshar, 2010), the nature of patriarchy has had different expectation of men and women in the Indian society, however, leading subordination of the woman. The Epic tale of Ramayana exposes about women who are virtuous, exaggerating their feminine qualities. These women are considered the 'possessions' of men. The Ramayana is considered as the cementing pillar to the patriarchal structure of the ancient Indian society and the sex-appropriate ideals that are important throughout the Ramayana

were a reflection of the patriarchal values that structured ancient Indian society. As Sarshar (2010) explained, patriarchal notions of social practices are approved by religion and religious institution as most religious practices regard male domination as superior. The practice of patriarchy has taken the control over family, marriage, divorce and inheritance and property biased against women.

Politically, Sri Lanka has produced strong, independent women. Sri Lanka had the world's first woman Prime Minister and the Sri Lanka's first elected woman President. In 1956, the first woman cabinet minister was appointed. These women were not only political bodies appointed to the parliament, but had enormous courage to tackle the socio cultural system to bring education and employment opportunities to women. They were faced with tremendous challenges for being women in politics, making decisions that would inspire other women in all levels across ethnicities in the country.

To a certain extent, patriarchic attitudes have encouraged some social, cultural and religious views of women being subordinate to men. These norms have discouraged how society would look at women as independent and strong beings. The societal acceptance of men being the dominant group had paved the way to gender based violence, victimizing women physically and psychologically. The *National Report on Health and Violence in Sri Lanka* (World Health Organization and Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition, 2008) described why men had gained more power in society and over women. According to the illustration, "the male psychology of dominance may not be biological but a direct consequence of "man-made" social arrangements" (p. 53). It has become the norm that any group in society has more power over the others has the power to decide.

Throughout history, Sri Lankan women have been involved in the agricultural sector as traditional agriculture was a family affair. While sons helped the fathers in the rice fields, girls spent their time with their mother and other elderly women helping with all the household tasks that were crucial. In addition, they helped men in the field with their mothers doing tasks like tying haystacks together or feeding the cattle. Evidently, making meals and keeping the hearth warm was one of the primary duties of these women. Therefore, women also had a central part in the family counterbalancing the role of men. According to Ross and Savada (1988) on their report on family in Sri Lanka:

All ethnic groups in Sri Lanka preserve clear distinctions in the roles of the sexes.

Women are responsible for cooking, raising children, and taking care of housework. In families relying on agriculture, women are in charge of weeding and help with the harvest, and among poor families women also perform full-time work for the more well-to-do. The man's job is to protect women and children and provide them with material support, and in this role men dominate all aspects of business and public life. (¶ 7)

The above quote clearly explains that responsibilities are clearly divided between men and women. Woman's duties are more centered in the household system while men would go out, work and support the family. The women, however, had a certain amount of freedom to go in to the fields if she preferred and help her man. Women are kept for the house hold tasks and looking after the kids because they are good at it and not because they could not do any work outside.

Looking back to the history of Sri Lanka, especially before the colonization period, the country has an account of trade, immigration, and colonial invasion over different periods of

history due to its geographical positioning. This has led to the development of various ethnic groups, each with its own cultural traditions and customs. Along with the majority Sinhala Buddhists in the country, the nation includes Sri Lankan Tamils with an Indian origin, Muslims, and Burghers (descendants from intermarriages between Europeans and Sri Lankans). Regardless of ethnicity or religion, the traditional role of a woman in family circle has been central in the culture in Sri Lanka. Women are considered the reproducers and upholders of their traditions. They are given the role of deciding household matters while the man supported them by giving financial security.

When the process of colonization came in, this family setting started to change as the colonizers brought with them patriarchal ideas of proper roles for women. According to a distinguished Sri Lankan feminist, Hewamanne (2006), under the British rulers, Sri Lankan women were portrayed as inferior beings over men who should be protected within the household. However, the particulars of what domesticity comprised within the Sri Lankan culture and colonial contexts were varied and different (Wickramasinghe, 2009, p. 6). For instance, Sri Lankan women were neither restricted essentially to cooking and child rearing nor were they entirely reliant on their husbands. Through their collective efforts as wives and mothers, Sri Lankan women enjoyed a certain amount of freedom and economic independence of their own in the traditional society, and they were considered the 'hub' that kept the family going on together. Most importantly, the women were aware of their rights and roles in a clear household cultural space compared to what the colonists introduced.

Almost every marriage in Sri Lanka is monogamous in which they involve one man and one woman. Unions between one man and many women were not illegal or unknown, but the

monogamous marriages were encouraged. Despite the ethnic and caste group, in all unions, the nuclear family is given importance. The idea of the nuclear family is highly respected even though it has become a custom that parents of either spouse or in-laws of either spouse would live with the family (extended family). With the kinship system in Sri Lanka, just as in many South Asian and Middle East countries, the cross cousin marriage is visible meaning the most acceptable for a young man to marry would be the daughter of his father's sister. The suitable partner for a young woman would be the son of a mother's brother.

A couple who is legally married cannot be parted on an agreement unless a woman demands a divorce from her husband on his ill treatment of her or his financial inability to look after her. Although women in Sri Lanka have traditionally enjoyed the right to their own financial gains, to conserve their birth name, and to stand for themselves in a court of law without any support or consent of a man, with the accepted norm of patriarchy, men eventually have the power of decision making in the family. However, with the change of social- economic culture, these patriarchic elements are changing.

Ross and Savada's (1988) report *The on Family in Sri Lanka* stressed that:

Special kinship terminology exists in both Tamil and Sinhalese for relatives in preferred or prohibited marriage categories. In many villages, people spend their entire childhood with a clear knowledge of their future marriage plans and in close proximity to their future spouses. The ties between cross-cousins are so close in theory that persons marrying partners other than their cross cousins may include a special ritual in their marriage ceremonies during which they receive permission from their cousins to marry an outsider. The system of cross-cousin marriage is ideally suited to maintaining the

closed ritual purity of an extended kinship group and retaining control over property within a small circle of relative. (¶ 2)

In the above statement, cross cousins marriage is encouraged with the intention of maintaining the custom of having extended families close and having control over property within a small group of family members. That is where the concept of dowry comes into play as traditionally, the dowry is defined as the properties transferred by parents to their daughter. These properties could be either a house, land, or jewelry, as noted by Wickramasinghe (2009), a renowned feminist figure among the Sri Lankan scholars. The notion of a dowry system carries both pros and cons in marriage. Though it is highly criticized in the feminist literature as a tool of patriarchy, it does have some benefits to the woman. As stated by Wickramasinghe (2009) dowry “may help women to attract husbands and increase their financial and social security and on the other hand it may put undue pressure on women and their families causing stress and anxiety specially if their poor” (p. 6).

Historically and currently, Sri Lanka gives importance to arranged marriages. If it is arranged, the entire authority of prior selection of the partners would be up to the parents and elders in the extended family. Even though this custom applies to both men women, the chance that a woman would have the chance to reject the proposal is less because her parents would make the decision for her. Traditionally, the responsibility of selecting a well suited son in-law for a daughter in the family is kept on the father. Mothers also contribute to it, but as a custom, the father is given the upper hand to decide.

Interestingly, astrology too goes hand-in- hand with this decision as both bride-to-be and groom-to-be individual’s “horoscopes” are placed together to be matched. The possibility of

them being matched will decide if they would marry or not. Matching horoscopes gives an idea that the future of a married couple together entirely depends on how well their horoscopes were matched among other key issues comes with love and caring. Even though such beliefs systems have started to change, still, most Sri Lankans rely on horoscopes when it comes to matrimonial affairs. People would say they disregard it but would want to try it because looking in to horoscopes is customary to the Sri Lankan society. In many occasions, looking in to horoscope is done because parents and elders desire it most. In that sense, despite the relationship would end through a love marriage or an arranged marriage, horoscopes and parents have a bigger say.

The Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research is to understand the nature and scope of patriarchy and ways in which it operates within the institution of marriage in Sri Lanka. Evidently, elements of patriarchy operate within the society stretching itself to social institutions like marriage. At the same time, understanding marriage as a social institution in Sri Lanka is important because the concept of marriage is not universal. For instance, the laws, customs and beliefs attached to the concept of marriage are different. Sri Lanka being a multi ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural society, the laws and customs attached to marriage in each ethnic group is different. These differences bring about different perspectives of what marriage is.

Women seeking employment and education outside the home had been a possible threat to the socially constructed traditional roles and the woman's status within society. It has also become a threat to the notion of patriarchy as women's autonomy has not been encouraged to a greater extent. As mentioned in the introduction, women did not have a strong voice in public but they held a considerable level of authority in household matters. Especially in matters regarding

children, mothers and other elderly women's opinions and decisions were taken highly in to account. It was a belief in the early Sri Lankan society that mothers had more control over children in the family. Therefore, historically, the Sri Lankan society was comprised of matriarchal elements as well as patriarchic elements to go hand in hand with. However, traditionally men were given the utmost importance in society as patriarchy appeared to govern both private and public spheres.

Having an education and being employed have become gateways for women in Sri Lanka to challenge patriarchy. However, within the institution of marriage, many educated women choose to become housewives to look after household work and their offspring. Some women do not have that choice, thus, they would give up on their individual dreams in order to support her husband and her children in the domestic sphere. In many occasions in Sri Lanka, women not only take care of their nuclear family, but also her parents and spouse's parents as well. This scenario occurs more with women in lower middle class families and in rural Sri Lanka. Women who have exposure to education, having an occupation, do try to delay getting married as they want to enjoy their autonomy. But not all women have that luxury. Most women who do not have the financial means, especially struggling to step out of the rural social setting of their dwellings would face the pressure of discrimination, poverty, lack of education, and due to all those eventually being exploited and abused by their men.

The Purpose of the Study

Before the 1960s when the strong feminists brought themselves to the streets fighting for women's autonomy within private and public sectors, women preferred to maintain their traditional roles in the family being a mother and a wife doing household chores instead of being

fully employed. Although they enjoyed some economic independence, it was limited. Women were also the majority who crossed the rural urban division by leaving their home/villages seeking occupation in the garment factories and other export-oriented industries in Sri Lanka. Even though a handful of women attempted to challenge patriarchy within and outside marriage, the majority of women still suffer from it to a certain extent.

Therefore, this study attempts to understand to what extent the existing system of patriarchy operates within the institution of marriage. Though the majority of women do a considerable amount of household work, take care of their kids and husbands, and sometimes in - laws, their efforts are not appreciated. The fundamental reason for this is the common myth that a woman is to restrict her role in to household tasks. Cultural ideas connected to the notion of patriarchy and marriage support this marginalization as an accepted norm. Therefore, women in Sri Lanka seem to take a double bind of marginalization. They are being oppressed before marriage through other patriarchic norms such as religion and customs unique to their ethnicities and after marriage are controlled once again by their husbands and sons. As I have experienced the impact of patriarchy to a certain extent as a single Sri Lankan female growing up in the Sri Lankan society, I have always been curious to find out to what extent patriarchy operates within the institution of marriage. Therefore, I make use of this study to educate myself and the readers on the nature and scope of patriarchy and how it operates within marriage in marriage while seeking in to redefining marriage outside the boundaries of patriarchy.

CHAPTER II

THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kandiyoti (2011), an Indian scholar addressing patriarchy through his book *Bargaining with Patriarchy, Gender and Society*, stressed that there are several forms of patriarchy. For him, “household system, polygyny, and corporate-male headed entities are the major forms of patriarchic oppressions” (p. 3). These different forms present women with “different rules of the game” and call for different strategies (Kandiyoti, 2011, p. 3). As a result, the argument falls on women in the third world challenging patriarchy in two different ways. First, in certain rural societies in Sub-Saharan Africa, women challenge patriarchy openly by exercising individual independence and protest against patriarchal practices. Secondly, in some societies in Asia, women bargain with patriarchy by using manipulation within a tradition of subservience to gain certain goals (Kandiyoti, 2011, p. 86).

In that manner, the way patriarchy operates in the society is not universal and the way women challenge patriarchy is not universal either. The notion of patriarchy treated within feminist literature does not convey a single concept but has variety of different meanings. As a result, it calls for attention to understand how patriarchy is defined and addressed by different theorists in different social contexts. Gross (1993), who is another critique on women’s oppression, claimed that, patriarchy in its definition stands for ‘rule by fathers. As a notion it is constituted with two meanings; first, Patriarchy as a system has ‘power over women’ as its central nature and secondly, by definition, ‘men have power over women’ (p. 299).

Walby (1989) made a reference to Max Weber’s dialogue on patriarchy where he draws attention to the patriarchy as part of the term ‘production,’ meaning that the oppression of

women cannot be detached from the other forms of exploitations of women in the capitalist society as racism and class exploitation.

While Max Weber connected patriarchy to the system of production and oppression in society, Vandhana Shiva (2010), an Indian physicist and an internationally renowned activist, give thoughts on the link between colonialism and the women's oppression in her book *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. The 'development' introduced by the colonial leaders is obtained through violating the laws of nature and practicing violence against women as she examines the position of women in relation to nature. Shiva linked the destruction of nature with the oppression of women taking place in the third world. As she documented, every single human activity contributes to marginalization of women to some degree. As an Indian, she brought out her experiences from her own society where she heads the women's movement in order to seek justice for both women and nature.

Incorporating her ideology to the Sri Lankan context, the history of the country gives solid evidence of a link between women and nature has never been separated unless they were threatened by an external force such as colonialism (Shiva, 2010). As mentioned above, throughout history, women in Sri Lanka has been a central part of the agricultural sector. They worked in the fields for long hours to feed their families. These women were the explorers and ecologists as they had a great bondage with greenery around them. Our great grandmothers and their mothers knew that nature is a care giver. It not only provided them with food, but also provided medicine and shelter.

Before colonization, Sri Lankan society was agricultural. Once the paddy fields were raked by men, women used to do the seeding. Further, once the harvest is collected, women in

villages gathered to grind and separate the seeds. This not only brought the village women together, but it created a bonding moment for them to exchange their everyday life stories. Not only that, women got together to go in to deep woods to collect tree roots, leaves, and other indigenous types of medicine. Once they are grinded and boiled, she did not have to worry about her family falling sick. In this manner, she not only played a role of a wife and a mother, but also as a doctor taking care of her family. Further, Sri Lankan women were very skilled at making “roofs” using coconut leaves. Once a coconut tree is cut or trimmed, she would collect as many leaves as possible, stitch them together to make a one big pile which used to cover the house. These activities explain that women had a strong link to nature more than men did and they were major contributors to the well-being of their families as well.

With the presence of colonization, women became insignificant as the colonizers started clearing forests and lands to build roads and factories. They were only encouraged to plant tea, rubber, and coconuts as it created money for the imperialist leaders. Women’s contributions were limited to work in these fields, working longer hours without much pay and respect. The society started to change and women confined themselves more in to household work and taking care of children. The women who found food and medicine in their back yards had to buy them in the near towns run by colonial masters. The connection between them and nature started to deteriorate at a fast pace. Families, who could afford to pay, sent their daughters to missionary schools for an “English” education. Others either were given in marriage or were kept home.

As time passed, many women who managed to obtain a better education strove to be autonomous and decision makers of their lives. The missionary education introduced by the British made a tremendous shift in the society. Even though these missionary leaders believed

that women were “not suitable” in the social arena, their education was able to empower women through their missionary schools in the country. Those who were able to afford this education were the families positioned in the highest level of the social class, caste, and social hierarchy in the society. The education necessarily did not empower women as such to flee from home and look for adventure but were to stay home and be housewives and educate their children through what they have acquired. There were few strong women rebellious enough to make use of their education outside their little homes and make an impact on other women in the society. Some of them made their voices on bureaucratic issues and politics which considered to be dominated by men.

In the Sri Lankan society, religion has a greater impact on roles of individuals (De Alwis, 2009). Similar to many other countries in Asia, the nationalist struggles in Sri Lanka resulted in forming the setting of what it is to be an ideal Sinhala Buddhist female (Hewamanne, 2006). Hewamanne (2006) claimed that, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as an answer to the colonial dialogue on women and culture, women were portrayed as inferior beings who should be protected within household. As always, men were given the first most priority in work place and in job selection. Thus, women who wanted to step out of the traditional roles had to go through hardships to achieve their status by competing with men.

Suranjita Ray (2015), an Indian author on patriarchy, noted in his article *Understanding Patriarchy* that gender based discriminations and exploitations are widespread. “Socio-culturally defined characteristics, desires, abilities, and personality roles of men and women do contribute to disparities and hierarchies in society” (p. 1). In Ray’s opinion, gender differences are ‘man made’ and they get approved and authorized by the patriarchal system (p. 1). Nevertheless, at

present, women have begun to demonstrate they have the potential to be empowered and independent from societal pressures. One of the young feminist voices on oppression of women in Asia, De Alwis (2009) claimed that “It is clear that we cannot address the changing role of women in Sri Lanka without approaching social pressures they face and heteronormative structures that continue to be imposed on them” (p. 13). As De Silva explained, it is important to address the social constraints that control women before analyzing her changing role in the society.

It is evident that the established social institutions set various roadblocks, so women may not break away from their assigned roles by the society. However, with the socio-economic changes when society needed human capital, women were forced to come out of their domestic roles to join the labor force for the sake of integrity of the society itself. Therefore, understanding social structures that impose pressure on women is crucial. Nevertheless, the debates on the changing role of women in Sri Lanka, especially with regard to marriage have not taken a constant approach with various timelines in history. No matter what change takes place in economy, politics, or in other sectors of social sphere, the preliminary foundation of such discourse have not changed. Which is, Sri Lankan women; irrespective of their ethnicity (be they Sinhala, Tamil, or Muslim) persist to be ‘nurturers,’ ‘reproducers,’ and ‘carriers’ of Sri Lankan tradition and culture (De Alwis, 2009).

Women finding access to formal education in Sri Lanka made a great impact on their lives and their roles in the social setting and the institution of marriage. Originally women were given an informal education at home, as the tradition was to give a formal education to men only. That was specifically due to the reason that they needed to be equipped with knowledge and

skills as the breadwinners of the family. During the 1960s, after the country gained independence from the British, women started to step out of their domesticities in seeking of formal higher education. The history of formal education is associated with the British education system that brought in to the country in the 19th century. This system changed entirely after the country gained independence, as the government set up schools for both men and women to acquire a formal education. This became an opportunity for women who desired to step out of their homes and explore their opportunities in life. However, even after acquiring a good education, it was still difficult for the women to find work and, when they eventually found work it was usually in low profile careers and jobs. A majority of employment available to women were in the unorganized and informal sector, which did not come under the supervision of labor regulations.

As far as Buddhism is concerned and as the most dominant religion in Sri Lanka, it accepts that women are capable enough to develop their knowledge and skills equal to men when it comes to comprehending Buddhist teachings of 'Dharma.' Buddhism thoroughly emphasizes on an equal position of women in any society. The laws that Buddha had set forth for Bikkunis (ordained women) was to safeguard the 'sasana' (The Buddhist way of living for the ordained women) in a society that generally looked down upon women. As an individual, he was the highest Being and could swim against the surge, as he wanted. However, when it comes to the "Sangha Sasana" (The Community of Buddhist monks), it is a collection of countless individuals with very different state of mind and backgrounds, so the purpose of the seemingly biased laws of the Bikkunis was to ensure the survival in an oppressive environment by being not actively opposing it as a community. It should also be noted that the ordainment of women during that period in India was a great leap forward itself, in a society, which considered women 'unworthy'

in every aspect. As Gross (1993) stated, “Dharma is neither male nor female” (p. 126).

Buddhism does not create gender division upon its doctrine as Dharma of Buddha accepts all individuals equally. However, it is interesting to note that a Buddhist society with all its intricacies and external influence from other faiths and cultures can hold the position of women and their responsibility in a different point of view. In the late pre-British society in Sri Lanka and its post-colonial manifestations, which was heavily influenced by south Indian religion and culture, sometimes religious taboos directly borrowed from Hinduism came into play.

In her book ‘*Widows in India,*’ Baneriji (1998) wrote that “in Hinduism, Hindu women are historically responsible for the moral and physical redemption of their males in their role as wives” (p. 40). They are expected to assimilate values and devotion and services to their husbands to gain a long life, good health and spiritual benefits on his behalf. Further, it is believed that, in Indian culture, a wife who ate off the plate used by her husband is considered to be a devoted wife. This applies to Hindu women in Sri Lankan society too. Even though, Sri Lanka does not go to the extremes of practicing “Sathi” Puja, which is, at the death of her husband, the wife is expected to sacrifice herself by jumping to her husband’s pyre. Such practices are accepted in the Hinduism for centuries. Therefore, such acts itself stand as proof how women were being looked down by the society. They were treated as being low in status compared to their male companions.

Thus, in the context of religion, the religious ideals are connected with the prevailing dominant social constructions. For instance, hijab in Islam is a socially constructed norm for a woman in Islamic religion and Islamic community. Women with Muslim origin, and particular Islamic religious sects, expect women to wear a Hijab. In this regard, two Muslim scholars,

Emrick and Baig (n.d.) noted that some women wear the hijab because it is 'Islamically correct' and they perceived it as intrinsically empowering. Similar to Emrick and Baig (n.d.), Sayed (2008) explained, hijab gives the women an air of power, pride and self-esteem. It also keeps them equal to their men and guards them from any sort of assault.

Nuhuman (2011), a journalist of the news website the Sri Lankan Guardian told a different story however. Nuhuman stressed that a vast majority of religious-aware Muslim men believe that they are the custodians of their women, so, they must obey their husbands orders at all times. According to their Islamic ideology, Muslim men have a religious authorization for their beliefs. He noted, "No religious sensitive Muslim male accepts the concept of equality of women; to them it is Un-Islamic" (Nuhuman, 2011, ¶ 59). Regardless of Muslim women wearing the Hijab or not, they do not have any equal position in the society as their men do. According to Nuhuman, religious fundamentalism and ethnic identity operate as two sides of the same coin for Muslim women in Sri Lanka.

Not only in feminist discourse, patriarchy is criticized and explained in relation to different sociological theories. Both Max Weber (1993) and Marxist Feminists have taken the term patriarchy to illustrate the oppression created by social systems. Marxist feminists have adopted patriarchy in the hope of transforming the theory of Marxism. In doing so, they believe that the Marxist theory would give an accurate and acceptable account for the marginalization of women and forms of exploitation.

Weber (1993), one of the leading sociologists in history, used patriarchy to explain the structure of social organization in which the father was considered the head of the kinship Network and the one who controlled its economy. For Weber, patriarchy is the power of men

over women exercised every day and experienced by all women that transcends specific mode of production. He defines power as “The opportunity which permits one individual to impose his will on the behavior of others even against their will” (Weber, 1993, p. 20). Weber’s illustration of patriarchy was related to family and household relations.

Sydie (1994), illustrating on Weber’s theory argued that, “Weber’s examination of patriarchy takes place in his analysis of power relations” (p. 56). As Weber recognized power as the prominent form of domination, it can be recognized in two different criteria as one that operates directly and the other indirectly. Indirect power relations occur when it monopolizes economy where as the direct power stands for the control of others (Sydie, 1994). That is the controlling power of domination. Weber (1993) explained that “domination is gained by influencing others through precise verbalization of what one expects and having these instructions obeyed unconditionally” (p. 20), and patriarchy relies on such a system to ensure subordination.

Weber in his theory (1993) came up with ideal authority types. Out of his ideal authority types, traditional authority is lawfully established by the purity of customs and beliefs. This type of authority is connected to the idea of hereditary, which is the capacity and right to rule is passed down. Weber’s (1993) authority types can actually be applied to see how political power has been passed based upon heredity.

In relation to Weber’s theory, Canagarajah (2009), a renowned writer in Sri Lankan feminist literature, mentioned in one of her articles on the paradox of female leadership in Sri Lanka, the mother and daughter, Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Chandrika Kumaratunga, the two powerful Sri Lankan females in the history of Sri Lankan appeared to challenge the system of

patriarchy through politics. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was the first female prime minister in the world who served three times in her positions during the period of her daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga who served as the president (Canagarajah, 2009). Thus, proving Weber's illustration on traditional authority type in the Sri Lankan context, not only it passed down from mother to daughter but also challenged the existing patriarchic system of 'male politics' in the country.

In the Marxist theoretical use of patriarchy, Marxist feminist Heidi Hartmann in her article *Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex* (1976) noted: "The patriarchal system was established in a way that men could control the employment of women and children in the family. By doing this, eventually men learned the tools of hierarchical organization and control" (p. 138). Marxist Feminist Literature has a critical application of patriarchy as a component of the prevalent socio economic system. The following chapter discusses how feminism make meaning of patriarchy as it operates in the society.

Connecting patriarchy to the Marxist-Feminist debates of the 1970s and 80s, the Marxist-Feminist Michelle Barrett argued that women's oppression is an essential element in capitalism (Brenner, 2000). As Barrett notes, "Marxist- feminists have taken the notion of patriarchy as a logical apparatus to explain male power in to class analysis. This notion recognizes that men have more rights as men in order to have control over women separating the connection between gender hierarchies and class" (Brenner, 2000, p. 12). Therefore, Barrett is concerned of two questions addressing whether two systems are to be found one controlling production and the other controlling reproduction. Barrett explained that efforts to build a single system may lead

towards reductionism and functionalism; therefore, noting patriarchy is in function in favor of benefiting the capitalist class (Brenner, 2000).

Marx's close friend Friedrich Engels (n.d.) also stated that social measures and institutions of capitalism are not collective but are specific products of particular historical circumstances. Engels further argued on the changes of social institutions take place on the changes of society based on economy. As a result, it is connected to how production and reproduction is prepared. For Engels, women's oppression has not existed at all times, but has come up with the emergence of private property, society being divided into classes and the rise of family as a social and economic organization.

Hartmann (1976), a very critical writer on women's oppression argued that "the division of labor by gender is a universal concept as it existed throughout history" (p. 137). The sexual division of labor is hierarchical as men are on the top having control over women at the bottom. As Hartmann believe the status of women's current position in society lies in the sex ordered division of labor. The idea of gender is closely linked with patriarchy where it separates roles of women and men in a society. Brenner (2000) gave reference to Michelle Barrett on gender ideology stating, "the women's oppression in capitalism is rested on the notion of gender, which is shaped by the capitalist social relations of production" (p. 46). She further explained that this very idea of gender is formed within the family sector from young age, which she calls it a within an ideology of family life.

Barrett and Phillips (1992), elaborating on theoretical aspect of patriarchy state that the notion of patriarchy is criticized for implying that women's oppression is universal, therefore, being incapable of handling historical change. They do have a valid point in saying that as

women's oppression cannot be looked through a singular universal viewpoint. It differs based on culture, race, ethnicity, and the entire social structure of the particular society with a given economic and social systems. In addition to their primary argument, Barrett and Phillips think patriarchy is also criticized for being unable to deal with the differences between women, based on ethnicity and class. Their argument can be applied to the situation in Sri Lanka as women are from several ethnic groups.

The laws and regulations that apply to the majority Sinhala, Buddhist women on marriage, domesticity may not be applicable to women coming with Tamil or a Muslim origin. Samarasinghe (2000) illustrated that "ideology of gender developed in the South Asian region have kept women in the domestic sphere. Their tasks were limited to housekeeping and child rearing" (p. 193). For her, male dominance is persistent. Nevertheless, using India and Sri Lanka as case studies in her research on patriarchy, Samarasinghe argued that women have used the patriarchal system to gain political visibility. She further explained that women's expected submissive nature is an important marker of patriarchal controls. At the basic level, the public or the productive field comes under the control of men while private sphere or the domestic area is the chosen area for women.

Mohanty (2001), a well-known feminist, noted that the term patriarchy does differ from western context vis-avis to the dynamics of patriarchy exists in the third world. Thus, feminist philosophy of patriarchy does vary too. Further, Mohanty noted that just as it is difficult to speak of a singular entity called western feminism, as it is difficult to generalize about 'third world feminism. In relation to that, Seidman (1996) argued that "patriarchy varies cross-nationally, but also manifest differently across ethnic, racial and class boundaries within nations" (p. 172).

Therefore, the feminist debates on patriarchy differ in which context it would be discussed and debated upon. Mohanty (2001) clearly illustrated that western feminist writing on women in the third world have to be considered in the perception of hegemony of western learning. The oppression created through patriarchy addressed by western feminists in the western feminist context is very different from the meaning acquired on oppression which non-western feminists address. The Third World women outside the western borders find that the basis of their oppression may not be confined only to the factor of gender alone.

Apparently, western feminism on women's oppression goes along with the dominance created by capitalism and global markets over Third World women and their oppression as addressed by non-western feminists. Gimenez (2009) in *Globalization and Third World Women: Exploitation, Coping and Resistance*, noted that there is rich literature on how global capitalism has maltreated most working women, at the same time creating a background in favor of supporting women's struggle. Further, she argued that such frame works that would oppresses third world women turning in to consumers of the products of transnational corporations, low paid workers, or domestic unpaid labor must be questioned. The problem she found in this is, many of the third world scholars who attempt to make voice on the oppression of third world women's oppression along those lines are marginalized by the mainstream academic discourse.

Malhotra and Mather (1997) did a study through a survey, life history, and focus group data to examine the relationship between decision making in the domestic sphere, paid work and schooling for young and married women in Sri Lanka. According to the results, education and employment that women have gained had an important role in having their decision stated in financial matters. However, they had a less say and less space to state their decision related to

social matters influencing their households. This implied that male family members were concerned about being challenged by these females where their authority was much visible in specific domains of activities like household.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

Selecting a research methodology and a design has been challenging with the nature of the study. Due to the geographical issues and for the convenience of collecting authentic data, I have incorporated the qualitative methodology where I would analyze three main journal articles written on patriarchy in relation to the women's status and the institution of marriage in Sri Lanka. The main articles will then be connected to the literature connected from different sources for this study.

The three main reports which come under the analysis are:

- The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality: A Report on Sri Lanka (Raymond, 2004).
- Breaking the Glass Ceiling? The Paradox of Female Leadership in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 2009).
- Social Transformation, Gender inequality and Violence against Women in Contemporary Sri Lanka (Goonesekere, 2012).

Even though these three reports have not written directly on how patriarchy operates within the institution of marriage, they have in-depth information on how patriarchal elements have contributed to the Sri Lankan social milieu and to the marriage as a social institution.

Report 1: The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality: A Report on Sri Lanka (Raymond, 2004)

This report by Raymond (2004) contains information gathered under several themes starting with a brief historical description of the demographics of the country. These themes addresses important information related to sex work, prostitution and society's perspectives on sexuality and gender roles. For this research on how patriarchy operates within the institution of

marriage, I carefully looked into the dynamics of gender roles, socio-legal status of men and women in Sri Lanka, and information on history that supported understanding the changing socio-cultural aspects in the society.

Raymond (2004) started with a fine description of the demographics in detail of the social setting of Sri Lanka with its multi ethnic and multi religious history and population in general. He also touched upon the debate whether Sri Lanka is a patriarchal country or not as it is subjected to disputes. However, the debate on patriarchy shed lights to all possible and relevant conversations with regard to the woman's position in society and within the institution of marriage. These conversations on patriarchy matters in the extended dialogue whether patriarchal elements exist in Sri Lanka if so to what extent, and to what extent would they operate within the institution of marriage. The extended dialogue of patriarchy and gender relationships is important because it identifies what it means to be a woman and what is expected of her in the institution of marriage.

In this report, under the discussion of gender roles, Raymond (2004) quoted De Munck (1992), Hewamanne and Brow (1999), and Lynch (1999) on religious and societal expectation of an "ideal" Sri Lankan woman. So, it explained:

The ideal woman for Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims is one who is obedient, modest, and hard working. She is seen predominantly in her role as a mother rather than a wife. In Sri Lanka, females, much more so than males, are evaluated according to a good-bad moral dichotomy. Immoral behavior consists of suspicions of sexual immorality, flirting, cursing, disobedient behavior, drinking or smoking and walking or being in places or areas where women should not be. (Raymond, 2004, p. 974)

Along with the expected values of a woman, the society expects the “man” to be in certain social conduct as well. The report explained:

A man’s reputation is gained through public works and, most importantly, through the collective reputation of his core female relatives (i.e., mother, wife, sister and daughter).

In the context, part of man’s moral duty (dhamma) is to serve as moral guardian of his females and to punish them for real or alleged violations (Raymond, 2004, p. 974).

The “national morality” of the country depends on the urban and rural values with much emphasis on what is good and what is bad. A woman who seeks autonomy outside the domestic environment or marriage is considered improper no matter how educated and well to do. To reduce this pressure to certain extent, Sri Lanka has made a great development in trying to bridge the gap between men and women in education. To date, education is the only path for women to attack the backward moral ideas that have chained them and move forward. The upper class families, the so-called “elites,” have always paid attention in encouraging their daughters to go for higher education. Having a good education was a way of finding a “groom” for these girls. Despite the level of education they obtain, after marriage, most women were to stay home as house wives. Those who went abroad would settle in those countries or would come to Sri Lanka to get married. Raymond (2004) made reference to studies done by Malhotra and Tsui (1999) on gender. Raymond also quoted from one of their writings done in 1999.

In contrast to much of the rest of South Asia, Sri Lanka has a cultural heritage of relative gender equality in terms of later marriages, bilateral decent, daughter’s value in the paternal home, continued kin support following marriage and widespread access to education for women. (p. 974)

In the report, Raymond (2004) noted that in 1999, the mean marriage age for a Sri Lankan woman was 24.5 years of age and for a man it was 27.9 years of age. One of the reasons for later marriages in the country had been that the difficulty of obtaining a dowry for the bride. Relating this information back what is written on dowry in the introduction, it is obviously puts pressure on the side of the woman's family if they happened to be financially poor. As a matter of fact, Raymond (2004) stressed that brothers are expected to help contribute to the dowry fund and defer their marriages until all their sisters are married. Sisters are also expected to marry in order of their age. Raymond continued to state:

Once the family has occurred sufficient dowry funds for the first daughter, they must continue working to accrue a similar dowry for the next daughter. Dowry funds ideally consist of a house, rice paddy land, cash, jewelry furniture, and other moveable goods.

However, the accumulation of dowry fund is a family effort and may be a major factor in the late marriage. (p. 974)

The brief account above on dowry brings a reason was to why the marriages are getting late. The benefit of the dowry is that it works as a "pre- death" inheritance in which the dowry will be legally transferred to the bride. Quoting Tambiah (1973), McGiliver (1998), and Munck(1996), the report stressed that the dowry is legally transferred to the bride in Sri Lankan Tamil and Muslim communities. But, in other South Asian countries, the dowry is transferred to the family of the groom. In the Sri Lankan context, the bride gets to keep the legal control over the dowry, but with entering the marriage, the groom gets the "proprietary "rights to the funds. In this manner, there is visible gender equality in Sri Lanka with relation to the other South Asian

countries. Partly it comes with the wife's control she has over the dowry rather than a late marriage.

However, researchers on gender roles taken place in Sri Lanka have demonstrated that patriarchal values permeate gender roles in the society. A survey taken place on gender roles between Sri Lankan Muslims and Sinhalese produced interesting results. With the exception of one participant out of 101, participants pointed out that "it was better to be born a man than a woman" (De Munck, 1992). The reason was that while women are largely restricted to the domestic sphere, men have the control over public places. It is noted that women tend to think they are limited to the domestic sphere like "frogs in a well" (The term frogs in a well is a common phrase in South Asia and was identified by Patricia Jeffrey's book in 1979, on gender called "*Frogs in a Well*") (cited in Raymond, 2004, p. 975).

In the employment sector of the country, the majority of women belong to middle class and lower middle class work in the "free trade zones" or the export garment factories in the country. Women in numbers would also go to the Middle East countries where they work for Arabic families as maids or servants. "The jobs are generally reserved for young unmarried women whose sexual moral reputations are tarnished because they are not under the surveillance and control of male relatives" (Raymond, 2004, p. 975). With globalization, fast moving technology and the mechanization of agricultural sector has forced women to find new employment. Due to such pressures, overall, the female rate of unemployment, by 2001 has become 22% which is twice that of males.

Raymond (2004) gave an interesting account on the matter of sexuality among women and men. In a survey in which Sri Lankan males and females participated, "93% thought that

females have a stronger libido or sexual drive than men do” (Raymond, 2004, p. 975). It is suggested that young women should not be given permission to go out by themselves because their sexuality is considered dangerous. The knowledge and education about sexuality in Sri Lankan society is less than satisfactory for not having a systematic sex education in the country. Most Sri Lankans seem to obtain their knowledge on sex from their peers or through magazines and books. In Sri Lankan culture, all receptive and penetrative forms of sex should happen within the institution of marriage. Even though extramarital affairs are not approved and rare for wives, men or husbands would visit brothels or “seek out impoverished widowed or divorced women (usually those with children to support)” (Raymond, 2004, p. 978). These women are called the “keeps” rather than calling them “prostitutes.” The men who have these “keeps” would bring clothes and cooking utensils and gifts for receiving sexual favors.

Report 2: Breaking the Glass Ceiling? The Paradox of Female Leadership in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 2009)

Canagarajah (2009) begins with giving reference to what a glass ceiling means. “The glass ceiling metaphor conveys a rigid, impenetrable barrier, but barriers to women’s advancement now are more permeable. Although men have long monopolized leadership, especially more powerful roles, this is changing” (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 2). Canagarajah gave a profound account especially on the female figures/leaders in the Sri Lankan social context but they have a hard time breaking through the traditionally powerful patriarchal setting in which they live. Relating this information back to the introduction for this thesis, the two Sri Lankan females made history in the political sphere in Sri Lanka by becoming the World’s first Prime Minister and her daughter becoming the President. They are none other than Mrs. Sirimavo

Bandaranaike and Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga. They indeed challenged the patriarchal setting of the Sri Lankan politico-cultural milieu.

It is come to the attention of Canagarajah (2009) that, with the traditional role of the women, given by the society, being caregivers, mothers and nurturers, their role as leaders, politicians is questionable. The question is:

But what truly happens to women who rule in traditionally patriarchal, international countries where the role of the woman as a mother and a nurturer is honored? Do they become what is expected—a soft hearted sympathizer with those who are victimized by power—or do they become like their counterparts, with tendency to be a cold hearted authoritarian? (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 2)

This indeed questions the role of the woman outside the family sphere, in the public. The report noted that Bandaranaike and Kumaratunga were strong women, giving their full contribution as aggressive leaders, especially in the issue of ethnic war in the country since 80s to the 90s, they operated through the patriarchal biases “did not have much of an influence on the stance of females in the Sri Lankan Society” (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 2).

To a larger extent, politics in Sri Lanka has been dominated by Sri Lankan family lines. These individuals came from respected family lines, believed to be from the purest bloodlines in Sri Lanka because they did not have any interracial marriages with any minority groups, especially with ones after the colonization. Just after the assassination of Mr. Bandaranaike in 1959, Mrs. Bandaranaike quickly took his position. Canagarajah (2009) stressed that “she was immediately dubbed ‘the weeping widow’ for the frequently bursting in to tears as she pledged

herself to continue her husband's vaguely socialist policies" (p. 3). Moreover, her role is worded in the report as:

Her first step in to the lime light of politics displays a stereotypical, emotionally—unsound woman, a type cast train of females. Thus, she played the role of a soft hearted suffering woman to gain sympathy of the traditional minded Sri Lankan voters in order to gain their sympathy, And yet, her progressively—aggressive actions form and antithetical portrait of Sirimavo Bandaranaike throughout her three terms. (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 3)

This report took note of the political role Chandrika Kumaratunga, the daughter of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, gave as a sharp contrast to her mother. Kumaratunga was able to win the presidency election in 1994 and her party won the majority of the seats in the parliament. Unlike her mother, Kumaratunga was read well in her higher education obtaining a degree from the University of Sorbonne, France. Canagarajah (2009) stressed how Robert Rotberg explained Kumaratunga's background as:

She gained from her parents' power and wealth to get educated abroad, unlike other women in the island who are discouraged by proceeding to higher education, in difference to traditional norms. She seemed to be cut from the 'modern cloth.'

Canagarajah, 2009, p. 7)

Apparently, both women Bandaranaike and Kumaratunga in the political sphere acted against what is called the 'female norms' when handling issues of crisis, especially during the ethnic war in the country. For instance, Sirimavo Bandaranaike carried out the socialist economic polices initiated by her husband, mainly giving prominence to the Buddhism in the country. Her government nationalized various economic enterprises and carried out land

reforms. Despite Kumaratunga's political views and strategies, it would be much more appropriate to be discussed in a different discourse of politics, her strong stance on her decision making as a public figure and a leader, had been impressive.

Report 3: Social Transformation, Gender Inequality, and Violence against Women in Contemporary Sri Lanka (Goonsekere, 2012)

This report by Goonsekere (2012) is developed on a key note speech she delivered for the Center for Gender Studies at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka; 2012. The key elements of her focus were gender, women's empowerment, patriarchy and social transformation. In the report, Goonsekere pointed out that, within the dialogue of gender equality, it is important in eliminating gender based discrimination. Sri Lankan society constitutes of more than 50% of females but they do not have the same chances to contribute to the development of the nation.

Within this discourse patriarchy and gender equality, 'power' has a dominant role. Goonsekere (2012) stated that "The world power has many of us negative connotations, since we are all familiar with the opportunities for the abuse of power" (p. 3).

In her speech and in this report, Goonsekere (2012) brought her attention to Simone De Beauvoir, quoting from her book *The Second Sex*: "The battle of the sexes is not inherent in the human anatomy" (p. 3). In this statement what lies underneath its expression is that women should not be thought as weak compared to men on her depending on her biology. Biology of a woman does not make her weak nor does a man's biology make him superior to women. Therefore, the discourse needs to be focused on "laws, polices, institutions and social values so as to internalize a standard of substantive equality" (Goonsekere, 2012, p. 3). Thus, women need not be marginalized because of their sex. If women are being discriminated on their sex,

addressing gender equality is much needed in empowering women as strategy/tool, to place women in a superior position.

Women do have their inherent birth right to all opportunities just as men do. Goonesekere (2012) emphasized that the Sri Lankan society needs advocacy, a path to understand social changes and challenge the traditional ideologies that justifies inequality and discrimination against women in the fabric of culture.

Goonsekere (2012) made references to how Buddhism views women's status in the Sri Lankan society. It is a fact that Lord Buddha challenged the existence of the caste system and measuring a person's worth, skills, status on the caste that he/she is born in to. Egalitarianism had been one of the ways that improved the connection between men and women in the earliest Sri Lankan society just as in other South Asian countries. Sri Lanka being a paddy growing country, men and women had different tasks attached to that they shared. This gradually led to the women's property in rights before and after marriage. The customary laws in the country identifies women's' equal and separate rights to property. Kandyan Sinhala law (*Kandy is the central province in the country, and Sinhalese are the majority ethnic group among the Muslims, Tamils , Burghers and other minority groups as moors. The law that it originated based on that region is called the Kandyan Law*) is considered as a 'discriminatory' law for its gender bias. The reason being that a "daughter married in *diga* loses her inheritance rights" (Goonsekere, 2012, p. 5). In this context, *Diga* means the daughter being married and going to stay with her husband's family. The opposite of *Diga* is *Binna* meaning, on marriage, the man would stay with the woman's family. So, if a daughter being married on *diga* and if a son of the family becomes a monk, both genders would lose their inheritance to the property as they are no longer

connected to that certain unit of production if that is especially to do with paddy lands and *Chenna* (also pronounces it as 'hena' meaning the agricultural patch).

Apparently, Hinduism also had some influence on Buddhism. According to the laws Manu, "A woman is under the power of her father in her girlhood, the husband during marriage her son in widowhood: she is therefore never free" (Goonesekere, 2012, p. 5). Nevertheless, this type of law is not included in the Kandyan customary laws. She further explains that the Sinhala Buddhist marriages are simple and had no rituals. But, it has changed at the current situation in the country to the extent that in some occasions, the bride's mother would be excluded from the ceremony if she is a widow (Goonesekere, 2012).

When it comes to the Muslim law, the belief is that it was brought in to the country during the colonial rule "as a collection of Muslim customs from East Asia and been accepted by the local Muslims in the country. They also recognize the separate property rights for women and it is called the "Mukkuvar Law." Even though Muslim personal law does not recognize the minimum age for marriage, marital rape of a child below the age of 12 years is an offense in the penal code. Under the Muslim Law the dowry is given as a marital gift of cash to the bridegroom. It is called the 'kaikuli' which stands for 'bribe' in Tamil. There is another type of dowry called "Stridhanam" (Goonesekere, 2012, p. 6). This represents a local custom but not included in the Islamic law. Apparently, the Islamic law of inheritance identifies males having the property rights. Regardless of the same criminal law in the country applies to all Muslims in Sri Lanka, 'adultery' is not considered a crime and men have a legal responsibility to support the non-marital children (p. 7). Goonesekere (2012) also pointed out that "there have been recent disturbing incidents where Muslim women who have relationships with non-Muslim men have

been beaten inside Mosques or in public places on the basis of decision taken by elders of the community” (p. 7).

When it comes to the Tamils, specially originating from the Northern Province the country, the ‘Tesawakamai’ law is important. Under this law, with relation to marriage, distribution of marital property, property of family members, ownership and death are been signified. Currently, some important changes have taken in the content of the law such as giving donations to a man in marriage. Giving separate property /dowry or it is called ‘chidenam to a woman on marriage has been diminished (Goonesekere, 2012).

Goonesekere (2012) also focused on the discrimination face by the war widows including the female heads of household in the North and East parts of the country. These widows were considered as the ones with full right having the responsibility over family property. However, the issue is that when it comes to administrable tasks, “public administration continues to focus on a ‘male-breadwinner’ and ‘head of household’, particularly in relation to social security benefits such as pensions and state land distributions” (Goonesekere, 2012, p. 7).

To go with the above there reports on the matter being researched, careful attention was also give to the “National Report on Violence and Health in Sri Lanka” (World Health Organization and Ministry of Health and Nutrition, 2008).

Throughout history, violence within marriage has become a serious where men seem to exercise their power over women. The society has condemned it as a tool of patriarchy where men having the upper hand to control women within the household. Violence over women is not confined to the household. However, for the convenience of the study, domestic violence is given more attention.

In this report, under Chapter 455, domestic violence, intimate partner violence within the institution of marriage is given importance. Domestic violence spreads across racial, ethnic, religious, educational and socio economic levels (World Health Organization and Ministry of Health and Nutrition, 2008). This form violence includes physical, sexual, mental abuse and economic deprivation and threats of violence. In the Sri Lankan context, it is believed that the violence takes place mainly not to harm the woman (victim) but to gain control over her and maintain power. The report stresses that the situation of domestic violence in the Sri Lankan social fabric can be understood only by understanding the environment in which women live.

Apparently, when domestic violence matter was addressed initially in early 1980s in the country, it was pushed aside as an idea introduced by the western world to disturb the structure of family. Currently, Sri Lankan society accepts it as a critical issue and had taken steps to provide help to the victims through legal system and support groups (World Health Organization and Ministry of Health and Nutrition, 2008).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE DATA

The primary focus of this study was to understand the nature and scope of patriarchy and how it operates within the institution of marriage in Sri Lanka. For that, I mainly looked in to three reports written critically on the discourse of patriarchy, primarily relating to the Sri Lankan social context of institution of marriage. Other literature documented will be incorporated to solidify the results as well. All three reports identified that the Sri Lankan society operates on patriarchal elements and institution of marriage of is one of them.

In the “*Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality*” by Francoeur and Noonan (2004), there was an interesting illustration on role of the Sri Lankan woman. It should be amusing the reader as it suggests that the Sri Lankan male is a lot superior. There it stated: “A man’s reputation is gained through public works, and most importantly, through the collective reputation of his core female relatives (i.e., mother, wife, sister, and daughter)” (Francoeur & Noonan, 2004, p. 974). This perspective addresses the values that has created on women by the society and for the women live in it. If a man’s reputation is gained through his immediate female family members, a man’s fundamental duty is to protect them and be the guardian but not an exploiter. In this account, what suggests more is that, “the collective reputation of the female relatives” has a greater responsibility to keep their reputation intact to define the role of the man. In that context, “part of man’s moral duty (dhamma) is to serve as moral guardian of his females and to punish them for real or alleged violations” (Francoeur& Noonan, 2004, p. 974). The above account of authority given to the man is rather questionable because, there is no mention that women have the same authority to punish the man on his alleged violations of morals.

Further, Francoeur and Noonan (2004) stated: “Even though extramarital affairs are not approved and rare for wives, the men/husbands would visit brothels or seek out impoverished widowed or divorced women (usually those with children to support” (p. 978). It is clear that women who have not had any financial support, especially raising their kids may have agreed to be an ‘entertainer’ by choice. Similarly, widowed women are kept in the similar position by their status. It is a culturally believed that widowed women are helpless and more vulnerable. But, a man becoming a ‘widow’ is somewhat a celebrated factor and society would not look down upon him as much as they do on the widowed woman.

In that sense, the reader could clearly understand the nature of “men’s’ actions are ignored by the cultural norms. Out of the three reports, *Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality* (Francoeur & Noonan, 2004) is the only report that has given a fine illustration of gender issues in Sri Lanka, and the society’s perspective of the role of Sri Lankan woman. Some years ago, even though women have been encouraged to get an education, it is only for the purpose of getting a good partner for life. Educated women had more ‘accepted’ status in the elite society. However, this education had also been limited to a certain privileged group of females coming from the ‘elite society.’ Therefore, going through this account in the report, it was evident that the education was just to uplift the status in society but not to empower themselves. The education had not provided them with anything other than getting in to a marriage deal.

Francoeur and Noonan’s report (2004) also stressed about the late marriages in the Sri Lankan society. Two primary reasons would be that on one hand, women with a good education would excel themselves well in the field of education or employment. Currently, most women

would delay getting married because they would like to be independent, expand their horizons in any discipline they study or work they do as professionals. These reasons have made them redefine their autonomy. Earlier, women wanted to be educated in order to find a groom as education was an added value to their social status in society, especially with the women in the elite social class. As mentioned above, these women would stay home after marriage. In the present situation, women would use their education to find a partner but wouldn't stay home. They would use their skills and knowledge to contribute to the financial gains of the family. Thus, women would work hand in hand with men to make earning for the family. In that sense, man cannot be considered as the only breadwinner but it becomes a collected and a shared effort.

In the Sri Lankan social context, widowed women carry a social stigma for their situation. In the day today dialogue, they are considered bringing bad luck to the family circle, helpless and a minority group that needs sympathy. Both *Encyclopedia of Sexuality* (Francoeur & Noonan, 2004) and *Breaking the Glass Ceiling* (Canagarajah, 2009) reports bring about the social acceptance of widowed women and ways in which they are socially accepted and treated in the Sri Lankan context.

In the report, *Breaking the glass Ceiling* (Canagarajah, 2009), the Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike was considered a 'weeping Widow' and emotionally imbalanced. Canagarajah (2009) stressed that "her first step in to the lime light of politics displays a stereotypical, emotionally-unsound woman, a type cast train of females" (p. 3). This clearly shows the perspective of society of a widowed woman as if her life has ended with the death of her husband. At the same time, stereo typing all women as emotionally imbalanced, down in a matters of grief. That was clearly displayed by the wording of 'a stereotypical, emotionally-

unsound woman' (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 3). Even though she was believed to have played the 'soft hearted suffering woman's role, she became one of the aggressive leaders in the country especially in the national matters.

The *Encyclopedia of Sexuality* (Francoeur & Noonan, 2004) also referred to the widowed women as helpless; therefore, men would take sexual advantages of them but for their sexual favors would be returned by supporting her and her kids by these men. This practice of extra marital affairs is not highly questionable when it comes to men in the society. They would not be stigmatized and ostracized as outcasts to the extent the society would do to a woman with same conduct. So, it is clearly noted the societal norms, cultural values in most occasions are formed on personal benefits or only supporting a certain group in society. Patriarchal attitudes are nourished and elevated by the same society that condemns it in certain cases, but not being able to pull them out as they are rooted very solid in the cultural settings of the country.

In the discourse of female leadership, both women, Kumaratunga and Bandaranakike came to power; especially with the ties they had to politics of the country from their family lines. Had not they come from solid, elite families with an upper social class, they may not have been in politics at all. Bandaranakike was a housewife, with no secondary education unlike her daughter Kumaratunga. But she was named the first woman Prime Minister in the world and became an iron woman handling the issues in the parliament shoulder to shoulder with the cabinet full of male domination. So, both these women challenged the notion of patriarchy with their social class, their family ties to politics. But, they still had to go through immense pressure coming from the male dominated political culture in the country. As Simone De Beauvoir said,

women should not be looked down upon for their biology, their biology does not make them inferior to men at all (cited in Brison, 2003).

Professor Savitri Goonesekere (2012), an ardent Sri Lankan scholar in the feminist discourse and gender in Sri Lanka, brings about the nature and scope of patriarchy through various elements. She identifies different system of laws connected to each ethnicity in Sri Lanka, especially concerning the matter of dowry and marriage. She identified three systems concerning the Sinhala Buddhists, the Muslims, and the Tamils. These three systems of laws come in to play when concerning marriage and dowry in the country. The kandyan law operates among the Sinhala Buddhists, concerning both '*diga*' and '*binna*' marriages. This law is much concerned with the property rights of the woman before and after marriage. Compared to Tesawalamai (for Tamils) and Mukkuwar Law (for Muslims), Sinhala Buddhist woman has rights to her property even after marriage unless it is given/patent to her husband. Under the Tesawalami law, the man/groom would be given a dowry as a donation. Therefore, the customary practice of giving a separate dowry property to a woman on marriage has been diminished (Goonesekere, 2012). At the same time, concerning the Mukkuwar Law for Islamic communities, it initially recognized a strong concept of women's rights for property, but with the influence of men and withier power relations to women, the women lost their rights for property. Such social impacts clearly illustrate that customs and cultural elements uplift patriarchal aspects within marriage and outside.

Domestic violence has attracted more attention currently as society does not accept violence on women. However, many incidents in Sri Lanka go unreported as women seem to take a backward position in asking for help. Earlier, wife beating or domestic violence was not

taken seriously in the Sri Lankan society as it is a domestic/personal matter. In the theoretical perspective, violence is used by a male on a woman to control her as a means of using power over her. In any 'civilized' culture, violence is not accepted, especially on women as men are prone to be brutalized by women in certain occasions. So, violence occurring within marriage is not accepted even though it seems as a private matter. It violates the rights of the woman, jeopardizes her physical and psychological well-being, and brings negative impact on the children and entire family unit. Therefore, the cultural beliefs that enhances 'macho' concept of men, being biologically strong compared to women so they can control women's bodies needs to be changed. Institution of marriage should not be a prison to both women and men. The patriarchal perspectives of signifying males' authority and power need to change.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The following summary, discussion, and recommendation is based on the literature obtained for this study focusing on three main reports concerned on understanding the nature and scope of patriarchy and how it operates within the institution of marriage in Sri Lanka. *The Continuum International Encyclopedia of Sexuality* by the Kinsey Institute (Francoeur & Noonan, 2004), a report documented on the social and gender issues in Sri Lanka giving emphasis on the history of the social fabric of Sri Lankan values, *Breaking the Glass Ceiling? The Paradox of Female Leadership in Sri Lanka* by Canagarajah (2009) and *Social Transformation, Gender Inequality and Violence against Women in Contemporary Sri Lanka* by Goonesekere (2012).

For the review of literature for this study, I have incorporated various scholarly articles produced by both Global South and Global North. Interestingly, literature on patriarchy and institution of marriage brings different perspectives within different cultural situations. However, one common element within the larger discourse of patriarchy falls on marriage and to what extent the role of woman has been challenged. The report on the paradox of leadership in Sri Lanka is especially incorporated to discuss how role of a woman can be changed given the situation. Both Kumaratunga and Bandaranaike have been housewives. Bandaranaike came to power with the death of her husband in 1956 and Kumaratunga came to power with the death of her party leader. Both women felt the pressure of coming in to the political sphere shedding their 'house-house wife' role. Eventually, they were considered as two of the strongest women leaders Sri Lanka ever had. Sri Lanka appointed both these females figures in to politic when the

country is faced with the ethnic conflict. So, two 'matriarchal' figures came in to power at a time of crisis.

Looking back to the history of Sri Lanka, the social structure has both matriarchal and patriarchal elements going hand in hand in the family circle. With the colonization process, woman's matriarchal values came to question with regard to the man's authority over women. But, Sri Lanka proved the fact that women brutalized by severe mental trauma such as assassinations of their spouses can become strong leaders in the public politics, an area completely dominated by males. Thus, women's representation may not at large but in small scale in public sectors such as politics have given strength to the other women in Sri Lankan society to voice their needs and grievances.

As Simone De Beauvoir once said, "A woman is a human being with a certain physiology, but that physiology in no way makes her inferior, nor does it justify her exploitation" (cited in Brison, 2003). Beauvoir, being an erudite Feminist scholar does believe that "feminists want to change not only women's situation but also the world" (cited in Brison, 2003, p. 189). Therefore, in order to accomplish this, one needs to address the bigger issues of class struggle, existing social system within society. So, patriarchy is one key element that needs to address in a larger discourse.

I do agree with Learner (1986) in his views on patriarchy as relationship manifest from a dominant group over minor groups. Learner stressed that men having power in all essential social institutions in society where women are disadvantaged of having access to hold power. This applies to the institution of marriage as a social construction where men become the decision makers in most occasions concerning the family and children. However, Learner sated,

“The system of patriarchy can only function with the consent of women” (p. 217). It is very true that in the Sri Lankan context, most women, coming from the rural divisions would not take an upper hand to challenge their situation, and they are women who are most vulnerable. Lack of education, poverty, having no adequate financial support have made them vulnerable to expect sympathy from others but not fight back to gain their strength to challenge the system. This is not the case with all women but most women are in this situation.

Currently, the system of dowry is fading from the Sri Lanka marital discourse but may not completely erode from society. Dowry has both pros and cons in its giving. In some cases it operates as a financial security for the bride but also gives much pressure to the family if they happened to be poor. Even though Sri Lanka situation is not severe as compared to India, dowry giving is practiced within families at present. At present families prefer to have their daughters educated as educated women have become a demand and treasure in family circles. So, this could be one reason as to why dowry is fading away from the Sri Lankan context.

As in India, Sri Lanka does not practice ‘Sati’ where the woman would sacrifice herself to the pyre after her husband’s death. Such practices need to be questioned and be eliminated. However, certain cultural elements cannot be eradicated once they are rooted in the social fabric. At the same time, certain cultural practices cannot be questioned by a different group from a different culture. Cultures are not universal and the discourse of marriage is not universal either. Therefore, what needs to be done is educate men, women, and children in society to demarcate from what is right from wrong and what is harmful from nurturing and nourishing. In the dialogue of violence inflicted upon women, alcoholism has become a critical problem in the Sri Lankan society. *Ceylon Today*, a leading newspaper in Sri Lanka published

an article by Gammanpila (2014), on Alcoholism in Sri Lanka. In the article, Gammanpila noted that according to the World Health Organization, the Sri Lankan situation in respect to alcohol consumption is satisfactory in comparison to the rest of the world. Per capita alcohol consumption in Sri Lanka is 3.7 liters when the world average is 6.2 liters (the timeline was not given in the article). However, despite the satisfactory results of alcohol consumption, still it is an influencing factor for violence across ethnicities and class hierarchy in the society.

Navigating the discussion to the Marxist theoretical view on patriarchy, one of the strongest feminists, Heidi Hartmann (1976) stated that, patriarchal system was established in a way that men could control the employment of women and children in the family. By doing so, men came to know of the hierarchical organization within the family circle which gave more power to them to be the decision makers.

In the larger discourse of patriarchy, Sri Lanka needs to redefine their values to give gender equality and reduce decimations. As I mentioned, values system cannot be changed overnight. Values, customs, and traditions are formed throughout history and certain groups in the society had the privilege to execute them in which majority and minority groups are created. As this study confirms, patriarchy with marriage operates in various manners. Dowry system, religious ideologies, considering the man to be the primary breadwinner, crucial decision maker, women being victimized are several visible forms of patriarchy. As an educated Sri Lankan female, I recommend the academic scholars in gender studies, in culture and ethical studies to educate the public on such issues discussed in this study. I highly believe the institution of marriage need not be a prison cell for a woman or for man. The perspective of marriage needs to be redefined and those who believe in domination of women and violence need to be educated to

‘un learn’ what they already believe and ‘re-learn’ what is essential for harmonious living. Thus, I repeat that “If the women of a country are slaves, the men can never be free” (Voice of Women Magazine, Sri Lanka as cited in Vinding, 2015).

References

- Barrett, M., & Phillips, A. (1992). *Destabilizing theory: Contemporary feminist debates*. Bloomington, IN: Stanford University press. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?>
- Brenner, J. (2000). *Women and the politics of class*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press. Retrieved from <http://monthlyreview.org/books/pb0106/>
- Brison, S. J. (2003). *Beauvoir and feminism: Interviews and reflections*. Retrieved from <http://sites.dartmouth.edu/brison/files/2014/09/B.9.-Beauvoir-Essay-and-Interview.pdf>
- Canagarajah, R. (2009). *Breaking the glass ceiling? The paradox of female leadership in Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from www.personal.psu.edu/
- De Alwis, M. (2009). *Interrogating the 'political': Feminist peace activism in Sri Lanka*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/pal/01417789/2009/>
- De Munck, V. C. (1992). *The fallacy of the misplaced self. Ethos*. Retrieved from <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/>
- Emrick, Y., & Baig, R. (n.d.). *The war of the women*. Retrieved from http://islamicworld.net/sister/war_of_women.htm
- Engels, F. (n.d.). *The origin of the family, private property and the state*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialistalternative.org/literature/family/introduction.html>
- Francoeur, R. T., & Noonan, J. R. (2004). *The continuum complete international encyclopedia of sexuality: A report on Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/lk.php>

- Gammanpila, U. (2014). *Alcoholism in Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <https://www.ceylontoday.lk/76-74148-news-detail-alcoholism-in-sri-lanka.html>
- Giminez, M. (2009). *Globalization and third world women: Exploitation, coping and resistance*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?>
- Goonsekere, S. (2012). *Social transformation, gender inequality, and violence against women in contemporary Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <http://www.kln.ac.lk/units/cgs/pdf/CGSUKOratioFinal.pdf>
- Gross, R. (1993). *Buddhism after patriarchy: A feminist history, analysis, and reconstruction*, Hemdon, VA: Sunny Press. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books>
- Hartmann, H. (1976). *Capitalism, patriarchy, and job segregation by sex*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173001>
- Hewamanne, S. (2006). *Critical feminist practices among Sri Lankan female garment workers*. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20459075>
- Human Rights Watch. (n.d.). *Caste system and Rodiya community in Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org>
- Kandiyoti, D. (2011). *Bargaining with patriarchy*. Washington, DC: Sage Publications. Retrieved from <http://org.uib.no/smi/seminars/Pensum/kandiyoti,%20Deniz.pdf>
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The creation of patriarchy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?>
- London Feminist Network. (n.d.). *Defining patriarchy*. Retrieved from <http://londonfeministnetwork.org.uk/home/patriarchy>

- Malhotra, A., & Mather, M. (1997). Do schooling and work empower women in developing countries? Gender and domestic decision in Sri Lanka. *Sociological Forum*, 12, 599. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/684734?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- Malhotra, A., & Tsui, A. O. (1999). Work and marriage: Mother-daughter similarities in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. Retrieved from <http://www.kinsyinstitute.org/ccies/>
- Mohanty, T. C. (2001). *Cartographies of struggle: Third world women and the politics of feminism*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?id=UQ6Fh->
- Nuhuman, M. A. (2011). *Ethnic identity: Religious fundamentalism and Muslim women in Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2008/06/ethnic-identity-religious.html>
- Osman, A. (2013). *Asian ascendancy: Media in the age of globalization*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3862860/>
- Raymond J. N. (2004). *The continuum complete international encyclopedia of sexuality (2004): A report on Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <http://www.kinsyinstitute.org/ccies/>
- Ray, S. (2015). *Understanding patriarchy, human rights, gender, and environment*. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/4995045/Understanding_Patriarchy
- Ross, R. R., & Savada, A. M. (Eds.). (1988). *Sri Lanka: A country study*. Washington, DC: GPO for the U.S. Library of Congress. Retrieved from <http://countrystudies.us/sri-lanka/41.htm>

- Samarasinghe, V. (2000). Subverting patriarchy?: Leadership and participation of women in politics in Asia. *Ethnic Study Report, XVIII, 2*, 193, 197. Retrieved from <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/265246102>
- Sarshar, M. (2010). *Patriarchy: The Indian experience*. Retrieved from <http://works.bepress.com/mubashshir/19>
- Sayed, J. (2008). *A context-specific perspective of equal employment opportunity in Islamic societies*. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10490-007-9051-6#page-1>
- Seidman, S. (1996). *Queer theory/sociology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books>
- Shiva, V. (2010). *Staying alive: Women, ecology, and development*. Brooklyn, NY: South End Press.
- Sydie, R. A. (1994). *Natural women, cultured men: A feminist perspective on sociological theory*. Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?>
- Vinding, I. (2015). *Gender paradox in Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <http://groundviews.org/2015/04/02/the-gender-paradox-in-sri-lanka/>
- Walby, S. (1989). *Theorizing patriarchy*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell publishers. Retrieved from <http://libcom.org/library/theorizing-patriarchy-silvia-walby>
- Weber, M. (1993). *Basic concepts in sociology*. New York, NY: Citadel Press. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?>
- Wickramasinghe, M. (2009). *Feminist research methodology: Making meanings of meaning-making*. Florence, KY: Taylor and Francis. Retrieved from http://books.google.com/books/about/Feminist_Research_Methodology.html?

World Health Organization & Ministry of Health and Nutrition. (2008). *National report of violence and health in Sri Lanka*. Retrieved from <http://grassrooted.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/National-Report-on-Violence-and-Health-2008.pdf>