

PASHTO GENDER PROVERBS WHICH PORTRAY WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE ABOUT HERSELF

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Abstract

Pashto proverbs, as a significant genre of the folklore and also as social discourse have guided Pashtuns in different aspects of their life. These proverbs are central to the social and individual life of Pashtuns, as these have sprung from Pashtunwali as a code. Pashtuns are bound by this code to live their according to the principles of this code. Those who do not follow it strictly are considered lesser Pashtuns. There are a large number of gender proverbs in the language, which treat woman with derogation, denigration and bring her to subsidiary and inferior level in the social structure. Discourses serve the interests of the powerful groups and provide them opportunity to monopolize their power and to perpetuate it as well. Woman in different traits and relationships have been brought down to the level of inferiority, contrary to the superiority of man. Proverbs are considered a masculine genre of the folklore and portray masculine perspective. There are a small number of Pashto proverbs about feminine perspective. These proverbs with feminine perspective present a view of woman, which is contrary to the proverbs about her from masculine angle. These proverbs project Pashtun woman with a strong sense of honor, self-respect and a desire for economic and social independence.

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INTRODUCTION

There is no denying the fact that proverbs are an important genre of the folklore in every culture across the globe. Rong (2013) believes that folklore has a significant role and place in the collective approaches of nations, which include their customs, traditions, norms, attitudes, practices of everyday life, which are collectively termed as its culture. Cultures are understood through their folklore and it also differentiates one culture from another. Some analysts and researchers believe that the social history of nations can be understood through its profound history of folklore. According to Tair and Edwards (2006), proverbs, on the surface seem simple, but at deeper level deal with all complex aspects of cultures. All the social characteristics of cultures and the subjects underlying them are covered by folklore and to say, more specifically by proverbs as the most significant genre of every society. Proverbs are small sayings with deeper and wise meanings, which can be either universal truth or can be about some aspect peculiar to a culture. Some proverbs have background story or incident to their background. It happens mostly that the general folk do not know the background incident or story. They take the story or incident in the general context. The codes of conduct of a nation, its values and ethics, social dealings and relations, embedded in religion, gender,

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treatment of gender, gender roles and perspectives on gender are covered by the folklore and more specifically by its proverbs Mahmood (2015) is of the view that the special trait of proverbs is simplicity of language. Deeper and universal subjects and simplicity of expression are also among the dominant features of proverbs. Besides all these features, proverbs also express the collective wisdom, experiences and observations of groups in a simple manner, as have been passed down from one generation to the other by word of mouth. Ahmad (1975) says that Pashto proverbs have evolved from Pashtunwali (the Pashtun code), which has given the genre Pashtun subjects and themes. Khattak and Barlotti (2006) say that Pashto proverbs serve as a strong tool for the fulfillment of the demands of Pashtunwali. This approach can be taken as authentic and convincing, as Pashto gender-related proverbs convey the message that these must have evolved under the influence of Pashtunwali (Pashtun code). A closer study of Pashto proverbs about the social exclusion of woman and her economic dependence have relevance with her treatment through Pashtunwali (Pashtun code).

According to Hussein (2009), proverbs about woman in different cultures have evolved to sustain and maintain patriarchies. The reason to the argument about the sustenance of patriarchies through discourses is that it has been through different strategies that cultures have adhered to the old traditions and norms to serve the interests of the powerful groups. Social structures have adopted different strategies for the above mentioned purpose. One out of these strategies throughout the period of human social history has been the language of discourses, which has served as a strong support, to maintain the status quo about so many things, specifically the superiority of man over woman in patriarchies. For the already mentioned purpose, woman has been projected as weak in the first instance, and secondly, through repetition of the language of discourses, her weakness and inferiority has been established as the social truth about her. Kerschen (2012), Thornburn (1978) and Schipper (1991) are also of the view that the derogatory and belittling language against woman through discourses and specifically that of proverbs most probably has evolved from man. Maghmoom (2014) in his translation of Thornburn (1876) says that Pashto proverbs portray the universal and also different social aspects of Pashtun life. Of all the different aspects of Pashtun culture, which these proverbs bring to the spotlight, one is about its treatment of woman. According to Alia (2019, p. 1), the negative and derogatory treatment of woman is common to all cultures across the globe.

There is similarity of ideas in the use of denigrating images about woman. Proverbs, as a discourse has portrayed woman negatively on the one hand, and secondly, has ignored her perspective. It would be more appropriate that as a weaker and inferior group her perspective has not been taken into consideration. There may have been man's inherent fears to the idea of overlooking woman's perspective, as to losing his own superiority. If woman's perspective has been ignored on this basis and her views have not been taken into account for the visible challenge and threat to man's superiority, then it can never be a genuine one. Genuine power and superiority cannot be gained through the suppression of the weaker groups. There have always been deliberate strategies and manipulation by the powerful to ignore the perspective of the weaker and marginalized and also to overlook their efforts about awareness. Awareness of the weaker is considered threat to the interest of the stronger. As it is said about proverbs that these are the carriers of the collective wisdom, which has been formulated on the basis of

observations and experiences of the generations of the past. According to Yousafzai (2018, Pp. 6-7) proverbs are referred to as words of the wise, a statement which renders them authenticity and sanctity. Due to the aspect of proverbs as “sayings of the wise,” even the negative views expressed through these have been considered as unchallengeable and unquestionable.

PROVERBS AS A GENRE OF THE FOLKLORE

Proverbs are a significant genre of the folklore in every culture of the world. Besides being a genre of the folklore, it has evolved as a social discourse by shaping views and perspectives of cultures on different aspects of their lives. Folklore is a blend of two words, folk and lore. Folk, according to Mahmood (2015, p. 5) mean the simple and illiterate people of the countryside. Lore, on the other hand, means the expression of their feelings in language, free from artificialities. Proverb, as a genre of the folklore possesses various traits. The first trait of proverb is its brevity, as it can express an idea or general truth about any aspect of life in one small sentence (Farid, 2024). Proverbs can be about a general observation or experience about some aspect of life. The proverbs of a language provide an insight into all aspects of a specific culture, besides shedding light on the universal aspects of human nature (Webster, 1982). The admitted fact is that human nature is the same everywhere but there are peculiarities and specific elements of human nature. Literature is a blend of the specific and universal and so does it apply to proverbs. Proverbs are about fundamental truths of life and expressed in simple and brief language (Sanauddin, 2015, p. 59). Cultures and societies are understood through its folklore and also that how one is different from the other (Rong, 2013). The in depth study of proverbs also help listeners and readers understand the various aspects of a culture by providing the social history of a nation through this genre of the folklore.

ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS ABOUT WOMAN’S PERSPECTIVE

Like all patriarchal structures, Pashtun culture treats its woman with derogation, belittlement, inequality, discrimination and injustice. She is treated with secondary status in different domestic and social affairs, related to her life. It is in this manner that man’s power, authority, superiority and dominance has been perpetuated and sustained. Different research studies conducted by Kerschen (2012), Thornburn (1978) and Schipper (1991) on the gender proverbs, bring to light the fact that the humiliating and belittling language of these proverbs most probably have evolved from men, as cultures have projected men’s viewpoint. These gender proverbs also reveal a fact that woman’s equality has posed a threat to man’s superiority in his view. It has not been directly stated by woman but the inherent fear in man about woman’s equality and freedom has made him threatened from her. He has strategically manipulated language through discourses to prove her inferior throughout the ages of human history. Language, as tool has remained at man’s command and it is he who has utilized it for his own interests. Moreover, researchers and analysts also make a claim that proverbs as a genre of the folklore may be associated with wisdom and rationality, so it is masculine genre. Ghilzai (2020, p. 2) says that the term gender has been for the first used by Gayle Rubin, a feminist anthropologist. Rubin is of the view that cultures have socially changed males and females into men and women, thus giving rise to gendered-culture. Holmes (1995) believes that we are basically born as humans and then it is culture, which changes us into men and

women. A study about the discursive representation of women in sample proverbs from Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya by Hussein (2009, p. 97) indicates that proverbs, as social discourse, have played a role in bringing women down to a lower position in the patriarchal structures of these three African countries. Hussein is of the view that different discourses, including that of proverbs have rationalized and to take a step further, also institutionalized the subjugation and secondary status of woman in different tribal and patriarchal societies. Hussein (2009) has explained the point about the rationalization and institutionalization of the inferiority and subsidiary role of woman in different African cultures extensively with argument. For the arguments he has provided proverbs from these cultures about the same subject. According to him, in the first place inferior status and roles are assigned to women in the patriarchal structures and further her inferiority is naturalized to the extent that denies the very humanity to her. If looked at in the context of African culture of the rationalization and institutionalization of the inferior status and role of woman, a striking similarity can be perceived of how woman has been treated in both cultures. Discourses have evolved in different cultures for the exploitation of the weaker and marginalized sections. Since the evolution of human societies language has remained a tool in the hands of the powerful and they have utilized for their own interests. Social discourses and their utilization against the weaker segments of societies have been associated with an organized strategy, the motive behind which is to bring them to derogation and subjugation. Woman has also been derogated in social discourses and has been brought to subsidiary level in all patriarchies.

Discourses in the social structures evolve to validate injustices and exploitation of the marginalized groups Pashto proverbs, as a genre of the folklore has highlighted trifles about the negative aspects of woman's nature, which have impacted her life in a negative manner. Negative discourses about the weaker groups in cultures and specifically women as the marginalized group have evolved from men, as it is men who have remained the symbol of power and strength in patriarchies. Discourses have highlighted the perspective of the stronger groups, while ignoring the perspective of the weaker. It has been on the basis of the same argument that most of the analysts and scholars of proverbs have termed it a masculine genre. Miruka (1994) view's and as has been cited by Kerschen (2012), says that throughout its evolution, the genre of proverbs has remained in the hands of man and it is he, who has shaped the view about woman, and moreover, it is he, who has dominated the social and public sphere. The domination of the public and social sphere has given authenticity to man's views about the weaker groups, the biggest victim of which has been woman. One thing has become certain from man's control of discourse. He has dominated woman not just on the basis of his intelligence and superior potentials but strategically and manipulatively. Proverbs, which have evolved from man about woman, have been with a purpose and the hidden motive behind which has been to do damage the image of woman. It has been through the distorted image of woman that he has been triumphant in establishing his superiority over her. Kerschen (2012) says that proverbs as the most significant genre of the folklore, has provided an image of woman, which has been accepted by cultures as her only true image. Moreover, the general trends and attitudes of societies have also been comprehended through this genre. Proverbs of different global cultures depict woman as inferior in intelligence, wisdom, potentials, efficiency, competence, traits and decision-making power. Man has been presented as the possessor of all the qualities in superior manner, compared to woman. The social image of

woman through proverbs has strengthened her image from the perspective of the other so much that her own perspective about herself has been overlooked and forgotten. Woman's image through the other also lead one towards understanding the trends and approaches of cultures. There have bulk of researches about linguistic sexism of woman, specifically of the African languages (Hussein, 2004; Agbemabiese, 2016; Gebeyehu, 2019; Abdullah, 2016; Balogun, 2010; and Ennaji, 2008) agree that cultures have drawn a negative and inferior image of woman, which has been taken as the only image about her.

Pashto proverbs, like other discourses have been embedded in the traditional patriarchal social structure of this nation. The gender based proverbs of the nation derogate woman and have looked at her from masculine perspective. Woman's perspective has been disregarded in the discourse, as there has been a deliberate strategy to develop an inferiority in her about herself. As an oppressed and marginalized group in the social structure, an inferiority has been developed in woman about her own weakness and inferiority. Her perspective has been disregarded and she has been treated as unwise, unintelligent, indecisive, inefficient and incapable. Woman as a subsidiary group is given the impression that her views and perspective hold no significance. If she tries to express her views about anything related to her life, she is discouraged and silenced. Woman, in the larger number of proverbs has been portrayed through man's perspective, where the discourse project her with dominant negative traits. The negative portrayal of woman in this discourse mostly ignore the important role of woman in the social structure. Proverbs about woman's perspective though smaller in number, provide us with a glimpse into her role in the culture and also what is her approach to the own treatment in the Pashtun patriarchal structure under the dominant influence of Pashtunwali (Khattak, 2008). There can be so many views and probabilities as to the proverbs about woman portraying her own perspective. The first view can be that these may have evolved from woman herself. Secondly, these may have evolved from men, who do not support the negative views about woman by the Pashtun patriarchal structure. These men may have expressed these views and as proverbs as a discourse are a general heritage and asset of a nation, so these have become a part of the same. As a genre, proverbs evolve from the whole culture, so individuals from whom these evolve are not known and individual views are not taken into account in this regard.

Pashto gender proverbs about woman's perspective are smaller in number but provide us with an insight into her feelings about her treatment by the culture. It also provides with an insight into how does she how would have she taken that treatment, how would have she reacted to it and how would have she rebelled against it if she the strength to do so. In all global cultures daughters are married off and go the home of husband, which is considered their only true home. After marriage daughters do not enjoy the same power and value in parents' home, which they do before. Woman's value, honor and power is associated with husband's home. Wise, sensible and intelligent women are aware of this reality and they value husband's home compared to that of parents. This idea has found expression in discourses of Pashto folklore, as nothing can escape expression that happens in the social structure. There are proverbs also about this aspect of a woman's life. A sensible Pashtun woman will not claim the ownership of her parents' home, rather she will take pride in being the queen of her husband's home. A Pashto beautifully portrays this aspect of a Pashtun woman's life and also her perspective on

it. The proverb says “Da plaar da kor mey melmana key kho korbana na” (May I never be a host of parents’ home, instead only a guest). The proverb is a clear indication to the fact that married daughter’s interference in the affairs of parents’ home will not be encouraged. Contrarily, she will enjoy respect there as a guest and will be provided with all hospitality that is due to her. Woman’s frequent visits to her parents’ home depend on how she is received over there. They are mostly welcomed with warmth by parents but if parents are dead, woman’s visits to their home is connected with the manner in which she is treated by brothers. It is human nature that they go where they are welcomed and paid respect, otherwise, people do not go to unwelcome places for years and years. There is a proverb, implicitly and explicitly illustrative of woman’s feelings about parents’ home; “Hagha wazey laarey che da plaar kara ba laarey” (Gone are those days when my visits to parents’ home would be frequent). The proverb about the feelings of Pashtun woman speaks of her self-respect, which she will stick to her honor at any cost. She will not go her brother’s home, even if she gets a clue that she is an unwanted guest there. Pashtun woman is the product of the same system, where the code of Pashtunwali is strictly followed and deviation from it is considered a dishonorable act.

Pashtun culture restricts woman to the household with her exclusion from the public and social sphere. These proverbs have evolved under the strong influence of Pashtunwali. Man in the Pashtun social structure to be weaker or to be economically dependent on woman (Khattak, 2008). Pashto proverbs, as a genre of the folklore, strongly convey that economic power and responsibilities associated with it are man’s domain. On the same basis, Steul (1981, p.309) assumes that Pashtunwali’s contradictory treatment of woman is fascinating and disgusting to an outsider. The explicit message of the discussion is that woman is economically dependent on man. Proverbs about woman’s own perspective are smaller in number but the focus of most of them is her self-respect and honor. A proverb in this connection says that “Da wroor khor mey krrey kho mohtaja mey warta na krrey” (May I be blessed with brother but may I never be dependent on him). As the larger number of proverbs about woman, which are from masculine perspective are either denigrating or belittling through metaphorical language. This treatment of woman through different imagery is similar across different cultures of the world. Moreover, as has been stated by Stevenson et al (2011, p. 241), there are proverbs about woman, which humorously target woman denigratingly and full of sarcasm and bitterness. Sarcastic views about woman are actually the age old views of cultures, expressed through discourses. Whenever woman has expressed herself in discourses, her views have remained contrary to the derogatory views of cultures. Moreover, discourses have overlooked the exploitation of the marginalized and instead of that has highlighted and magnified their negative traits. Pashto proverbs, which project feminine perspective are entirely different from cultural views about her. Women are seen as lamenting the death of husband and praising and glorifying their positive traits.

The innermost feelings of women about her treatment by culture are mostly not known to people, as she is silenced strictly whenever she has tried to express herself. A Pashto proverb about feminine perspective presents a different realistic approach. The proverb says; “Che senga wey haghasey ba dey jarrah” (You will be lamented by me the way you were). The death of husband is lamented the most by women, as he is their only protector and provider. The loss of husband is a great loss for woman and his death makes her lonely and isolated.

The proverb mentioned above about woman's perspective is based on realistic and practical approach. She says that the lamentation of husband's death will be according to his worth and value. Whenever woman has expressed her views about herself and treatment of her by society, she has been observed as discontented with her social treatment. The larger number of Pashto gender tappas and the smaller number of proverbs with her perspective display the fact that she is being forced to live men, whom she does not consider worthy enough to be idealized by woman for lover or husband. The above mentioned proverbs projects a very rational feminine approach. Women are supposed to wail and cry over the death of husband, mostly because of their social and economic insecurities. The proverb mentioned above gives vent to feminine feelings that her grief and lament should equal the worth and masculinity of husband. According to Farid (2025), Pashto folklore has evolved from the ideal Pashtun code, Pashtunwali. This code besides as a guideline to Pashtuns about many aspects of their life has provided the concept of ideal masculinity.

A true Pashtun, as has been enunciated by the Pashtun code and also folklore, must possess certain traits. He should have a strong sense of honor, self-respect and should be the true protector and economic supporter of his family. A Pashtun who does not fulfill the above mentioned criteria, is considered a lesser Pashtun (moozi) in Pashto folklore, specifically tappa. Moozi (a lesser Pashtun) is never the ideal of Pashtun woman but she has no other choice in living with him due to the decision of elders about her. Pashto tappa is replete with Pashtun woman disgust for moozi (a lesser Pashtun) and having to live with him due to social restrictions in different ways. Being a feminine genre of the folklore, tappa has provided for woman's feelings about the injustices done to her in the name of traditions and norms. Pashtun woman, if given the choice of decision-making about her life, will prefer to live single all her life instead being the life partner of moozi. She will work hard to earn living for herself and will be happy in poverty, as she lives for honor and dignity and self-respect. She is quite certain that moozi (a lesser Pashtun) will never provide an honorable life to her. A Pashto proverb about the same feeling of woman conveys; "Da mozeege na kunda kha yem" (Better to be widow than to waste life with moozi). Instead of wasting her life with an unworthy and dishonorable, she is ready to prefer a hard life for herself, earning a living for herself in the challenging social structure of Pashtuns and which has been shaped again by the code of Pashtunwali. If Pashtun woman is given the choice, she will prefer the challenging path for herself, in order to live with honor. The proverb is also expressive of the hard reality that Pashtun woman is economically dependent on man but she still feels the urge for economic independence, as it will win her freedom from the clutches of traditional restraints. There is another proverb, portraying Pashtun woman's strong abhorrence for the detestable character of moozi (a lesser Pashtun). The proverb says; "Na kawom moozi, chaaray na kawom, lawing ba pa daana mechan annra krram" (I will not marry moozi, instead will choose the most difficult labor for earning a living). The proverb is about two aspects of Pashtun woman's life, her strong desire to live with an honorable man as life partner and secondly, an urge in her for economic independence.

Pashto proverbs, as a significant genre of the folklore have focused the negative traits of woman. The negative views about her have been promoted by proverbs as a masculine genre. During this perpetuation of the negative views about her through discourses, cultures have

ignored the fact that woman as a human being has also certain traits and ideals. Throughout the perpetuation and continuation of domination and exploitation of woman, cultures have overlooked her aspirations and ideals. Pashtun woman has idealized man, who is loyal, honorable, full of self-respect and dignity and must be the best supporter and provider for the family. This aspect of a Pashtun woman's life has been ignored and her views have never been taken into consideration. Whenever she has found the slightest space, she has expressed herself in different genres of the folklore and that too anonymously. Even if her name has not been known publicly, her perspective has found place in the discourses. Woman's own perspective about the aspects of her own life have been quite contrary to the social views. For instance, like all cultures of the world, Pashtun value sons over daughters. The birth of son is celebrated and is considered a matter of honor, compared to the birth of daughter. Lomotey et al (2020, p.73) cites an African proverb in this context, which says that "He who has daughters is always a shepherd." A Pashto proverb says: *Loor Khor da praddee deraan khazala da*" (Daughters and sisters have to be dumped like trash, as soon as possible). Derogatory language of the discourses across cultures highlight the similarity of themes about the belittling treatment of woman. The denigrating language of discourses and specifically proverbs, show that the treatment of woman across cultures has remained the same. Moreover, similarity has also been found about how discourses have strategically ignored woman's perspective. It may have been about the fear of man as to losing his superiority.

Pashtun culture treats woman as superior in all relationships due to the reason that he is the social protector and economic provider of woman in all these relationships. Two proverbs about woman's own perspective, in relationship of brother and son reveals the fact of how Pashtun woman's aspires to live with dignity, honor and self-respect and not to be dependent on man economically. These proverbs are "*Da wror khor mey key kho mohtaja mey warta na key*" (May I be the sister of a brother but not dependent on him) and "*Khudaya zoye raakey kho mohtaja mey warta na key*" (May I be blessed with a son but I may not be dependent on him). The above mentioned two proverbs speak about the self-respect, honor and her own separate identity despite the social inhibitions and restrictions. Her innermost through these proverbs say that she would prefer socially and economically independent life for herself if provided an option. Woman's perspective through the discourse of Pashto proverbs reveal the bitter reality that throughout the ages discourses have served as power tools in the hands of man. It has always been man, who through these tools have created ideologies about gender, which have served to create gender stereotypes. These gender stereotypes have perpetuated and maintained the status quo. According to Van Dijk (2001, p. 355), discourses are always a true reflection of the trends and approaches of societies. These approaches of cultures are based on the collective observations, experiences and also wisdom of cultures. It has been on the same basis that their authenticity cannot be challenged easily. One thing is certain about discourses and it certainly is about the support these have rendered to the interests of the dominant groups in cultures everywhere. The marginalized groups and their interests are the target of discourses. Pashtun culture terms proverbs as "*Da kannree Karkhay*" (writings on the stone). These are known as words of the wise and due to the same reason the cultural truth promoted by them has been considered as sacred. Pashto gender based proverbs shaped the psyche of Pashtun woman in such a manner that the truth conveyed by these was taken by her as sacred, therefore, she never thought about challenging them and took it as the only truth

about herself. Lomotey et al (2020, p. 71) say that “Proverbs carry the wisdom of Patriarchy.” In this context, in patriarchal structures, it is culture, which has defined both genders. It can be said, on this basis, that gender is a cultural and social construct in patriarchies, and not a natural construct.

Pashtun culture does not give woman the right of decision-making about her life. Whenever she makes her own decision about choosing a life partner for herself, she may make a wrong decision, as those who do not have experience at the art of decision-making, may make a wrong decision. Pashtun woman her mistake, when she realizes that her decision about her own life was wrong. There is a proverb, where woman laments her wrong decision in the selection of life partner for herself. It says “Ma da meenay meerra okoo hagma chamyar okhato” (I married for love but the husband turned out to be from a lower caste). As Pashtuns in the sub-continent have lived with Hindu culture for centuries, so they have adopted the strong idea about caste system from Hinduism. If looked at in religious context, Pashtuns are Muslims and in Islam distinction on the basis of caste or race has been discouraged. The interesting thing about Pashtuns is that they are staunch Muslims by faith but they follow culture, when it comes to practice. In that case religion becomes secondary for them and it culture, which holds primary significance for them. Pashtun woman, as the product of cultural norms, feels herself bound to them. The lament and sadness of Pashtun woman over the thing that her life-partner turned out to be from lower caste and that she made the decision about her life in ignorance is visible in the proverb. Discourses about race and caste exist in cultures, embedded in the psyche of people. It is these discourses, which shape the views, opinions and also decisions of people and they are guided in their daily life by the biases shaped through these discourses. Pashtuns look down upon people, who earn through different skills. Pashtun woman is also the product of the social system and is aware about the wrong decision she has made in choosing the man of lower caste for herself. The idea expressed by the proverb reflects that Pashtun woman wishes to have life partner from honorable and respected family. The background to the idea can be that an honorable man will not commit a dishonorable act and will not let her down. There is one other perspective of Pashtun woman related with the idea expressed in the proverb mentioned above. She not only aspires for an honorable man for life partner but she also wishes to be get respectable in-laws. A Pashto proverb about woman’s perspective says; “Ka za kha na yem kho kha skharganay raakray” (Even if I am not good may I be blessed with good in-laws). People with sense of honor respect their daughters-in-law and treat them like their daughters. Women pray for good in-laws, as they know that they will be put in esteem and regard by them. A married woman’s fate depends on the type of in-laws into whom she is married.

Proverbs about woman’s perspective about herself, though smaller in number, provide with a glimpse into how woman views her social treatment and how would she respond to it if she is given the opportunity. The genre of proverbs is generally considered as masculine, so we do not see woman’s perspective mostly. Moreover, her perspective about herself or the social world around her is not considered of significance. These few proverbs about her perspective, which probably have come from her signify her strong standpoint about her life and her decision-making about her life, the opportunity for which she is not provided by the culture.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study about the different discourses of cultures reveals the fact that throughout the ages, in patriarchal structures, woman has been depicted as socially inferior to man and that it is he who has to remain in power, as well as in control of the public and social sphere. Language has served as the hand maiden of man and as a powerful has provided an immense support to him in establishing his superiority. On the basis of this argument, it can be rightly said that discourses have also remained in the hands of the powerful. Proverbs, as a masculine genre of the folklore, have also evolved as the effective tools of patriarchal ideologies and structures. Pashto proverbs are also a significant genre of the folklore and are mostly representative of man's perspective. Proverbs of this culture about woman show that the larger number of these project man's perspective about woman. Woman's own perspective has either been ignored or not considered worthy and significant. That is why the larger number of Pashto gender proverbs are derogatory and humiliating, which bring woman to a subsidiary and bad level, making her role, status and position secondary in the social hierarchy. This treatment of woman through discourses and specifically that of proverbs is not restricted to Pashtun culture but is similar in all patriarchal structures. Discourses have projected negative view of woman, which has evolved from man and unfortunately, she has been made a slave to the masculine view of her, and moreover, as a dominated group she has complied to that opinion about her. The negative view of woman through these traditional carriers of truth and wisdom have snatched the right from woman to form perspective about the different aspects of life or about her own self.

It is quite true that the larger number of Pashto proverbs about gender present a very negative view of her. Her positive traits have been overlooked by these proverbs and negative traits have been highlighted. There are a small number of proverbs, which project woman's own perspective about herself. These proverbs may have been evolved from woman or from men with positive approach towards women but these bring to light positive and understanding view about how woman thinks and feels about her issues and what will she decide for herself if provided an opportunity in the very conservative society of Pashtuns. She has to live her life with the man to whom she is married and her compromises and sacrifices are highly appreciated. If a woman tries to go or speak against the established norms, she is discouraged and silenced. The proverbs, which convey woman's perspective, which goes against the traditional one. Some proverbs about woman's standpoint say that she will prefer to remain virgin all life rather to live with an unworthy man. Another proverb conveys the idea about woman's outlook that she will prefer widowhood for herself than be the wife of *moozi* or lesser Pashtun, in whose actions society or individuals do not take pride.

In the Pashtun hierarchy, there is a place of honor and pride for those who fulfill their duties and responsibilities, both socially and individually. Pashto proverbs have evolved under the dominant influence of Pashtunwali, as a code of life for all Pashtuns. Pashtun woman is the part and parcel of the same code in the social structure. If the social structure praises bravery, honor, respect, sacrifice, patriotism and numerous other traits, she also stands by those traits and any deviation or violation from the good traits of the social code is not tolerable to her. She is dependent on man socially and economically, so greatly aspires her life-partner to be

the possessor of those traits, otherwise, even if she has to remain single all her life, she would work hard and would not make a complain.

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