Vol. 23(1), 2023, pp.27-44, ISSN: 2072-0394(Print), ISSN: 2663-8886(Online)

Marriages, *New* Women and Changing Intra-Group Dynamics of the Trader Families in Rawalpindi

Amna Hafeez Mobeen
Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies
Quaid-i-Azam University. Islamabad

Abstract

This research expounds on the question of how the micro-foundations of power are constituted and manifested in middle class trader families? In the pursuit of answering this question, the present study aims to focus on the domestic sphere of traders who primarily belong to Nirankari Bazaar[1] in Rawalpindi, historically a mercantilist city[2]. This work is based on my ethnographic study and observation of the community norms and practices within the homes of the traders. This work will explore how relationships in the domestic sphere are made, contested and befriended so as to know how the intra-group dynamics unfold in traders' families. The underlying focus of this is to understand the significance of women of traders in the making of the families, formulating or breaking linkages to consolidate or disintegrate the economic position of the trader. In this regard, we look at the institution of marriage as the basic unit of intra-group dynamics and relationships whereby 'new' relatives are designated as instrumental drivers of the family and house. The central argument in this study is how the *new* woman after being included in the trader household is expected to connect or disconnect family unity and property which is a marker of significance for the trader. The paper draws semblance with literature on domestic relationships in Punjab from the historic, economic and social context. Further, the paper is based on the theoretical foundation from Levi-Strauss's structural analysis within anthropology that explains, society as like language is based on rules and patterns that constitute the deeply embedded structures within. The embedded or *unconscious*[3] structure in this case of marriage determines the subsequent *conscious*[4] social relations and practices of making and unmaking alliances in the trader household. This purpose of the research is to elucidate the role of new women in contouring family dynamics despite the dominance of men in the traders families.

Keywords: Marriage, Women, Trader Families, Punjabi Culture, Friction and Allianxes.

تلخیص

اس تحقیق کے پیش نظر ہم اس سوال کو اُجاگر کریں گے کہ متوسط طبقے کے تاجر خاندانوں میں بنیادی سطح پر کیسے طاقت اور تقویت خاندانی رشتوں میں اُبھرتی ہے۔ اس سوال کے پیش نظر یہ تحقیق راولپنڈی کے تاجرخاندانوں پر نظر ڈالے گی جن کا تعلق قدیم نرنکاری بازار سے ہے۔ یہ کام مشاہدے پر مبنی ہے جس میں علم بشریات کے تحقیقی طریقوں کے ذریعے اُن تاجر خاندانوں کے نجی سطح کے طور طریقوں کا مشاہدہ کیا گیا ہے۔ اس کے ذریعے یہ دیکھا جائے گا کہ نجی سطح پر رشتے کیسے

This work is Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

بنتے ہیں، اُن میں اختلاف اور اتحاد کیسے آتا ہے۔ اس کے پیش نظر یہ دیکھا جائے گا کہ تاجر خاندانوں کی خواتین کا ایک اہم کردار ہے رشتوں اور گھریلو حرکیات میں۔ خواتین بالخصوص وہ جو شادی کرکے نئے گھر میں نئے فرد کی حیثیت اختیار کرتی ہیں اور گھریلو توڑ جوڑ میں اپنا کردار ادا کرتی ہیں۔ اس مرکزی خیال کو خواتین کی صلاحیت سے دیکھا جائے گا کہ کیسے اپنی اتحادی اور اختلافی حیثیت سے خاندانی اور کاروباری سرمائے کو جوڑ اور توڑ سکتی ہیں۔ اس زاویے کو سماجی، تاریخی اور معاشی اعتبار سے دیکھا جائے گا اور پھر Levi-Strauss کے ساختی تجزیے میں پیش کیا جائے گا جس میں سماج زبان کی طرح خاص طور طریقوں سے بنتا ہے۔ یہ طریقے لا شعوری ساخت جو کہ شادی کے رشتے سے بنتا ہے اس کا اثر شعوری ساخت پر منحصر ہے جو رشتے، ناطے، اتحاد اور اختلاف کی شکل اختیار کرتا ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ: شادی، خواتین، تاجر خاندان، پنجابی ثقافت، اختلاف، اتحاد

Introduction

This study aims to delineate the strategic role of women in creating frictions and making alliances within the trader household. In this study we bring forward the notion that marriage grants significance and importance to women in the *new* household. This is contrary to the popular assumption that marriages cause difficulty in the life of a girl by burdening her with obligations and commitments and curtailing her agency. Hence, this study aims to add to the wide range of literature related to marriages that argue the deterioration of women's situation in the patriarchal bond of marriage.

To make the aforementioned argument, this research draws its analysis by conducting participant observation of the community. To pursue this qualitative data collection methodology I attended wedding ceremony of three trader families, I also visited those home after the wedding events and rituals to observe the presence and inclusion of the new women in those three households. In addition to this, I also focus on the Punjabi wedding rituals, and songs which can be observed, heard and sung in the marriage ceremonies within the trader community. The traders in this study are well grounded in their traditional spaces in the old *mohallas* and in the historic Nirankari Bazaar. Furthermore, they also draw association with folk Punjabi tradition, because even today their ceremonial practices and rituals elucidate historical traces.

The traders based in interior Rawalpindi draw their cultural assimilation with Punjabi culture and traditions as they draw ancestral links to Jallundhar in present day Indian Punjab. In the greater Punjab home as an exclusive residence for the family that traces common male line of relationships. The traders' homes bring together all the relatives by birth and male lineage by marriage including parents, sons, their wives and children. The going away of the daughter from her parent's home and the coming in of 'new' daughter in the given home is a recurring and a frequently observed pattern in all the patrilocal

families. The parents within trader household wish that their boys and girls get timely assimilation in their respective 'true' families, and a place in the 'right' homes. To accomplish their wishes the elders in these families fix the appropriate match for their children and get them married at the earliest. It is not only the elders, but even the younger people in these families look forward to getting married. For them marriage is an ultimate aspiration of life, both the girls and boys look forward to get married as early as they finish high school. As it was commonly said, 'the girl has done Matric so a suitable match must be looked for her' or 'the boy has started going to the *dukaan*, he earns now so he must be married now'. So the average age of marriage is 18 plus for girls and 22 plus for boys. The suitable age of marriage may or may not resonate with the marriage act in Punjab[5], but regardless of this the marriages take place and that too with much emphasis and zeal.

Marriage is not only exclusively celebrated and valued in this *biraderi*[6] only but it holds significant value in wider Punjab too. It is considered an inevitable and predestined phenomenon that everyone has to succumb. This can be observed by looking at the abundant Punjabi oral tradition (in the form of wedding songs/*tappa*[7]) exhibiting joy and celebration in wedding ceremonies and marriages highlighting the innate importance of the institution of marriages in Punjab. It is due to the importance of marriage that traders devout their major resources towards organizing a great wedding ceremony of their children. They look up to the 'big' auspicious day of their children and reserve all their energy, resources and ambitions for their children's wedding. These expenditures go beyond any other major life aspirations of everyone in the family. On this dream day all the unrequited material desires of the boy and girl are also eventually fulfilled by the parents. Whether it be to go on vacation, perform any religious obligation like Umrah or Hajj, or acquire a car or an expensive gadget all can come true on the event of marriage and varying significant occasions after marriage.

Despite the significance of marriage, this institution is tainted with certain internal complexities. These complexities come to the surface when the new girl becomes the part of the house and the at the same time the boy becomes more included in the wife's home. This shows that both the partners make a way to intervene in the real families of their partners. However, given the patrilocal traditions in traders' families most changes and challenges are incurred in the family and house of the married boy. It is there that the new bride assumes the status of a constant member in the house and her inclusion may lead to changes in main setup of the patrilocal house. Hence marriage and life after that becomes a complex relation, with many overlaps in relationships resulting in frictions or alliances. The friction in the new relationships after marriage is discussed in the light of structural analysis within anthropological studies. This will be done by looking at the joint system of family in which after marriage, the husband and wife live in a house where all or most of the patrilineal relations co-exist under one shelter. The household is run with joint

family resources and income, causing further interdependency amongst all the relationships dwelling in the house. Within the given backdrop this paper aims to look at how the internal conflicts are curbed by certain consanguineal relationships which may rupture structural friction within marriages in the trader community and in Punjab.

Marriages and Kinship

In various historical and anthropological studies, marriages in Punjab are meant to consolidate the family and to keep the line of inheritance intact through the male heir. In such a scenario reproduction and consolidation are the basic premises through which the matrimonial alliances are tied. Marriages in landowning classes in Punjab were based on *biraderi* endogamy, in this respect the sanctity of *biraderi* was an utmost priority when the decision of marriage was to be taken. If marriage within *biraderi* was not the possibility then hypergamous relations were assumed, which meant if the woman could not be married to men of equal status then the family was supposed to tie her marital knot in a *biraderi* of a relatively higher status (Alavi 1972). So the foundation of marriage was laid in order to consolidate relationships within or beyond the *biraderi* to retain *biraderi* bond. In these studies *biraderi* was translated as brother-hood which emphasized horizontal ties between contemporaries rather than vertical lines of descent (Eglar 1960, Ahmad 1977, Alavi 1972). The *biraderi* based kinship system held significance in Punjab where families were based on patri-lineage as they traced their ancestor-ship from common patriarch in order to be affiliated to a *biraderi.* Likewise in this study marriages are settled in the *biraderi,* where *biraderi* is just not only about male lineage but also about 'horizontal' link between the common forms of living and affiliation that traders draw from the common space of signification. The space, Nirankari Bazaar, a commercial sphere belonging to men of a common lineage with common means of living within a common space. So, Nirankari Bazaar affirms the membership of *biraderi* by delineating its own trading culture, family dynamics and group belongingness which distinguish these traders and their families from that of historical Punjabi landowning rural classes. To accentuate the significance of group belongingness and to consolidate the spatial, economic and cultural bonds these traders fix the marriage of their children within the Bazaar relations. This can be seen when almost every *dukaandaar* in the Bazaar is linked to the other through some consanguineal or affinal relation, as it is commonly heard there, that he is my *saala*[8], that one is my cousin, the other is my *saandhu*[9] and so on.

The kinship and marital relations that connect the men in Bazaar are then translated in the homes too (with the reference of the wife who comes from another family from the same *biraderi*). The Bazaar and *biraderi* relations then become fundamentally synonymous as the women remain in the same kinship even after marriage. The change in *biraderi* affiliation after marriage does not hold relevance here even though it was a norm for

Punjabi women in particular to change the membership of her *biraderi* and become a member of husband's clan (Alavi 1972, p. 2). Hence, marriage in this group provides a strong pull to connect the Bazaar members and to foster new relationships via the entry of new women in the homes of the traders. Marriage within traders today is still a force that strengthens kinship and class bond, Bazaar ties and also domestic relations. In this regard marriage as an institution helps us to understand relations in the homes, Bazaar and within this group of traders.

Therefore, the study of kinships whether based on affinity or on consanguinity is fundamental to understand the general structures and patterns prevailing in traders' group who hold a place in the larger society too. According to Levi-Strauss, 'kinship systems…are built by the mind on the level of unconscious thought and the recurrence of patterns, marriage rules, similar prescribed attitudes between certain types of relatives…lead us to believe that the observable phenomena result from the action of laws which are general but implicit' (1967, p. 32). This statement helps to understand that kinship groups and their practices of making families and relationships are reflective of the embedded cultural values and gender laws of the society. This statement draws its theoretical foundation from Levi-Strauss's structural analysis that explains a society is based on embedded rules and patterns of the social structures just like language. The given *unconscious*[10] structures that formulate the traders of Nirankari Bazaar determine subsequent *conscious*[11] social relations and practiced in their houses by their family members. The given structures like that of group affiliation through kinship, *biraderi*, space and profession are a given that help us to understand the manifestations of social relations within traders' families. The given kinship, culminates in relationships both in the Bazaar and homes is explained by using Levi-Strauss's argument 'two orders of reality, system of terminology and system of attitude' (1967, p. 35). Here, the system of terminology exhibits the vocabulary to refer to various affinal relationships, whereas, the system of attitudes reflect psychological and emotional connections linked with a given relationship. In Pakistan and not only Punjab the patrilocal relationships through marriage represent hostility and/or affection, which can be exhibited by a huge array of mainstream family dramas representing stories after marriage which mostly results in utter hatred resulting in divorce[12].

Power Dynamics within Marriages in Punjab

The changes in the homes of traders may be associated with challenges and dilemmas because a new member joins the rank of the family upon marriage. However significant marriages are within Punjab there is an implied assumption that marriage produces unequal relations between newlywed wife and the family of husband. This assumption is brought to the forth by the anthropological literature on marriages in Punjab in general. The marriages in Punjab typically are premised on the notion that the bride's side or

'wife givers' are of relatively lower status than the groom's side or 'wife takers' (Chaudhry 2011, p. 414). The lower ranked side is then entitled to pay the 'other' side valuables and services in the name of dowry or traditionally known as *daaj* to oblige the wife takers, 'Punjabi look up to their bride takers and pay dowries when giving their daughters into marriage' (Chaudhry 2011, p. 419). Even in another historical anthropological studies it is said that 'the hypergamous pattern the superior status of the bride groom's family makes it more demanding about the prestations they receive with the girl, as if it would only accept marriage into an inferior family on condition of receiving hard cash; but this precisely squares with the pattern of the gift; one gives a daughter and goods to a superior in exchange, not in this case for spiritual merits, but for something similar, namely the prestige or consideration which results from the intermarriage with him' (Dumont 1977, p. 117). These patriarchal notions attached with dowry or gift giving reduce women as brides to the status of exchange 'objects'.

In addition to this, another aspect that is brought into the study of Punjabi marriages is the breeding of animosity in this relationship. Chaudhry delineates that in Punjab the institution of marriage is held on the feelings of antagonism, 'antagonistic spirit between relatives by marriage' (Chaudhry 2014). This notion dwells on the premise that matrimonial knot is tied in order to win over the conquest of being and living in the affinal house by the new woman in order to win over her place in the new home. This all begins the episode of resentment in the guise of marriage which is partaken as a celebration of union between a man and his wife. Here, the dowry or *daaj* is analyzed as a weapon used by women to control their new settings. The gifts given at the time of wedding legitimizes the control of bride in husband's house and sets the stage for bride's stronghold in her the house of her in-laws. The more dowry the bride takes along at the time of marriage the more power she enjoys and more hostility she asserts in claiming her space in the new affinal house. This is exhibited in wife's 'wining over' relationship with her husband with whom the marriage contract is signed. In this scenario, marriage is again viewed as a contract between a high ranked and low ranked group (not necessarily based on the wife taker and wife giver hierarchy as mentioned earlier) where the low ranked group compensates the former with prestations. Valuable prestations from the bride's side provide a legitimate position to the newly wed to acquire or 'conquer' substantial space in the affinal household. When the girl is married she is expected and conditioned to win 'conquest' in the *sauray*.

The aforementioned desire for 'conquest' by the brides and grooms are displayed in the joyous Punjabi wedding ceremonies which reminisces that marriage is synonymous to 'raid' (O' Brien 2012) and attacking the village to perform marriage by *force*. The grandeur of the arrival of *janj*[13] accompanied by high pitched music and drumming represents the pride of conquerors who have finally taken over. Depicting age old traditions in Punjabi weddings O'Brien says, 'the bridegroom would be seated on a mare,

on a subconscious level this is an imitation of the conquering Aryans coming on horseback to capture land and women' (2012, p. 116). The presumption of raid or conquest is equally subsumed and acknowledged from the side of the bride, as it is stated that, 'as the *barat*[14] approached the girl's village, the women came out and jocosely singing abusive song and surrounding the whole party with wool, as if making prisoners of them all. They too are subconsciously remembering that this is a raiding party, the appropriate response which is abuse and resistance' (O' Brien 2012, p. 116). Moreover, 'barring of the way of *janj* by bride's friends and sisters is yet another indication of all but the forgotten folk memory of marriage as raid' (O' Brien 2012, p. 116). In the same study an analogy of marriage is made to abduction is also made as it is said, 'there was much wailing and weeping as the bride prepared to leave… this is reminiscence of when women were literally carried away after abduction' (O' Brien 2012, p. 118). Moreover, beyond the marriage ceremony, the adversity between bride and husband is reflected in folk oral tradition sung at wedding (see annexture) *'bara afsos laga mahiye di gaali da…saadi galli aa mahiya tainu kuttay pawanwa gey…kal wali gali da tainu maza chakhawan gey'*. The rhyme represents ironical situation where husband is referred by bride as *mahiya* (lover/close friend) hurls abuses at her. The dejected bride promises to take revenge of such an action when *mahiya* will come to her own home base.

These instances assert that the feelings of antagonism or opposition is culminated at the beginning of the marriage when the marital knot is tied. The friction in the preliminary structure of marriage is trickled down to the other relationships in the new family of the bride. It is said that, 'the wife is considered an outsider who comes and destroys the family, which is ideally joint and extended' (Chaudhry 2009, p. 24). The problematic position of the wife in the new house in relationship with her husband and in-laws is also drawn in parallel to Pukhtun culture where Lindholm says, '…men and women confront one another in a continuous struggle for power. Women as incoming wives, seek to retain their lineage honor and gain a position of dominance in their new home' (1982, p. 60).

The aforementioned notions related to marriage may spring up in this traders' group in this study but they do not 'explicitly' look upon women as dowry bringers or antagonists in the house. In actual dowry and its intensity is emphasized more by bride's side than by groom's side so that their *izzat*[15] can be accentuated in the Bazaar that how generous and gracious the girl's side is. This generosity is also exhibited so that a positive impact of their daughter is made in the new house. The bride's *izzat* in the new home will also be linked to how much her family values her through the special gifts granted by her family on her weddings. Further, the animosity is not blatantly proclaimed when we observe extravagant celebrations held by the groom's family from the time of the betrothal till marriage to exhibit their *izzat* too. However, clues of resentment and friction do surface with subtlety in the present times in this community which may draw resonance with the historical anthropological literature. The desire for *izzat* in the guise of ritualistic gift

exchange from both the sides whether it be from bride's or groom's side illuminate the transactional basis of marriage. Whether subtle or blatant, there is transactional nature of the marital bond whether this be in the historical texts or in the current study of the traders. The desire for *izzat* and the aspiration of securing a place in the home of the in-laws may not resonate with the romantic notions of love and intimacy at the beginning of the marriage (which might develop over the course of time).

Structures of Friction in Marriage and New Relationships that Contest them

After the much celebrated marriage ceremony is over, the newly wed woman in trader's household enjoys a first few weeks as a freshman in the system. The period of 'induction' in the new system grants time and space to the newly wed whereby going back to her consanguine home frequently becomes a norm. Despite most of the emphasis on women's place in her husband's home, the women in these families do not adhere to it strictly, the flexible back and forth movement between the new and the former house is an accepted pattern of adjustment after marriage of women. The movement back and forth is mostly accompanied by the husband who on his day off from *dukaan* voyages to his in-laws house to pick his wife and on his way to work drop his wife to her parents home. Later on over months and then years the frequency of visits decreases as the woman finds more space and activities for her in the home. The husband's home or *sauray*[16] after some years becomes her abode too to which she can also make a claim to.

The new bride in the family secures her space in the new domestic sphere by following the suit of the former new comers or as much as it is required of her. The tasks that she performs are complementary to some main task so that she may get accustomed to the new settings gradually and slowly. The gradual process of her induction over time gives her space and authority in the house, her involvement in house chores and presence is her key to secure a place, respect and worth in the house. Moreover, the birth of offsprings and in particular male offsprings make women more entitled in the house but here, along with children the presence and involvement in everyday matters guarantees her space in the house which becomes her legitimate claim later.

The gift offerings at the wedding and embedded meaning behind the ritualistic celebrations after and before the wedding along with the wife's reluctance to settle in the 'new' home soon after marriage strengthens the assumption that the general structure or pattern of marriages in traders too breeds friction between the newly wed woman and her husband's family. The element of antagonism is justified by certain coherent rules and orders as stated in Punjabi marriages and within traders families specifically too but in this there can also a break in the pattern. The question of how the pattern of strife in Punjabi marriage germinate an exception, an exception of friendliness with the younger brother of husband. This inquiry is inspired by Lindholm's (1982) work 'Jealousy and

Generosity: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan' where he brings forth that in the heart of Pukhtun culture there is utter hospitality and generosity but the flip-side of the situation shows that there is an equal tendency in this culture for competitiveness, jealousy and bloodthirsty animosity. Lindholm says, 'friendship and its ritualized enactment in the offering of hospitality are of central importance in the worldview of the Pukhtuns, how this can be reconciled with the social order which presses, in every instance, for competition, opposition and mistrust? Here was the break in the pattern' (Lindholm 1982, p. xxviii). Here I have drawn inspiration from Lindholm's work (though in a different context) where first (structural) patterns are determined and then breaking of patterns is studied. The assumption here is that there is a coherent structure of marriages in Punjab which centers on conflicts between *nau*[17] with *sauray*[18] but then the flip-side reveals friendship within *sauray* too. This makes an implicit assumption that system of marriage and working of affinal relationships are assumed to be general characteristic of Punjabi social system as a whole and that it is also generalized to this group in study.

This scenario is discussed in various studies where the friendship with females of the family including mother-in-law, sisters-in-law (*narran, darrani* and *jethani*) are unthinkable where all of the females are contesting their status and domination in the patrilineal household. There are hostile relations between the mother of the husband and wife, commonly referred as *sas-nau* (mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) relationship. Das (1976) in her study on Punjabi kinship explains the position of a man who is bound between his mother and wife, 'there is considerable tension between the ties created by sexuality and those created by procreation, and a man is often torn between loyalty to his mother and his wife' (p. 10). There is an innate rivalry between *sas*[19] and *nau*[20] in which the man is the point of contestation and both want to win over the consent of the man for their long term position in the household. Furthermore this relationship is discussed in reference to Punjab in Pakistan that during the first years of marriage, the mother-in-law fears that the bride will establish an independent household and try to disintegrate the joint family of her sons. She therefore, does not want her sons to be intimate with their wives (Chaudhry 2011). This is the root of many household quarrels stemming from the friction between *sas* and *nau* in which the husband sometimes intervenes and negotiates or takes discriminatory stances in favor of one of the quarreling party which adds fuel to fire. There have been numerous instances in the folk culture of Punjab which reflect the relationship between *sas* and *nau*. One of the most popular Punjabi folk wedding song also popularly sung at the wedding ceremonies of traders (see annexture) exhibits that the daughter in law or *nau* in anticipation mimics mother in law's adverse reaction when the *nau* thinks of going back to her *sauray.* It is said,*'mein sauray nahi jana sas burr burr kardi hai…mein sauray nahi jana sas taanay deindi aye'* (I do not want to back to my in-laws home because my mother-in-law always blabbers). The hostility between *sas* and *nau* is pretty evident when the *nau* resists going to *sauray* because she feels that there she faces all type of contempt, rejection and derisions.

Other than the mother-in-law, in husband's consanguine family the wife encounters a different relationship with husband's sister as *narran*[21]. The relationship between *narran* and wife's husband (sister-brother) are celebrated throughout the lifetime and are based on the premise of love and sacrifice. She is treated as a guest in the house of conjugal family because she is soon to be married, after marriage the brother becomes her support mechanism, hence high value is attached to this relationship. In most of the anthropological studies kinship bond in societies brother–sister bond is central and most important to understand an entire social system where it operates (Radcliffe Brown 1941, Davidoff 1995, Chaudhry 2011). In Punjab and in this community too, a sister is entitled to make a constant claim to support her in any time of her life, before or after marriage. This makes the *parjayi*[22] vulnerable in case her husband/*narran's* brother exceeds his function of support leaving lesser of the ground and familial resources for the wife to claim whenever required.

Furthermore, the wife is also challenged by the wife and elder brother of the husband. The married elder brothers of the husband/*jeth* and their wives *jethani* are potential sharers in the to the distribution of the collective resources of the household. Within the patrilineal system which can be discerned by the pattern of inheritance distribution in traders groups like most of the kin groups in Punjab. Within this setup the prospective sharers of property enjoy a preliminary and legitimate claim over the joint resources held by the family, hence making them foremost *shareek* (potential shareholders). Das explains this innate threat and conflict, 'the *shareeka*, which may be translated as male term agnates, or co-parceners, implies conflict. Thus hostility between brothers though expected and to an extent natural, is considered less than human. It implies that greed over property has made them relinquish even the established biological ties by having shared the same womb and sucked the same milk' (Das 1976, p. 5).

The new home of the girl emanates antagonism for her in every relationship where she feels vulnerable amongst established affinal relatives. In this situation however, there is a probable friendly relationship between the wife of the elder brother *parjayi* and the younger brother of husband, *deyour*. There is affection, friendship and trust in this relationship which is contrary to other new relationships which the wife assumes in husband's house. The famous Punjabi folk wedding song that is mostly sung by women on the *dholki*[23] night says, *kaala doriya kunde naal araye aye, tey chohta deywara paabi naal lariya oye, chohttay deywara teri eik parjayi aye* (see annexture-the younger brother fights with his sister-n-law but then he is being told that that one is your dear sister-in-law, meaning to call off the fight). This implies that in the beginning there is friendly resistance between *deyour* and *parjayi.* they quarrel with each other yet at the end of the song there is reflection of affirmation and affection where *parjayi* promises to get her dearest *deyour* married (as marriage is an important institution) zeal and excitement. In his seminal work 'On Joking Relationships' (1940) Radcliffe Brown explains that when

there is 'peculiar' combination of friendliness and antagonism with relatives by marriage, then joking relationships provide balance and stability. In the pretext when a newlywed 'outsider' woman becomes a part of the husband's family then this creates 'social disjunction which implies divergence of interests and therefore the possibility of conflict and hostility' (1940, p. 195). The possibility of friction creates social disjunction then joking relationships help to maintain or subside the clash of disjunctive tendencies in the house. As it is said, 'joking relationship prevents serious hostility by the playful antagonism of teasing, and this in its regular repetition is a constant expression of reminder of that social disjunction which is one of the essential components of the relation, while the social conjunction is maintained by the friendliness that takes no offence at insult' (Radcliffe-Brown, pp. 197-98). In reflection to this work the cordial relationship between *deyour* and *parjayi* exhibits the element of joking relationship, which is meant to blow away the cloud of rivalry in the new house. The joking relationship in most instances is associated with younger brother or sister of the husband where undue boundary of respect and silence is not the prerequisite. In this relationship the *parjayi* gets an avenue to let go off the weight of constant contestation from her shoulders.

The cordial bond between the *new* woman and her husband's younger brother in Punjabi kinship system stems from the material conditions traced from the historical practices in Punjab. For instance, when the husband dies in that case the widow and her children are heirs of deceased man. If the widow is very young or if the deceased has left heirs then the patrilineage creates the need for levirate, where the widow must marry the younger brother if he is of marriageable age and willing. O' Brien states that, 'some ethnologists have seen in the permitted joking relationship between the sister in law *parjayi* and younger brother *deyour*, a form of preparation-anticipation of a future marriage *(O' Brien 2012, p. 123). In other studies these cordial relations between the two relatives by marriage are given as the mask (front stage) of Punjabi kinship but the biological and economic reasons as the true face (back stage) behind such relationships. Das explain this as, 'the Punjabi belief is that conduct derived from the biological sub-stratum cannot be suppressed but that it should be kept in the backstage, away from public view. The backstage is not any less than the real front stage where behavior is governed by rules derived from the cultural stratum' (Das 1976, p. 3). Here the ambiguity of joking relationships is used to break the dividing line between the *backstage* and the *front stage* and to articulate these levels of kinship behavior. This is manifested by the practice of *gaud bithayi*[24] which I came across in various *walima*[25] ceremonies where *deyour* sits on the lap of *parjayi* at the time of marriage to exhibit his partial 'ownership' over her *parjayi*. When I asked about this practice, the families remarked that it was a ritual they all did. The ongoing ritual also strengthens the observation that the unmarried *deyour* is a close ally of the bride, though occasionally turbulent, but essentially cordial and harmonious.

The implicit structures traced through literature and group practices in traders bring to the forth that there are varyings relations of hostility or friendship in the 'new' house of the married woman. The woman through her agentive power navigates these rifts and makes transitory alliances to secure greater position in the home. In this, backstage or implicit historical, biological and economic reasons are important to understand kinship and marriages in Punjab that draw relevance to traders marriage patterns even today. In the backstage, land in terms of business assets or collective *chhat* is a major source of family building in traders community today. There is immense association and affection with *land* which is considered instrumental to reproduce and sustain generations of these traders. The sanctity of land can also be revisited by excavating significance of land in the historical Punjabi tradition whereby a parallel analogy between land and mother are drawn, both who procreate and sustain human life (Das 1976). However, in this study this land is denoted with the *chahht* and *dukaan* that serves the same purpose of sustaining families. So to hold the family together, the land (the home and the shop) must be held together and taken care of, it must not be fragmented or else it loses its value. In pursuance of these goals the traders families make, and live relationships in their homes.

Since land (property) is highly valued in these Punjabi traders, then they must be also passed on to the next generation through the father's bloodline. In a study based in Punjab Alavi explains this, 'both membership of the kin group (namely *biraderi* or *patti*) as well as inheritance of property are transmitted along the male line' (1976, p. 4). Just as the mother is significant owing to her characteristic of procreation in the same way father and his lineage is important since they determine the control over the land which holds immense value in the local traditions. There is a popular saying in Punjabi saying *khoon da khichao*[26] which exhibits the attraction of the child (prospective heir) to the father (Alavi, 1976) translated as a pull towards the line of inheritance. In the backdrop of the land, home and *dukaan* being central to family making, there has always been a need to have joint family system to keep the property consolidated and intact. This requirement is realized through the operations of a patrilocal joint family system in which the brothers stay together after they are married and have their own children, because a separation in the house or in this case *dukaan* will reflect a disintegration of the joint property. As stated earlier fragmentation is a nightmare for land owing Punjabi family and it is a source of utter disgrace and dishonor to the family in question. Collectivization and binding of the land exhibits cordial relations between brothers and all the family's efforts to be concentrated in order to subside any potential risks of fragmentation of the property. This is particularly true when the eldest brother acts as binding glue and the younger brothers submit to him in order to keep the family unity intact. In the same line of argument it is established that the *parjayi* wife of the elder brother finds it conducive to retain friendly relations with the *deyour* younger brother of husband. The situation however, changes when the younger one gets married to produce potential heirs who are equal heirs of the same joint land then the brothers assume the status of *shareeka*. Upon assuming the status of *shareeka* the relationship takes the form of subtle hostility (which has been discussed earlier too).

The joint family as it is signified today in the families of the traders is representative of a coherent and united family that values the collectivization of *chhat* at home and assets in *dukaans* held in Nirankari Bazar. This struggle for collectivization draws reflection from the historical Punjabi martial and landowning classes. Historically in Punjab, the martial races were particularly known to practice polyandry (Briffault 1959, p. 137, Berreman 1962, p. 60, O' Brien 2012, p. 124), when on expeditions there was prolonged absence of husbands from the house. This meant security concerns for the wife and it was when fraternal polyandry is noted to be advantageous (Westermarck 1922, p. 193). Other than the issue of security the literature also asserts that fraternal polyandry existed in Punjab to hold the economic resources together of the family. O' Brien (2012) said that, 'it was a way of combining the landholding and maintaining a common family with better living standard and avoiding excessive subdivision' (p. 125). The purpose of polyandry in other regions too was also to keep the number of heirs low so that there is less sub division of family property and the patrilineal, patrilocal group is held intact (Berreman 1962, p. 65, Westermarck 1922, p. 185). Moreover, if a separate wife was there for each brother then rivalry amongst the women leading to disputes amongst the brothers would become inevitable. Leach explains this phenomenon, 'if two brothers share one wife so that the only heirs of the brothers are children born of that wife, then, from an economic point of view, the marriage will tend to cement the solidarity of the sibling pair rather than tear it apart, whereas, if two brothers will have separate wives, their children will have separate economic interests, and maintenance of the patrimonial inheritance in one piece is likely to prove impossible' (Leach 1955, p. 184). Lindholm explains this in Pukhtun culture too where, 'wife is always blamed for the breakup of the patrilineal joint family; a break which is in fact largely caused by the enmity and personal ambitions of the brothers' (Lindholm 1982, p. 120). In a different study it is said that enmity amongst the brothers comes through their wives (Barth). In these studies wives in various contexts are associated with creating distances and rivalry amongst the brothers. So polyandrous relations in past were directed to minimize the threat of rivalry between brothers and to ensure unity within the family. Berreman (1962) cites that, 'the economic function served by polyandry is attributed to the desire to keep intact the property of the wealthy, to the necessity to keep the property of the very poor from dropping below the subsistence level, or to both'. In the backstage, the reasons for joint families are frequently attributed to friction among wives of the brothers who create a fraternal strife within the brothers. This may also hint at the feelings of probable jealousy with the coming in of separate wife for each brother, which could not have spurred in the old polyandrous marriage patterns where one wife was for all. The brothers and wife of the older brother share harmony until the former tied up in separate marital bonds for procreation of their 'own' families and hence sprouting inevitable animosity amongst the brothers. Here again, whether according to the literature or within the trader families women are instrumental agents even in developing differences according to the need of the situation and navigating the risk of disintegrating the family.

Conclusions

There is great significance tied to the institution of marriage in Punjab as the literature suggests and within this community too. But these marriages are laid on the structural and implicit friction between the relatives by marriage but that friction is transiently alleviated by the friendly relations by the friendly bond between *deyour* and *parjayi*. This relationship helps new entrants to assimilate well with the old incumbents of the patriarch's home in a new system after marriage. The exceptional friendliness between *deyour* and *parjayi* acts as a system of ventilation for the *parjayi* who is an 'outsider' and is vulnerable to the supposed dejection instilled by *sauray.* The transitory and conditional relationship of affection between *deyour* and *parjayi* explains how domestic relationships elucidate structural pattern of family and kinship making in the 'backstage' with relational manifestations in the 'frontstage'. However, the relationship between two aforementioned parties changes its nature and turns into another hostile relationship when the *deyour* gets married. Upon marriage *deyour* is compelled to contest for the same economic and social shareholding through his heirs, which makes him *shareek* both in home and *dukaan*. This change refers to the primary notion of kinship making through marriage based on the premise of antagonism that reflects the embedded structure of kinship prevailing in traders' household. This has been discussed in the limited parameter of assumptions and situations hence it may not always be generalized. Since this is a generic assumption so the support for the new *parjayi* could also be offered by young *narran*, any other male or female child in the affinal family or even *saura* (father-in-law). But within the scope of this discussion no other friendly relationships within the in-laws other than with *deyour* is discussed. The basic premise here is that antagonistic structure of marriage may be ruptured by friendship between the opposing parties.

Moreover, the structures of inherent friction are shattered by the relatives who live under one *chhat* and are affiliated with one *dukaan* if they follow the order of collectivization. In this regard, the historical literature is emulated within the traders' community too where great significance is tied to retaining economic strength through collectivization. This inculcates cohesive intra-familial bonds resulting in joint family systems in Punjabi kinship, inclusive of this community. The breaking of joint family system in such an economic cohesive structure can be fatal and destructive for the entire family (as discussed in historical literature too, Berreman 1962, pp. 62-66, Radcliffe-Brown 1941, p. 7). In light of the said reasoning, the property, home and business of traders may serve to momentarily reduce friction, animosity and competitiveness amongst brothers and their affiliates in order to ensure their claim in family's collective property resources at least till the division of collective assets are not finally done. In both the cases the household dynamics and relations are managed by the 'new' female members so to secure the material control and space in the patrilineal settings. Their inability to do so may deprive the son (husband) of his valid claims in the collective shareholding in *dukaan* and of the *chhat*.

End Notes

1. Grand marketplace
2. *Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi district*. "Civil and Military Gazette" Press. 1895. Archived from the original on 19 August 2020. Retrieved 27th April 2022
3. Levi-Strauss 1967, p. 31, in reference to structural linguistics
4. Ibid
5. https://pcsw.punjab.gov.pk/Punjab%20Marriage%20Restraint%20%28Amendment%29%20Act%2C%202015Under the Punjab Marriage Restraint Act, a boy under 18 years and a girl under 16 years of age are minors and not of marriageable age
6. Kinship pattern
7. Folk songs
8. Wife's brother
9. Wife's brother-in-law/husband of wife's sister
10. Levi-Strauss 1967, p. 31, in reference to structural linguistics
11. Ibid
12. https://galaxylollywood.com/2020/09/22/pakistani-drama-obsession-divorce/
13. Wedding procession in which the groom, his family, friends and relatives go/travel together to bring the new bride in the man's home. This is a grand celebration accompanied by music and dances from groom's side on their way and arrival at the bride's home, then after certain rituals the *janj* escorts the bride back to the man's home
14. Urdu and Hindi word for *janj*
15. Honor or prestige in a given social group
16. Home of the parents-in-law
17. Daughter-in-law
18. In-laws
19. Mother-in-law
20. Daughter-in-law
21. Husband's sister
22. Brother's wife
23. Musical gathering before the wedding day
24. Literal meanings: to sit on the lap
25. Second most important ceremony of Muslim marriages, performed after the nikkah (legal marriage contract) has been performed. This ceremony is celebrated with an exquisite feast arranged by the groom's side. It is organized to confer the official declaration of the marriage and the consummation of it
26. Pull of blood

References

Ahmad, S. (1977). *Class and Power in a Punjabi Village*. Lahore: Punjabi Adbi Markaz.

Alavi, H. A. (1972). Kinship in West Punjab Villages. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, New Series 6: 1-27

Barthe, F. (1965). *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans*. Routledge

Berreman. G. D. (1962). Pahari Polyandry: A Comparison. *American Anthropologist*, vol.64:1, pp.60–75.

Briffault, R. & Taylor, G. R. (1977). *The Mothers / Robert Briffault ; abridged, with an Introduction by Gordon Rattray Taylor.* (1st Atheneum ed.). Atheneum.

Chaudhary, A. (2011). A Woman's Marriage to the Quran: An Anthropological Perspective from Pakistan. *Anthropos*, vol.106:2, pp.411–422.

Chaudhary, A. (2014). Interpreting Honor Crimes in Pakistan: The Case Studies of the Pukhtun and the Punjabi Societies. *Anthropos*, vol.109:1, pp.196–206.

Das, V. (1976). Masks and Faces: An Essay on Punjabi Kinship. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol.10:1, pp.1–30

Davidoff, L. (1995). *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class /Leonore Davidoff.* Polity Press.

Dumont. L. (1980). *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications/Louis Dumont; translated [from the French] by Mark Sainsbury, Louis Dumont, and Basia Gulati.* (Complete rev. English ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Eglar, Z. (1960). *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan.* Columbia University Press.

Leach. E. (1955). 199. Polyandry, Inheritance and the Definition of Marriage. *Man (London)*, vol.55, pp.182–186.

Lévi-Strauss, Jacobson, C. & Schoepf, B. G. (1974). *Structural Anthropology / Claude Lévi-Strauss ; translated from the French by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf.* (Jacobson & B. G. Schoepf, Trans.). Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.

Lindholm, C. (1982). *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan/Charles Lindholm.* Columbia University Press.

O' Brien, J. (2012). The Unconquered People: The Liberation Journey of an Oppressed Caste. Oxford University Press, Karachi.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (1941). The Study of Kinship Systems. Presidential Address. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol.71, pp.1–18.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (1965). A Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses. New York, NY: Free Press.

Westermarck, E. (1922). *The History of Human Marriage/by Edward Westermarck.* (5th ed., rewritten.). Allerton Book Co.

Annexure

کالا ڈوریا کنڈے نال اڑیا ئی اوئے
کے چھوٹا دیورا پابی نال لڑیائی اوئے

چھوٹے دیورا تیری دور پلائی وے
نالڑسو ہنیا وے تیری اک پر جائی وے
چنا چوری دانا مکھن اوندا نئی
کہ لجا بھتانی میرا پوا لاکھا ندائی نئی

کالا ڈوریا کنڈے نال اڑیا ئی اوئے
کے چھوٹا دیورا پابی نال لڑیائی اوئے

ککڑی اولیتڑی جھڑی کڑ کڑ کردی اے
سو ہرے نہیں جانا سس بڑ بڑ کردی اے
ککڑی اولیتڑی جھڑی آنڈے دیندی اے
سو ہرے نہیں جانا سس تعنے دیندی اے

کالا ڈوریا کنڈے نال اڑیا ئی اوئے
کے چھوٹا دیورا پابی نال لڑیائی اوئے

ستھنا چھیڑ دیا ملتانوں آیاں نے
ماواں اپنیاں جناں ریجھاں لایاں نے

کالا ڈوریا کنڈے نال اڑیا ئی اوئے
کے چھوٹا دیورا پابی نال لڑیائی اوئے

بڑا سواد آیا مسرے دی دالی دا
بڑا افسوس لگا ہیئے دی گالی دا
ساڈی گلی آ ماہیا تینوں کتے لڑاواں گے
کل والی گالی دا تینوں مزا چکھاواں گے

کالا ڈوریا کنڈے نال اڑیا ئی اوئے
کے چھوٹا دیورا پابی نال لڑیائی اوئے

ریلاں والیا ریلاں نو ویچ کے
نواں ویا کرالے پونا نوں ویچ کے
پونا نئی وکدی او پھپھڑ ڈاڈا اے
تینوں وسچاں گے جناں کھٹیا کھادا اے

کالا ڈوریا کنڈے نال اڑیا ئی اوئے
کے چھوٹا دیورا پابی نال لڑیائی اوئے

کالا ڈوریا میں آپ نگونی آں
چھوٹے دیورنوں میں آپ وہانی آ

کالا ڈوریا کنڈے نال اڑیا ئی اوئے
کے چھوٹا دیورا پابی نال لڑیائی اوئے

Amna Hafeez Mobeen is Lecturer in the Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University. Islamabad.