



## A Mare Wearing a Scarlet Bridle: A Feminist Critique of Gender Based Animal Imagery in Punjabi Proverbs

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims at animal imagery found in Punjabi proverbs related to gender and to reveal if it is ideologically patriarchal. Here, Punjabi proverbs with the mention of animals and gender are selected through the technique of quota purposive sampling from a collection of 8500 Punjabi proverbs Saaday Akhaan, (Our Proverbs) (Shahbaz 2004). Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Lazar, 2007) provided the theoretical background. Furthermore, proverbs with female gender and male gender are divided into thematic categories on the base of the gender and the animals targeted. 'Gender Relationality' is assured by selecting the animal images related to both male and female genders. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods has been used to analyze the data. The findings reveal that 53.95% of animal-based Punjabi proverbs target females, whereas, only 1.69% of proverbs target males. Here, a higher number of proverbs present females in a face-threatening manner as compared to the one mentioning males in a face-saving and glorifying manner. Additionally, only 1 proverb (0.28%) is found that shows a comparatively soft attitude towards daughters by comparing them to sparrows. This study contends that animal imagery in Punjabi proverbs strengthens patriarchal social tendencies. These animal images do not only reflect but also promulgate gender bias. This research also suggests that linguists should pay attention to these proverbs. Further research can be done on the actual use of Punjabi proverbs to investigate how much they are still holding fast to the beliefs of perpetuating gender bias.

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## 1. Introduction

Proverbs are famous sayings which represent the ideology and culture of the society in which they are spoken. The characteristics of animals are linked with human beings to compare their behaviors and appearances, but this comparison is gender biased as the review of related researches has revealed that more negative, depreciative and unpleasant attributes are attached with females as compared to male.

According to the Great Chain of Being Theory (GCBT) (Lakoff & Turner, 1989) human beings are given the highest place in the hierarchal chain where animals and plants are placed below them. According to that theory, the human beings possess all the qualities of the things mentioned beneath them. From this view, the characteristics of animals should be associated with males and females impartially, therefore, this research aims to analyze whether the distribution of these traits in Punjabi proverbs is unprejudiced or not.

Punjabi is a gender-specific language in which a particular gender refers towards a definite group of people by which the image of the group is constructed. Here, gender does not

remain a neutral matter and it is systematically constructed through proverbial language. It differentiates between sex and gender where sex is shown to be a biologically given trait and gender is something determined by the society by defining specific gender roles. These roles then become their identity. The function of Punjabi language of proverbs in the construction of gender is analyzed which reveals that such discursive units systematically privilege men to maintain the patriarchal dominance in the society, while, it associates derogatory traits with females to portray them in negative animal images to suppress them.

The above argumentation shows that the proverbs determine the social attitude that how males and females would be perceived and treated. As Rahman (1998) defines that the proverbs are a mirror of a society and call them the "un-masked and un-adulterated images of a society in which one finds people's ideas about life, the ideals and values they hold dear, and the elements they consider supreme in the spiritual as well as material life." It can be inferred here that proverbs could possibly reveal the gender preferences of a community in adherence to the ideals and morals of that society. In the same way, by reanalyzing the proverbial gender biased language, the prejudice against female gender could possibly be invalidated.

Therefore, this research has focused on the analysis of the animal imagery of Punjabi proverbs and to maintain gender relationality 208 proverbs with female gender as well as 146 proverbs with male gender of animals are analyzed. The various animals are used in Punjabi proverbs and their diverse behavioral and physical attributes are linked directly or metaphorically with men and women to portray their characteristics and behavioral patterns. The goals of this research are (i) to identify the gender-related aspects of animal imagery in Punjabi proverbs, (ii) to analyze the type of traits linked with women by using the female gender of animals and (iii) to examine the nature of characteristics attributed to men by using the male gender of animals. This research will explore the data to get the answers of the following research questions:

- How has animal imagery in Punjabi proverbs been employed to portray different aspects related to gender?
- Which animals and which of their traits are used to metaphorically represent women?
- Which animals and which of their traits are used to signify men?

## **2. Literature Review**

The researches in various foreign languages have analyzed gender and animal imagery from multiple perspectives. The domain of gender-based animal imagery is still unexplored in the folk genres of Punjabi language and specifically proverbs. A brief literature review of the researches done on the relationship of language and gender is given below:

Aragbuwa and Omotunde (2022) in their recent study conducted on 100 Yoruba Proverbs, have explored conceptual metaphorization that perpetuates the gender bias to incapacitate women in Yoruba culture. This study also shows that women are given "downward orientation" by attributing an inferior status to them in comparison to men. Here, it could be inferred that through proverbs strong messages of gender discrimination are communicated to Yoruba masses that instigate their unjust treatment of women. The positive aspects of feminine existence are undermined to nurture patriarchal supremacy.

Whereas, Lomotey (2019) condemns the usage of gender biased Spanish proverbs that invite Yoruba people to practice violence on female gender. This research also highlights the misogynous ideologies that systematically reinforce patriarchal hegemony by mapping minds of native speakers and support vicious actions of the Spanish community against women. It seems to suggest the careful reevaluation of Spanish proverbs in order to dismantle female subordination and to develop new social perceptions for women. It seems to imply that proverbial linguistic examination of Spanish proverbs could diminish the polarization of male and female gender as powerless and powerful respectively.

Rasul (2015) has studied stereotypical gender roles in Urdu and English proverbs and concluded that in most of the proverbs women are treated as 'bashful', 'chatty', 'passive' and 'sex toys' while, unlike women, men are praised for their 'intelligence', 'wit', 'strength', 'courage' and 'bravery'. Although, such qualities can also be observed in women, but these are

only associated with men through the tool of language to strengthen their image in society. Hence, the negative features are associated only with women to portray them in a definitely derogatory manner.

Sanauddin (2015) has investigated Pashto proverbs from the perspective of gender and concluded that most of the Pashto proverbs are based on a sexist ideology which is practiced by men to suppress women. Therefore, it can be said that proverbs are golden patriarchal chains that bound women to the fixed image in the asymmetrical gender ideology of Pashtun society.

Mohammad and Rashid (2014) have studied 'cat metaphor' in Malay and English proverbs. It shows that the characteristics such as 'spiritless', 'savage', 'aggressive', 'ostentatious', 'idle', 'selfish', 'paltry' and 'cheeky' are attributed to cats. These cat-based metaphors suppress women by making them realize that they hold nothing positive and valuable. These features not only change their image in society but, their self-image is also distorted. It affects them psychologically, emotionally, mentally and socially.

Nakhavaly and Sharifi (2013) has compared gender discrimination in Persian proverbs against both males and females. This research contended that Persian Proverbs associate adverse traits such as 'sinful and vicious', 'inferior and incompetent' more with females than with males. The women are defamed not only by the use of Urdu or Pashto proverbs but the Persian proverbs do the same thing. They convey a similar message to the softer sex of being inferior in these male-dominated societies.

Fati-Rabat (2014) has examined the place of women in Moroccan proverbs where they are criticized, mocked and insulted by the association of negative traits such as 'witless', 'puny' and 'defenseless' with them. They are belittled by imparting secondary place in Moroccan culture.

Wang (2012) has presented a comparative analysis of Chinese and English proverbs in which females are shown inferior to men. The ideology conveyed through these proverbs is gender biased in which women are insulted and considered weak. However, this research has raised a voice by highlighting these evils.

Estaji and Nakhavali (2011) has inspected semantic derogation in Persian proverbs. This research shows that females are humiliated by the use of animal expressions by associating shoddier attributes with them. Furthermore, he observed that Persian proverbs linking negative traits with men are very fewer in number. This unfair distribution of good and bad animal traits causes gender-based discrimination in the society through the use of these proverbs.

Balogun (2010) has also studied and revealed that Yoruba Proverbs are oppressive towards women. The proverbs that refer to females are extremely displeasing and abusive. Yoruba culture mortifies females and is hostile towards them. Women face physical as well as mental violence in this traditional atmosphere. The intensity of oppression found in Yoruba Proverbs is more than found in any other language.

Rodriguez (2009) has consummated that the speakers of English and Spanish represent males and females by different animal names. The animals such as 'bitches' refer towards females, whereas, 'bulls' denote males. In this research, it is vividly shown that the animal expressions used for females are coarse than those linked with males. The metaphor 'bitch' instantly creates a negative picture in the mind where the implicit motive is to convey moral corruption of a woman. On the other hand, the metaphor of 'bull' hints at the strength and authority of men. Therefore, through the use of language, this partial ideology is conveyed to the young and innocent generations whose minds are still under construction. Hsieh (2008) has dealt with the origins and semantic shift of the word 'dragon' in Mandarin

Dan (2008) has scrutinized the metaphorical meanings of animals in the Chinese language. It is highlighted that the young women are considered as a 'bird' and 'sprat', whereas old women are called as a 'swine' and 'hound'. Women gain importance in the society

just because of their physical beauty, attractiveness, sexuality, and ability to reproduce. Later on, in the old age when they lose all these traits, they are merely considered as 'swine' and 'hound'. They hold importance for the society not more than these grubby animals of the street. He has also explored the 'cat' expression in Chinese and German. This research focuses on the animal expressions and discovers the animal characteristics such as 'treacherous' and 'shrewd' that are attributed to human beings.

Nadim (2000) has analyzed 100 animal expressions mentioned in Shirazi proverbs and concluded that the metaphor of 'donkey' is oft repeated and the traits such as 'foolish' and 'useless' are associated with it. He has explored the 'donkey' imagery on impartial grounds just to determine the features attributed to human beings through it.

Fontecha and Catalan (2003) have done a contrastive analysis of matching sets 'fox/vixen', 'cow/bull' with their parallels in Spanish. In this research, it is found that the metaphorical meanings of these sets are tendentious towards females. Oha (1998) has determined hostility and revulsion towards women in the discourse of the masculine Igbo society. Women are presented as 'illogical', 'demonic', 'unwise', 'cranky' and 'corrupt'. This society targets the morality and intellect of women.

All the above-mentioned researches have explored various dimensions of different languages such as Malay, Spanish, Chinese, Yoruba, Urdu, Pashto, Igbo, Morocco, Persian, German and English. The animal expressions are studied from their metaphorical perspective in foreign languages, but this study highlights the research gap that nothing has been done on the gender-based animal imagery found in the Punjabi proverbs. This present exploration aims to scrutinize this dimension of Punjabi proverbs in which specific types of attributes of animals are linked with males and females to portray their certain images.

### **3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

This research is qualitative cum quantitative in nature. The researcher has used two methods for the analysis of proverbial data. In this research, to answer the research questions, the gender-based animal imagery prevalent in Punjabi proverbs are examined. '8500' Punjabi proverbs are studied from the collection of Punjabi proverbs; *SADDY AKHAAN* (2004) by Dr, Shahbaz Malik. However, the population of the study consists of 354 proverbs, total 208 proverbs with targeting at female gender and 146 proverbs with male gender are scrutinized through Systematic Purposive Sampling. Whereas, out of these 354 proverbs, 44 proverbs are finally translated and analyzed as a representative of the whole data. The kinds of traits and features of animals that are associated with the dichotomous gender are thematically categorized.

This research primarily deals with the sociolinguistic perspective of the Punjabi proverbs. A mixed approach is adopted to analyze the data both quantitatively and qualitatively. Thematic Content Analysis is employed to critically analyze the selected representative proverbs. The purposive quota sampling method is used to present the sample. Moreover, the data is quantified by assigning categories and then inferring percentages to conclude which animal metaphor is used in what frequency for which gender and in which terms, in Table 1 and Table 2. Furthermore, the researcher has followed the following steps to analyze proverbs:

- The researcher has foregrounded numerous Punjabi Proverbs holding the theme of gender bias and containing animal imagery in them. In this way, gender-based proverbs are categorized.
- Afterwards, the researcher has applied the method of Thematic Content analysis to examine the specific attributes that are associated with male and female gender through animal images in Punjabi Proverbs mentioned in *SADDY AKHAAN* (2004).
- Concludingly, the researcher has analyzed the text according to the theoretical framework (FCDA) Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis provided by Lazar (2007).

Whereas, the language about the gender in Punjabi proverbs is examined which seems to suggest that the image of male and female gender is socially constructed. The proverbs are analyzed by using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis Theory (FCDA) (Lazar, 2007) as a framework where "The central concern of feminist critical discourse analysts is with critiquing

discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order -relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group, and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as another social group." (Lazar, 2007). Lazar's FCDA suggests that gender possesses an ideological structure that categorizes people of a community into different classes; "men and women" and also develops "a hierarchical relation of domination and subordination, respectively". It shows a need to resist gender discrimination to terminate illogical biases against women. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis investigates the complex relationship between gender and hegemony across different cultures and ages. It also elaborates the mechanisms of gender construction in societies and its perpetuation through revised actions of its community members. Whereas, FCDA emphasizes the need of deconstructing and then reconstructing social practices in order to annihilate gendered social hierarchies. In this way, it aims to possibly have communities based on gender equality. In this way, FCDA could help the researcher in highlighting the derogatory and gender biased patriarchal linguistic practices in Punjabi culture.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Discussion

##### 4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, the proverbs are classified on the basis of initial categories which will present the results of the research in numbers and percentages where total number of proverbs and proverbs targeting a particular gender determine the percentage.

Total numbers of proverbs with animal imagery that target men and women are mentioned in table 1. Here, out of total population sample of the study which is 354 proverbs, 146 (41.2%) proverbs are targeting male gender and 208 (58.8%) proverbs are targeting female gender.

**Table 1**

Targeted gender	No. of Proverbs	Percentage
Male	146	(41.2%)
Female	208	(58.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

**Table 2**

Categories	No. of Proverbs	Percentage
<b>Proverbs with female derogation</b>	191	(53.95%)
<b>Proverbs with female glorification</b>	1	(0.28%)
<b>Proverbs with female derogation and male glorification</b>	15	(4.23%)
<b>Proverbs with male derogation because of his relation with female</b>	6	(1.69%)
<b>Proverbs with both male and female derogation</b>	1	(0.28%)
<b>Proverbs with male glorification</b>	35	(9.88%)
<b>Proverbs with male derogation</b>	---	(0%)
<b>Proverbs with male gender-General Meanings</b>	62	(17.51%)
<b>Proverbs with male gender-Neutral Meanings</b>	43	(12.14%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 shows the total number of proverbs that target both men and women. The qualitative analysis in Table 2 shows that out of 354 proverbs 191(53.95%) show derogation towards women and only 6 proverbs (1.69%) are found that target men in some negative light because of their relation with women. On the other hand, 35 proverbs (9.88%) glorify male gender and privilege men and not even a single proverb (0%) is found which have directly targeted men in a face-threatening manner. Dissimilarly, only 1 proverb (0.28%) is found that shows a polite attitude of Punjabi society towards daughters, but they are still shown as weak and powerless creatures by being equated with 'sparrows'. Additionally, 105 proverbs (29.65%) use the male gender of animals in neutral terms and to convey general senses. In this research, the proverbial language is found partial towards females. Therefore, this

research seems to suggest that Punjabi proverbs systematically privilege men and despise women through animal imagery.

Figure 1:



All the derogatory 'attributes' of animals that are linked with women are presented in the form of word clouds. In Figure 1, a word cloud shows all negative 'attributes' of animals that are linked with women in Punjabi proverbs. Whereas, in the following Figure 2, the 'female' genders of all animals that are used directly, parallel and metaphorically to target 'women' are displayed in the form of word cloud.

Figure 2:



In Figure 3, the 'male' genders of all animals which are used directly, in parallel position or metaphorically to target 'women' are displayed in the form of word cloud.

Figure 3:



Whereas, in Figure 4 the 'attributes' of all animals which are associated with men are presented in the form of this word cloud below.

**Figure 4:**



In the following Figure 5 all the animals which are used directly, in parallel position or metaphorically for 'men' are displayed in the form of the word cloud below.

**Figure 5:**



#### 4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

For qualitative analysis, the proverbs that are selected through systematic purposive sampling are analyzed to find out how the animal imagery is used in Punjabi proverbs to portray gender and the types of attributes which are associated with the male and female gender of different animals to target men and women. These proverbs are classified to arrange the data systematically on the basis of the direct, metaphorical and parallel use of animal images. However, the categories, based on derogation and glorification of gender, are mentioned below:

- Proverbs with the female derogation
- Proverbs with the female glorification
- Proverbs with the female derogation and male glorification
- Proverbs with the male derogation because of his relation with female/s

- Proverbs with both the male and female derogation
- Proverbs with the male glorification
- Proverbs with the male derogation

Proverbs with the female derogation;

#### 4.2.1 The Punjabi proverbs with the female derogation through direct comparison, metaphorical or parallel use of the female gender of animals

##### a. Buffalo

*Znanni da rona tey majhaan da mutar ek braabr* (Shahbaz, 2004)

Crying of a woman and urinating of a buffalo have an equal status

In this proverb, the tears of a woman are compared with the urine of buffaloes. It shows that her feelings are not valued in Punjabi society. This proverb also encourages men to hurt women physically and emotionally because her pain is considered insignificant and negligible.

*Majhan deyvn kut, nuhaan jaman kuriyaa, doowen chorr chpat* (p.127)

The buffaloes give birth to the (male) calves,  
the daughters-in law give birth to the baby girls: both are useless

These two happenings are equated to show as great losses and calamities. The event of daughter in-law giving birth to the daughters is compared with the birth of buffalo's calves. Their birth is considered a useless and demeaning phenomenon. It becomes a matter of woe for the family. This research reveals that the girls are no more valued than male calves of buffaloes which are going to be of lesser value than the female calves. This proverb gives the reflection of girl child's status in Punjabi society.

*Muj moi, dhi sui* (p.336)

The buffalo is dead, the daughter is born

In this proverb, the birth of a daughter is considered as mournful as the death of a buffalo. Her birth is abhorred. A similar thought related to the birth of a daughter is found in another Punjabi proverb '*The home of a daughter's parents is like a place of mourning*' (Khan & Ali, 2017). On the other hand, the birth of a son is highly welcomed as '*Sons are sweet fruits so should be given to everyone by God*' (Khan & Ali, 2017). This proverb explicitly shows the gender biased attitude of Punjabi society as proverbs represent the ideology and culture of the society.

##### b. Sheep and Buffalo

*Bheyd boori, meeh daabi, darhi wali run, tinaa cheeza chad ky soda kri nishang* (p.101)

A brown sheep, a two-colored buffalo, and a wife with beard:  
Avoid all three to be successful in your trade

It shows that a woman having hair on her face is humiliated and not accepted by the society. She is paralleled with two animals 'sheep and buffalo' to be denigrated. The people especially men of Punjabi society are warned about being in contact with all three of them.

##### c. Vulture

*Eil koko eil app khandi gajraa dhi nu deyndi kil* (p.56)

The mother vulture eats soft parts of carrots herself and gives hard parts to her daughter.

The image of vulture is metaphorically used to portray a greedy and selfish mother who forgets her children's needs and prefers her personal comforts on theirs. Whereas, in other proverbs mothers enjoy great status in Punjabi society '*maawan day pera haet jannat ay*'



(Khan & Ali, 2017) 'Paradise lies under the feet of mothers', but the proverbs having animal imagery despise mothers equally.

**d. Female Monkey**

*Bandri dey peyr sarran lgy san tey os bchy heyth pa laey sun (p.76)*

When the female monkey felt her feet burning, she placed her children beneath (her feet to save herself)

The image of female monkey is used for a mother who does not care for her children and is found to be selfish and self-centered. Here, the most privileged relation 'mother' is castigated through animal imagery.

**e. Hen**

*Kadi kukri di banng vi ravaa hoi ey (p.284)*

Can a hen's clucking ever be fluent?

Here, the 'hen' is used to metaphorically represents women's talk and points of views of Punjabi society that the work accomplished by the women cannot be equal to the task performed by the males. Through the image of hen, the status of females is subjugated and masculinity is systematically glorified. However, this proverb shows the ideology of the society where each sex has a definite gender role and according to that woman are not considered equal to men. Whereas, in a Swahili proverb the gender roles are evident and women are portrayed as powerless and weak creatures: 'A hen does not crow where there is a cock' (Kobia, 2016). Additionally, in Persian proverbs the traits of stupidity and dumbness are connected with hen to target women (Estaji & Nakhavali, 2011).

*Apni kukri changi hovey tey praeey ghr anndy ku devy (p.62)*

If our hen is good, why would she lay eggs in others' home?

Here, the hen is used to portray women as unfaithful, fickle and insincere creatures. While, the same traits are associated with 'fox' and 'cat' in Malay and English proverbs (Lakoff & Turner, 1989).

**f. Jenny**

*Khotti ah kisy lakhtei akh chadeya oss ghaa khana chad deta (p.301)*

Someone called Jenny a dancer and she left eating grass.

The image of Jenny (female donkey) is metaphorically presenting women as weak-kneed, insensible and foolish who do not have a brain to know and understand people's intentions and are easily influenced by flattery.

**g. Goat**

*Shavashey meri bakri da jehney qerza lahya khatri da, fittey muu maanda jihney gheo nhi joreya gaan da (p.261)*

Well done for my goat who has paid the debt of money lender,  
a curse on the mother who has not saved the organic fat from the milk of the cow.

A mother is directly paralleled with a goat. She is considered unmindful, careless and thoughtless.

Through the use of animal imagery, the mother is admonished whereas an inferior animal 'goat' is admired.

*Paath khayey sath pheyr vi paath di path (p.109)*

A goat eats sixty rupees but still remains a goat.

A girl is metaphorically represented by a goat which shows that in Punjabi society providing a nutritious diet to a girl is believed to be useless as she will not be able to pay it back by financially supporting her family. On the other hand, it is advised to take great care of a son as he will help his parents in financial affairs (Sanauddin, 2015).

**h. Gilt**

*Bohti runi udam runda, ghar surniyan da taranda (p.88)*

The squabble of numerous women turns a house into a gilt parlor.

Women are dishonored by the direct comparison with gilts and portrayed as belligerent beings who turn their house in the gilt parlor by their combative and troublesome nature.

**i. Cat**

*Bivi billi tay sut gher chali (p. 92)*

A cat-like wife, visits seven houses.

The outdoorsy and meandering wife who does not stay at home and likes to stroll is considered a cat. The proverb conveys that the stereotypical gender roles confine women within the four walls of the home and the image of a cat represents the irresponsible and meandered nature of wives who ignore their family and home at the cost of their personal pleasures. Nakhavaly and Sharifi (2013) has explored the same gender roles in the Persian proverbs: 'At home staying is the work of woman' (p.19) where women are forced to stay at home.

**j. Female Jackal**

*Run bethi vigrri, jeven chachti gidrri (p.224)*

The angry wife is sitting like a resentful female jackal.

An angry wife is compared with a bad-tempered female jackal whereas, in Malay proverbs this feature is associated with fox (Wan, 2013). This proverb shows that the cultural difference is present in the attribution of diverse animal traits that are used to target women. The independent cultures ascribe unique traits with different characters.

**k. Mare**

*Budhi ghorl lal lgam (p.80)*

An aged mare wearing a scarlet bridle

This proverb represents the stereotypical gender-based expectations that an old woman is reproached when she deviates from the expectations of a society. She is not approved of adopting any fashion. Their personal desires are suppressed and are forced to live like corpses. This manner restricts the life of a woman deficiently.

**l. Sheep**

*Hun ty bheyda vi Makkey chliya ney (p.389)*

Now even the sheep are also going to Makkah.

The 'sheep' imagery is metaphorically used to target prostitute women if they seem to do any act of piety and to criticize their diversion. Here, the sheep are considered ignoble and treacherous. Unlike this image created through Punjabi proverbs, the sheep is a sacred symbol of purity, innocence, and virtue in European communities. This proverb also shows a wide range of senses and connotations attached with different animal images in miscellaneous cultures.

#### 4.2.2 The proverbs with female derogation in which women are targeted by the direct comparison, metaphorical or parallel use of the 'male' gender of animals

##### a. Horse

*Ghoray nu tlaa, tay runn nu khula* (p.319)

Grass for the horse and bashing for the wife (are justified).

This proverb represents a comparative and parallel mention of two treatments as the right choices where the males are glorified and women are disgraced. It is considered that as the grass is beneficial for the horse so is the beating with a shoe for a wife. This proverb stimulates men to keep thrashing their women to maintain their authority on them so that they remain obedient to them.

##### b. Dog

*Chor ku chati bhli, kutty ku guti bhli, gndi run sutti bhli* (p.178)

It is favorable to fine a thief, to keep a dog chained and to get rid of a bad wife.

The parallel use of dog imagery depicts female derogation and advises the people to spurn the corrupt woman. She is believed to be as dangerous as an unchained dog. Estaji and Nakhavali (2011) research has explored a similar humiliating expression in a Persian proverb: 'a shrewd woman is like a dog without collar'.

*Galeeni lagi tay atta kutyaan khada* (p.308)

She was engaged in talking and the dogs ate the flour.

Women are insulted to be depicted as highly talkative beings who forget their responsibilities once they start a conversation. This proverb also shows their negligent nature. An English proverb also portrays women to be extremely chatty: 'A woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tale' (Rasul, 2015).

##### c. Donkey

*Gul na avey theyth di ty khoty wangr leytdi* (p.307)

She does not know how to talk sense so lies like a donkey.

An artless and ill-mannered woman is compared with a donkey for being an uncivilized and boorish creature. On the other hand, in Persian proverbs donkey symbolizes the deceitful and tricky nature of women (Estaji & Nakhavali, 2011).

*Digi khoty ton gusa kumyaar tay* (p. 76,211)

(She has) fallen from the donkey and gets angry at the owner (of the donkey).

This proverb shows the behavior of a woman to be extremely illogical and irrational that she is unable to use her sense in recognizing the real cause of the situation. Bracketing of a woman with a donkey would create a demeaning image of a female in the minds of the listeners.

##### d. Quail

*Titer khambi jher karey jey randi veys akrey, sir par mhi vasna oh vee hor karey* (p.124)

A quail-colored bird when shudders and a voguish widow, the first one indicates rain and the second one will marry again.

The beauty of quail's color and the fashion of a widow are mentioned in parallel terms. In this proverb, the voguish widow is criticized as Punjabi culture does not allow her to do

fashion and to marry again. She is not given the right of living a normal life after her husband's death. It also represents the conventional gender roles.

*Titer khambi badli mehri surma pa, oh vasey ga mahengla oss ki khsm tay raza* (p.125)

The quail-colored cloud and a stylish maiden,  
it indicates heavy rain and she will destroy her home.

The conduct of a maiden is paralleled by the attractive colors of quail. A fashionable girl proves to be a careless wife who would never pay attention to her house and husband because of being busy in taking care of her own self. A similar idea is traced in an English proverb: 'The more women look in their glass, the less they look to their house' (Rasul, 2015).

#### 4.2.3 Proverbs with the female glorification

The proverbs in which female gender of animal 'cow' is metaphorically used for a daughter is given below:

##### a. Cow

*Gaa nu ghaa tay chadi da ey ruri ty nhi* (p.304)

The cow is to leave on the grass and not on the garbage heap.

Though, it is the only proverb that shows a sympathetic attitude of Punjabi society towards women that they should be married carefully, yet, this research shows that a daughter is compared with a cow and she is valued not more than a farm animal. Hence, the female glorification is actually proved to be derogation. On the other hand, the 'cow' is used to symbolize 'dumbness' in Malay proverbs.

Proverbs with female derogation and male glorification;

#### 4.2.4 The proverbs with female derogation and male glorification by the metaphorical use of the male and female gender of animals

##### a. Lion and Cat

*Apny ghr bili vi sher hundi ey* (p. 36)

A cat is a lion in her own house.

Here, woman is portrayed to be an inferior and weaker self as a 'cat' whereas the association of strength, power and terror with lion represents the superiority of man. A similar expression is found in a Malay proverb: 'kitten becomes tiger at home' (Mohammad & Rashid, 2014).

##### b. Lion and Goat

*Doon (2) sheyran vich bakri badhi* (p. 201)

A goat is tied between the two lions.

In this proverb, 'lion' represents the power and authority of men while 'goat' depicts the helplessness and dependence of women in the Punjabi society. The patriarchal dominance is systematically maintained through animal imagery and its discursive application.

##### c. Cat and Mouse

*NO (9) soo chuhay kha key billi hajj nu chali* (p. 363)

After eating nine hundred mice, the cat is going to perform the pilgrimage.

Innocence is linked with the male gender whereas corruption and impurity are connected with females. Here, 'cat' and 'mouse' metaphorically represent women and men respectively. This cat metaphor-based proverb is used to signify a characterless woman who intends to do some acts of piety.

Proverbs with the male derogation because of his relation with the females

#### 4.2.5 The proverbs with male derogation in which men are targeted because of their relation with females by the direct comparison, metaphorical or parallel use of the male gender of animals

##### a. Dog

*Kuta so jo kuta paly, kuta so jo nany haly, kuta so jo behn ghar bhai, kuta so jo sohray ghar javai, wadda kuta so ei bhal sohra phiry javai nal (p. 279)*

The dog is one who rears a dog, the dog is one who lives at his maternal grandparents' home, the dog is a brother at his sister's home, the dog is a son-in-law at his in-laws' home, the biggest dog is the father-in-law who wanders with his son-in-law.

*Sohry ghar jwater tey kuty di manind (p. 258)*

The son-in-law at his in-laws' home is like a dog.

In the above-mentioned proverbs, the metaphor of 'dog' is used to communicate the status that Punjabi society gives to a man when he depends or stays at a place which belongs to his female relatives including his sister, daughter, mother and even wife. Punjabi society expects men to stay at their own places and be self-reliant and honor conscious, otherwise, they are castigated socially and culturally. Hence this proverb is a satirical representation of such men.

*Sub ton vadaa kutta ohnu jaan, ap budha ty run jawan (p. 240)*

Consider an old man having a young wife as the biggest dog.

In this proverb, an old man who marries a younger girl is criticized by entitling him as the biggest dog. It also indicates the treatment of his wife who is not going to give her husband the due respect and he will also live a life of social humiliation by losing all the worth and regards earned throughout his life.

##### b. Dog and Crow

*Jwai jwahan di chaan, na bahey kutta na bahey kaan (p. 155)*

A son-in-law is the shade of barley, which benefits neither a dog nor a crow.

Sons-in-law are considered as useless persons for their parents-in-law as Punjabi society does not allow the sons-in-law to extend some service to the parents of their wives hence, they prove of no pragmatic value for them and are compared with a tree whose shadow is not beneficial even for a dog to sit under or a crow to sit at its branches.

##### c. Snake

*Jawai sarhany da supp (p. 155)*

A son-in-law is the snake under pillow

A son-in-law is directly compared with a snake because of his capacity to be harmful and to hurt the daughter.

Proverbs with both male and female derogation

#### 4.2.5 The proverb with male and female derogation in which women and men are targeted by the metaphorical use of the male and female gender of animals

##### a. Swine and Bitch

*Doon (2) zaleen da vanrraa jeeven doon (2) kuttiyaan vich soor (p. 212)*

The husband of two women is like a swine between two bitches.

In this proverb, the animal images of swine and bitch represent men and women. This proverb contains cultural glimpses. This animal imagery shows that polygyny for men and polyandry for women both is not allowed. In Punjabi culture, it is highly disapproved by comparing them with the dirty and debased animals. Such people never get respect in the society. Whereas, in another Punjabi proverb: '*Puttar wyahiye waar waar, dheer wyahiye ikko war*' (p. 107) '*Son should be married multiple times, while daughter should be married only once*', polygyny is allowed for men while women are restricted from doing the same act.

#### Proverbs with the male glorification

The proverbs with male glorification in which men are addressed by a direct comparison, metaphorical or parallel use of the male gender of animals are given below:

#### b. Horse

*Marda tay ghorya kam peyn avally* (p. 338)

Men and horses are made to face challenges.

*Ghoraay tey mard kaddi budhay nahi hondey*

Horses and men never grow old.

In these proverbs, men and horses are directly compared by associating bravery, strength and eternal youth with them and men are glorified by the attribution of such traits.

#### c. Lion

*Sheyran dey putar sher* (p. 264)

The sons of lions are lions.

*Sher da eko bra* (p. 264)

Only a single son of a lion is enough.

*Sher sada mass hi khana ay* (p. 264)

The lion is to always eat meat.

*Shiyena nal hath gadavn thik nhi* (p. 265)

The enmity with a lion is not good.

In these proverbs, the image of lion represents men metaphorically and links them to power, influence, supremacy, gallantry and potency.

#### d. Elephant

*Hathi jundey da lakh moey da sava lakh* (p. 379)

A living elephant is of one lac and a dead one of even more.

Here, 'elephant' metaphorically represents men and links them with perpetual usefulness, worth, and utility. On the other hand, in Malay proverbs 'elephant' denotes power (Wang, 2012).

#### e. Crocodile

*Deryya vich rehna tay magarmach nal veyr* (p. 194)

Living in the river and wrangling with the crocodile.

Crocodile metaphorically represents men where power and authority is connected with them to show their control.

Men are privileged by attributing these positive traits of power, authority, strength, bravery, usefulness with them while not a single proverb is found with animal imagery that supports women. They are devalued by considering weak, unimportant, talkative, corrupt, helpless, irrational, uncivilized, treacherous, bad-tempered, irresponsible, lazy, unmindful, weak-kneed, foolish, fickle, selfish, greedy, useless and negligible. In most of the proverbs, women are defined by using wounding animal images for them. These results chain the ideas of FCDA theory (Lazar, 2007) where men are supported by linking constructive traits with them to sustain their supremacy.

#### Proverbs with Male Derogation: Proverbs with General Meanings

#### **4.2.6 No proverb is found in which men are besieged by the use of male gender of animals. However, the proverb which conveys general meaning by using of male gender of an animal**

##### **a. Donkey**

*Paly ey zar ty bnda ey nar, nhi taan har (p.113)*

If a person has money, he is a man, otherwise an ass.

A penniless person is valued nowhere. He becomes useless without the possession of money. This proverb depicts the degradation of humanity in general and materialistic approach of Punjabi society in particular that any man who does not have money is not respected. He becomes worthless like an ass. This proverb also gives a general meaning.

#### **4.2.7 The proverb in which male gender of animals is metaphorically used to convey the general meaning**

##### **a. Camel**

*Oonth budha ho gya pr mutrna na aya (p.65)*

The camel grew old but did not know how to urinate.

In this proverb, the 'camel' is used to denounce the people who remain foolish and ignorant even in their old age. This research reveals that some negative traits like foolishness and ignorance are linked with the male gender of an animal, but it addresses all the human beings.

Hence, the analysis of the data seems to present that men are systematically privileged by attributing positive attributes with them, while women are abhorred in face-threatening proverbs by associating negative traits with them.

## **5. Conclusion**

The findings of the study reveal that total 354 proverb target gender in which women are targeted more than males as the proverbs despising women are (58.8%). While, no proverb could be found that abhors males directly. Only one proverb (0.28%) is found during this research that shows the concern of Punjabi society for the marriage of the daughters, but, even in that proverb, they are valued just at the level of a 'cow' which proves it to be a derogation in the disguise of glorification.

On the other hand, out of 354 proverbs the proverbs addressing males are (41.12%). Out of them in total (14.11%) proverbs men's status is glorified and here linguistic sexism benefits them in maintaining their authority and dominance in society as most of the positive traits are associated with them. In (1.69%) proverbs men are directly and metaphorically denounced because of their relation with women. Whereas, a proverb is found that shows contempt for both men and women as it denotes the prohibition of polygyny and polyandry for them in Punjabi society. This research reveals that the proverbs, in which male gender of animals is used, do not target men. Instead of that (71.51%) proverbs convey a general

message to the whole mankind while (12.14%) describe the facts only. Hence, this quantitative data analysis shows that men are systematically saved from mortification.

The findings of this research stand in the similar domain as those of Nakhavaly and Sharifi (2013) about Persian proverbs. It demonstrates that also in Persian and English proverbs male gender refers to the whole mankind, whereas, female gender is always used to target women. This research also shows that Punjabi language contains linguistic sexism and Punjabi culture is biased towards women that suppress their qualities by the eminence of them as faulty creatures but no negative characteristic of animals is associated with men, rather, they are considered to be the paramount of strength and power.

The association of everlasting adolescence and eternal usefulness vividly shows the superiority and dominance of men in Punjabi culture. Through animal imagery, the negative traits of different animals such as unimportant, talkative, corrupt, helpless, irrational, uncivilized, treacherous, bad-tempered, irresponsible, lazy, unmindful, weak-kneed, foolish, fickle, selfish, greedy, useless and negligible portray women to be the wicked beings on earth. In Punjabi proverbs not even a single aspect of their personality is admired by the use of animal imagery. The researches (Balogun, 2010; Estaji & Nakhavali, 2011; Fati-Rabat, 2014; Mohammad & Rashid, 2014; Nakhavaly & Sharifi, 2013; Rasul, 2015; Sanauddin, 2015) made in the proverbs of different languages such as Malay, Spanish, Chinese, Swahili, Yoruba, Urdu, Pashto, Igbo, Morocco, Persian, German and English unveil hostility and biased ideology of several societies towards women. By discovering similar ideas this research forms a link with the previous researches and contents that societies still hold fast to patriarchal ideologies.

## 6. Suggested Future Studies

Further research can be done by comparing the animal imagery of Punjabi proverbs with the animal proverbs of any indigenous or foreign language. The actual use of Punjabi proverbs by the native speakers can be investigated to determine how much they are still holding fast to the beliefs as reflected in these animal images to perpetuate gender bias and patriarchy.

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