

## ***Men make houses, women make homes: A comparative study of gender roles in proverbs across languages***

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### **Abstract**

*Gender is a very popular area among researchers and can be an interesting study as far as Proverbiality is concerned. Proverbs which are words of wisdom that are passed on from generation to generation reveal very interesting facts regarding the relation between language and thought; proverbs acquire great significance because they mirror the traditional power relationships between genders. This paper comparatively studies the differences and or similarities between the worldviews related to “man and woman” presented by English and Urdu proverbs to seek answer to the question of linguistic universalism and linguistic relativity. I have used The Matti Kussi International Type System of Proverbs to thematically categorize the fourteen proverbs from Urdu and same number from English language on gender and would seek whether the proverbs talk about men and women in similar or different ways. The study showed linguistic relativity where languages portray women and men differently as per their societal norms and culture.*

**Keywords:** Gender, Proverbiality, Universalism, Linguistic Relativity, *The Matti Kussi International Type System Of Proverbs*

### **Introduction**

Proverbs are regarded as true words of wisdom that summaries observations and experiences regarding various aspects of life into brief linguistic units. A component of oral literacy that is transmitted through the generations is proverbs. Most proverbs are found all around the world as they are worldwide and universal entities (Jawed et. al., 2022). They are ubiquitous in society and bear common responsibility for the content of all forms of communication, leaving little room for independence and originality. Proverbs can be found in practically any kind of situation, including political speeches, religious sermons, newspaper headlines, songs, and even visual arts like paintings and caricatures. Proverbs have served as a source of guidance for people for ages, and their importance in the world of communications cannot be overstated. Proverbs are regarded as true words of wisdom that summaries observations and experiences regarding various aspects of life into brief linguistic units. A component of oral literacy that is transmitted through the generations is proverbs. As Jawed et. al., say “Proverbs are general and precise sayings in a language that are transferred from generation to generation”. (2022, p. 924). Proverbs can be found in practically any kind of situation, including political speeches, religious sermons, newspaper headlines, songs, and even visual arts like paintings and caricatures. Proverbs have served as a source of guidance for the people for ages, and their importance in the world of communications cannot be overstated (Mieder, 2004).

According to Mieder, "even the most complex definition will not be able to identify all proverbs," hence defining a proverb is a highly difficult and detailed task (2004, p.4). A lot of academics have tried to figure out what exactly qualifies a sentence as a proverb. According to Winick (2003), a piece of text can acquire the status of a proverb simply by virtue of its origin, rather than requiring to have the quality of traditionalism. However, Mieder (2004) appears to be

in disagreement with a large number of other academics who believe that traditionality—which “[that] includes aspects of age and currency”—is necessary for a text to qualify as folklore or a proverb. Another significant characteristic of a proverb is its brevity; on average, a proverb is seven words long (Mieder, 2004).

Fixity is another crucial characteristic of a proverb, but occasionally a proverb is employed in a different way. Norrick (1985) describes a kernels of proverbs, which are well-known proverbs that are only partially stated. Proverbs have fluid meanings since the situation in which they are used also affects their interpretations. A proverb may therefore have more than one interpretation; Krishenblatt-Gimblett (1973) examined how proverbial meanings may vary depending on their context of use. Proverb lore frequently employs a variety of literary methods; the most popular ones are rhyme, paradox, alliteration, parallelism, hyperbole, and metaphor (Arora, 1984).

Proverbs are basically statements of social reality; they serve as a foundation for both individual and social development as well as maturity and success in life. Since proverbs are a reflection of society, studying them can help us understand communities and their collective psyche on a deeper level. As Long said “Proverbs photograph the varying sights of social usages; the experience of an age is crystallized in the pithy of aphorism. What a light is shed by them on customs which shift and change like a camera obsura” (as Cited in *orient proverbs*, Ed. by Dr MP Saha, Jatiya Sahitya Parishad, Cakcuta, pp.6).

They focus on nearly every facet of human existence and contain a hidden wealth of wisdom accumulated over many years. Gender, age, money, age, fate, beliefs, time, human nature and many others are few of the themes that get their mention in proverbs hence no aspect of life is neglected in proverbs. Proverbs are regarded as having a culturally loaded (Rani & Ranjha, 2021). These are words that have amassed wisdom, clear cultural connotations, and powerful national traits. There are many proverbs that talk about womanhood, nature of man, difference between these two species socially, so gender gets a very diverse representation in proverbial form. Proverbs are cultural tools that are believed to construct gender stereotyping.

### **Language and Thought**

There are two views as far as relationship between languages and thought is concerned; languages have universal and similar aspects in spite of apparent differences. But the other view proposes that each language has a different way of representing reality. Hence these linguistic differences have far more implications than just apparent ones. Von Humboldt claimed (Langham, 1967) that language diversity is a plurality of worldviews rather than a diversity of signs and sounds. Acquiring a foreign language should ideally lead to gaining a fresh perspective on one's preexisting worldview. This is partially true, as each language encompasses the entirety of a particular group of people's conceptual framework and manner of expression. Many academics adopted Humboldt's theories; Trier and Weisgerber, among other Neo-Humboldtians, discovered that every language reflects a worldview (Ma, 2001). According to Sapir “No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached” (Daniel, 1995). According to Dong (2022, p. 84) “the limitations of language limit our description of things, thus it limits our thinking mode of reasoning”.

Jenkins (1999) proposes language as the key to recognize the thought world or the worldview of people. Dong writes “Thought determines or influences language” (2022, p. 84). Hence there are multiple languages and each language has a different way of cutting up reality; consequently proverbs of a language construe such cultural realities differently. The other opinion would see proverbs as representative of collective knowledge of mankind. This paper ventures to find out whether proverbs of two different languages represent linguistic relativity or linguistic universalism as far as representation of gender is concerned.

### **Proverbs and Gender**

A gender is a social construct rather than biological phenomena and is a result of cultural construction (Bertens, 2014). Hence femininity and masculinity are created in a society based on some presumptions while most of them are stereotypical in nature. “Women are not born. They are made. The same is true of men” (as cited in Eckert & Ginnet, 2005). This gender discrimination and stereotyping results in imbalance of power relations in the society. And it is the tool of Language through which such ideologies are made up and disseminated in societies. socio-cultural roles and the expectations of society towards females can be derived from oral literature such as proverbs, riddles and folk tales (Jawed et. al., 2022). Amali (2000) analyses image of women in African society through Idoma proverbs and concludes that in spite of the fact that proverbs do talk about the importance of women in their training of children, religious matters and other obligations but it also craft some fault-finding remarks. He relates his findings with observations of other scholars by quoting Dyer

“Proverbial philosophy has long agreed that woman is a complex creature, little understood and, according to Michelet, she is a miracle of divine contradictions; an opinion endorsed by pope in his moral essays, a woman is the most inconsistent compound of obstinacy and self-sacrifice that I am acquainted with”. Similarly Rasul (2015) while comparatively analyzing the representation of gender in proverbs of different languages found how patriarchy plays its role can be clearly observed in the Dutch proverb: A good woman goes without head”.

Proverbs are a way to ‘naturalize’ an idea by giving it a status of common sense. Louis (2000) while investigating the role of proverbs in one of the discussed anecdote concludes that proverbs, as used by husband while conversing to his wife, are “verbal weapon as a complement to physical force”. Hence these proverbial utterances are “instruments of power and control”. Bashir and Amali (2012) conducted a sociolinguistic study of Hausa proverbs with reference to co-wife where negative portrayal of woman is not by a man rather a woman. Hence Hausa proverbs represent a unique African cultural practice: Polygamous family. This discussion proves that politics of proverbs is very complex as far as gender is concerned. Proverbs in one culture represent men and women as binary opposites but in another culture woman against woman are taken so. Litovkina (2011) while comparing women representation in Anglo-American anti proverbs and traditional proverbs concludes that both talk of women as “awful, talkative” and deprive them of logical thinking; though the image of women as “submissive, powerless, silent” in traditional proverbs is transformed into “bossy, active and dominating” image in anti proverbs. So the worldview presented in proverbs is a process just like the proverbs themselves. Generally women

get negative stereotypical labeling as Coffin (1968) had observed about proverbs as “objects of women-anti feminism, fear and hatred of women, especially wives”. Though a lot of researches conducted on representation of women in proverbs of different languages infer from their corpus that women get negative and stereotypical representation but in a case study conducted by Amali (2000) representation of women in an African language: Idoma, is reported as neither partially negative nor positive as women are ‘conceived indispensable for their family as poles to fence’. ‘Language assigns hierarchical power to its users’ and a patriarchal society might not assign equal power to both genders (Daniel, 2008).

### **Theoretical Frame work**

Not only is the classification an excellent tool for comparative and contrastive research, but it also provides valuable understanding of the shared human experience. The Matti Kussi International Type System of Proverbs “has primarily been an attempt to find a practical way to arrange a large collection of literature [i.e. proverbs found in collections] references” (Lauhakangas, 2001, p. 76). In 1972, the system of proverbs was developed. There are thirteen major themes in all, indicated by uppercase alphabets: The practical knowledge of nature, Faith and basic attitudes, The basic observations and socio-logic, The world and human life, Sense of proportion, Concepts of morality, Social life, Social interaction, Communication, Social position, Agreements and norms.

These main themes are divided into 52 main classes which are denoted by digits. Here are the fifty two classes Natural elements, Animals, human being: animal, Weather, calendar, God : man and religious institutions, Fatalism, Durability of x's nature / durability of identity X yields /requires /belongs to x, Nothingness/emptiness yields/loses nothing, Little: big /a little: a lot, Signals & their meaning /interpretation, Appearance : internal values, Plurality of the world and human life Joy : grief /laughter : crying /pleasure : agony, Dynamics of needs, Food, eating, Spirits and intoxication /dependences, drinking habits, Relativity of ranking / the essential unity of differing things, Good and evil - success, Pride: humility, boasting : loss of honor, Kinship,, Development - a person's background, Child: parents /upbringing, Man : woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, Marriage, Youth : old age, Health : illness, Death / the dead, Self : others (knowledge of oneself) / individual : collective, Managing on one's own : trusting other people / strangers, Group solidarity, Near : far / at home : in unfamiliar conditions, Me/us /own advantage : others /hospitality towards guests, Friend: enemy / good or bad neighbor ,Aggression & peaceableness ,Communication, Power, ruler : subject / superior : inferior, Wealth : poverty / money, Law and justice, Business / buying & selling, Precaution : incautiousness, Mobility, travel, Wisdom /intelligence : stupidity, Courage: cowardice, compliance, Skill /tools /material, Own initiative / enterprise / responsibility, Work, labor, diligence : success, inactivity/laziness : shortage, Thrift / stinginess, Experience/practice : learning, Timing / right moment, bad moment / use of time, Attitudes towards change /modernity, Attitudes towards the present/future, adjustments, Starting : finishing, beginning : end. There is last subdivision of these main classes and subgroups for each main theme are different. Some exceed to number fifty and few can be confined to less than seven types. Fourteen number of English and fourteen number of Urdu proverbs are thematically categorized according to the above mentioned type system of proverbs

and followed by content analysis in detail to see what meanings and worldview is being portrayed through them. The original complete The Matti Kussi International Type System of Proverbs can be retrieved from the database at the link: <http://lauhakan.home.cern.ch/lauhakan/cerp.html>.

### **Analysis of Urdu and English proverbs**

Proverbs containing the key phrases that describes either man, woman, or both are analyzed. Each proverb includes a code based on the Kussi International type system of proverbs. Before the code, the names of the theme, class, and subgroup are stated in parenthesis without modification. Small alphabetical letters are employed to encode subgroups, whereas capital letters are used to symbolize major themes and numbers to designate key classes. The literal meaning of Urdu proverbs comes before their interpretation. Certain proverbs specifically address men and women in the same proverb. Hence such proverbs that belong to both the themes are analyzed under the theme of “man and woman”.

#### **Representation of Men in Proverbs**

*The way to a man's heart is through his stomach:* G4b

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

This saying alludes to the widely believed notion that men enjoy eating, so providing them with delicious food is a surefire way to win their affection. This implies that women should perform household chores like cooking in order to satisfy males. Though this proverb does not match with the biological placement of organs i.e. heart and stomach but presents the idea as general truth. There is also a similar well know Urdu proverb: *mard kay dill ka rasta us kay mayday say guzar k jata hei* which means the same as this English proverb.

*Boys will be boys:* G4b

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

The saying, which alludes cynically to human nature, says that it is expected of a young man to act boisterously and that it is acceptable in social situations. The socially acceptable and acknowledged notion that boys and men are naturally naughty and should therefore be forgiven is referenced in this proverb. A man who has an affair should not be considered guilty of it since it is inherent in his character. As a result, by portraying their behavior as normal, they are granted the freedom to do as they choose. There is an Urdu proverb that has closer meanings to it is *mard akhir mard hi hota hei*.

*Mard ka kiya hei aik joti pahni aik uteri:* G5h

[Social life, marriage, woman and man- power relations]

It is quite easy for a man to take off one shoe and put on the other, according to the literal translation of the proverb. This proverb refers to the power relations between husband and wife as the metaphor *joti* is used for a woman that a wife is inferior to her husband. The word used for man is *mard* which could be *admi* but the word *mard* has connotations that man has gigantic strength and has the authority of treating his wife in whatever way that he wants. This proverb alludes to men's socially acceptable ability to divorce or separate from their wives and find new ones without any problems; conversely, women, who are not granted the same luxury,

find it concerning that they cannot leave one husband and marry another. The saying also alludes to the idea that women are seen as the husband's clothing, which is always subject to change. In addition, just as shoes wear out with time, so too do women that men use and replace with new ones as needed. The meanings of this proverb are gender biased and stereotyped. The polygamy that is prevalent in the society where this saying is employed is also mentioned.

*Mard ka dikhaya na khaiyay mard ka laya khayay:* G4b

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

It literally means: Eat what the man gives, not what he shows. The saying advises women to see what men earn for you instead of listening to or trusting what men say, as men have a tendency to deceive women with words alone. According to this saying, women are free from earning obligations placed on males, and they are also the ones who spend the money that men make. *Ka* is repeated rhymes with *na* and *khaya* and *dikhaya* also rhyme together *mard* is also repeated this adds to the linguistic power of the proverb.

*Mard ka nam mard say behtar hei:* G4b

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

The translation is: Man's name is greater than himself. This proverb alludes to the gender stereotype that believes men are fearless and amazing; therefore just the mention of the word "man" might deceive others. There is use of *mard* instead of *admi* that has implications that men have domineering personality. Although women aren't specifically addressed in the saying, it is implied that they should speak a man's name in order to be protected, safe, etc. The name of *mard* is repeated twice in the proverb which foregrounds and further adds force to the idea of strength of man's name. People also use a saying of similar meaning: *Mard ka tu nam hi kafi hei.*

*Mard maray mard, namard maray banyay ko:* G4b

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

It can be understood simply as follows: A man beats another man, but a coward or impotent person beats a Hindu trader or small-business owner (a weak person). According to the saying, a person is considered to be a real man if he can defeat someone of same strength instead of someone weaker, like a small-time retailer. Here, physical aggression and beatings are praised and given good connotations. The use of parallelism further foregrounds the comparison drawn between the two: *mard* and *namard*. The use of *namard* is very significant as it is considered as something shameful or that makes one embarrassed. The use of metaphor *banya* for the weak person implies someone who is a common person.

*Mard ko gard karni parti hei:* G4b

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

The saying literally indicates that a man must put in great effort. Because it is socially expected of men to earn money, men are responsible for earning money rather than women. There

are two rhyming words in the proverb *mard* and *gard* which is further strengthening the dependency of *mard* over *gard*.

### Representation of Women in Proverbs

*The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world: G1b*

[Social life, Kinship, the value of a mother, being orphan]

This proverb makes reference to a woman's function as a mother. Although it celebrated the motherly role of a woman yet also restricts it to only this role. The mother is referred to as the "hand that rocks," while the child in the cradle might be implying to a male child. Although women are portrayed in this adage as having a fairly passive role in life, it appears like they are being favored. This adage also restricts women to the biological position of mother, as if their only purpose in life is to bear sons who will dominate and empower the world. As a result, men are socially assigned to the mainstream active role.

*Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned: G4c*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of sexes, the woman's lot in life, women's unreliability, talkativeness and evil]

This proverb describes a woman's tendency for malice, retaliation, and bloodlust. A woman's anger and ferocity know no bounds when she is rejected in a romantic relationship. It follows that a woman is incapable of accepting rejection. This suggests that a woman's love is intense and pure, so when a man rejects her, she will react fiercely and dangerously. It wouldn't be incorrect to argue that the proverb intensifies the bad image of women by using phrases like "hell, fury, and scorn." This proverb portrays nature of women negatively and over generalizes this assumption on the whole species.

*A woman's work is never done: G4b*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

Women are expected to conduct household chores like cooking, cleaning, ironing, and other responsibilities, therefore their jobs involve numerous tasks that must be repeated every day. The adage makes reference to the gender realities of a society where each gender is assigned certain roles. The home is typically seen as a woman's domain; even if women are increasingly entering the workforce, domestic duties are still seen as their responsibility. The term "woman's work" gives the impression that the duty is being performed by the woman herself rather than on behalf of others (other family members). The term "never" emphasizes how endless women's responsibilities are.

*Far-fetched and dear-bought is good for ladies: G4b*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

According to this saying, women are stereotyped as being frugal, enjoy shopping, and have extravagant spending habits. This proverb shows women as shallow beings with no serious and deeper aim in life. Again a very negative image of women is portrayed.

*Aurat aur ghora raan talay ka: G5h*

[Social life, marriage, woman and man- power relations]

The saying literally means "the woman and the horse beneath the thighs," which implies that until and unless women are given authority by males, they must be governed or both remain under one's possession. The proverb alludes to the widespread social norm that views men as in charge and control. The metaphor or connection made between the woman and the animal horse is particularly important because it suggests that treating a woman in the same way that a horse is controlled by its master through a bridle is equivalent to treating a woman negatively. As a rider/master of a horse decides its direction so is with women they do not have any freedom. Moreover the word *raan* is symbolical a thighs rides on a horse so it can also point towards sexual control over woman. There is also a similar proverb in English: *A whistling woman and a crowing hen are fit neither for god nor for men.*

*Aurat rahay app say, nahi jayay sagay baap say:* G4c

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of sexes, women's unreliability, talkativeness and evil]

If a debauched lady controls herself, she won't even be terrified of her father, which indicates that she doesn't give a damn about other people or the outside world. She doesn't feel guilty or embarrassed about her involvement in immoral acts and has no fear of anyone. This proverb alludes to women's wickedness. Since this adage makes no mention of the immorality of men, it sets exceedingly high moral standards for women. The proverb's reference to the woman's father alludes to the social practice of exerting authority over women, especially daughters, especially when it comes to issues of respect and honor. Even while the adage seems to only highlight negative aspects of women, it also highlights their strong spirit as a positive quality.

### **Man and woman**

*The female of the species is deadlier than the male:* G4c

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of sexes, women's unreliability, talkativeness and evil]

According to this saying, women are more harmful and poisonous than men. The biological term "species" suggests that there is no way to escape because it is a natural difference. This proverb uses disparaging language to describe women. This proverb compares the characteristics of men and women through the usage of the terms "than" and the comparative degree of the adjective "deadlier." This proverb denigrates women and is gender biased.

*A man is as old as he feels and a woman as old as she looks:* G4b

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

The proverb discusses how age is relative for people of both genders. The comparison in the experience and meaning of age for men and women is further highlighted by the use of parallelism. A man's age varies based on his circumstances at the time; if they are excellent, it makes him feel young and invigorated, whereas a woman can look younger by choosing cosmetic procedures like makeovers. Therefore, the standards for age vary based on a person's



gender. The seemingly straightforward saying has more meanings than it first appears since women's appearance is valued, supporting the stereotype that views women as objects of desire for males. As a result, it is expected from a woman to affirm to the stereotypical thinking which considers her an object of view for the world of men; hence it is expected from a woman to work on her looks.

*A good Jack makes a good Jill: G5f*

[Social life, marriage, woman and man-life together, solidarity, lack of solidarity]

In place of the terms "husband" and "wife," the Christian names "Jack" and "Jill" are used in this proverb to refer to the relationship between a husband and wife. The choice of both names is highly significant because they both begin with the same letter "j," which illustrates how strongly the husband and wife are related and dependent upon one another. According to this proverb, the husband determines the wife's behavior because if the husband is loving and caring, the wife will also be; therefore, the husband's actions determine the wife's behavior. The present indefinite tense gives the impression that it is an unquestionable fact.

*The gray mare is the better horse: G5h*

[Social life, marriage, woman and man- power relations]

The saying describes the relationship between a husband and wife; it states that because wives are stronger than their husbands, the husband is subject to the woman. This proverb typically refers to a story about a man and his wife; the husband had chosen to buy a horse, but the wife insisted on buying a grey mare, so he had to comply. Therefore, the saying alludes to a woman's unwavering and stubborn nature, which requires a man to submit. Similar to these ideas is in Urdu proverb: *Aurat ki maat maan*.

*Aurat ki maat maan: G5h*

[Social life, marriage, woman and man- power relations]

Never take a woman's advice or obey her. The proverb forbids males from taking advice from women, saying that doing so will get them into trouble. The saying alludes to the widely held stereotype that women are less intellectual than men, and as a result, their recommendations or counsel may be deceitful. The proverb's caution is reinforced by the usage of imperative form.

*Men make houses, women make homes: G4b*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

A "house" is a structure intended for human habitation, while a "home" is a location where a person resides with their family in a loving environment. According to the saying, men can work hard and build a structure, but only women can make a building into a home. This proverb refers to the social norm that expects a woman to take care of the house and give it a homely feel by giving it her love, attention, and time. For this reason, a woman is regarded as essential to the family or the home. As Payne (1822) says "home! Sweet home! /there is no place like home, there

is no place like home” similarly George Gordon Byron Don Juan (1837) says “for without hearts there is no home”. There is parallelism used in the proverb which foregrounds the presented comparison between the man and a woman.

*Behind every man there is a great woman: G4b*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman’s lot in life, things associated with women, men]

In society, men are granted the mainstream position, while women serve primarily as his sources of support, as the saying suggests. The proverb places a woman behind a successful guy because it conjures up images of a woman doing so. According to the saying, a woman has no independent role in her own life and is only a means to an end for males. Though this proverb can also be seen as giving credit to women for the success of men as mothers, wives etc. Proverbs are believed to be representing universal and common sense; the use of the adjective “every” fulfills that role as it generalizes the meaning of the proverb.

*A man’s work lasts till set of sun; woman’s work is never done: G4b*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman’s lot in life, things associated with women, men]

Gender-based work allocation designates certain domains for men and others for women. Men are expected to provide for their families by working long hours, while women are responsible for taking care of the home and family around the clock. Despite the stereotype that women stay at home due of their numerous responsibilities, in reality, they are the last to go to bed. As a result, women's lives are generally harder and more demanding than men's.

*A whistling woman and a crowing hen are fit neither for god nor for men: G4c*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of sexes, women’s unreliability, talkativeness and evil]

A few things are associated with men that are socially unacceptable for women. For instance, a lady would be seen unfavorably if she whistled. Women's whistling is compared to a hen's crowing; just as a hen's crowing is not welcomed by God, so too is a woman's whistling; the contrast is made between something natural, like crowing, is related to whistling. As a result, this contrast presents the socially unacceptable behavior as something that is inherently forbidden or unattainable. It also refers to the idea that a reticent woman is good and useful for a man rather than the one who behaves like woman. Whistling can also symbolize voicing ones thoughts here. There is another proverb with similar meanings:

*A whistling girl and a crowing hen always come to the same bad end.*

*Aurat paar hath utahana buzdali h: G5h*

[Social life, marriage, woman and man- power relations]

The English translation of this proverb is: A woman should not be hit, a man who does so is not strong rather coward and weak. This proverb is against the norm of using physical force on women. The saying refutes the notion that a man can be strong and brave by assaulting women, especially his wife. Instead, a man can be strong by showing respect

for women. The proverb describes cowardice as an extremely terrible deed because it is something that men find repugnant.

*Aurat ka khasam mard, mard ka khasam rozgar: G5f*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of sexes, woman-man life together, lack of solidarity]

Literal meaning of this proverb is that the woman has husband whereas man has livelihood as his husband; husband here stands for ones duties. The obligation of earning is upon a man whereas a woman's duty in life is to take care of the needs of her husband. This proverb defines social duties and roles that are expected of men and women.

*Mard ka nokar maray saal bhar mein, randii ka nokar maray chay mahinay mein: G4c*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of sexes, women's unreliability, talkativeness and evil]

Servant of a man would die in a year whereas that of a prostitute (woman) in six months. In this proverb the word *randii* (prostitute) is used to refer to women in general hence representing women in general as sex objects of whom men are exempted. Moreover it also refers to difference in the nature of both genders: men take less work from their apprentices but women trouble their servants to the extent that their life shortens.

*Mard ka nahana aurat ka khana barabar hei: G4b*

[Social life, man: woman/ ranking & position of both sexes, the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, men]

The literal meaning of this proverb is: man makes haste in bathing while woman does so in eating. This proverb describes different habits of women and men thus generalize an observational idea presented in it. This proverb portrays men as not much concerned with cleanliness and women not so with their diet. Bathing is part of maintaining ones appearance which is expected from a woman hence a man would not spend much time on it. Eating is essential for maintaining ones health and physique though it is human's basic need but it is made to be seen as part of maintaining masculinity.

### Discussion

The proverbs (English and Urdu) fall under the category of G4b (The woman's lot in life, things associated with women, with men) in the Matti Kusi system. According to Urdu proverbs, men are characterized as having a dominant nature, needing to demonstrate physical strength, be financially successful, and be socially acceptable for divorcing and taking up new wives. Men are characterized as docile, gregarious, and foodies by nature in English proverbs that pertaining to marriage. Overall the categories are same; the difference is between the power relations that are represented in the category of G5h: woman and man-power relations; Urdu proverbs show dissymmetry between the power relations between the two genders where man is stronger and independent hence socially legitimized to use power over woman.

Most of the analyzed proverbs on woman from English language fall in the category of G5h (Woman and man-power relations) and G4c (Women's unreliability, talkativeness and evil) whereas majority of analyzed Urdu proverbs belong to G5h, G4c and G4b (the woman's lot in life, things associated with women, with men) categories. The themes in Urdu proverbs differ from

those in English proverbs; women are described as debauched, instinctively guided, uncontrollably talkative, not loyal and trustworthy, flexible and adaptable, flexible in their suggestion-making, and victims of domestic violence in English proverbs. Women are also depicted as stubborn, possessing a revengeful nature, having a very hectic life, caring for home and children, appearances mattering to them, and her looks determining her age in Urdu proverbs. The results so demonstrate linguistic relativity.

The proverbs that compare or explicitly mention both genders in English language belong to G4b category: The woman's lot in life, things associated with women, with men; G5h: Woman and man-power relations; G5f: woman and man-life together, solidarity, lack of solidarity. The proverbs that are analyzed taken from Urdu language almost all of them fall under the category of G5h (Woman and man-power relations) that implies dissymmetry among the two genders in term of power relations. These English proverbs portray women from the following angles: women are viewed as "deadlier" than men; women are the reason behind men's success; women's accomplishment is that they are mothers to powerful, successful, male rulers, etc.; women must prepare delectable meals to win men over; a woman's life is dictated by her husband's behavior; men's lives are easier than women's because men work outside the home and return home at night, but women's work never ends; men must submit to their wives' wishes; men can make money and build houses, but only women are capable of doing so; but it is the capability of only a woman that she turns it into a home, the age of the woman depends on how she looks but for a man it depends on how he feels so appearances are considered significant for the woman. Rani and Ranjha (2020) explored the representation of men and women in English proverbs. Their *findings reveal that* proverbs refer to women as a burden, a sexual object, and delicate are an indication of patriarchy. Conversely, men are specifically acknowledged as the dominant gender in the globe. Generations are being taught these power dynamics through proverbs, which may be one of the reasons patriarchies in various kinds continue to exist today.

Urdu proverbs typically deal with power dynamics between men and women. They describe how men must treat women like animals or else they would not stay in their possession, that women should ignore what men say and instead consider his sources of income (man is the family's breadwinner, while women take care of the house, etc.), that men's personalities are regarded as amazing and that women feel protected just by his name, that men should never listen to women, and that men are described as powerful and independent while women are dependent on him. The findings drawn show that this proves the relativity of a language. Khan et. al., (2017) investigated a similar kind of study on Punjabi proverbs and found very similar revelations about gender construct that consider Punjabi proverbs which held fast to the principles of traditional society and strengthen patriarchal social set up. Punjabi proverbs not only preserve, promote, and uphold gender inequality, but they also reflect it. Punjabi proverbs are not precise and valuable sources of cultural representation; rather, they are ideologically charged. Rubab et. al., (2023) conducted a descriptive study of gender inequality in the proverbs of Mewati language and concluded that proverbs in the Mewati language present men in a good light while portraying women in a misogynistic or ambivalently suppressive light, negating their positivity, individuality, and intelligence. It is expected that the research would inspire future scholars to investigate Mewati

cultural and folk discourse in order to highlight the need of treating both genders equally and to implement gender equality reforms within the Mewati community.

Like Khan, Jawed at. el., (2022) found similar results which showed that women are portrayed both positively and negatively in the proverbs of both the languages. Some of the positive themes that talked about women as beautiful and intelligent at the same time some negative themes like incapable, fragile, talkative, men-dependent, fool and objects of satisfaction also emerged.

### Conclusion

Without a question, gender has been one of the major subjects in social science over the past few decades. From the viewpoints of their respective fields, linguists, cultural historians, anthropologists, folklorists, and philologists have been investigating gender issues. The present .The construction of gender stereotypes in English and Urdu proverbs is the subject of study. Proverbs are linguistic and sociocultural phenomena that have fostered patriarchy in many communities. The study's conclusions demonstrate that proverbs in both Urdu and English portray women as weak, subordinate, and inferior. Urdu proverbs, however, emphasize this shortcoming mostly from a marital perspective. The analysis of Proverbs showed interesting aspects of both the universal human wisdom and the diversity found among them. It is difficult to call language either a universal or a completely relative human asset rather both of the extreme postulates prove wrong.

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