

Colloquial maxims and gender ideology in Lashari Baloch community: An Anthropological insight

Asma Rubab

PhD Scholar

Department of Anthropology
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. Pakistan.
Email: Asmarubab05@gmail.com

Muhammad Shahzad

Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Department of Sociology

Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan.
Email: mshahzad061@gmail.com

Hafeez-ur-Rehman

Department of Anthropology

Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. Pakistan.
Email: Anthro_hafeez1952@yahoo.com

Abstract:

The article is a product of an endeavor to probe the functionality of Baloch maxims in construction of femininity and masculinity where the later serves as the powerful contextual referent which constructs, shares, and perpetuate the meaning of femininity within the Saraiki speaking Baloch community. The social demonstration of both the gender ideologies: femininity and masculinity, have been discussed here. However, the main focus of the research is on feminine identity or womanhood in the semi-tribal setup neighboring Sulaiman Ranges. By interpreting and understanding the meanings of maxims that are referred to, on certain occasions, we have analyzed and have tried to bring forth what femininity actually means in Baloch community. The theoretical approach of hermeneutics is used here to understand the underlying meanings of the proverbs that actually plays a vital role in constructing and representing gender identities in the community. The linguistic demonstrations have been shown by the researchers to put forth the feminine identity construction and understanding within the context of Baloch culture.

Keywords: Baloch, Language, Masculinity, Femininity, Gender ideology.

I. Introduction

As for as the gender ideology is concerned, the asymmetrical gender categories in terms of assigned popular expectations and response for men and women can be witnessed in many cultures across the globe. Women are treated as marginalized groups even in part of the world where contest between gendered social categories are said to be minimized. The women do not enjoy equal social status as compared to men throughout the world. Even in the societies who claim that gender and race differentiations in educational and other achievements are almost disappeared, gender equity is not achieved. For the exploitation, exclusion, and denigration of women, there is a strong socio-political and legal system in the society (Cohen, 1993, p.6). The impression that how a man and a woman should behave is created and reinforced by the social, political, religious, material, and educational institutions in a gendered society (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1995).

The main research question encompasses that how the language is playing role in shaping the gender identities in the community under study. Specifically proverbs, that are commonly used in the language of the community help a good deal to understand their gender ideology. The maxims act as a tool for socialization in the *Lashari* Baloch tribal community to construct and interpret the shared meaning of femininity. For this reason, the sufficient number of maxims and proverbials are inquired and interpreted as the people under study, perceive, feel, and interpret them in a certain cultural context. Rich oral art is the important characteristics of Southern part of the province Punjab where proverbs and colloquial gendered terminologies are widely used in the daily life of the individuals throughout its long standing history. Many generations have been equipped with cultural knowledge and conventions regarding gender ideologies which has been exhibited, perpetuated, and delegated across the generations through the *Saraiki* proverbs.

The people in the area under study speak *Saraiki* language. *Saraiki* is the term used for an ethno-linguistic group of speakers in central and southeastern Pakistan, primarily Southern Punjab. Some dialects of *Saraiki* are dispersed in the province of Sindh and some located in the province of *Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa* primarily Dera Ismail Khan District. In this article, we examined the gendered folk maxims, within post-modern discourse of power relationships, prevailed in the *Saraiki* speaking *Baloch* tribe entitled as *Lashari* residing in the village *Drighri*, union council *Wah Lashari*, District Rajanpur territory. The role of language to investigate gendered conventions is also discussed in the paper as well as the expectations about functioning of masculine and feminine identities. The theoretical paradigm of cultural hermeneutics is used to contextualize and explain *Saraiki* proverbs.

Normative beliefs on which a society builds its gender roles and fundamental nature of individuals called Gender ideology. Nevertheless, Gender ideology is perceived to victimize women in many cultures. Gender ideology is expressed through a systematic demonstration of Proverbs, narratives, symbols, and myths about being masculine and feminine which encompasses individuals' behavior in the society. Gender ideology is rather reinforced by everyday social practices. Normative concepts of masculine and

feminine behaviors are grounded, criticized, and managed by every society through a set of compartmentalized social system. West and Zimmerman are of the opinion that some behaviours are routinely celebrated or displayed on some occasions that are linked to the gender categories and everyone is aware of their positioning related to those events (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p.139). The gender ideology within the Baloch culture is the formation of existence of sexual identities to position them in social realm differently by assigning them two different yet inter-dependent universes of meanings and actions. In Baloch cultural practices, the maxims, rituals, symbols, superstitions, epics, verbal historical tales, and laconic phrases are pivotal aspects to synchronize the popular gender ideology.

The detailed analysis of the field data suggests that women are symbolized as idiotic, frail, jealous, nefarious, unreliable, inferior, and inappropriate in the popular maxims. Another picture reveals the symbolization of women as a glyph of affection, nurturing and cherished in Baloch oral tradition. It is important to mention here that the picture of positive portrayal of woman is very short not because the data is insufficient but because of the less availability of popular proverbs which carry the positive meaning regarding tribal feminine identity. This phenomenon is based on the post-modern perspective where the language acts as a systematic web of gender domination.

It is difficult to pin pointedly argue that whether proverbs design the asymmetry in gender ideology or vice versa but it may be connoted that only those part of popular maxims get recognition and popularity which support the powerful. The popular proverbs demonstrate the asymmetry of gender ideology in *Baloch* culture. It has also been concocted as male's hereditary right to fidelities and have advantage of being on edge over women as a matter of social right to have the command over her (Oha, 1998). The clear image of functionality of formulaic expression and idiosyncrasy of women in Baloch tribal community is discussed in this article.

II. Literature Review

After going through a wide range of magnum opus related to the asymmetrical gender ideologies, it can be asserted that language labels perform a pivotal role in dissemination of popular gender ideology within any cultural setup. From different perspectives, the connection between language and gender has been analyzed. This analysis encompasses the exposure of manifested discriminatory behavior against the women in cultural, institutional, and hermeneutical discourse. Pankhurst explained that when men were engrossed with greater important matters, their woman scuttlebutt and whispered. The Study denotes that whispering and gossiping along with other aspects of the domestic discourse of women shows that language of women is undermined and is powerless (Pankhurst, 1992).

The second genre of language and gender analysis is related to the patterns of communication between masculinity and femininity. The scholars have been more concerned with gendered differences in patterns of communication around 1970s. When compared with men, it has been witnessed that women are deficient in possessing inevitable environment of nous, directness, boldness, etc (Cameron, 1994, p. 384). The socio-cultural and hermeneutical basis of maxims which permits men to be controlling

and women to be controlled and directed, according to the set rule for ideological womanhood, is important for us to investigate in more detail which is expressed through the proverbs during daily speech. In the mode of communication of male and females, there lays a conspicuous difference embedded in social needs (Rapoport et al., 1995). In the social hierarchies, men mostly gravitate to the communication with boldness and authority that is to sustain a certain social and political positioning in household spheres. Conversely, women choose to remain submissive and maintain silence to fulfill the requirement of 'nice girl' (Fox, 1977). Women may earn the support for themselves through abiding by the requirements of patriarchal society. While doing this, women actually judge themselves through internalized standards of femininity (Devereaux, 1990, p. 337).

Thirdly, it is pivotal to connote that the historical and cultural circumstances in which a proverb is usually configured should be considered for holistic understanding of the semantics attached with the proverbs. For instance, to comprise the meaning of this Saraiki maxim: *Dudh putr wala*, — Milk and male possessor — a sufficient contextual knowledge is required. The proper understanding about the geographical, historical, economic, and cultural background knowledge of maxims about the meaning of implicational occupancy in the proverb is necessary for the interpreter. Successful life needs two things in the view of Saraiki speaking Baloch: a male inheritor and milk (cattle). An individual can rarely be able to understand the meaning of a proverb without such information. The interpreter needs to understand the arrangements and linkage between language i.e. lexis and syntax (Bell, 1991).

Finally, the most important but usually ignored problem of gender and language is the mode of usage of gendered language to communicate regarding the functionality and dynamics of womanhood in the society. We couldn't come up with more detailed analysis, due to time and resource constraints, which could demonstrate the manifested and socializing role of proverbs regarding the devaluation of womanhood in semi-tribal Saraiki speaking Baloch culture. However, we have explained and have debated the cultural meanings of proverbs.

III. Baloch Proverbs Constructing Gendered Identities

Proverbs and colloquial sentences are commonly and broadly used phenomena in different cultures. As for as the Baloch tribal culture is concerned, the tribal proverbs facilitates the transmission of cultural knowledge and traditions across generations. Many Scholars have talked about the function of the proverbs in the society where focus is on the analysis and characteristics of proverbs. Some scholars have examined the suggestive nature of proverbs that they always hold a certain value that is attached to them for transmission to the generations and preservation (Ssetuba, 2002, p.1). This study analyzes the role of colloquial jargon as well as symbolic representation of semantics of femininity in different proverbial structures in constructing and perpetuating the gendered culture. Exploring the inferences of gender stereotypes, the role a language plays is analyzed.

Every proverb possesses a circle of space around it which contains the meaning and extent of functionality of that particular proverb. The surrounding space determines the functionality of that proverb as well as the extent of meaning. This surrounding space

contains cultural knowledge, degree of controlled persuasiveness, from female's perspective, as well as the system of meaning of relative semantics which give rise to the required comprehension and understanding of shared meanings of the proverbs. The surrounding space can be termed as 'context' of the proverbs. If we put that proverb in different context, the semantics of proverb may change. Let's have a look at some gendered proverbs in detail and analyze the surrounding space which tends to assign the meanings and determine the functionality of any particular proverb. Collection of maxims in this study is gathered from the observation of colloquial interaction of respondents which followed the interrogation about their contextual usage. It is not possible to understand gender relationships accurately without referring to the context or to study them in isolation from the communal settings. Without reference to the community, it is challenging to comprehend the social construction of femininity & masculinity as both are interrelated with each other (Jackson, 1993, p.66; Kimmel, 1987, p.12). In Baloch community, even maxims that specify the projection of masculine and feminine identities are based on noticeable difference of psychological and physical traits. Proverbs about masculinity are comprehended for an holistic analysis of the relationship between the sexual identities. In this study, some proverbs are specifically masculine or feminine but there are some whose meanings change when there is change in contextual situation.

Since, it is difficult to categorize the single proverb into some specific compartmentalization or categorization sometimes, because they exist under the varied contexts, and possess varied meanings. It has been difficult to accurately spread out individual proverb into distinct thematic meanings. For instance, in some circumstances when a proverb is prominently used to disparage womanhood indirectly implies the idea of how masculinity provides justification for men to utter derogatory phrases for the personality of women. In some cases, the narrator of the proverb or the language of the proverb is feminine which implies that the derogation is not being done only by their male counterparts but also by the females of the community as well. One may ask the question about this fact, the answer lies in the pattern of hegemonic masculinity to such an extent that women have to denigrate the other females to win the acceptance and considerations from the men. The fact needed the analysis of qualitative data through the amalgamation of two approaches: content analysis and Hermeneutics (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.27). After the collection of maxims they are sorted according to their interpretive distinctiveness.

i. Femininity, Evil, and Inferiority

The maxims which evidence the inferiority of the women have different levels taking into account the sensitivity of the encoded and implicit message in them. A few of them are exceedingly aggravated and suppose to put forward exuberant depreciation of the women in the semi-tribal society. For Instance, the metaphorical demonstration about the women who is short heighted is symbolized with satan: *Biddi rann shaitan ay*, that a woman who is short heighted is seen as atrocious with demonic power which brings disarray and devastation. The proverb: *ranna ranna akhiya ranna di hik wasti, wasday ghar bar kareendiyen jadan charhdi masti*, that women cause destruction when they are possessed with destructive (sexual in some instances) desire. Another such proverb: *tre vann kuvann, Manjh Dabbi, bhed puchhli, darhi wali ran*, that these three forms are evil: a buffalo with a curved back, a sheep with a long tail, a woman with the beard. These are

the most grievous colloquial ravishment on women. Another proverb reflecting the evil existence of women in the Baloch community: *Soowar da kattiya buch wainda aey, Bhoondan da kattiya nahi buchda*, that a person who has been bitten by pig could be cured but who resides with doomful lady cannot be rescued from the impact of devastation caused by that women. This maxim tells that woman is the basic cause of ups and downs in life that if a man is suffering from a natural disaster, there are many chances that he would survive but if he is accompanied by a lady who is considered to be doomful then he is unable to face good fortune throughout his life span.

This sort of proverbs reflect the popular gender ideology and position of women in the society under study. Not only this, even the maxims that appear non-reactive voices or little sensitive elusively communicate the mindset of the society about prescribed inferior status of women. For example, a maxim in the community under study says: *Shala aurat baanjh na howay*. This maxim symbolizes conversely patriarchy's jubilation of woman's fertility and its importance to ascertain her survival. In this respect, the indivisibility of sexuality and fertility in Baloch worldview is unwrapped. The reference behind this, however, is intolerant behavior towards a woman's inability or badluck to bear children. This shows how important and valuable child bearing is for the survival and affluence of the lineage. Although if a woman does not want to bear the child, she may not express her desire because it is unacceptable and considered a non-compliance to the norms of the community in general.

Another demonstration of women as inferior entity can be seen in the notion that usually the women are perceived to be illogical and unintelligent. As per this proverb: *Aurat jehra mashwara deway honday bilkul ulat amal karo*, that means if a woman gives suggestion, to her husband particularly, regarding any decision making process or any other thing, though she may have some expertise in that, it is mandatory for the husband to act contradictory to what she has suggested due to the unsoundness and unwise mentality of the women. Another such proveb: *Aurat di aqal gittay wich*, connotes that women possess very low level of intelligence as if they don't have minds rather they think from their ankle. Contrary to this notion, men are considered to be wise and smart who conceal their plans from woman regarding anything related to their decisions. Another proverb that can be categorized in this perception: *Zaal Pair di Jutti hai*, that social position of a wife is just like a footwear. In this maxim a typical mentality of a Baloch culture is manipulated that she is like a shoe or footwear without considering her to be a human being. It can be said that like a shoe woman possesses the same worth as of shoe and could be changed at any time whether due to need, according to the wish of the male.

The conception of the women's biological and mental lowness is one of the formative and prerogative aspects of gender ideologies prevailed in the culture under study. This originates from the perspective that women are reversal and men are the exemplary criterion of humanity (Eveline, 1994, p. 159). The Saraiki maxims under this pattern facile women's softness as negative attribute to assume the important positions in the hierarchy of society. For example, a Proverb: *Aap howain Tagrhi, Kon Laawy Phakrhi*, intelligibly signaled this out that if a woman is wise enough then no one can harm her but she suffers just because she doesn't possess the required wisdom. The

stereo-typical inferiority of women is exploited as an intellect to demark their approach to pivotal status in the community. Another Saraiki Proverb says: *Angoori jamdiyon sanjapdi hey*, that the management of a woman can be anticipated with her birth. If she would have good household management skills, it could be anticipated in her early childhood.

ii. Femininity and Denied Existential Self

After marriage a woman must assure her every sort of existence such as emotional, psychological, and economic according to the mindset of her husband. The wife's thought should not contradict with that of her husband. The identity of a wife is colligated into that of her husband in such a way that is evident in this Saraiki proverb: *Parni Patri dheer da janaza susral tun niklay*, that means once married then she shouldn't leave her husband's home for good. Only the case may be, when she is allowed to leave his home, is after death. The Baloch maxims regarding femininity manifest the negation of the community to women socio-psychological existence with men particularly husbands. Decision by woman to abandon her husband is not only disliked but it is considered as highly absurd. The community widely criticize the woman who decides to take divorce. The interpretation of this proverb is that future of the married female is determined by the masculine context in which she lives. In similar context, the wife assumes her husband's attitude and home as a sole refreshment. The proximal cause for this is because the relinquished females are not accepted in the society usually.

Another proverb possesses the meaning: *Doojhay di bakri kun gha koi nahi satenda*, that no one feeds the goat of a stranger. This phrase indicates the behavior of society regarding a woman, especially when a woman of ordinary outlook and average condition, becomes widow or divorced or is needy, no one cares about her and takes the responsibility. So, she is forced through patriarchal power relationship that she has to bear whatever her husband does to her. This argument spreads connotation that in a patriarchal society women usually have internalized the normative behaviors influenced by patriarchy to please their men and they gauge themselves according to those standards (Devereaux's (1990, p. 337).

Another proverb denies the existential utility of women in such a way: *gandum de Daany da mu chakki do*, that the grain of wheat is always to quern. Women are supposed to be the weakest and dependent creature in general and lack their own identity and strength. This proverb is applied on that kind of female who would always be weak in their life whether before the marriage or after it. She always depends on men i.e. father, brother or husband and also she has to nod in positive and in submissive manner instead of refutation. This maxim possesses the semantic in a way that there is resemblance between woman and grain of wheat i.e. a woman is to subjugate through men as the wheat grain is to quern. Another mindset demonstrate the denial of existential 'self' of females through the proverb that if someone wants to marry a female; he should judge her grandmother's habits: *shadi krni ay te chuwaair di nani ku parkho*. This maxim is somehow showing a conservative thinking of society about judging a woman to whom someone wants to marry if she is unknown to him or outside his kinship. It is best to say that, for investigation about a woman it is a measuring scale of society that if a maternal

grandmother of a girl is noble or pious then she would also be like her. An unknown woman for marriage proposal is adjudicated by having a panoramic view on her maternal grandmothers' personality. Her grandmother's overall behavior determines the piety of the chosen female.

Another unique aspect of women's denied existential self can be witnessed in this proverb: *Bua Bhhatreejii Hikka zat, Maanwan Dhhiyan Bayee Bayee zat*, where the lineage of paternal aunt (Father's sister) and niece is extracted to be the same but the lineage of mothers and daughters are seen as different. This maxim shows that paternal aunt and her niece are considered from the same lineage while a daughter who is born and reared with her mother is seen as stranger to her mother because her mother possesses the different blood line. The daughter is seen more adherent to her father's sister than her own mother and the only thing which separates them is, the lineage. This categorization might be further useful for family relationships which usually leads toward paternal aunt having much stronger bond with the niece.

iii. Femininity and Subjectivity

Proverbs that transmit endurance of women regarding physical and psychological mortification impalpably reverberate the social perspective that subjectivity is deficient in women. For this reason, women are mostly symbolized through animalistic personification in the proverbs. For instance, a proverb: *gadhaan da kam nai k bedi na charhay*, that means donkey do not protest about burden. Another proverb: *gadha kon kia shanas, gulqand kya hondi ay*, that donkey cannot understand the value of sweets because it has got no opinion and choice. The common perception in the society especially about female is that they behave non-sense in a very primal typologies as for as female's behavior is concerned. This maxim shows silly attitude of a woman that, according to male psychology, something that is important and valuable is of no value for her. Further, she lacks subjectivity. That is why, she cannot hold any opinion or estimate actual value of any pivotal phenomenon.

Another proverb suggests that women do not possess free-will. A proverb says: *Zaal, baal tay moch da waal jeth tekao, oath tekday*, that women are equated with the kids and mustache meaning that anywhere you place wife, kid and mustache, they will be settled there without complaining or refuting against the will of men or possessors. Sylvia Plath talks about this oppression in patriarchal societies. She symbolizes the position of women in the society with yew tree and moon. The moon is no door, it is a face in its own right (Plath, 2010).

iv. Feminine Embodiment and Commodification

Men dominate in social and economic causation in the community. It is another way for the men to execute themselves by exteriorizing women and depersonalizing their involvement in interior domain (Collins, 1986). The way women are exteriorized differ from one culture to another. Men have been using women since long as passage through which men build and make integral bond with other men. Families meliorate their coalition through handing over their female children. For instance, for the peace between

contenders in inter-tribal conflicts women serve as expensive tool (Lewis, 1985). Other customary practices are also obligated by the people on their women either because of religion or tradition as ritualistic part of transition. The respondents have been practicing fastening to protect the modesty of their unmarried females. It is also a sign of a decorum so that their demand as a perfect bride may increase. The community under study highly values the virgin girl for marriage. This approval is followed by a ritual in which men bring their pistol with them on the first night. Hence, if she is virgin, the vaginal blood will prove it, otherwise, she could be killed by that night due to not being virgin. This ritual is more like symbolic though. Another aspect of female exchange in marriage is demonstrated through the usage of proverbs in such a way that: *Watty Satty di Kamai, Ganji gai tay Kaani aye*, when there is exchange of women in exchanged marriage system (A pair of brother and sister is exchanged for marriage with another pair of brother and sister), it is said to be the trade of bald with the one eyed. The semantics behind this maxim can be seen as the shortcomings of exchanged marriage. It is portrayed as a trade of two physically challenged women that in exchange of a defective woman one gets another defective woman. Once again here woman is portrayed as low that she is even being commodified in exchange.

Baloch maxims display these manners of portraying women inside the array of the patriarchal configuration. Mostly, the sets of maxims under the present pattern, represent the direct or indirect embodiment of the feminine identity. The maxims intelligibly expound how tribal paternal ancestors exteriorize women by setting several embodiments on their body and ability of production through innumerable expectations of patriarchal demands. Maxims unveil the ancestral vision about satisfaction of the women after the birth of children and guarantee the prolongation of pedigree (Ankrah et al., 1994). When they say: *Maa de pairan tallay jannat ay*. It seems to be that People under study, esteem women because this proverb shows the celebration of being mother by placing heaven under their feet. Ofcourse women as a mother or sister is also respected in Baloch community but the problem arises when she is a wife. This is the phase of her life when she is mostly stereotyped.

In the gendered society under study, patriarchal masculinity can be witnessed as a socially symbolized form of the physical, social, and psychological existence of men in society. The conventional image and its constituents of the masculine ideal have long been accentuated through religious as well as temporal literature since long. In Baloch community, archetypal forms of tribal masculinity are fortified through maxims such as agonistic, ascendance, intensiveness, aliveness, resistance, and autonomous. For instance, the Saraiki proverb: *Daarhi na Muchh Nirra Tuch Tuch*. For masculine identity the mustaches and beard are pre-requisites. Here in this maxim, males who don't have beard and mustaches are supposed to be disrespectful because identity of a male is just shown by having beard and mustaches. This proverb rendering the meaning for masculine identity connotes the theorization of male jingoism in ménage. The Men are exalted by the society through *Balochki*: code of behavior to perform and perpetuate their masculinity by strictly avoiding praxis that predicate weakness.

This maxim: *Sepahi Nal yari na la, Rann nu bhaid na de, Dar te Bair na Raah*, means if one wants to live a successful life, he should abide by these three manly rules;

Avoid making friendship with policeman, avoid to share secret with the woman and avoid growing berries at doorsteps of house. The three main ingredients of this maxim show that all three things are the cause of destruction for any person and would cause loss. If a person makes friendship with a policeman, his deputation on some other place would hurt. Similarly, it is perceived that a woman cannot hide or hold a secret and if, in any case, she got informed about a secret, she would cause some loss by disclosing it. Lastly, if a person grows berries in his house especially on entrance, it will be too difficult for him along with others to easily pass on. Simply all three things are unreliable and here woman is again negatively focused by the society. The Saraiki Baloch proverbs such as, 'Farting in public is not masculine, rather it is feminine to be weak', and, 'A man should be a big man everywhere whether in home or in public', conveys the meanings that how the society have exalted the man. Certain cultural morals of masculinity of men are not only expected in domestic life rather it is required in every aspect of daily life. Masculinity's hegemonic version is rhetorically so compelling that it is based on an obvious conviction that a man is a man everywhere (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994, p.3).

v. Femininity and Psychological Dynamics

There are some proverbs which transmit partisanship of society in the favour of men regarding psychological issues among women. There are some preconceptions that women possess weird psychology. To show this, the maxims bespeak the impression of the women to have psychopathological issues. The maxim: *Nachan aonda koi nai tay, wehra dinga*, means that if a woman cannot do a particular thing, she always blames for that failure on others. A woman may put the convexity of their own axiomatic impuissance on something else. This very notion can be seen in another proverb: *Roway Yaaran koon, ghhin ghhin naa Bhhirawan da*, that means yearning for the lover but pretending as if she misses her brothers. A societal image of psychological character of a woman is portrayed in this proverb that a woman who falls in love with someone and misses him but she conceals her emotions from others for her lover. On query, she pretends that she is crying because she miss her brothers. Frailty of a woman is expressed here that she cannot explain her sorrow to anyone and is unable to share her feelings.

Representing women as deficient in having sound objective knowledge in the way they cerebrate and act, all of the maxims abstracted under this pattern demonstrate this theme. If the man supposedly tries to rectify this lacking in women, he is warned by the elders of the family in these words: *Saariyan Hikky Moolhay nahi Chharhaindiyaan*, which means all the faults of a woman can never be rectified in a single attempt. Woman is supposed to be the icon as well as the base of every fault due the lack of sufficient knowledge. This maxim is kind of a priori warning to a man that if he wants to eliminate the faults from women's behavior, it could not be done at once rather it is a process that takes time. A bunch of faults in a woman would gradually be rectified.

Another such proverb demonstrates a specific fault in the personality of a woman: *Idher Warhsi, Udher Warhsi, Nikami Mol na thi*. This maxim is explaining that due to the habit of wandering in several houses whether known or unknown, gradually that woman loses her value, respect and worth in the community. Even her fellow women

try to avoid her due to this habit of non-adhering to the ideals of tribal femininity. The fellow women are then warned against such women in this proverb: *Kharbooza, Kharboozy ko daikh k rang badalda hai*, that a man is known by the company he keeps. This maxim is generally applied regardless of gender difference, but mostly it is used to warn the women in the community not to have inappropriate woman's company because she can be influenced by the bad woman in any aspect of life especially in antagonistic approach to the hegemonic patriarchy. If a nearby woman is having a low reputation and a male member keenly observes the change in behavior of a female of his own family which is usually unexpected then he makes his opinion through this very proverb.

vi. Femininity and Sexual Objectification

Men and women are placed against the compartmentalized set of hierarchical figures in a given time and space in a sexist cultural context. This attributable difference of sexes normally gives rise to the difference of masculine and feminine roles, inheritance of the property, involvement in social and political activities, and perceptions about gender. Sexual objectification of gender is one of the perceptions about women in the community. There are a few sexist proverbs that denotes the objectification of women in Baloch community. The proverb: *Chau Chundali*, a female having four corners in her body. The corners symbolize the breasts and butts which demonstrates women as sexual objects in a way that the local people proudly can address a female as the one having no body but a merely sexual organs with her and that becomes her only reference of introduction.

vii. Femininity and Domestic Violence

In tribal culture of Baloch community, domestic violence against women holds no astonishment. Regarding torture and pridfulness of men, a few of the maxims are: *Jain di juti, onda sir*, that a woman should be beaten with her own sandal. It connotes that when someone has the authority to give punishment to females, it should be done to make the woman obey. Another maxim says: *Ghorhay koon talla, Runn koon khalla*, that as food (grass) is essential for horse that makes him obey the owner, beating is essential for woman to make her obey the husband. On routine basis, as one just feeds a horse with grass and take advantages of its strength and loyalty similarly woman should be treated harshly and her daily 'diet' must include abuses, blows of fists and slaps to keep her up to the mark and according to the standards of a male dominant culture. Disch is of the opinion that stereotypical men cause psychological and corporeal punishment to their female partners (Disch,1997, p. 394). The subconscious gender stereotypical determinants as well as behavior is thought to a zealous magnitude (Kelly,1998). Stereotypical gender contribution and expectations can be annihilating and boosting men to exercise masculine hegemony.

III. Conclusion

This research has explored the utility of Baloch maxims in construction of masculine and feminine identities. By using the theoretical approach of cultural

hermeneutics, we have analyzed and have tried to understand the meanings of proverbs that are strong referral points in understanding gender identities in the Baloch tribal setup. The emphasis is on the social configuration of both the gender ideologies. However, the main focus of the study is on the construction and meanings of feminine identity through different socio-cultural aspects. Understanding any social and cultural phenomenon through the lens of gender is not possible without understanding the behavior of both masculine and feminine identities in a specific cultural context. Analysis is based on the argument that Baloch maxims preserve heritage and ideology. Honor, steadiness, or persuasiveness is peered with masculinity, while subdueness, affront and inability with femininity. The sample maxims discussed in this study mirror the actuality of women in Saraiki speaking Baloch culture.

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