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Q7(a)

Explain how the pattern of patriarchy is being altered in a family and at the workplace in the present context.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 marks · Systems of Kinship

Systems of Kinship: Family, household, marriage; Types and forms of family; Lineage and descent; Patriarchy and sexual division of labour; Contemporary trends.

Core demand of the question

- Has patriarchy been altered in the family and the workplace? Substantiate
- Keep the answer within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

Patriarchy is male dominance across household and work; it can change form.

- **Family:** more dual earning and law, still care, honour, and NFHS violence.
- **Workplace:** some professions and SHGs, still informal segregation.

WFH and lockdown reorganised rather than ended the double day.

Walby's public patriarchy is the best short map.

Introduction

Patriarchy is organised male dominance across household, work, sexuality, and the state. Sylvia Walby argued it can shift from private to public forms. Family and workplace in contemporary India show alteration, not abolition. Law, education, and wages have moved. Unpaid care and informal insecurity still pin the structure.

Body**Family: what has altered**

- Talcott Parsons's male-earner nuclear type is no longer the only official script. Dual earning, delayed marriage, and female-headed households appear in Census and NFHS files.
- Education and later age at marriage raise women's bargaining in some classes. Giddens's "pure relationship" is a limited urban possibility.
- Law on inheritance, domestic violence, and divorce opened exits that earlier household patriarchy denied.

Family: what persists

- Unpaid care, which Ann Oakley named as labour, still falls on women. Work from home during COVID-19 intensified the double day.
- Sex ratio, spousal violence, and decision-making items in NFHS show constraint inside "modern" homes.
- Kin control of marriage, often caste-endogamous, still organises honour.

Workplace: what has altered

- Women have entered professions, public office, and some factory and service lines. SHGs made credit and public meeting visible.
- Formal equal-pay rules and maternity provisions exist for a thin organised sector.

Workplace: what persists and mutates

- **Informal sector dominance:** no contract, home-based piece work, domestic service, and gig tasks without a career.
- Occupational segregation and a glass ceiling keep command posts male.
- WFH dashboards did not socialise childcare. They often moved the office into a gendered house.
- Lockdown dismissed informal women first and sent migrants walking; another class kept salaried screens.

How to read "altered"

- **Walby's** shift from private patriarchy (husband as direct boss) to **public patriarchy** (state and labour market as bosses) fits much of the evidence.
- Friedrich Engels tied the family to property. Property in land and firm still skews male, so alteration is incomplete.
- **Intersection with caste and class:** Dalit and migrant women face a harsher workplace patriarchy than the professional dual-earner story.

Flow diagram

Patriarchy -> Family care marriage
 Patriarchy -> Workplace segregation informal
 Law education dual earn -> Altered form
 Unpaid care gig lockdown -> Persistent structure
 Altered form -> Private to public
 Persistent structure -> Private to public

Conclusion

Patriarchy has been altered in family and workplace through law, schooling, dual earning, and **public patriarchy's** new offices. It has not been ended. Care, informal labour, **NFHS** violence and sex-ratio files, WFH, and lockdown show reorganisation. Substantiate with **Walby**, **Oakley**, **Census**, and the 2020 split between home-office and reverse migration.

Facts & figures

Walby

Patriarchy as related structures; historical shift from private to public forms.

Oakley

Housework as labour; the family remains a workplace of care.

NFHS

Indian evidence on decisions, nutrition, work, and spousal violence.

Public patriarchy

Control through labour market and state as much as through the individual husband.

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