

## Representation of Gender in Balochi Proverbs

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### Abstract

*A proverb is a short, concise statement that expresses a general truth or piece of wisdom based on common sense or practical experience. Proverbs are often used to convey advice, warning, or moral lesson in a memorable way, and they have been a part of human communication for thousands of years. Proverbs are usually handed down through oral tradition and are often culturally specific, reflecting the values and beliefs of a particular society. They can be found in literature, speeches, conversations, and everyday language, and they are often used to add depth and meaning to a message. The aim and objective of this research was to check the representation of gender in Balochi proverbs. The method of the research was qualitative and analyzed the interpretative meaning attached to the Balochi proverbs. Through the purposive sampling technique, 16 proverbs were selected from four books and these proverbs were critically examined. The findings of the research depict that women were represented negatively and degraded the worth of women. Balochi proverbs reinforced traditional gender roles and stereotypes, with men often being depicted as strong, rational, and dominant, while women are portrayed as emotional, weak, and submissive. These representations have real-world consequences for gender inequality, with women often being excluded from leadership roles and decision-making processes. The paper concludes by calling for a more inclusive and nuanced approach to the use of proverbs, which acknowledges and challenges gender biases and promotes gender equality. The research highlights the importance of ongoing critical reflection on traditional cultural practices, including the use of proverbs, in promoting gender equality and social justice.*

**Key Words:** Balochi Proverbs, Social Construction. Gender, Submissive, Dependent, Inferiority of Female, Supremacy of Male.

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## 1. Introduction

Language and its constituent parts, along with proverbs, were regarded because the maximum revealing archive of social life, and its observation can contribute to the expertise of the present-day tradition and the beyond of human society (Mullett, 1972:83) due to the fact language is inextricably embedded inside the community of socio-cultural members of the family (Ahearn, 2001; Bakhtin, 1981). Sociolinguists, anthropologists, sociologists, and different social scientists regard language as a form of social action, a culturally useful resource, and a set of sociocultural practices the study of which provides a starting line for the know-how of how social family members are conceived, how institutions are organized, how members of the family of production are experienced and how identification is mounted (Schieffelin, 1990:16; Ahearn, 2001:110; Scott, 1990; Fan, 1996).

Women are oppressed throughout the world. Even in parts of the arena in which race and gender variations in educational and different social achievements are stated to have almost disappeared, gender fairness has no longer yet been attained. There are complicated social, political, and criminal bases for "the exploitation, denigration, and exclusion of women" (Cohen, 1993: 6) in a society. The British sociologist Giddens (1989) defines sex as organic or anatomical differences between males and females, whereas gender issues are the psychological, social, and cultural differences between guys and women. In other words, intercourse is something you've got, and it may be described in terms of objective, scientific criteria- that is, the number of X chromosomes someone has. Gender, alternatively, is social assets: something obtained or built via your relationships with others thru a man or woman's adherence to sure cultural norms and proscriptions. Gender isn't always something we're born with and not something we have, however something we do- something we carry out (Butler, 1990: 302). This observation focuses on the social creation of gender in the Baloch society through proverbs.

Proverbs are defined differently by using prominent dictionaries and pupils. Oxford Dictionary defines a proverb as "A brief pithy saying, telling a chunk of advice or general reality" and consistent with Collins Dictionary a proverb is "memorable, a

quick and distinctly rigid declaration embodying, exceptional pupils have defined proverbs that it's far a big popular phenomenon which permits communication across societies (Mubarok, 2017). Proverbs are condensed and précised sayings that can be regularly used to explicit trendy truths or realistic precepts (Rasul, 2015). They confer with a short, usually recognized sentence of the folks that carry the fact, information, morals, and conventional views in a metaphorical shape that is constant and memorable and transferred from one technology to the other (Miedier, 1985). These are the famous sayings usually grounded in recommendation and country a usually prevalent truth because proverbs had been originated from cultural traditions, and they alternate from era to era. on occasion their meanings are no longer applicable. "folk wisdom" is rooted in proverbs. They reflect upon the cultural values and physical environment (Ghilzai et.al., 2020). This study is conducted on Balochi proverbs. The word Batal (proverb) is used in Balochi and Batal plays a significant role in the tradition and culture of Baloch and Baloch society. Because proverbs depict the psychology and behavior of the nation. The aim and objective of this study are to know or understand how women are represented in Balochi proverbs.

## 2. Literature Review

Proverbs represent the thoughts, psychology, and social behavior of a nation in a sociocultural setup and gender-based proverbs depict how gender is represented or kept in the society.

In keeping with Ghafoori & Elyas (2022) women have been portrayed negatively as missing highbrow maturity, failures, incapable of carrying out their responsibilities, awful-choice makers, willing to bias, and the source of temptation for guys. On the alternative facet of the coin, women have been praised in some of the proverbs that confine them to particular restricted gender roles, including moms, wives, and daughters in Hijazi proverbs.

Rasul (2015) explored in English and Urdu proverbs that girls as weak, inferior, and subsidiary. but Urdu proverbs depict this weak spot extra within the marital angle. A woman is normally anticipated to be completely docile, submissive, and subservient to her husband in specific and to her in-legal guidelines in widespread.

rarely any proof of braveness and assertiveness of women is observed. In all of the proverbs of both English and Urdu girls are offered as negatively beautiful, fragile, unintelligent, and talkative. they may be considered difficult and untrustworthy and are projected as degraded and immoral items of pride. there may be simplest one exception inside the records of Urdu proverbs wherein ladies are noted with a fantastic connotation: janat makani maryam zamani (Ikram-ullah, 2005: p. 64) which refers to a lady who's so pious that her area in paradise is showed and he or she may be referred to as Mary of her instances.

Mubarok (2017) analyzed ladies' illustrations within the Sundanese proverbs, and it can be deduced that the author argues that a maximum of these proverbs tend to serve the pursuits of guys by way of safeguarding hegemonic masculinity. further, hegemonic femininity guarantees the dominant role of men and the subordination of women, i.e. an acceptance of, and compliance with, a traditional knowledge that men are advanced to ladies as illustrated in Sundanese proverbs within the research findings. further, in these proverbs' girls are defined as depending on and submissive to guys, and are valued for their bodily appeal, home roles (cooking tasty), having to obey, and ability to serve her husband. moreover, the creator argues that those gendered proverbs tend to be hegemonic because of the energy and authority of fellows, as prescribed by using society.

Gebeyehu (2019) explored that ladies are represented negatively within the language of Awngi proverbs in the societal context of Awi. because the ladies are taken into consideration to be careless in the management of domestic sports and are not capable of manipulating their homes nicely. As a result, ladies are considered to be incapable of household activities and domestic management. men are considered to be superior and powerful in retaining energy and authority in society. The inferiority of women depicts that women are discouraged and men are endorsed to be holding strength and authority in society. moreover, ladies are decided to be cussed, detrimental, and perilous creatures in the evaluation of men. Likewise, they appeared to be unintelligent, passive, talkative, and lazy creatures. they may be also considered to be greedy and egocentric.

Belkhasher and Salman (2016) scrutinized Hadhrami proverbs if you want to discover the illustration about women. Researchers discovered that most of the people of the proverbs reflect intercourse discrimination in opposition to females. The intercourse-discrimination concept that considers males superior to females in intelligence, electricity, and management abilities is bolstered by using proverbs. additionally, other proverbs shed mild on different traits of women's personalities including, wickedness, jealousy, and curiosity. To represent such notions, sure literary techniques are used like metaphors, similes, and irony; furthermore, the transitivity structure of the proverbs plays a capability function to reflect these distinctive photographs. Despite those terrible representations towards girls, there are nevertheless other proverbs that respect women's role amongst their families or towards their society. Proverbs could not deny the importance of mothers regarding their sacrifices for their children. as it becomes stated before, language is a mirror and carrier of the way of life of the society; many proverbs reveal the society's customs and traditions, especially in marriage.

Pervaz et al. (2021) analyzed Punjabi, Sindhi, and Urdu proverbs on the illustration of girls. these proverbs confirmed that females are represented in a biased manner that contributes to the internalization of patriarchal social order and stereotypes that take girls as based, vulnerable, now not able to take choices, and irresponsible. ladies are as compared to animals and insects and they may be additionally portrayed as risky gadgets like knives. In distinguishing proverbs, ladies are also dehumanized. So, this study concludes that the proverbs of all four languages portrayed women as inferior instead of the identity of motherhood.

Shah, Sultan, and Kakar (2018) concluded that girls are represented as submissive, structured, and unintelligible, and derogatory terms have been used for women and many others. those proverbs are also selling the supremacy of guys over males and females are legitimized to practice their power over women by way of the patriarchal social shape of society. those myths and traditions considering women in Balochi proverbs display the patriarchal structure of society throughout history. these all are socially constructed and men who exercise their hegemonic energy and

promoted masculinity in society. due to which, the guys have electricity to manipulate and form the social shape of society in line with the hobby of their personal.

Khan, Mustufa and Ali (2017) observed that women are portrayed in a biased way that contributes toward the perpetuation of stereotypes and patriarchal social order that symbolize ladies as housewives, based, susceptible-minded, not capable of taking choices, etc. that is in assessment with the depiction of adult males as the honor, grace, the assignment takers, responsible and solvers of all of the issues because of their ownership of bodily and mental power, intellect and perception. furthermore, girls are portrayed as and as compared to animals, insects, and even inanimate gadgets to dehumanize and objectify them. guys are referred to in poor terms only in the proverbs in which they are stated concerning ladies. So, the proverbs depicting woman characters in a bad light are in a roundabout way perpetuating patriarchy whilst bringing up men in an extremely high-quality manner directly reinforcing it.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

Numerous social problems, such as dominance and the manipulation of supremacy, are problematic for society. During the discourse, they are supported and reinforced in several ways, some of which are not always obvious (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 2001). For instance, Lazar (2007, p. 141) uses a feminist critical discourse analytical (FCDA) perspective to claim that "matters of power, ideology, and gender have grown much more diverse and complex in recent times." It may be argued that by their very nature, proverbs offer more deep and nuanced understandings. That is, proverbs frequently cloak their intended meanings behind their ambiguous and occasionally contradictory interpretations, making their underlying ideologies both covert and pervasive. Proverbs can thereby contribute to the upkeep of (hierarchically) gendered societal structures that are detrimental to women, and these might be represented in subtle ways. The goal of FCDA is to combat these unequal gender relations. In this opinion, we think it is a sound critical approach for this study. Due to the feminist perspective from which it approaches CDA, FCDA might be seen as a subset of CDA. Hence, we will discuss some of the core concepts of CDA, which also serve as the basis for FCDA. Yet, according to Wodak (2002), its main

focus is on "understanding not just opaque but also transparent structural connections of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as expressed in language" (p.11). According to Van Dijk (2001), CDA is a study that "mainly investigates the way social power abuse, domination, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted in the social and political environment via text and speak" (p. 352). As a result, CDA critiques how language reflects social inequality. FCDA is also interested in feminism's emancipatory objective, which connects to CDA's focus on social injustice analysis. Hence, the primary objective of FCDA is to "criticize discourses that sustain a masculine social directive, that is, relations of power that aid males as a social group while discouraging, excluding, and disempowering women as a social group" (Lazar, 2007). So, the main objective of CDA and FCDA is to build a deliberate confrontation with these unequal gender behaviors. However, in the spirit of postmodern feminism, which encourages a range of gender practices and permits the contestation and reinterpretation of meaning as well as diverse subject positions in a variety of contexts, our main objective in this research will not only be on reviewing portrayals that deprive females but also on emphasizing those that are in their favor.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

This study is conducted under the umbrella of qualitative research. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. In this research proverbs as data are being studied and researchers analyzed the data through interpretation or subjective meaning attached to the proverbs. Data are collected from the four famous Balochi proverbs books written by prominent authors. The name of books; are Balochi Batal by Rahim (2017), Batal Rabeedage Bunze by Luqman (2010) and Batal Gwashtin o Galband by Ragaam (2012), and Batal Ganj by Farooq (2011). A purposive sampling technique was used to select proverbs from these selected books. In the Purposive sampling technique researchers choose the subjects according to his/her opinion apply to the topic of study. Thus, researchers selected 16 proverbs after reading these four books purposively which reflected the gender representation and were analyzed through the feminist critical discourse analysis.

## 5. Result and Discussion

The aim and objective of the current study are to analyze the Balochi proverbs and how these proverbs represented gender in society. Proverbs are short and condensed statements showing a general truth or piece of advice. Proverbs are oral traditions that are transferred from generation to generation based on experiences, common sense, and wisdom as per social events. Balochi proverbs reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes, with men often being depicted as strong, rational, and dominant, while women are portrayed as emotional, weak, and submissive. Balochi proverbs represent women negatively and degrade the worth of women. These proverbs depict the patriarchal and male dominance of the Baloch social structure.

آکہ جن چا پء کپ ایت چو پوڑے آء آپ ء کپ ایت

(A man under the authority of his wife, sees nothing but erosion)

(Rahim, 2017: 100)

Proverb No.1: This proverb utters that if the husband depends upon the wife then the name of the husband vanishes. The man who bows down to the woman is humble and depends on every activity upon the wife. This indicates that the wife is weak and cannot interfere with the decisions of the husband (male) because considered that males can take better decisions and are wiser to take decisions. This astonishingly indicates if the husband or male shows consent to the wife or female is considered humble and weak.

آجن کہ یشگاں گول آنت چہ آجناں بے جنی گھترانت

(Better to be without a wife than to have one who wanders)

(Rahim, 2017: 107)

Proverb No.2: This proverb states that it is better to be single than a vagabond wife because a vagabond wife gets notorious by herself and as well as makes you notorious. In this proverb respect and esteem of the male are attached to the character of the female. This proverb shows the insult of a woman and gender biases because this rejects the freedom and liberty of the woman to go even outside their home.



برات اگاں کورے بہ بیت بلے گوہار اُمیت وارانٹ

(Though a brother may be blind, a sister leans on him in times of need)

(Rahim, 2017: 151)

Proverb No.3: This proverb is commonly used in Baloch society whenever a sister needs help or assistance from a brother but a brother does not help or assist her. In this proverb, it is portrayed that the sister is dependent on the brother even though the brother is blind but the hopeless sister keeps hope on the brother. A blind person is dependent and physically defective and always needs the help of a physically fit and sound person in most of the activities of life. But in this proverb, a physically fit and sound girl (sister) is made dependent on a blind brother. This is against the rationality and common sense. This gives a clear and explicit message that the brother (male) is the feeder, safety, and protector of the sister (female) even if the male is blind. This shows the superiority of males or the patriarchal structure of Baloch society.

برات بہ گند گوہار بہ گر

(When seeking a partner, observe the brother and wed the sister)

(Rahim, 2017: 151)

Proverb No.4: According to the Baloch traditions and culture female is a stranger (Na Mehram) and will never face anyone. In the classical era of Baloch, before looking at the physical appearances and capabilities of the girl people observed the physical appearances and capabilities of the brother (male) and decided to marry the sister (girl) or not. This looks quite strange that the characteristics like physic, physical appearance, capacity, and color of the female are judged based on the male characteristics. This is quite derogatory and insulting for a female.

چکاء بیگہ کر شک بے دانہ نشیں قومے، ہمک دار بے بندیت

(Girls, honey, and rabbits lack brains and depend on others strength)

(Ragam, 2012: 157)

Proverb No.5: This proverb is about the lack of consciousness of women, honey, and rabbit. Rabbit is always captured or beaten fearlessly and anxiously. The woman is always betrayed. Due to lack of consciousness, honey always generates in pus or the

roots of wood and will be captured. This proverb indicates the psychological weaknesses and lack of consciousness of women in life. The existence and the conscious level of woman is questioned in the male dominancy.

جنین سُھرائی سُھریءُ زاپرانِ ءِ زردی ءِ برباد کنگد

(A woman is betrayed by the colours of gold, and the Zaafran)

(Rahim, 2017: 281)

Proverb No.6: A woman is easily deceived because she does not see ahead and does not know the importance of anything. Gold and Zaafran are the most expensive things in the world and these two things are linked with the life of women over their decisions. The wishes of the woman are more than the man's. This proverb also indicates the psychological capacity of the female. In this proverb, it is indicated that a woman's psychological capacity is weak and is easily betrayed in society.

جن ءِ پہ جن بہ جن، مرد پہ دیوان

(To make your first wife obedient, marry a second and make a man subservient by having conversations)

(Rahim, 2017: 282)

Proverb No.7: In this proverb, it is highlighted that marry another woman in order to kneel or make submissive to the first wife. On the contrary it is uttered that in order to bring down or kneel a man then talk to the man in *Dewan* means in group. This is the nature of a woman that a woman will never want his love, feelings, and emotions to be shared with another woman. Because a woman naturally expects from a man that she should be the only wife of the husband. Marrying another woman is equal to killing the woman and this completely breaks or kneels the woman. This proverb does not indicate the submissive of women but indicates the domestic violence as well. Because such situations keep the woman in psychological torture.

جن ءِ پہ سے چیز گرنٹ، اول حیا دومی پہ برات، سبھی پہ ذات

(Three reasons a woman is wed: humility, her brothers, and lineage)

(Ragam, 2012: 159)

Proverb No.8: As per this proverb, Baloch observes three things in marriage. First, he observes whether the girl is humble and respected; secondly, she is the sister of brothers; thirdly, the caste and race she belongs to is a noble caste or race. Baloch does not select the wife (girl) based on color and beauty rather selection is done based on respect, loyalty, caste, and race. This proverb indicates that a woman is taken as an entity only and all the characters of the woman are selected or chosen from the male.

جنین چک نان پہ قسمت وارت

(Fortune is the bread and butter of a maiden's sustenance)

(Ragam, 2012: 159)

Proverb No.9: Happiness, success, and love of a woman from her husband depend upon the luck of the woman. A lucky woman always makes her home peaceful and prosperous and her husband (man) bestows his love upon her and an unlucky woman is always hostile and warring. This is quite strange that luck decides the fate of a woman. This proverb is linked with a mythological thought that fate decides the future of the human being. This is against rationality and science.

جنین چک گورء دکان انت

(A maiden is a commodity in the market, ready to be bartered)

(Farooq, 2011: 255)

Proverb No.10: The word *Gor* means businessman or Hindu in the Balochi dictionary. The literal meaning of this proverb is that an unmarried girl (Janeen Chuk) is an entity to be sold in a shop of a businessman. In Baloch society, Hindus were businessmen and were very famous for their businesses. This proverb refers that a woman is nothing more than an entity and is kept to be sold. It simply refers that a female getting married and taken away from their parents to their husband or in-laws' family. This shows the female has no importance or worth in the family because treated as a guest till the marriage.

شو میں پس زین کارایت، شو میں جن جنک کارایت

(A cursed goat bears a male, while a woman gives birth to a female)

(Ragam, 2012: 339)

Proverb No.11: In this proverb woman is being linked with an animal goat. A cursed goat produces male offspring and cannot increase the race and wealth likewise a cursed woman produces female offspring. Females are married and taken away by the people and cannot support or serve their parents. These proverbs indicate that female is responsible for the female children and labeled as ill-fated, cursed, or unlucky. This is against the rationality and medical science basic principles which consider that male has XY sex chromosomes and females have XX sex chromosomes. According to medical science for the male child if the male contributes the Y chromosome and the female contributes the X chromosome. But in this proverb female is made responsible for the female infant.

گاریں سادو کہ چک نئے جنگ انت

(Sadu's fate is sealed, cursed with daughters)

(Luqman, 2010: 185)

Proverb No.12: Under discussion proverb says, Sadu (A female name) has lots of sorrows and problems because she has no son and has two daughters only. In this proverb males and females are being compared. According to the concept of this proverb. Males can remove problems and sorrows of someone however females themselves are considered to be problematic. If a female cannot solve the problems of herself how she can be a shad for others? In brief, this proverb shows women are weak and not strong enough to support their families. Because it is considered in Baloch society that the male child is the symbol of proudness, a feeder, and a supporter of the family whereas the female child has no worth.

مرد کہ جن ءجی جی کنت، جن ہم ءت ءلی بی کنت

(When the husband bows, the wife assumes the master's crown)

(Ragam, 2012: 442)

Proverb No.13: In Baloch society, the word *Mard* is used for the married man (Husband). This proverb indicates the patriarchal structure of the Baloch society. This means that If the husband (man) gives liberty and freedom to the wife (woman) then the wife will be involved in bad habits. Here the proverb indicates the power of man over woman. The power of man can legitimize the life of a woman and power should

be practiced to save the life of a woman from bad habits and activities. This indicates gender biases in society.

دشیاں ہاتھوں جنیں خوش کن انت سکیاں برات گوں مرکب ءاوشتاں

(Joy is Hathoon Jan's share, while hardships fall upon her brothers)

(Farooq, 2011: 205)

Proverb No.14: The word *Hathoonen Jan* means lovely wife and *Markab* means stands with. In Baloch society, the wife is considered to be the companion of joys and happiness but the brother is considered to be the companion of sorrows and difficulties. Here the proverb indicates the patriarchal and male dominance of the social structure of the Baloch society that women deceive their husband in time of difficulty whereas the male kinships support and stand with the male. Psychology is sketched for the woman that they cannot support, or stand shoulder to shoulder with the male because women are taken as weak, fragile, fearful, and dependent upon a male. But the male is considered brave, strong, and independent in Baloch society.

جن مرد ءپا ءسواں انت۔

(A woman is nothing more than her husband's slippers)

(Farooq, 2011: 257)

Proverb No.15: In this proverb wife (woman) is compared with the shoe. The place of the shoe is under the foot. Here it is believed that wife (woman) is like a shoe and she should be kept under the foot. If she is removed from the foot then she will sit on the head of the husband. This proverb gives the lesson that wife is dependent on her husband. The woman is submissive to the man. Shoes themselves do not move likewise women are not authority to take decisions. Directions given by the husband to the wife be followed as they are. The wife is bound to follow all the instructions and dictations given by the husband to her. Because the wife (woman) is submissive to the husband (man).

جنیں شیطان ءیار انت

(A lady is the devil's comrade)

(Rahim, 2017: 292)

Proverb No.16: In this proverb woman has been linked with stereotypical ways of evil. Because it is considered that evil brings those people in his way who do not understand the concept of good and bad or right and wrong. Emotional and irrational decision-makers are considered to be the companion of evil. So, women are considered to be emotional creatures and take irrational and emotional decisions. Because women cannot follow the man because it is widely believed that women can easily be fooled due to their low intelligence level. Thus, women are like the devil every time creates problems.

## 6. Conclusion

FCDA involves examining various aspects of discourse, such as vocabulary, syntax, rhetorical devices, and discursive strategies, to identify how language is used to construct and reinforce gendered and other forms of social identities and hierarchies. This approach also involves considering the broader socio-political and historical context in which discourse is produced and consumed. So, this research concluded that women are represented in Balochi proverbs as submissive, dependent, weak, unintelligent, and derogatory terms are used for women. These Balochi proverbs perpetuate inequality and patriarchy in Baloch society. Women are depicted in a biased manner which generates the perpetuation of stereotypes and patriarchal social order that characterize women as housewives, submissive, unintelligent, dependent, weak-minded, not capable of taking decisions, etc. Such proverbs are socially constructed in order to practice masculinity and hegemonic power in the male-dominant and patriarchal social structure of Baloch society. In the traditional thinking of the Baloch society, such proverbs are used to manipulate and shape the social structure to guarantee the interests and ends of men. Thus, it is high time to revisit and reconstruct such myths and traditional thinking to promote gender equality and gender empowerment in society. Because women are considered as important as men in the society.

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