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Patriarchy and Gender Categories in Pakhtunwali: Family, Socialization and the Women Agency in Peshawar Valley

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Abstract

This article deals with the interaction and relationship of gender in *Pakhtunwali* and seeks to explore the concepts of Pakhtun codes of life and behavior in terms of family, segregation and the women agency; how *Pakhtunwali* represents men and women through socialization and its pattern, how and why *Pakhtunwali* identifies gender categories in the form(s) of patriarchy. It explores the position of Pakhtun woman, her nature, and practice both within the public and private sphere of society, particularly in Peshawar valley. It understands the question that how, and why did Pakhtuns women subordination came into existence if they have a strong bond of emotions in *Gham-Khadi*? And how female-female alliances are performed as an agency and how does patriarchy use that performance as its strategy through females themselves?

Keywords: Patriarchy; Gender categories; Women Agency; *Gham-Khadi* Network; and Honour-Shame Complex; Family; Socialization; Pakhtunwali.

Introduction

In *Pakhtunwali*, every gender is subjected to external influences of great important i.e. gender categories. Every ounce of word and action of such categories went into fending off an activity unknown to one's personal. Similarly, women in *Pakhtunwali* are entitled to the claim they act and believe in, to the names they bear, and to the manifested position they exercise, both as body and gender. Such manifestation is two-fold: gender categories and patriarchy and both of which were the main concern of feminist critique. It allows the present article to form some conception of Pakhtun women in the Peshawar valley and to trace these socialized patterns and gender relations both internally and externally.

Like other societies, patriarchy is deeply rooted in the valley of Peshawar and its society and it is *Pakhtunwali* which has constructed gender dichotomy and established different ways of life for both sexes and gender variance. The orientations of Pakhtun women are structured within gender categorization and hierarchies. To understand the position of women in Peshawar valley, the article explains and analyzes questions that how *Pakhtunwali* presents gender relations and socialized patterns through the manifested position of Pakhtun women in Peshawar Valley and also how does *Pakhtunwali* categorize such manifestations. For collection of data, it employ multidisciplinary inquiries, qualitative research methods and historical methodology are used to find the orientation of Pakhtun woman, her gender identity, expression/role and sexual orientation and her representation in patriarchy. These facts are analyzed from secondary sources



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and sociological and anthropological works on the makeup of the Pakhtuns women in *Pakhtunwali* and Pakhtun society.

Pakhtunwali and Patriarchy: Family and Gender Hierarchical Order

Pakhtunwali is the Pakhtun¹ way of life and traditional customary law. It is the culture of the Pakhtuns which has rules for all aspects of life-related to social life, whoever lives according to these rules can live according to them and therefore they deserve to be called Pakhtun. Hence, *Pakhtunwali*, Pakhtun, and Pakhto² have mixed up with thought and action, where every individual was guided through socio-cultural norms, and where every individual is socialized by gender, the determination to uphold the nature of character and discipline of the Pakhtun society. As uniform controlling principles, the rules embodied all of the characteristics, individual or collective desire, and activities relating to his/her functions. Similarly, it also have shaped and re-shaped the individual and collective consciousness in a way they think, practice, and believe. However, those limits are not fixed due to the external and internal forces that society as a whole constructs or builds in a degree of characteristics. Consequently, *Pakhtunwali* is collectively an intricate system of morals and codes of behavior where speaking Pakhto is not considered as Pakhtun but 'doing Pakhto'³ and following its rules is called Pakhtun.⁴

Since centuries, *Pakhtunwali* has governed the Pakhtun social structure in terms of emotion, morality, and gender. Its unwritten nature, part-fiction and part-reality have described the individual and collective social behavior, the principle of equality, and tradition belonging to the Pakhtuns, which was also found in oral traditions, folklore, proverbs (*mataloona*), songs, and so on. Nevertheless, at the back of it, there were no legal sanctions, rather *Pakhtunwali* was profoundly entrenched in Pakhtun's social structure in varying degrees.⁵ The norms and

¹ Despite some elements of cultural similarities, from the word Pakhtun came a word called Pakhto. Usually Pakhto is considered or means language but Pakhto is not just a language but something else. Pakhto is the attribute and quality that is considered necessary for every Pakhtun. Pakhtun, (and/or Pashtun, Pukhtun, Pathan and Afghan) are an ethnolinguistic group in North-West of Pakistan and southern Afghanistan who not only speak Pakhto as distinguish language and do Pakhto (or *Pakhtunwali*) but also maintain their lineage and genealogy. For more detail about the Pakhtun' origin and theory see Amina Ahmed, *Sorrow and Joy among Muslim women: The Pukhtuns of Northern Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3; Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani, *Tareekh Afghanistan*, trans., Movli Mahmood Ali Khan (Mandi Bahauddin: Sufi Printing and Publishing Company, n.d.), 20-26; Asar Jan, *Da Pukhtano Nasle Serrana* (Peshawar: Jadoon Press, 2012), 17-53; Rajwali Shah Khattak, *Pashtunwali* (Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 2008) 5-8; and Saadullah Jan Barq, *Pashtun Aur Nasaliyat HinduKash* (Lahore: Sanjh Publications, 2018), 21-26 and 471-475

² Rajwali Shah Khattak, *Pashtunwali*, 5. Pakhto is not only a language but also the name of a particular lifestyle. The Pakhtun nation has existed since Pakhto. Pakhtun is also a nation and a standard of character. These lifestyles, characters, and nationalities are considered to be the basic component of a unique civilization, called *Pakhtunwali*. Also see Muhammad Nawaz Tahir, *Largoni Fikroona* (Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 2015), 20-21 and 64-66; Jan, *Da Pukhtano Nasle Serrana*. 17-25.

³ Dipl. -Dolmetscherin Elke Limberger-Kastsumi, trans., *Analyse der Staatendokumentenatation: AfPak Principals of the tribal & clan structure* (n.p. The Austrian federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 2017), 10-27. 'Do Pakhto' denotes *Pakhtunwali* and to guide one's values and behavior which is based on the rules that Pakhtun would neither dishonor oneself nor others. See Lutz Rzehak, "Doing Pashto: *Pashtunwali* as the Ideal of Honorable Behaviour and Tribal Life among the Pashtuns," *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, no. 1 (March 2011): 9.

⁴ Lutz Rzehak, "Doing Pashto," 9.

⁵ Limberger-Kastsumi, trans., *Analyse der Staatendokumentenatation*, 27-35.



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values of the *Pakhtunwali* were not written down and each tribe has different versions of codes that unified the whole structure of the Pakhtun society.⁶ However, the external and internal manifestations can vary considerably from region to region and tribe to tribe. Unequivocally, many elements of *Pakhtunwali* are less predominant, especially in the urban Pakhtun regions, but the dichotomy of shame and honor prevail in the entire Pakhtun society. Considering the self-portrait of the Pakhtun, *Pakhtunwali* signifies all traditions where Pakhtuns have identified themselves as an ideal and where they altogether distinguish from other non-Pakhtuns.⁷

In historical parlance, the social history of Pakhtuns was the foundation of the norms and values of *Pakhtunwali*. In view of cultural variability and cultural similarities and differences, it is believed that the tribal code, Pakhto *Tappah*, customs of Pakhto and *Pakhtunwali* were the old Aryan code of honor and Sanskrit hymns.⁸ Similarly, some believe that the Pakhtun codes of life (nomadic way of life) resemble the Mediterranean, the Middle East, East Africa, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Philippines.⁹ Others traced that in the 5th century, the Central Asian immigrants (the inhabitants of Sakas, Kushans, Huns, and Gujjars, etc.) evolved the process of *Pakhtunwali* indigenously.¹⁰ However, the resembled habits, dwelling, and material things of many foreign strains have depicted the *Pakhtunwali* in terms of mixed race.¹¹

Furthermore, even before the ascendancy of Islam and conversion to Islam, *Pakhtunwali* has maintained its social order independently and established its social structure and tribal government. In the time of the Mahmud of Ghazni, such social structure was termed 'Afghan'¹² i.e. 'hill tribe' (regions of Central Asia to South Asia) which later (in the 12th century) became the base for the Ghoriid

⁶ Tom Ginsburg, "An Economic Interpretation of the Pashtunwali," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (April 15, 2011): 9.

⁷ Rzehak, "Doing Pashto," 2-3. Pakhtun distinguish themselves from others people not only due to their culture, history, and language but also their behavior, or consciousness.

⁸ Dr. Qabil Khan, *The Tappah: Reflection of Pakhtoon Culture in Pashto Folklore* (Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 2008), 8-10; Khattak, *Pashtunwali*, 5-6.

⁹ Rzehak, "Doing Pashto," 5. A Russian writer, I. M. Reysner argues that from the Marxist perspective, Pakhtun nomadic tribes were settled between 14th and 17th centuries.

¹⁰ Limberger-Kastsumi, trans., *Analyse der Staatendokumentenation*, 41.

¹¹ Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, *North-West Frontier Province: History and Politics* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2007), 5-6. For more details about Pakhtun's historiography and public history see Masood, Danyal, "Rethink Pashtun's Historiography as a Narrative of Violence, Displacement and Resistance: Applied History in Waziristan Studies". *Shnakhat* 3, no. 3 (August 2024): 235-254; and "Sources, Nature and Narrative of Pashtun Public History: Historiographic Freedom and Responsibility". *International Journal of politics & Social Sciences Review (IJPSSR)* 3, no. III (2024): 30-43.

¹² Barq, *Pashtun Aur Nasaliyat HinduKash*, 476-480. There are many names, like Kashi, Rohi, Suleimani and etc. has used for Pakhtun, however, in all of them, Afghan is a name that has been appearing a lot not only in languages but also in writing. And especially in Arabic and Persian literature, Pakhtun has always been called Afghan. Pakhtuns themselves like to call Afghan or Afghani and whenever there was an opportunity to write nationality, Pakhtuns used to call themselves Afghans. Since a well-known name has been given the name of Afghanistan for the same reason. Therefore, Afghans are considered as an alternative to Pakhtuns. Although this not the case, the meaning of these two words, Pakhtun and Afghan is completely different. Thus no one add anyone else to the word Pakhtun, only Pakhto and do Pakhto are called Pakhtuns. In short, Afghans are ethnically and linguistically a Pakhtuns but this name is not an expression of any tribe or individual or language rather it has the meaning of living in a region and in a particular land and it still has the same meaning.



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Polity.¹³ Nevertheless, in the 15th and 16th centuries, the revivalism of the Pakhtun nationalism led them to the feudal stage (overlapping the slavery stage but even feudalism was not common to all Pakhtun regions) through the basis of *sialy* (equality). The class formation was not the ideal form for all Pakhtuns.¹⁴ This transition goes along with violent conflicts and severe confrontations, however, “nor is Pakhtun society in a state of perpetual anarchy and war”.¹⁵

From ancient city-states to contemporary globalization, tribal societies have preserved distinct ways of life, culture and identity. Pakhtuns also maintained their way of life by the name a code, *Pakhtunwali*. From Indian kingdoms to the present South Asian region, *Pakhtunwali* preserved the Pakhtun’s culture and identity as basic codes of honor. It is assumed that the cultural and psychological make-up of *Pakhtunwali* have evolved by the 2nd millennium A.D. (or five thousand years ago)¹⁶ and both Pakhto and ‘do Pakhto’ has been considered the ideal for Pakhtuns, and every individual have to live up to the fundamental codes of *Pakhtunwali* as an ethnic identity-maker.¹⁷ Due to its tribal order, for Pakhtuns, ethnic identity was very important than religious, national, and even cultural identity, therefore, both in theory and practice, Pakhtuns always relied on local autonomous laws. The vast geographic belt has shown that the religious and cultural variations were not systematically shared by all Pakhtuns,¹⁸ thus in some measure, Pakhtun society is not homogeneous, however, there is no compromise on some basic values of *Pakhtunwali*. From birth to death, these values govern and regulate almost every aspect of Pakhtun’s lives and relationships. As an unwritten code, Pakhtuns do not compromise on *Pakhtunwali*. According to a Pakhto proverb, “Pakhtuns obey only one law, i.e. *Pakhtunwali*”.¹⁹ The norms and values of such relations were structured in *Pakhtunwali* which has preserved Pakhtuns traditional values and maintained the ethnic identity of Pakhtuns both socially and politically, despite long and continuous conflicts with foreign kingdoms, and modern states.²⁰

In the same synoptic paradigm, Pakhtun also experienced imperial authorities and new developments. Since centuries, *Pakhtunwali* has transformed with external forces i.e. new institutions, and cultural ideas and was remained a contact zone as ‘imperial-local’. After the 16th century, Pakhtun society also experienced the imperial outpost, modernity and new political hierarchy,

¹³ Limberger-Kastsumi, trans., *Analyse der Staatendokumentenatation*, 30-31 and 41-42. Ghorid Polity is consider the first Pakhtun state which was break down and corrupted by the Mongols around the 13th century; Robert Nichols, *A History of Pakhtun Migration, 1775-2006* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25-27. In the 11th century, Pakhtuns joined the army of Mahmud Ghazni into India in order to obligate the Islamic justices and settled as a landed rulers. The custom of melmastiya allowed Mahmud to accompany them. As military service Pakhtuns helped Mahmud for the purpose to establish the Islamic order in India. The tribal order and kinship structure of the Pakhtuns has recruited about 14000 horseman and 14000 footman from Afghan tribes. Similarly, majority of Pakhtun women also joined these forces as tradition to settle and stay there as a permanent occupation of territory.

¹⁴ Limberger-Kastsumi, trans., *Analyse der Staatendokumentenatation*, 42.

¹⁵ Akbar S. Ahmed, *Millennium and Charisma among Pathans: A Critical Essay in Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1976), 6.

¹⁶ Salma Shaheen, *Peshawar Shehr awr Riwayat* (Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 2007), 95.

¹⁷ Tariq Rahman, “Pashto Language and Identity-Formation in Pakistan,” *Khyber.ORG* (July 1995): 4-5.

¹⁸ Ellen Harding, “Mobilizing Identity in the Pashtun Tribal Belt,” *Small Wars Journal* (2010): 3.

¹⁹ Ashish Shukla, “The Pashtun Tribal Identity and Codes: At Odds with Pakistan’s Post-9/11 Politics,” *THAAP Journal* (2015): 48.

²⁰ Ibid., 46.



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however, Pakhtuns maintained their cultural hierarchy and social resiliency in this region. In South Asian context, in 19th century, different historical events and relationships shaped the societal structure i.e. urbanization, socio-economic reforms, new law of codes, a *Khani* elite and reinforced traditional practices²¹ through regular administration, and revenue and what the British called the 'Settled Areas' and 'Tribal Areas'.²²

There are diverse views on the identification of Pakhtun society (here the case study of Peshawar valley)²³ and its societal structure. In general, some scholars and anthropologists characterized Pakhtuns society as 'patrilineal pedigrees' whereupon societal structure was rooted in egalitarian nature. Others consider that the structure of Pakhtun society was subject to kingship order, where ethnic Pakhtuns were 'acephalous' in nature and govern on a segmentary lineage system. In this structure, equality is according to the love of freedom, as Pakhto proverb rightly expresses that "every Pakhtun's man is a *Malik*".²⁴ In both cases, it showed that though egalitarian nature is explicit in theory, in reality, that structure is by caste-like divisions in which marriages were used for social order, and relations, honor, and interaction. Hence, most marriages were either endogamous and virilocal where women were considered an important 'source of connection'²⁵ or the institution of marriage was based on 'social contract' or animosity to settle the difference in family, tribes.²⁶ However, *nang* and *qalang* re-shaped some of the Pakhtuns social patterns and relations, therefore by geography, some scholars categorized Pakhtuns into two large groups i.e. *nang* and *qalang*. The *nang* (honor-bound) represents 'highland Pakhtuns' who mostly belong to mountain areas while the *qalang* (rent-paying) represents 'lowland Pakhtuns' who mostly lived in the fertile regions.²⁷ Generally, the inhabitants of mountains are very tough, and agriculturally poor. The structure of this society (*nang*) is both 'segmentary and acephalous' wherein *Pakhtunwali* and its codes are traditionally a dominant force among its subjects. On the other hand, the lowland Pakhtuns are agriculturally dominant in both land and market surplus. The structure of this society (*qalang*) is both 'hierarchical and asymmetrical' in which the social patterns of Pakhtuns are less dependent on

²¹ Nichols, *Setting the Frontier*, xxii-xxi. For more details about segregation and authority see Abu Hurara, Raheem Ullah, and Hassan Ali, "Segregation and Authority in Late-Medieval India: Women, the Harem, and the Humayun-Nama Perspective," *International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences (IJCISS)* 3, no. 3 (August 3, 2024): 208-219.

²² Ahmed, *Millennium and Charisma among Pathans*, 6-7. For more details also see Akbar S. Ahmad, *Pakhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in Tribal Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); and David M. Hart, ed., *Islam in Tribal Societies: From the Atlas to the Indus* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

²³ Geographically, the valley of Peshawar came under the central and the part of west region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It comprises of the districts i.e. district Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan, Nowshera and Swabi. Peshawar valley is bounded by Malakand division and district Buner to the north and north-west, district Attock to the south, Mohmand to the west and north-west, and Khyber tribal district towards the west and south of Peshawar Valley, and Haripur to the east.

²⁴ Ahmed, *Millennium and Charisma among Pathans*, 46-48.

²⁵ Amineh Ahmed, *Sorrow and Joy among Muslim Women: The Pukhtuns of Northern Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5-10.

²⁶ Hanif Khalil, *Genius Khushal: Life, Works and Thoughts* (Peshawar: Pashto Adabi Tolana, 2021), 22-23.

²⁷ Shukla, "The Pashtun Tribal Identity and Codes," 46.



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Pakhtunwali and tribal economy. In addition, they are rely more on 'patron-client relations'.²⁸ However, the aforementioned structure such as egalitarian in nature, love of freedom, *nang* and *qalang* have shown that it was the nature of family which determined the values and norms of Pakhtuns society. Hence, in patriarchy, it is family which becomes the mediating and forming patriarchal power between individuals and social structure. In kinship order, family maintained the patriarchal power-structure as a whole, where every individual socialized through gender or sex category.²⁹

In this paradigm, in Pakhtuns regions, most of the family structures are joint, patriarchal, and patrilineal. In these setups, the whole affairs of the family are male-dominated i.e. from birth to death. The family is used as a security mechanism for its subjects, and its provision for women are defined and established. Hence, there are three forms of a family: extended, joint, and nuclear, however, majority of the population lives under extended patriarchal families.³⁰ In this structure, gender relations and patterns are glaringly defined by men as 'patriarch values' and because of very limited social space for women, some scholars claim that Pakhtuns fall in the 'category of classic patriarchy'.³¹

The category of 'classic patriarchy' is geographically suitable for Pakhtuns who live in this region. In her article "Bargaining with Patriarchy," for Deniz Kandiyoti, the structure of this category was determined by patrilocal extended household i.e. to reproduce peasantry through agriculture and to represent power culture by patriarchal extended family. In such a mechanism, a senior man can hold and control the whole authority of the family and members. Similarly, it can also provide systematic controls to state and binds the transformation from 'kin-based to tributary modes of surplus control'.³² In such a social system, women do not feel uniformity because it entails forms of control, other than religious and cultural boundaries.³³ Moreover, for Deniz Kandiyoti, such a process was also called a 'patriarchal bargain' and in this bargain, women were constrained by societies as a 'distinct gender ideology'.³⁴ This bargain was not timeless but easily influenced by historical transformations i.e. re-shaping the gender relations. However, in this pattern, women are unprivileged in many ways. First, extended households not only deprive women of their father's patrimony but even their claims in their husbands' patriline can only be possible through the birth of a male child.³⁵ Secondly, along with men's interests, in classic patriarchy, senior women (mother-in-law) subordinate every aspect of young girls' lives through women's life cycle. Therefore, under such a cycle, a young bride utilized her power over her subservient daughters-in-law in the same

²⁸ David B. Edwards, "Learning from the Swat Pathans: Political Leadership in Afghanistan, 1978-97," *American Ethnologist* 25, no. 4 (November 1998): 714. See also Shukla, "The Pashtun Tribal Identity and Codes," 46.

²⁹ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 33-35.

³⁰ Humaira Nosheen, "Impact of Changing Women Status on Pakhtun Society," (PhD diss., University of Peshawar, n.d), 87 and 146.

³¹ Naila Aman, et al., "Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in Pakhtun Society," *International Journal Pukhtunkhwa Journal* 5 (June 2020): 2.

³² Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2, no. 3 (September 1988): 278.

³³ Ibid. Geographically, along with Pakistan, the structure of 'classic patriarchy' is clearly found in South and East Asia (India and China), the Muslim Middle East (comprising Turkey and Iran), and North Africa.

³⁴ Ibid., 275-79.

³⁵ Ibid.



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manner as she inherit and experience the same pattern of hardships and subordination of senior women. Hence, under classic patriarchy, the power structure of extended households has been structured by women themselves through the internalization of patriarchy by the cyclical nature of women's power,³⁶ or as incoming wives, its women who preserved the patrilineal lineage of honor and positions in their husbands' house.³⁷

Nevertheless, the position of women in classic patriarchy is very limited, because elder women can only control labor power and their security either by old-age and married sons as the source of loyalty or conflicts among young and old women. For patriarchy, old women keep the 'conjugal bond secondary' by suppressing the romantic love among youngsters. The interest of the young bride is to overcome the power of old women (mother-in-law) in the household.³⁸ Moreover, the institutionalized structure of gender segregation is the basic feature of classic patriarchy. The dichotomy of class and caste, re-enforced complication for women because it not only developed a strict purdah system but also established women dependency on men both economically and socially.³⁹

It is also considered that *Pakhtunwali* is masculinist', and both of its tribal nature and patrilineal lines has shown that men control all forms of the mode of production, for instance, settled agriculture, farming, pastoralism, and herding, all organized through systematic structure wherein women belong to men as property.⁴⁰ Economically, sexual division of labor is explicit in Peshawar valley. Most of women are un-paid workers, productive and essential members of the household. Within the four walls of the house, women work and maintain everything including child-caring and cooking. For instance, from the fieldwork (agriculture) to food processing and pastoralist, Pakhtun women have performed their tasks regularly and silently without acknowledged by men.⁴¹

Despite Pakhtun society and its traditions also changed substantially with migration, industrialization, urbanization, education, modern social structure and capitalist economy. These factors re-shaped the way of life and the family structure of Pakhtuns to some extent such as they got access to empowerment i.e. both in government, semi-government and private sectors in urban regions of the Peshawar valley.⁴² Nonetheless, modern social structure and capitalist economy have transformed both material and non-material culture and even customary laws to a considerable extent.

Geographically, in the valley of Peshawar, urbanization, literacy, and economy re-shaped social values and social patterns from extended family to nuclear family and re-categorized or altered social groups into *nang* and *qalang*. Within this framework, in the rural region of Peshawar valley, agriculture has developed and new varieties of crops and animal husbandry are open to rural areas, while in urban structure, urbanization and industrialization have opened up new markets

³⁶ Ibid., 278-79.

³⁷ Khalil, *Genius Khushal*, 22.

³⁸ Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," 279.

³⁹ Ibid., 280.

⁴⁰ Valentine M. Moghadam, "Revolution, Religion, and Gender Politics: Iran and Afghanistan Compared," *Journal of Women's History* 10, no. 4 (1999): 176.

⁴¹ Barnett R. Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and the Collapse of International System*, 2nd ed. (USA: Yale University Press, 2002), 24.

⁴² Nosheen, "Impact of Changing Women Status on Pakhtun Society," 11.



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for different services. Similarly, in these services, the old manifested position (traditional occupation) of women changed and replaced new market services.⁴³ To some extent, in this region, the power-structure of old paternal households changed into new ones, wherein, being economically independent the young man separated from father's household and being socially independent the young women transformed from both emotional security and the early patriarchal bargains i.e. women's cycle of subordination.⁴⁴

However, breaking from the early gender hierarchical order of the classic patriarchy, women do not receive any other alternative (empowerment) but enter into a new crisis. Under such crisis, they still rely on men's obligations and subordinations in which compromise is the only option for them. Hence, women protect their honor and respect via *purdah* and modesty both in segregated public and private places.⁴⁵

Marriages and Matrimonial Decisions: Family, Gender Relations and Emotions

In Peshawar valley, the manifestation of Pakhtun woman has determined through her position, status, and body. The social pattern and relations of gender have been structured through gender categories. Under such categorization, both sexes have to perform and follow some basic rules, values, and codes of life under the edifice of patriarchy. Like other societies, Peshawar valley is considered a male-dominated, such as in the presence of a man, Pakhtun women cannot laugh and have fun overtly. As said by Benedicte Grima, "there was no sharing of emotions between the two worlds".⁴⁶ Similarly, in terms of economic growth and social change which lead to enhance women status in this region, however, gender dichotomy is still prevails. Her body, and her sex, came to symbolize her gender identity, expression and sexual orientation on which her socialization rested.⁴⁷ Thus, women are subordinated to societal structure and cultural social status. Both cultural and earning skills are determined low level of socio-economic status of Pakhtun woman.⁴⁸

In these dichotomous views, the societal structure was very segregated and the ideological domain for women was designed within the inside house, which is considered to be their moral and religious space.⁴⁹ Some thinkers have claimed that "*Pakhtunwali* is a non-religious system"⁵⁰ because some of its norms are contrary to both sharia and state laws. They claimed that on the eve of Islam,

⁴³ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁴ Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," 281-82.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 282-83.

⁴⁶ Benedicte Grima, *Secrets from the Field: An Ethnographer's Notes from Northwest Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9.

⁴⁷ Farzana Rasool Sanam, *Po Zela Mardan ki da Khazo Kaltoori Rasamoona Riwajoon* (Mardan: Sanghar Publishers, 2019), 137-146.

⁴⁸ Mohammad Jalal-ud-Din and Munir Khan, "Socio-Economic and Cultural Constraints of Women in Pakistan with Special Reference to Mardan District, NWFP Province," *Sarhad J. Agric.* 24, no. 3 (2008): 489.

⁴⁹ Arab Naz and Hafeez-ur-Rehman, "Pakhtunwali versus Islam: A Comparative Analysis of Women's Rights in Islam and their Violation under Pakhtunwali (Pakhtun Code of Life) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan," *International Journal of Humanity and Social Science* (July 2011): 23.

⁵⁰ Thomas Barfield et al., "The Clash of Two Goods: State and Non-State Dispute Resolution in Afghanistan," *United States Institute of Peace* (n.d): 7-8.



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Pakhtunwali was practiced among the Pakhtuns, which codified the myth and legend with clearly distinguishable group boundaries.⁵¹ Though *Pakhtunwali* and Islam are tandem today and despite long significant conflicts between the customary laws and sharia, however, in this conflict, as a custom *Pakhtunwali* takes precedence,⁵² it is also said that “Pakhto is considered separate from adherence to Islam”.⁵³

On the contrary, in terms of moral space, Pakhtun custom attributed to men’s value-oriented i.e. patriarchy, self-expression, and the core of honor and *peghore* (satire). Under *Pakhtunwali*, the traditional custom has been established as a self-image and a central institution for Pakhtun lives which can be distinguished other traditions.⁵⁴ Others claim that *Pakhtunwali* is highly patriarchal because men can take advantage by either denying women empowerment or structuring them into strict segregation. But in both cases, a woman is constrained by her gender identity and gender expression, and men dominated women in almost every aspect of their life. In this mechanism, honor is considered as the essence of every individual’s life and the notion of such honor is not been complete without the element of women. It is *Pakhtunwali* which practiced men’s interest over women through bargaining them as *swara* (nearest virgin female) in disputed settlements.⁵⁵ However, despite the far-flung areas, *swara* custom is not practiced in most of the Peshawar valley region.⁵⁶

Moreover, in this region, gender expression (sex roles) has developed within the social structure of marriage and family. Man is a patriarch and masculinity is power. According to the Pakhto proverb, it is the responsibility of man to protect *namoos*: *zan*, *zar*, and *zamin* (woman, gold, and land), which come under the code of honor.⁵⁷ For men, women are the repository of honor for family and tribe. Men always watch at any moment of their women and if they find out any sign of sexual misconduct (adultery) then it becomes the issue of survival (death or ostracism) for Pakhtun women.⁵⁸ Marriages and matrimonial decisions among the Pakhtuns are decided by men. From birth to mate selections, traditionally, men dominated over women. A mate for girls is selected by men of relatives.

⁵¹ Harding, “Mobilizing Identity in the Pashtun Tribal Belt,” 2.

⁵² Barfield et al., “The Clash of Two Goods,” 7-8; Harding, “Mobilizing Identity in the Pashtun Tribal Belt,” 2.

⁵³ Ahmed, *Sorrow and Joy Among Muslim Women*, 16.

⁵⁴ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 117-121.

⁵⁵ Aman, et al., “Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in Pakhtun Society,” 7-11. Under the honor-shame ideology of *Pakhtunwali*, the gender expression serve women as passive actors in disputed settlements among the Pakhtun. This norm is called *swara*, notwithstanding, being outlawed in Pakistan, *swara* is still practiced among the Pakhtun. *Swara* represents a men’s values and under such values, women are giving away as reparation in setting blood feuds committed by men in Pakhtun society. In local customary laws and especially in rural area, women are giving away either as guilty to the aggrieved party or victimized as an exchange between the two parties. Besides, under sexual orientation, a nearest virgin female should be selected as a revenge and usually daughters and sisters of the offender family who are victimized in *swara*. Thus, the practice of *swara* serves men’s interests and serve women as sexual terror. Because in an interpersonal conflict, its men who paid a great importance to the interests of men while its women who bear the brunt of the conflict either as source of *swara* or subject to sexual terror by differential treatments. Therefore, men’s perspective is a dominant force of the dominant group (men).

⁵⁶ Khatoon, *Da Swabai da Saqafat Hindara*, 125; Shaheen, *Peshawar Shehr awr Riwayat*, 103-105.

⁵⁷ Azmat Hayat Khan, *The Durand Line: Its Geo-Strategic Importance*, ed. M. Y. Effendi, 3rd ed. (Islamabad: Area Study Centre, 2005), 35.

⁵⁸ Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 24.



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Consent of a girl is a symbol of femininity for men because seeking such consent (by a girl) is considered dishonor for family as whole. It is the family which decides a future husband for a girl. Every woman has to follow the rules of patriarchy without any say in this matter. If she refuses, she becomes the victim of honor and *tor*.⁵⁹ In rural society of the Peshawar valley, Pakhtun woman is bound to social norms and values. In marital relationship, woman choice is only limited to acknowledge the will of the outsider. Woman is unable to choose her life partners at her own will. Instead of this, society is considered a woman as inferior mentally.⁶⁰

Traditionally, all marriages are arranged according to tribal relations, class, and caste. Most marriages are nothing more than an exchange, for instance the Pakhto proverb, '*wada pa badal*' highlights the notion of arranged marriage. In this context, intra-caste marriages are preferred among the Pakhtuns because upper castes want to separate themselves from the lower castes.⁶¹ They are either afraid of the transfer of property or it becomes the question of values or self-image for the primacy of male relations because for Pakhtuns, the property is a symbol of honor and power. Traditionally, Pakhtuns divide their property among male members of the family. Most of the women are deprived of inheritance rights and many of them cannot question it. The Pakhto common notion says "*khaza pa jaidad sa kawi* (women do not need property)".⁶² This notion relates to women's behavior and they follow the same patriarchal structure by considering it as *peghore* and honor. For instance, in Peshawar valley, still, if any woman claims inheritance rights, it is assumed that "*da padony za ye owrak ko*"⁶³ i.e. she has left her place where she keeps her *chador*. Here, *chador* means home, security and survival in terms of *gham-khadi* relationships and gender honor.

Apart from this, a woman's choice is also limited by patriarchy both in divorce and re-marriage. In Pakhtun society, the patriarchal structure discourage the practice of divorce. It is considered against the code of *Pakhtunwali*. Traditionally, divorce is stigma of *tor* or *peghore* among the Pakhtuns. For a woman, such stigma does not allow her to opt for divorce due to issues of re-marriage, reputation, social mobility, and sexual protection. The *peghore* of divorce (i.e. *talaqi*) is more than an abuse or sin among the Pakhtuns for both sexes. Among the Pakhtuns, divorced women are very rare. The re-marriage of such women is culturally restricted because of *peghore* and sometimes it becomes the cause of conflict among the tribe. A divorced woman is considered

⁵⁹ Aman, et al., "Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in Pakhtun Society," 9-10.

⁶⁰ Jalal-ud-Din and Munir Khan, "Socio-Economic and Cultural Constraints of Women in Pakistan with Special Reference to Mardan District, NWFP Province," 488.

⁶¹ Hafeez-ur-Rehman, "Pakhtunwali versus Islam," 26.

⁶² Ibid., 28. See also Akbar S. Ahmad and David M. Hart, ed., *Islam in Tribal Societies: From the Atlas to the Indus* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 269. Fourth, in Pakhtun society, the women's inability to inherit and afford property rights, ownership, and land tenure are the reflection of gender inequality. In many versions of *Pakhtunwali*, the inheritance rights of women are either ignored or altered beyond recognition, though guaranteed in Islam law.

⁶³ Khatoon, *Da Swabai da Saqafat Hindara*, 126. Because of property most of females do not get marriages and remained unmarried and died. Her property rights has enjoyed by her brothers and nephews. Ahmed, *sorrow and Joy among Muslim Women*, 38-39. According to Amineh Ahmad in both districts of Swat and Mardan, *Bibiane* (women of wealthy families) hold substantial wealth, lands, and commercial property.



as *speera* (ill-starred or bad woman).⁶⁴

Similarly, the custom is explicit in the Pakhto proverb that “*kunda da kam da*” which means that the widow belongs to the tribe.⁶⁵ But traditionally, Pakhtuns have discouraged widow re-marriage. For Pakhtuns a widow is regarded as *badnaseeba* (ominous) and *speera*. The re-marriage of the widow from outside of her kin is also discouraged and even impossible and unimaginable, however, for a widow the only choice is her deceased husband’s brother (i.e. *lyver*) or sometimes another member of the close family.⁶⁶

Related to Peshawar valley, in some studies, it is assumed that the consent of females in re-marriage is cultural rather than her own because the *peghore* (of a widow and/or rejection of re-marriage) of honor means no choice but to remarry except a mother or an aged woman. Similarly, if even she rejects re-marriage she faces *peghore*. Thus compromise is the only option rather a desire.⁶⁷ In addition, because of its nature, the practice of polygamy is controversial, however, *dwayam wada* (second marriage or polygamy) is not a custom. In the patriarchal structure, the second marriage is either nothing more than to subordinate the woman and to keep her obedient or the desire of male birth when she wants to remove the tag of *meerat* (issueless). For Pakhtun women, the word *dwayam wada* is more than a sword.⁶⁸ For instance, in her story, Bano illustrates that how a second marriage becomes an issue of survival for Pakhtun women by the name of Pakhto.⁶⁹

Segregation and Honor-Shame Complex: The Dichotomy of Purdah and Sexual Terror

In *Pakhtunwali*, the virtue of women was prescribed by the honor-shame complex, wherein gender segregation was a dominant force behind the subject of women’s control.⁷⁰ For such subjugations, men decided the values of *ghairat* and its implementation for tribal order. This order was structured by the weight of tribal honor, which rested on the shoulders of men. Traditionally, men have been considered as a powerful gender expression through their ‘muscular myths’ as the protector of the whole community. In such a process, the identification of masculinity is manifested by carrying weapons and aggression. For honor, every man carries a weapon (sword, dagger, Kalashnikov) for tribal order and honor because among the Pakhtuns, if an individual is not able to uphold his honor, he should be called *daus* (a person without honor).⁷¹

Like other Pakhtun regions, in Peshawar valley, code of behavior, shame and honor are designed within the framework of morality. Honor and reputation restricted a woman’s life to ethical duties i.e. to acknowledge a ‘life as a series of hardships’ or *ghams*. However, such hardships identified women with both

⁶⁴ Naz, “Pakhtunwali versus Islam,” 27-28.

⁶⁵ Limberger-Kastsumi, trans., *Analyse der Staatendokumentenatation*, 49.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁷ Shumalia Rafiq and Naseem Akhter, “The Rights and Duties of widow in Pakistani Laws and Contemporary Perspectives: A Case Study of Peshawar and Katlang Districts,” *UOCHJRS* 5, no. 1 (December 2021): 87-96.

⁶⁸ Limberger-Kastsumi, trans., *Analyse der Staatendokumentenatation*, 29-30.

⁶⁹ Bano, *Da Shago Mazal*, 569-70.

⁷⁰ Aman, et al., “Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in Pakhtun Society,” 5.

⁷¹ Shukla, “The Pashtun Tribal Identity and Codes,” 49.



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verbal and physical behavior under the rules of modesty, timidity, and patience.⁷² As a source of self-aggrandizement, the identification of honor among the Pakhtuns is both individual and communal and it is *Pakhtunwali* that determined honor, subject to pride, identity, and social norms. This pride is actively engaged in the honor of gender which is determined by men. For Pakhtuns (men) the honor of women means the honor of the whole society as a property.⁷³

Under the honor-shame complex, Pakhtun women are inextricably linked to men's honor and it is *Pakhtunwali* which expressed that as *namoos*. This means that men's value is a dominant force behind the honor of all women. Therefore the code of *Pakhtunwali* compelled and pressurized women as repositories of family honor for stability within the family and community.⁷⁴ The practice of honor-killing is a very illustrative example among the Pakhtun about the honor-shame complex. In *Pakhtunwali*, the *tor* and *peghore* define the dishonor and modesty of women. Although women always maintained men's value when in case of forceful marriage (or something not desirable) women try to escape with a stranger, so the results are death for besmirching a Pakhtun's honor. Besides this, an interaction with a stranger (*na-mehram*) is also a symbol of *tor* and *peghore* for family or community. As a result, under the honor-shame complex, the Pakhtun men try to change blackness (*tor*) to whiten by *badal* (mostly killing) in order to escape from *peghore* and restore the lost honor.⁷⁵ As a source of pride and honor, *Pakhtunwali* is a mechanism via which every act bequeath men to hold and negate women because the notion of honor is deficient without the component of women in traditional Pakhtun society. This practice and perception are constructed, therefore women continuously serve men and maintain the dominance of masculinity in Pakhtun society.⁷⁶

"*Pakhtunwali* is highly masculinist"⁷⁷, and as cultural resources for masculinity, it carries a rationalized ground for the subjugation of women within the prescribed ways to serve and reinforce the notion of patriarchy.⁷⁸ As an ancient tribal code, *Pakhtunwali* regulates the whole society wherein women are nothing more than chattel for men,⁷⁹ because the punishments and reparations under it, women as chattel have been conveyed for a wide range of social justices. It creates a sexual terror for women for their prior masculine justices,⁸⁰ the great

⁷² Grima, *Secrets from the Field*, 85-87.

⁷³ Aman, et al., "Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in Pakhtun Society," 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁷ Moghadam, "Patriarchy, the Taliban, and Politics of Public Space in Afghanistan," 20.

⁷⁸ Aman, et al., "Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in Pakhtun Society," 3-4.

⁷⁹ Leela Jacinto, "Abandoning the Wardrobe and Reclaiming Religion in the Discourse on Afghan women's Islamic Rights," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 1 (2006). *Pakhtunwali* is not legal laws but an ancient tribal codes which only regulates its subjects wherein women are exploited in men's interest of social order.

⁸⁰ Mark Drumble, "Rights, Culture and Crime: The Role of Rule of Law for the Women of Afghanistan," *Washington and Lee University Schools of Law* (2004): 352; Aman, et al., "Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in Pakhtun Society," 9. Under swara culture, women are victimized in many ways. The choice and desire of women in natal relationships are more restricted than regular marriages. In *swara*, women lost the social safety in the form of violence, sexual terror and absolute threat as well as likely to take as a second wife. Women is nothing more than a bridge between the disputed parties and its men from both parties who decided the faith of women and its women who are victimized



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example of this terror was *swara*. As a form of customary and de facto an govern(s) its subjects, *Pakhtunwali* reflects a patriarch world view.⁸¹ Because in the context of gender orientation, *Pakhtunwali* is a masculine construct only for masculine interest and to reduce women experiences to men's honor.⁸² Like Iran and Afghanistan, Pakistani society also practiced a 'culture against women' where the socialization of women has been based on sacrifice in all aspects of their lives, health, and even survival.⁸³ In *Pakhtunwali*, the institutionalization of restrictive codes for women was also practiced under the framework of patriarchy. In these codes of behavior, gender categories were very rigid whereupon honor of the family was enforced with women's virtue while men maintained these codes with rigid gender segregation.⁸⁴

However, in these segregations, *purdah* has been used as an organization of honor and respect. *Purdah* represents the category of behavior and according to the rules of *purdah*, every individual follows prescribed norms and values which were established in *Pakhtunwali*. Both men and women lived in segregated worlds, the seclusion of domestic life for women are designed in the four walls of the house, while there was no determined seclusion for men. Albeit, men are not only prohibited in women's world but they are considered as a protector of the inside world. *Pakhtun* custom are value-oriented, in which men's virtues are a dominant force and it is men who define the rules of every individual and collective behavior. Men define the value of judgment, courage, morality, and dependability also to be influenced by men. *Pakhtunwali* is dominated by men's gender expression wherein either masculinity is evaluated by men's company over femininity or men dominate the whole public values, sexuality, and patriarchy.⁸⁵

Traditionally, the expression of *purdah* for *Pakhtun* women was '*chador and chardiwari*' which represents the veil and the four walls of the house. This concept portrays gender segregation both inside and outside the house. This restriction has not only been limited to women's movements, and activities but also to their social lives and social relations. The 'honor-shame complex' constructed the observance of *purdah* as a compulsory element in *Pakhtunwali*. The logic behind *purdah* is to defend the honor and reputation of women and men's pride. For this, *chardiwari* is used as a symbol of *purdah* for women, and sometimes it is synonymously used for *kor* (home) and *kor-wala* (the one in the home) for a wife. So it is the woman who identifies both *purdah* and *peghore* in the honor-shame complex, according to *Pakhto* proverb, '*Na ye kor shta, na ye peghore shta*' which means that if someone does not have any female in his house then he does not any kind of taunts in society.⁸⁶

Like other *Pakhtun* regions, in *Peshawar valley*, it is a command for a woman to cover her head because being bear-headed is considered a sin. This sin is shaped into both moral and religious spheres. Outside of the house, the most social place is the *bazaar* (market) for women where women should observe

by both the offended and offender in the process of exchange.

⁸¹ Drumble, "Rights, Culture and Crime," 381.

⁸² Aman, et al., "Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in *Pakhtun* Society," 4.

⁸³ Moghadam, "Patriarchy and the Politics of Gender in Modernizing Societies," 123.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 117-134.

⁸⁶ Aman, et al., "Self-Aggrandizement and Squeezed Social Space for Women in *Pakhtun* Society," 6-7.



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gender seclusion and man should be modest. Even in the time of traveling by their own vehicles, women should wear burkas or observe purdah, the curtains and windows shut tight.⁸⁷ Purdah or veil is compulsory for women in Pakhtun society. The symbol of veil determines the *sharm* (modesty and honor) behavior of every woman. Because “leaving one’s veil is equivalent to leaving one’s womanhood”.⁸⁸

Similarly, from her engagement, every girl observes strict seclusion and especially in the rural area, in case of cousin engagement, a village girl might be sent to some family member at a distance in order to observe seclusion.⁸⁹ In the rural areas of Peshawar valley, many women do not use their given name but some specified name which is given by kinship.⁹⁰ Thus, in Pakhtun society, seclusion is a compulsory element. In *Pakhtunwali*, it is part of *namoos* or honor for both family and women themselves. It is purdah that defines gender boundaries and segregation for both sexes. The honor of woman is established in purdah. It is not only considered in self-defense for women but also a weapon for men to control the position of women.⁹¹ The concept of *namoos* is a feminine trait claimed by men’s honor and represents the notion of *nang*, morality, and chastity. However, in a larger picture, it is the core element of women, tribal order, and property.⁹² Thus, purdah is a social custom through which women have been segregated by men.

Similarly, the concept and context of purdah in the Peshawar valley depends on location, class, and ethnic group. Some Pakhtun women wear *chador* and other hijab. Every woman defines herself within societal forces. However, most of the Pakhtuns (and especially women) have interpreted the practice of purdah in the context of religion (Islam) but educated women consider the strict seclusion and veiling as signs of patriarchy.⁹³ Consequently, the rules were defined for both sexes. Girls are born in the inner world and should be buried in the four walls of the grave after their death, as in Pakhto traditional saying “for the women either the house or the grave”.⁹⁴

Patriarchy and Socialization: Female-Female Alliances in *Gham-Khadi* Network

Male is dominant and *Pakhtunwali* is masculinist needs further discussion in order to understand the question that how, and why did Pakhtun women’s subordination came into existence if they have a strong bond of emotions in *gham-khadi* in Peshawar valley? And how female-female alliances are performed and how does patriarchy use that performance as its strategy through females themselves in Peshawar valley?

In Pakhtun society, for every individual, social norms exist that illustrate how to behave and express one’s gender (masculinity and femininity) and how to learn gender stereotypes in respective manners. *Pakhtunwali* discouraged anyone to

⁸⁷ Grima, *Secrets from the Field*, 10-31.

⁸⁸ Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women*. 5.

⁸⁹ Grima, *Secrets from the Field*, 10-31.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁹¹ Naz “Pakhtunwali versus Islam,” 24.

⁹² Maliha Zulfacar, “The Pendulum of Gender Politics in Afghanistan,” *Central Asian Survey* (2006): 37.

⁹³ Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 24.

⁹⁴ Ahmad, *Mataloona*, xvii.



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take part in the sphere of opposite gender because the division of labor and social patterns are confined for both sexes,⁹⁵ and it is sex that identifies an individual's gender, ability, and functions. It is said that men do not belong to *harem* (segregated place) activity but only manage the outside world because they either cannot hold power and knowledge or even the capability regarding the intrigues and complexity of the female circles.⁹⁶ So if men do not belong to the complexity of the inner world (harem) then why alliances among females are weak? Or then who established these alliances and for what purposes?

In the Peshawar valley, Pakhtun women live in the complexity of social relations where the established gender hierarchies constrained their position to a segregated space. So inside the house, these relations are dubbed as "*gham-khadi* network".⁹⁷ In her work, Ahmed says unlike other eternal spaces and bazaars (what she called non-segregated public), *gham-khadi* network is segregated public because it is either used as a 'network of relationships' among Pakhtun women or considered as a reputation building. *Gham-khadi* network is like a sound relationship and representation of ideology for Pakhtun women especially among the elites (*Bibiane*). In urban center of the Peshawar valley, *gham-khadi* network is not considered apolitical but explicitly "political position building"⁹⁸. Among the elite, a socio-political network was maintained through females' interaction and their wide range of relationships both in the village and household. For this network, marriage among kin is very important that's why it is said that *Pakhtunwali* is kinship order. Thus as segregated public, *gham-khadi* network works as a matter of symbolic self-definition, identity, and political relationships.⁹⁹

According to a Pakhto proverb "*Khadi pa khanda kha khari aw mary pa zhara* (laughing looks good at a wedding and tears at a death)".¹⁰⁰ Therefore, *gham-khadi* are events and rituals among the Pakhtuns, where *gham* connotes grief, sadness, loss, and sorrow, while joy and festivity come in the categories of *khadi*. This network is rested on emotional rituals wherein gender distinctions or hierarchies are expressed through performance.¹⁰¹ Hardship and suffering determined the honor and reputation of each gender according to one's experiences. In *gham-khadi* network, suffering is usually applied to feminine identity i.e. to express 'the self' in values of suffering narrations such as *qessa* (stories of personal experience). So it is *gham* which needs personal depth experiences as a unique *qessa*. Despite not a being rule, *gham* is usually applied to women, however, man's *gham* is more economic and honor-related than to sorrow and grief.¹⁰² Like many Muslim and Mediterranean societies, *gham*

⁹⁵ Muhammad Hussain, et al., "Gender Stereotyping in Family: An Institutionalized and Normative Mechanism in Pakhtun Society of Pakistan," *SAGE Open* (2015): 8-9.

⁹⁶ Grima, *Secrets from the Field*, 40.

⁹⁷ Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women*, 48-49. The categorization of *gham-khadi*, its events and visits are blurred and complex. In general, the major events of *Gham* are; death, fight, *noqsan* (trouble and difficulty), long-term departure (but for men it is also considered as *khadi*), daughter, her birth and wedding, force marriage and etc. while events of *khadi* are; wedding and birth of men, circumcision, return from travel, the first steps and words of babies and etc.

⁹⁸ Ahmed, *Sorrow and Joy Among Muslim Women*, 5-43.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women*, 41.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 11-12.

¹⁰² Ibid., 12-36.



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(grief) is synonymously related to females because females' lament is expected while for men, grief is nothing more than a taboo. However, such expectations are categorized by women themselves, for example, unmarried girls are not expected to perform in *gham* either because they are considered as ignorant or *gham* is only applied to womanhood. According to Grima, such "emotion is cultural, controlled, learned and performed".¹⁰³

Pakhtun women always relied on patriarch material culture, when they performed their emotions in *gham-khadi* network. There is explicit conflict among Pakhtun women on how to dignify the material things to gain great attention and comments from other women. It becomes a long gossip among women about the details of things which is bought either by the groom or bride family.¹⁰⁴ In *khadi* network, marriage is considered a domestic affair of women whereas they not only appear and take out their confined wishes, to dance and sing as well as they can go to the bazaar in order to purchase a wedding collection. However, from the time of engagement, there is a competition of gift exchange, reciprocal luncheon, and congratulatory visits. In marriage ceremonies, the gossip among Pakhtun women is about how a bride's and groom's mothers have arranged the events and performed their roles. From the selection of the groom to management, women assume different roles, and every woman tries to judge and impress other women.¹⁰⁵ At the time of marriage, Pakhtun women themselves judge other women (or bride) with the quality of cooking, physical defects, and speaking etc. Interestingly women themselves judge these qualities by visiting and checking her out.¹⁰⁶

So these performances in *khadi* by Pakhtun women are neither more nor less than what one finds in patriarchy and its strategies to reduce the women's way of thinking to material culture rather or to utilize these emotions on female-female alliances or sisterhood. By way of illustration, under the honor-shame complex, at the time of selection, the boy's mother has to select a bride which is best suited to her children's social and educational background. Similarly, the boy's family always selects traditional girls for her son who expects segregation and modesty from her.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, it is a class within patriarchy which "sets one woman against another".¹⁰⁸

Moreover, at the time of marriage, people are weighed on their financial position and social status. Culturally, the value judgment is *hasab nasab* (familial affiliations) rather than to look for capabilities. Therefore, to avoid *peghore* (of status), the selection process among the Pakhtun woman is very explicit to status¹⁰⁹ rather than solidarity to a girl or female-female alliances. The first expression of such culture maxim honor is '*Khalaq ba sa wai*' (what will the people say?) and '*da stargo garawalo na ba woozo*' (we would not be able to

¹⁰³ Ibid., 11-13.

¹⁰⁴ Grima, *Secrets from the Field*, 40.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 24-38. During weddings and other designated occasions (and/or sometime in hiding), Pakhtun Women could freely sing among themselves of their own mountain melody when no men at all to see them but it bring shame on the family if they found tape-record.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 30.

¹⁰⁸ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*. 38. Family is the base of social stratification. It is family through which patriarchy re-affirmed sexual hierarchy where antagonism among the women explicit the nature of women sexuality.

¹⁰⁹ Naz, "Pakhtunwali versus Islam," 29-30.



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face the people).¹¹⁰ Therefore, in Peshawar valley, it is the cultural norms that undermine the position of women for community self-expression or kinship, and this has shown that “men’s honor lies in women’s shame and modesty”.¹¹¹

Like other Pakhtun regions, in Peshawar valley, outside the bedroom, men are rarely taking part in the everyday existence of women and similarly, women do not deal with any male existence outside the home. However, there is also the existence of restrictions and sacred taboos between the two sexes. There is eternal play among the women themselves in *gham-khadi* which seems flirting, teasing, and entreating.¹¹² Hence, the construction of gender is defined both socially and culturally. The identification of gender has been determined by the development of stereotypes and their images. In the framework of social role and social dominance theories, the dichotomy of gender and stereotypical images in *Pakhtunwali* has developed more culturally rather than naturally. In Peshawar valley, gender expressions are explicit by predetermined notions. Males follow the masculine traits, while females adopt femininity. Both live and manage their domestic affairs according to customs and gender identity. Sexual orientation is driven according to patriarchal structure whereas the ‘projection of sexism’ is defined in the tradition of stereotypical dichotomy.¹¹³ In the same synoptic paradigm, under psychoanalytical socialization theory, gender stereotypes are not developed arbitrarily in Pakhtun society but organized by socio-cultural factors and it is the institution of family that re-enforce the gender categorization in *Pakhtunwali*. This categorization operates as the manifested position of gender through customs and traditions. For instance, in this region, since childhood, the birth of a male child is symbolized as *khadi* (happiness), whereas female birth is considered as *gham* (sorrow and sadness),¹¹⁴ or sometimes girl is symbolized as a *sharm* for Pakhtun’s house.¹¹⁵

By socialization, a child can learn and act according to the environment’s norms and customs. However, in gender socialization, a child can follow and perform the prescribed notion of gender. This socialization even starts before the birth of a child when people ask a question, is it a girl or a boy?¹¹⁶ Thus, younger generations learn and internalize all these gender images and stereotypes from their parents and society.¹¹⁷ It is women, who practice the psychological implications of lack of male offspring in *gham-khadi* network. The patriarch values are practiced by women at the time when they celebrate ceremonies inside the house, i.e. boy’s birth denotes the emotions of social prestige while the birth of girls is considered as socially negligible.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

Women in *Pakhtunwali* are entitled to the claim they act and believe in, and are lived in terms of gender relations and socialized patterns as well as to the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 26-27.

¹¹¹ Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women*, 37.

¹¹² Grima, *Secrets from the Field*, 41-42.

¹¹³ Hussain, et al. “Gender Stereotyping in Family,” 2.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁵ Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women*, 37.

¹¹⁶ Hussain, et al. “Gender Stereotyping in Family,” 2-3.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 6.

¹¹⁸ Ahmed, *Sorrow and Joy Among Muslim Women*, 34-35.



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manifested position they exercise, both as body and gender. They live in the complexity of social relations where the established gender hierarchies constrained their position to a segregated space. The majority of women are more concerned about the societal structure, playing with the gender binary, with moral questions and patience in the traditional hierarchies. There is the hierarchy of authority, where she is neither the authority nor has right to ignore her emphatic command, expression, and protest, however, was unheeded. Similarly, the hierarchy of women's circle, where women are performed and experienced the stereotypical ideas about gender and femininity, and the hierarchy of gender, wherein sexual identity and body are marked every woman by the scale of representation i.e. sex, action, expectation, and work.

Pakhtunwali is a way of the Pakhtuns; naturally, it is unwritten and quasi-legal; practically, it is gender-segregated and patriarchal; and structurally, it is ethical, social, tribal, and stateless as well as generally, it is the code of life and the code of the hills. Similarly, it is collectively an intricate system of morals and codes of behavior that govern the Pakhtun social structure in terms of emotion, morality, and gender. In the Peshawar valley, it is *Pakhtunwali* that has constructed gender dichotomy and established different ways of life for both sexes and gender variance wherein Pakhtun women maintain and follow some basic rules, values, and codes of life under the edifice of patriarchy.

From diverse claims and various complexity of power dynamics, patriarchy has constructed the institutionalization of restrictive codes as patriarchal orders. In Peshawar valley, Pakhtun women have socialized via gender expression/role (masculinity and femininity), compulsory marriages, and control sexuality by men. Hence, *Pakhtunwali* and most of its elements are patriarchal and male-dominated. Gender relations and social patterns are culturally segregated. Gender categories are explicit while male gender identity has the advantage in almost every aspect of life, power politics, and social affairs. It is the patriarchal norms and values which determine sex roles via gender expression whereas masculinity maintains its power over femininity.

Under patriarchal values, Pakhtun customs are value-oriented, in which men's virtues are a dominant force and it is men who define the rules of every individual and collective behavior. And it is the family which becomes the mediating and forming patriarchal power between individuals and social structure. Therefore, Pakhtun women live in the complexity of social relations where the established gender hierarchies constrained their position to a segregated space. It seems to be that Pakhtun woman's body, and her sex, came to symbolize her gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation on which her socialization rested. Similarly, along with eternal play among the women themselves i.e. women's cycle of subordination, it is the cultural norms that undermine the position of women for community self-expression or kinship when they perform in emotional rituals.

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