



RESEARCH PAPER**Portrayal of Gender Roles in the Saraiki Proverbs: A Sociocultural Study**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the portrayal of gender roles in Saraiki proverbs through a sociocultural framework, focusing on the influence of culture and society on gender perceptions. The research analyzes a selection of Saraiki proverbs to uncover how they reflect and reinforce gender norms within the Saraiki-speaking community. Using sociocultural theory, the study highlights the depiction of both men and women, exploring the underlying values shaping these portrayals. The results reveal the traditional wisdom embedded in these proverbs and its impact on gender stereotypes and biases. The findings offer recommendations for integrating gender awareness into educational curricula and cultural studies resources. Additionally, the study supports initiatives for social change and contributes to preserving Saraiki cultural heritage. Comparative analysis with proverbs from other cultures is suggested to enhance cross-cultural understanding of gender representation, providing valuable insights for policymakers and advocacy groups addressing gender issues.

KEYWORDS Cultural Norms, Cultural Wisdom, Gender Role, Saraiki Proverbs, Sociocultural Theory

Introduction

This study uses sociocultural theory to investigate Saraiki proverbs' gender representation and the language and discourse utilised to reveal gender perspectives. The sociocultural theory is a sociological and psychological theory that examines how culture and society shape people. It shows how friends, parents, and others shape cognitive, learning, and societal processes. This developmental psychology principle emphasises the role of sociocultural values in these functions. This theory examines society's impact on individual development. Sociocultural theory gained popularity in the 1990s and was used in play, education, and social situations.

Globally, proverbs represent people's physical and abstract comprehension of their surroundings (Ndunog2002). Madumulla (1995) states that 'proverbs are considered to express the collective wisdom of people suggests that they constitute the philosophy of the people reflecting their patterns of thinking, containing their traditional values and means of defending them' (Ennaji 2008 Despite being the prevalent 'wisdom', proverbs are human constructions and thus not immutable, according to this paper. Extensive literature shows how proverbs and the strength of tradition in proverbial expressions determine gender

(Ennaji, 2008). This study defines Saraiki proverbs (akhaan) as short-sentenced elder sayings that impart wisdom. These proverbs reflect culture.

Schipper says proverbs can predict how long people will accept particular gender norms. Schipper (2010) said proverbs' themes come from human behaviour and experience. According to the experts, proverbs are a great way to learn about original speakers' lifestyles and cultures and show that people from different civilisations can share moral values. Proverbs reveal language speakers' attitudes and nationalism. Proverbs cover many human experiences. Proverbs are utilised in regular conversation for practical objectives. Mieder (1993) states that "By employing proverbs in our speech we wish to strengthen our arguments, express generalisations, influence or manipulate other people, rationalise our shortcomings, question certain behavioural patterns, satirise social ills, poke fun at ridiculous situations Proverbs summarise, advise, or comment on situations. They comfort in big and minor problems and guide decision-making (Taylor, 1996).

Dominguez (2010) states that values and beliefs are codified and manifested in all elements of language communication, including popular expressions, shared vocabulary, oral traditions, conversational rules and engagement, and even linguistic inventiveness. Sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, and historians have studied Proverbs from diverse viewpoints to understand how they are ingrained in our culture and daily speech. Folklorists like Granbom-Herranen (2010) observed that proverbs are part of masculine patriarchal speech and women are subjugated and objectified. 20th-century researchers use these explanations. Kerschen (2012) has studied myths, traditional practices, conventions, rituals, songs, rhymes, and stories from numerous cultures to reveal masculine chauvinism. They believe proverbs best explain cultural practices, beliefs, gender distribution, and representational systems. These areas should be investigated because they show how social attitudes change over time.

Some Saraiki proverbs target women who defy society. This study worries about these women's portrayals. The study discovered Saraiki proverbs are generally anti-women. Several women interviewed and extensively studied data demonstrated that Saraiki proverbs encourage male authority over women and focus on family behaviour. Their father, brother, husband, and sons must be cared for throughout life. Saraiki language and proverbs support these cultural norms during socialisation.

Literature Review

Men and women's numerous identities in English proverbs and power interactions are examined by Ranjha (2020). This research covers male and female gender representations in proverbs and their relationships. 38 proverbs from two dictionaries are analysed using Fairclough's 3D model. All proverbs fall into three categories: women's, men's, and mixed-gender. Women-related proverbs outnumbered men-related ones. Most proverbs about women are negative, while those about males are complimentary. A few proverbs explained men's and women's negative and positive reliance. Patriarchy is shown in proverbs that characterise women as burdens, sexual objects, and frail. Men are openly nominated as world rulers. These proverbs pass power down to generations, which may explain patriarchies in many forms. Understanding these proverbs' origins can help you comprehend English gender roles and how they have changed over time.

The way Kgomotso Ambitious Theledi (2021) depicts women by society through cultural expressions is significant. Saraiki proverbs have traditionally portrayed women as submissive to men. This representation has reinforced a narrative of women's abuse, oppression, and subjection under tradition and society. Saraiki proverbs reveal the

complex web of cultural expectations and conventions that affect women, unlike proverbs, which lack nuanced differences based on class, age, ethnicity, sexuality, and aptitude. Saraiki proverbs may not accurately depict the different experiences of single women or divorced people within the societal framework of women, underlining the need for more inclusive and representative representations of women. These proverbs impart life lessons and shared experiences that mould a community or society's awareness and regulate it. Many proverbs teach women and girls about proper behaviour and self-care, but many may denigrate women in society. Saraiki proverbs help explain cultural change and gender roles, provoking critical views on women's situation in Saraiki society.

Arabic and English love proverbs differ semantically, according to Muhi (2021). The study revealed that semantic differences in Arabic and English love proverbs make their didactic meanings easier and more enjoyable to transmit and boost their persuasive power. Altohami (2023) analyses Egyptian Arabic and American English proverbs' gendered representations of "wife". The study illuminates how language, gender, and culture intersect in these linguistic corpora by investigating these proverbs' cultural and ideological origins. Female critical discourse analysis and conceptual metaphor theory are used to study wives' social roles in Egyptian Arabic and American English proverbs. Methodically exploring the prevalence of proverbs representing the role of a wife in different socio-cultural contexts shows the diverse representations and beliefs associated with this phrase in each culture. It contrasts the main concepts and beliefs around the term "wife" in Egyptian and American civilisations, showing differences and common values. The Egyptian-Arabic corpus generally portrays wives negatively. The analysis also reveals the source domains that legitimise "wife" concepts and ideology in both linguistic corpora. Cultural differences, especially surrounding extended family, affect how American English proverbs portray the social actor "wife". The study highlights the cultural and linguistic intricacies that shape the gendered representations of "wife" in Egyptian Arabic and American English proverbs, revealing gender dynamics and power relations in these cultures. Shadeed (2024) states that proverbs reflect the unique beliefs, values, and experiences of cultures and societies. This study used a qualitative approach to examine gender representation in English and Palestinian Arabic proverbs, focussing on negative attributes.

Material and Methods

The qualitative study "Gender Portrayal in Saraiki Proverbs: A Sociocultural Study" examines Saraiki Proverbs' gender representation and social and cultural context. The researcher collected a thorough list of Saraiki proverbs from Google research and elderly individuals about gender roles, expectations, and relationships to understand their meaning, usage, and cultural context. Focus groups with men and women of various ages and backgrounds explored their comprehension and experiences with the proverbs. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1896-1934) was the researcher's theoretical framework. The sociocultural theory is a sociological and psychological theory that examines how culture and society shape people. It shows how friends, parents, and others shape cognitive, learning, and societal processes. This developmental psychology principle emphasises the role of sociocultural values in these functions. This theory examines society's impact on individual development. Sociocultural theory gained popularity in the 1990s and was used in play, education, and social situations. The sov Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) believed that peers, carers, parents, and culture shape higher-order brain functioning. Lev Vygotsky thought that social contact shapes human development and varies by culture. The sociocultural approach emphasises how social interaction affects mental development. The sociocultural theory (1896-1934) holds that learning is primarily social and that cognitive functions depend on interactions with others, particularly those

“more skilled” than oneself. According to sociocultural theory, mentors like carers and educators help people develop psychologically. Social and cultural events help people develop their values and beliefs. This paradigm emphasises peer and mentor influences on learning. Additionally, it emphasises how attitudes and cultural ideas affect learning. The content study analysed proverbs' themes, content, and gender stereotypes. The qualitative method is ideal for this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of Saraiki proverbs' social and cultural context, language and imagery, and participant meanings and interpretations. The researcher will employ several data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing to verify data veracity. A qualitative technique is used to gain a deep understanding of gender depiction in Saraiki proverbs and their societal context.

Results and Discussion

1; ناری بنا نہیں (Mitti di guroor na kare, nari bina nahi)

The proverb "Mitti di guroor na kare, nari bina nahi" is intricately woven into the patriarchal structure and cultural values of the Saraiki community, where men are viewed as dominant but reliant on women, who are considered essential caregivers. This saying underscores the traditional gender roles and the importance of relationships, teaching humility and recognizing women's significance in men's lives. Through Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the proverb serves as a cultural tool for mediated learning, passed down through social interaction and language, reinforcing community values. It operates within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), challenging individuals to internalize these cultural norms with guidance from more knowledgeable members of the community. This process influences both identity and behaviour, encouraging a collectivist mindset and reinforcing traditional gender roles. In summary, the proverb illustrates how cultural wisdom shapes cognitive and social development, highlighting the indispensable role of women in the social fabric.

2; اٹھے سکھ (sukh uthy nari jithy)

The Saraiki proverb "Jithy nari, uthy sukh" highlights the cultural belief that women's presence brings happiness and prosperity to society. Rooted in the social fabric of Pakistan and India, the proverb underscores the essential role of women as caregivers and nurturers, reinforcing the importance of respecting and valuing their contributions. It serves as a cultural tool for mediated learning, where community members transmit these values through language and social interaction, shaping individuals' understanding of gender roles and relationships. Through the lens of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, the proverb operates within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), guiding individuals to internalize these cultural norms and integrate them into their identity and behaviour. This process promotes a collective mindset that prioritizes harmony, empathy, and cooperation, aligning individual actions with community values and fostering a sense of belonging.

3; مردا دا منہ، تے ناری دا بھلنا ("Marda da mu, te nari da bhulna")

Social and Cultural Context

The proverb "Marda da mu, te nari da bhulna" reflects a patriarchal society where traditional gender roles are deeply entrenched. It highlights the social expectation for men to prioritize pride and honour, while women are expected to be forgiving and self-sacrificing. This dichotomy reinforces gender stereotypes, portraying men as dominant and women as nurturing and submissive. The proverb serves as a cultural tool for mediated learning, transmitting these values through social interaction, language, and the

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By internalizing its message, individuals develop a deeper understanding of societal norms, shaping their identities and behaviours to align with community expectations. Ultimately, the proverb perpetuates a culture of gender inequality, influencing how individuals perceive and enact their roles within society.

4. ناری دی مسکان، گھر دی شان ("Nari di muskan, ghar di pehchan")

The proverb "Nari di muskan, ghar di pehchan" encapsulates the cultural emphasis on women's roles in maintaining household harmony. Viewed through Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, it functions as a tool for mediated learning, reinforcing societal norms around gender behaviour. By encouraging reflection on gender roles and expectations, the proverb can deepen understanding of these dynamics, ultimately shaping individuals' identities and behaviours in alignment with cultural values.

5. مردا دی آن، ناری دی شان ("Marda di aan, nari di maan")

The proverb "Nari di muskan, ghar di pehchan" reflects the patriarchal social and cultural context where women are expected to maintain household harmony. It emphasizes traditional gender roles, portraying women as primary caregivers whose happiness is linked to the well-being of the home. Through Vygotsky's sociocultural lens, the proverb serves as a tool for mediated learning, reinforcing societal norms around gender behaviour. The language of the proverb encodes these values, shaping how individuals perceive and internalize their roles within the family. By operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb guides individuals to understand and navigate their responsibilities, influencing their identities and behaviours. Ultimately, it perpetuates gender stereotypes, encouraging women to prioritize domestic duties and sacrifice personal aspirations for the sake of family harmony.

6. کھوتہ پورا تے، غرور پورا ("Khota poora tey, ghoora poora")

The proverb "Khota poora tey, ghoora poora" reflects a societal context where hypocrisy and pretence are valued over authenticity and honesty. It suggests that those who present a false image are seen as more successful, while straightforward individuals are viewed as incomplete. This cultural norm encourages superficiality, leading to a society where individuals feel pressured to prioritize appearances over sincerity. Through mediated learning, the proverb transmits these values, shaping how individuals perceive and navigate social expectations. The language of the proverb reinforces the idea that fakeness is rewarded, perpetuating power dynamics that favour pretence. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb influences identity and behaviour, encouraging people to adopt pretentious identities and suppress their true selves. This ultimately fosters a culture of hypocrisy, where genuine connections and authentic identities are sacrificed in favour of maintaining a perfect image.

7. تہاڈی جان، تے تہاڈی مان "Tuhadi jaan tay, tuhadi maan"

The proverb "Tuhadi jaan tay, tuhadi maan" (Your life is yours, your honour is yours) reflects a cultural emphasis on individual autonomy and personal responsibility, encouraging people to prioritize their values and well-being over societal expectations. It signifies a shift from traditional norms that often emphasise collective honour to a focus on self-empowerment and self-respect. This proverb aids in mediated learning by guiding individuals through social interactions and guidance from community members, fostering a deeper understanding of personal autonomy and integrity. The language of the proverb reinforces its message by emphasizing personal ownership and responsibility, making it a

powerful tool for conveying cultural values. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development, the proverb helps bridge the gap between current understanding and greater self-autonomy with appropriate guidance. Its influence on identity and behaviour is profound, as it encourages individuals to take ownership of their lives, act with integrity, and develop a strong sense of self and purpose. By internalizing the proverb's message, individuals navigate life with greater confidence and authenticity, leading to a fulfilling and meaningful existence.

8. "جتھے دے نیچے، اتھے نئی وچھے" ("Jithy dey nichay, othey nai wichay")

The proverb "Jithy dey nichay, othey nai wichay" (Where you are placed, don't look elsewhere) emphasizes the cultural values of humility, contentment, and self-acceptance. It encourages individuals to appreciate their current circumstances, focus on their own path, and avoid comparing themselves to others, promoting a sense of self-awareness and gratitude. This proverb facilitates mediated learning by guiding individuals to internalize these values through social interactions and community guidance, fostering a positive mindset. The language of the proverb reinforces its message, making it memorable and reflective of cultural norms that prioritize inner peace and self-contentment. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development, the proverb helps individuals transition from external validation to internal self-worth, supporting personal growth and self-acceptance. Its influence shapes behaviour and identity by encouraging individuals to embrace their unique strengths, live authentically, and navigate life with humility and grace, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

9. "ناری دی بولی، گھر دی رولی" "Nari di boli, ghar di roli"

The proverb "Nari di boli, ghar di roli" (A woman's voice is the foundation of the home) underscores a cultural context that values women's roles as essential to family stability and harmony. It highlights the importance of women's contributions, often undervalued, in maintaining the well-being of the household and community. This social context promotes respect for women's voices and agency, emphasizing their central role in nurturing and leading within the domestic sphere. Through mediated learning, individuals are guided to internalize these values, moving from gender bias towards greater gender equity and respect. The language of the proverb reinforces its message by creating reverence for women's roles, and its simplicity aids in its transmission and memorability. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development, the proverb helps individuals develop a deeper understanding of gender dynamics with guidance, fostering a more inclusive and equitable view of gender roles. Its influence on identity and behaviour encourages individuals to challenge stereotypes, value women's contributions, and strive for a more balanced and respectful family and community dynamic, ultimately leading to more empathetic and equitable interactions within society.

10. "مرداں دی حمت، ناری دا بھروسہ" ("Marda di himmat, nari da bharosa")

The proverb "Marda di himmat, nari da bharosa" (A man's courage, a woman's trust) reflects a cultural context where traditional gender roles are emphasized, with men expected to be courageous and women to be nurturing and trusting. It highlights the interdependent nature of these roles, suggesting that a man's bravery complements a woman's trust to create harmony and balance in family and community life. This context underscores the value placed on gender complementarity, trust, and loyalty in relationships. Through mediated learning, individuals are guided to internalize these values, understanding the significance of gender roles and developing a nuanced view of gender dynamics. The language of the proverb reinforces traditional gender roles and the

importance of trust and loyalty, making the concept accessible and memorable. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development, the proverb helps individuals progress from simplistic gender stereotypes to a more reflective understanding of gender complementarity and relationships. Its influence shapes behaviour and identity, encouraging individuals to embrace traditional roles while promoting empathy, cooperation, and commitment, ultimately fostering stronger and more harmonious relationships within the family and community.

11. ناری دا مکھ گھر دا دیکھ ("Nari da mukh, ghar da dekh")

The proverb "**Nari da mukh, ghar da dekhin**" (A woman's face, a home's reflection) underscores a cultural view where women are seen as the embodiment of family honour and values. It highlights that a woman's demeanour and behaviour are perceived as a reflection of the family's reputation and well-being, emphasizing traditional domestic roles such as caregiving and household management. Through mediated learning, community members use the proverb to impart the importance of these roles, helping individuals internalize cultural values and understand gender dynamics. The language of the proverb reinforces traditional gender roles, making it a powerful tool for shaping and transmitting cultural norms. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb helps individuals progress from simplistic views of gender roles to a more nuanced understanding, encouraging critical reflection and a deeper grasp of gender relationships. Its influence extends to shaping identity and behaviour, fostering a sense of purpose and belonging by traditional values, and promoting positive behavioural changes that contribute to harmonious family and community relationships.

12. مردان دا کم، ناری دا کم ("Marda da kaam, nari da kaam")

The proverb "**Marda da kaam, nari da aam**" (Man's work, woman's duty) reflects a cultural context where traditional gender roles are deeply entrenched, with men expected to focus on external, economically driven work and women on domestic duties. This proverb reinforces the idea of gender complementarity, emphasizing the distinct roles of men and women in maintaining family balance and harmony. It highlights the significance of women's domestic responsibilities while perpetuating gender stereotypes and limiting opportunities. Through mediated learning, community members and elders use this proverb to teach traditional roles, fostering an understanding of gender dynamics and responsibilities. The language of the proverb, creating a binary distinction between men's work and women's duties, perpetuates these roles and implies differing levels of agency. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb helps individuals progress from simplistic views to more nuanced understandings of gender roles. It influences identity and behaviour by reinforcing traditional roles, shaping individuals' self-perception, and promoting a sense of purpose within the community. However, it also constrains individual potential by reinforcing narrow gender norms.

13. ناری دی سوچ گھر دی سوچ ("Nari da soch, ghar di soch")

The proverb "**Nari da soch, ghar di sochin**" (A woman's thought, a home's reflection) highlights a social and cultural context where women are viewed as the core custodians of family values and honour. It underscores the belief that women's wisdom and decisions significantly impact the well-being and reputation of the home. This context places high value on women's domestic roles, such as managing the household and nurturing relationships, while recognizing their agency in shaping family dynamics. The proverb facilitates mediated learning by guiding individuals through social interactions to appreciate the importance of women's roles and the broader implications of their actions.

Its language, which connects women's thoughts with the home's reflection, reinforces traditional gender roles and underscores the interconnectedness of women's inner lives and family well-being. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb helps individuals advance from simplistic views of gender roles to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics. It influences identity and behaviour by encouraging women to embrace caregiving roles and fostering respect for their contributions, ultimately promoting more equitable and empowered relationships within the family and community.

14. مردان دا غرور ناری دی عزت ("Marda da guroor, nari di izzat")

The proverb "**Marda da guroor, nari di izzat**" (Man's pride, woman's honour) reflects a deeply ingrained social and cultural context where traditional gender roles are defined by patriarchal values. It positions men as embodiments of pride and authority, responsible for protecting and providing, while women are seen as bearers of honour, modesty, and domestic virtue. This cultural framework emphasizes family reputation and collective honour over individual aspirations, reinforcing gender-specific expectations. The proverb facilitates mediated learning through social interactions, where individuals learn to internalize and navigate these gender roles with the help of community guidance. The language used—associating men's pride with strength and women's honour with virtue—reinforces and perpetuates these traditional roles. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb helps individuals progress from simplistic views to a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics. It influences identity and behaviour by shaping how individuals perceive their roles and relationships within the family and community, often reinforcing restrictive stereotypes and limiting personal potential. By examining this proverb, we gain insight into how cultural values and norms shape gender roles and influence behaviour, highlighting the need for a more inclusive understanding of gender relationships.

15. مردان دا ہتھ گھر دی برکت (Nari da hath, ghar di bakhat)

The proverb "**Nari da hath, ghar di bakhat**" (Woman's hand, home's fate) reflects a social and cultural context where women are seen as central to the household's well-being and prosperity. It underscores traditional gender roles, positioning women as primary caregivers and managers whose actions directly impact the family's fate. This context is rooted in patriarchal values that often limit women's roles to domestic duties, though the proverb also acknowledges their significant contributions and agency. Through mediated learning, individuals internalize these values, guided by community members who reinforce the proverb's significance. The language used in the proverb—associating a woman's hand with the home's fate—emphasizes women's control and agency within domestic settings while reinforcing traditional gender norms. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb helps individuals advance from simplistic views of gender roles to more nuanced understandings of women's roles in family dynamics. Its influence on identity and behaviour encourages women to embrace domestic roles, shaping their sense of self and behaviour while perpetuating gender stereotypes and limiting potential. Examining this proverb reveals how cultural values and norms shape gender roles and individual behaviour, highlighting the need for a more inclusive understanding of gender and relationships.

16. مردان دی شان گھر دی شان ("Marda di shaan, ghar di shaan")

The proverb "**Marda di shaan, ghar di shaan**" (Man's honour, home's honour) highlights a cultural context where men's behaviour is seen as central to the family's

reputation and social status. This reflects traditional patriarchal values that position men as the primary bearers of family honour, suggesting that their actions directly influence the family's prestige. Mediated learning through this proverb involves community members guiding individuals to appreciate the significance of men's roles in upholding family honour, fostering a deeper understanding of gender dynamics. The language of the proverb reinforces this by linking "honour" with men's responsibility, perpetuating traditional gender roles and patriarchal values. Within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb helps individuals advance from simplistic views of gender roles to more nuanced understandings of family dynamics and social harmony. Its influence on identity and behaviour encourages men to prioritize family honour, reinforcing traditional roles and potentially leading to stress and perpetuation of gender stereotypes. Overall, the proverb illustrates how cultural values shape gender roles and personal behaviour, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive understanding of gender and relationships.

17. (ناری دیسکھ، سب دی سکھ) Nari di sukh, sab di sukh)

The proverb "Nari di sukh, sab di sukh" (Woman's happiness, everyone's happiness) reflects a cultural view that women's well-being is essential for the overall happiness of the family and community. It emphasizes that women, as primary caregivers, play a crucial role in maintaining family harmony, suggesting that their fulfilment directly impacts communal well-being. The proverb challenges traditional patriarchal norms by highlighting the importance of women's agency and happiness. Through mediated learning, individuals come to understand and value this perspective, as community members teach and reinforce the proverb's significance. The language used, simple yet evocative, underscores women's vital role in fostering social harmony. The proverb operates within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), helping individuals move from simplistic views to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics. It influences identity and behaviour by empowering women to prioritize their happiness, fostering empathy, and promoting positive relationships within families and communities.

18. مرداندا زور ناری دا جوڑ ("Marda da zor, nari da jor")

The proverb "Marda da zor, nari da jor" (Man's strength, woman's power) reflects a patriarchal context where men are expected to display physical strength and women's emotional power. This proverb reinforces traditional gender roles, with men's dominance and women's nurturing influence seen as complementary but unequal. It underscores a societal division of labor and power that maintains gender inequalities, while also acknowledging women's influence. Through mediated learning, individuals come to understand and internalize these roles, as community members explain and reinforce the proverb's significance. The language of the proverb, with terms like "strength" and "power," perpetuates traditional stereotypes but also allows for reinterpretation. Operating within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the proverb helps bridge the gap between simplistic and nuanced understandings of gender roles, encouraging individuals to develop a more critical and empathetic view of gender dynamics. While it shapes identity and behaviour by reinforcing traditional roles and expectations, it also provides a platform for challenging and redefining these norms, fostering a more inclusive understanding of gender relationships.

Dicussion

Central to the findings is the pervasive reinforcement of a patriarchal structure within these proverbs. Women are consistently relegated to domestic spheres, their identities inextricably linked to caregiving, nurturing, and maintaining household

harmony. Proverbs such as "Nari di muskan, ghar di pehchan" (A woman's smile is the identity of a home) underscore the importance of women's emotional labour in creating a positive domestic environment. However, this emphasis also places a disproportionate burden on women, suggesting that their worth is often measured by their ability to foster domestic tranquility.

Conversely, men are predominantly positioned as the breadwinners, decision-makers, and symbols of family honour. Proverbs often equate men's worth with their economic contributions, reinforcing the notion of male dominance. This construction of masculinity can limit men's emotional expression and perpetuate rigid gender roles.

A notable gender difference in these proverbs is the emphasis on women's patience, tolerance, and self-sacrifice. Proverbs such as "Nari di boli, miti di boli" (A woman's words are like the earth) equate women's speech to the grounding nature of the earth, suggesting a patient and enduring character. While this might appear positive, it also reinforces the stereotype of women as submissive and tolerant.

The persistence of these proverbs in contemporary society underscores the enduring influence of tradition. Despite societal shifts and advancements, the deep-rooted messages embedded within these proverbs continue to shape gendered expectations and behaviours. To achieve a truly equitable society, it is imperative to critically examine the underlying assumptions and values propagated through these linguistic artefacts.

By understanding how language constructs gender, we can begin to dismantle the barriers that perpetuate inequality.

Challenging the traditional interpretations of these proverbs is crucial for fostering a society where individuals are free to define their identities and roles without being constrained by outdated gender stereotypes. Moreover, exploring how younger generations engage with and reinterpret these proverbs can provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of gender roles.

Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and gender is essential for effecting meaningful social change. By recognizing the power of proverbs to shape societal norms, we can develop strategies to challenge and transform these narratives, paving the way for a more just and equitable future.

Conclusion

The analysis of Saraiki proverbs reveals a complex interplay between language, culture, and gender, with these linguistic artefacts serving as powerful conduits for reinforcing societal norms, particularly concerning gender roles. A Vygotskian lens illuminates how proverbs function as cultural tools, shaping individuals' perceptions and behaviours from a young age.

Implications

The implications of a study on "Portrayal of Gender Roles in Saraiki Proverbs: A Sociocultural Study" can be discussed across various dimensions:

Cultural Understanding and Preservation

Deep insights into the social norms and values of the Saraiki-speaking population are provided by this study. It is possible to conserve and value the cultural legacy and

wisdom ingrained in proverbs by comprehending how gender roles are portrayed in these sayings. The project helps to preserve these cultural artefacts by compiling and evaluating Saraiki proverbs, ensuring that traditional wisdom is not lost over time.

Gender Studies and Societal Impact

The study clarifies the gender roles and prejudices that proverbs reinforce; these might be utilised to question and reconsider conventional gender standards. It invites a critical analysis of how these proverbs shape gender roles in Saraiki society. Proponents of gender equity and advocacy organisations working to reduce gender inequality in Saraiki-speaking regions can benefit from the identification and analysis of gender biases in proverbs.

Educational and Social Implications

The study can raise public awareness about the influence of traditional sayings on gender perceptions by promoting discussions and reflections on how cultural practices shape societal attitudes towards gender. The findings can be incorporated into educational curricula to integrate gender roles and cultural proverbs. This can help students develop a more inclusive and critical understanding of gender issues.

Linguistic and Anthropological Contributions

The study advances the science of linguistics by examining how language both perpetuates and reflects gender norms. This can improve knowledge of linguistic patterns and the social context in which they occur. An anthropological viewpoint on the study sheds light on the wider social structures and ideas inside the Saraiki community by examining how proverbs embody and communicate cultural values.

Policy and Social Reform

Policymakers may use the study's implications as a guide when creating initiatives to combat gender disparity and advance gender-sensitive behaviours. Interventions that are more culturally appropriate and effective can result from an understanding of the cultural context of gender roles. Through exposing the gender biases present in traditional proverbs, the research can support social change programs that seek to dispel persistent gender preconceptions and advance gender justice.

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