GENDER ROLES IN PAKISTANI-URDU WEDDING SONGS

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Abstract: This qualitative study of Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs allows a closer look at the gender situation, and towards the understanding of the process of construction and perpetuation of gender-based stereotypes. However, the major concern of this study is to understand the portrayal of each gender along with the question that does such portrayal underlines the traditional gender roles and gender inequality. Taking a discourse analysis perspective, this study analyzes textual data from the lyrics of the seventeen wedding songs. The song selection was based on purposive sampling technique. The data were collected through transcription and recording of the audios of the songs. As a result of thematic analysis thirteen themes emerged, ten portraying the female gender and four portraying the male gender. These themes reveal important findings that support and reinforce the gender-based stereotypes and also reflect gender hierarchy, normative heterosexual relationships, kinship norms and gender subversions.

Key words: Gendered discourse, gender roles, gendered stereotypes, wedding songs

INTRODUCTION

> "Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks- already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. When man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder." (Huxley, 1931, p.33)

In the above extract from his novel, Huxley summarises how individuals were moulded into obedient citizens through repetitions.

From biological sex to likes and dislikes, each human was predetermined to meet the expectations of the society and its governing authority. While the story and the setting are fictional, the idea of pre-determining life and living for individual beings is apparent in contemporary society as well. People are gendered along binaries of sex and sexuality with the expectation that they will live and perform in accordance to the specified gender scripts regulated by social and cultural norms.

Gender is established within individuals through training and repeated practice to the extent that people are suppressed to achieve gender uniformity. The ability or perhaps potential of a body to perform diverse genders is nullified by society's pre-conditions that makes individuals live within particular set boundaries. For instance, a body that is sexed as female based on certain physical or biological features is a girl- with all meanings and implications associated to this word. As a consequence, this girl must adapt to the set of social regulations and internalize specified traits, characteristics and attributes. Such conformity of individuals also proves the power that is fixed in such a process where the aim is to align each being to a stereotypical form of what the society deems to be a girl or woman, boy or man. Subsequently, other roles and labels come into play, namely, daughter, sister, mother, wife, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, son, father, brother, husband, and many others that result from kinship and marriage; each having a specific role that they must adhere to in order to be socially acceptable. Thus, both kinship and marriage have proven to be fundamental aspects of many societies. This idea of 'gender performance' is similar to Shakespeare's idea of the world being a stage where individuals are mere actors as they perform their parts scripted by societal norms. He writes;

> "All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players;
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts,"
>
> (Shakespeare, 1623)

This study considers gender as a social concept that influences and orders life in the Pakistani-Urdu speaking community. It argues that wedding songs form an essential discursive element that is sanctioned by patriarchal authority to reinforce societal values and principles. Wedding songs have been chosen because since weddings are one of the most significant rituals in the weddings of the Pakistani-Urdu speaking community, the analyses of the songs, which are treated as discourse, sung at these weddings also unravel the cultural and social ideologies of the Pakistani-Urdu speaking community. The treatment of wedding songs as texts that represent discourse is derived from Scott (1988, p.35), who clarifies that 'a text is not limited to written material, but rather refers to "utterances" of any kind and in any medium, including cultural practices.' Wedding songs with reference to this study are taken as utterances that provide an insight into Pakistani beliefs, customs, traditions and deep-seated social values. Thus, these songs not only highlight the gendered discourse, but through highlighting it, it also provides an insight into the Pakistani culture. Miller (2008) also assents to this when he states that 'musical performance offers an ethnographically distinct site of cultural production, constitutive and revelatory of multiple points of suture that informs an individual's sense of self in society'. Therefore, wedding songs have been analysed in this research paper to understand the gender situation of the Pakistani-Urdu community and also to identify gendered notions and stereotypes (if any) that may occur in these songs. Furthermore, songs portraying gender subversions are also analysed to reflect on how the potential for non-conformity to social norms exists within this genre.

A brief outline of the common Pakistani marriage customs prevalent in Urdu-speakers is provided here since the songs that are analysed forth relate to these diverse rituals. The wedding proper is a complex ritual spread over, in many cases, three days, even though preparatory activities including some customary prayers and gatherings begin long before and continue afterwards. Given the

diversity, some of the most common events that are held in a Pakistani marriage include variations of the following; marriage proposal (*rishta pakka*), engagement (*ma~gni*), *Dholki*, *mehandi* (henna), *baraat*, *nikaah*, wedding reception (*shaadi*), *ruXsati* (farewell), and *valima*. A proposal party (*rishta pakka*) is a reception held at the bride's house, where the groom's parents and family elders who had formally asked or requested the bride's parents for her hand in marriage, this event is held when their request is accepted. An engagement (*ma~gni*) is a formal ceremony to mark the engagement of the couple. Rings and other items of jewellery among affluent families are exchanged between the bride and the groom-to-be. Often before, and at the engagement ceremony *Dholki* is arranged. The *Dholki* or *Dholak* celebration takes its name from the percussion instrument *Dholki*, which is featured heavily during these wedding celebrations. Traditionally, many days or even weeks before the actual wedding day, relatives (women in particular) gather in the house of the bride or groom to sing and dance while accompanied by percussion instruments. Today, this ceremony has also been reduced to a single night of singing and is often combined with *mehandi* or *henna* ceremony. *Mehandi,* or the *rasm-e-henna* ceremony (custom of *henna* ceremony), typically takes place one or two days prior to the actual wedding day (the *shaadi*). The event is traditionally held separately for the bride and the groom. The *henna* is symbolically placed on the couple's hands. The groom's friends and family bring along sweets and *henna* for the bride, and the bride's family does the same for the groom. In the bride's ceremony, the groom normally does not participate, and similarly on the groom's event, the bride stays at home. However, nowadays, this tradition of separate *mehandi* events for the groom and bride has been replaced by a single combined *mehandi* event for both the bride and the groom. The bride normally wears a green, yellow, or orange dress for the *henna* celebration and uses only light, or mostly, no make-up and, traditionally, the bride's *dupaTTa* (veil) is draped over so that it covers her face. This is known as '*ghuu~gaT*'. The groom usually wears casual *shalwaar*

qamiiz. Sometimes elaborate musical and dance performances are part of the *mehandi* celebrations. These dance sequences and singing competitions between the bride and groom's families have become quite common these days. Traditionally, the *mehandi* was considered a women's event and men did not participate in it. However, this has changed substantially in recent times with males featuring prominently in the *mehandi* celebrations as well. The event of *mehandi* is then followed by *baraat* which is the procession of the family, relatives, and friends of the groom and they accompany the groom to the wedding venue for the official ceremony. Usually they are also accompanied by a band playing wedding songs. A marriage contract, *nikaah*, is signed by both the bride and the groom. The *nikaah* ceremony is often combined with the *shaadi* which is when the bride's reception formally takes place. The *ruXsati* (sending off/ farewell of the bride) takes place when the groom and his family leave together taking the bride along with them. This is a sombre occasion for the bride's parents as it marks the departure of their daughter from their home. The departure of the bride becomes a very emotional scene as she says farewell to the home of her parents and siblings to start a new married life. *Valima* is the final day of the wedding held by the couple as they host their first dinner as husband and wife.

Not all, but in many of these events, like engagement (*ma~gni*), *Dholki*, and *mehandi*, wedding songs are sung accompanied by drumming (*Dholak*). Songs may also be sung or played at other related events too as variations are many even within the Pakistani-Urdu speaking community. These songs are mostly and usually sung by women; however, men may also accompany them in singing and dancing. Thus, the Pakistani wedding, in general, constitutes of fragments of rituals, many of which are narrated through wedding songs, and are reflections of social values, beliefs and ideologies. This paper tries to investigate how male and the female genders are portrayed in Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs and to check if that portrayal underlines the traditional gender roles and gender inequality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media portrays gender in both traditional and non-traditional ways (Wood, 2005). Music, and more importantly, lyrics, can function as social mirrors providing the listener with a description of the world they live in and an aide to the construction of their social identity (Reyes, 2012). It is an important aspect of people's lives and its uses are multiple. Music influences our formative years and has an impact on our sexual and psychological development (Aparicio, 1994). It can be recreational, educational, social, emotional, therapeutic, and/or spiritual (Hays, et.al, 2002).

Music carries meanings in its storylines. As listeners, consumers cannot help to pick up life lessons on gender representations, gendered relationships, and gender stereotypes. Much research has been dedicated to understanding how music influences consumers. Earlier, research found that music provided means of self-expression and that the vocabulary or images learned fed gender stereotypes (Reyes, 2012). Most recently studies have concentrated on the effect of gendered messages in songs/music across various genres (Martino, et al., 2006; Primack, et al., 2009). Several researchers have found that although consumers tend to believe that media does not affect them, media affects our upbringing, identity, and relationships with others (Wood, 2005).

Lyrics can serve as socializing agents and propagate gender stereotypes, which are over-generalizations about the characteristics of an entire group based on gender; and, therefore lyrics are of interest in the study of gender issues. An important variable, however, to take into account is genre. Research suggests that different genres portray gender differently (Freudiger & Almguist, 1978). In the current study, gender representation, gender roles and portrayals of men and women in wedding songs are examined. Since wedding songs are integral to people's lives and consist of gendered discourse which is, the light they shed on caste, kinship and marriage, cultures, gender, power, sexuality, family life, patriarchy, and the forms of agency and

constraint operating within the same framework turns them into a resource for a gendered discourse analysis research (Sunderland, 2004).

> "It is because some texts bear messages which work on us in a way of which we are not necessarily aware that I feel it is important to analyse texts carefully in terms of the systematic language choices which have been made. Close analysis may help the reader to become aware of the way that language choices may serve the interests of some people to the detriment of others." (Mills, 1992, p.187)

It is this quotation from Mills that becomes the rationale for the following sections in which the Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs are treated as pieces of discourses. While the wedding songs may not appear systematic as Mills emphasises, the fact that these songs represent the language and cultural structures of Pakistani-Urdu speaking community makes these songs carriers of sub-currents of social beliefs, ideologies and conventions. And, since these songs carry gendered discourse which refers to the nature of the interactional dominance that is found in mixed-sex conversations (Jassal, 2012), understanding these discoursed representation or construction of the identity women and men, boys and girls in particular gendered ways becomes essential. When women and men, boys and girls are represented and/or are expected to behave in particular gendered ways, post-structuralism and Critical Discourse Analysis see gendered discourse as 'subject-positioning' those individuals or groups concerned. (Wetherell & Edley, 1998.; Weatherall, 2002). The notion of 'subject positioning' is similar to the notions of gender-roles (Money, 1957) and gender performativity (Butler, 1990). The former refers to the set of societal norms dictating what types of behaviours are generally considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for a person based on their actual or perceived sex. The specifics regarding these gendered expectations

may vary substantially among cultures, while other characteristics may be common throughout a range of cultures (Money, 1957). The latter, the notion of gender performativity, focuses on the way individuals "do" or "perform" their gender identity in interaction with others (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003). Butler characterizes gender as the effect of reiterated acting, one that produces the effect of a static or normal gender while obscuring the contradiction and instability of any single person's gender acts. She insists that 'to understand identity as a practice, and as signifying practice, is to understand culturally intelligible subjects as the resulting effects of a rule bound discourse that inserts itself in the pervasive and mundane signifying acts of linguistic life' (Butler, 1990, p. 121). Pre-sexed agents are made to comply with these guidelines by structuring esteemed human institutions like history, culture, education and religion to reinforce the same ideologies through their practices and theoretical framework (Shandil, 2014). Since gender is an act that is performed repetitively, the singings of these songs are gendered performances that occur in a social context and due to their prevalence in discursive practices they have been internalised as natural by both the genders.

METHOD

The nature of subject under study and the underlying goals of the research provide the rationale for choosing one methodology over another. Because the major focus of this study is to understand, analyse and interpret the lyrics of the Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs on a detailed, deeper, and substantial level with specific focus on the gendered discourse of these songs, it was necessary to incorporate a methodology that provided a holistic and an interpretive analysis, therefore, qualitative approach is adopted. Because qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive, therefore, research outcome is ultimately the product of the researcher's interpretation of the data (Dornyei, 2007). Since the primary focus of this study is wedding songs, therefore, 17 Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs are selected. Ten

of these songs are sung by female vocalists, five by males, and two are duets sung by both male and female singers. The selection of the songs was also challenging as the focus of this study is strictly restricted to the gendered discourse of, and gender portrayal in, wedding songs which was then narrowed down to Pakistani wedding songs, and later further tunnelled to the Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs solely. This made the sampling technique purposive. Data were collected in the time duration of a week by making use of tools like transcription and recording of a few songs. In addition, to make this study feasible in terms of time, only those chunks of songs are analysed, translated and presented in the findings' section in a thematic fashion which fit under the head-themes. The thematic analysis of these songs is conducted through discourse analysis of the lyrics of the selected songs. The following table consists of the analysed songs;

Table 1 the analyzed Pakistani-Urdu wedding Songs

Song Title	Artist/Group Gender
1. *zara Dholki bajaao goriyo*	Male and Female
2. *balle balle*	Male and Female
3. *mehandi se likh do re*	Female
4. *mehandi rachche gi tere haath*	Female
5. *mehandi ki xushbu se*	Male
6. *yahi to he vo apna pan*	Male
7. *mehandi ki raat aai*	Male
8. *Dholak baja ke saheliyaa~ bula ke*	Female
9. *banno tere abba ki oo~chchi haveli*	Male
10. *mere nehar se aaj mujhe aaya*	Female
11. *mehandi ki ye raat*	Male
12. *chaand si banno meri tere havaale*	Female
13. *bhaiya ko bhaabi*	Female
14. *Disco bhaabi naachche*	Female
15. *dhiire dhiire shaadi ka bahaana ban gaya*	Female
16. *nande~ banii~ chand taara*	Female
17. *me~ allaah qasam gaali nahi~ du~gi*	Female

FINDINGS

For the ease of discussion, this section has been divided into the following sub-sections; (I) Songs portraying the female gender, and (II) Songs portraying the male gender.

Songs Portraying the Female Gender

A close look at these wedding songs resulted in the emergence of a list of themes that must be addressed. The themes that portray the female gender are discussed below under the following sub-headings;

1. Over-praising the bride:

A very common theme that emerged as a result of close analysis of the Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs was the over-praise of women, particularly of the bride in marriage. Irrespective of the gender of the singer, the beauty, *'ruup'* of the bride is glorified in addition to the specific comments on the bride's accessories as well. Consider the following;

> *tera ghuu~ghaT jo uThaae*
> *ruup tera seh na paae*
> *chaand ko voh bhuul jaae*
> *dekhe tera si~ghaar*
> Whoever picks up your veil
> (is) unable to bear your beauty
> (he/she) forgets the moon
> and is bewitched by your makeover (beauty)
> -Song Title: *mehandi rachche gi tere haath*

Here, the bride's beauty has been elevated to such a status that it is being compared to that of moon's beauty and is said that whoever picks up the bride's *'ghuu~ghaT'* sees that her beauty is better than that of the moon. Such bewitchment with the bride's *'ruup'* gives the impression of her great beauty. This is just one instance of such over-praise; consider the following where the bride's make-up and accessories are also elaborated to glorify her beauty.

kabhi khuli kabhi band aa~kho~ me~
kajre ki vo dhaar
gaalo~ ki surXi me~ jhalke hirde ka iqraar
baalo~ me~ gajra kano~ me~ jhumke chunri dhaari dhaar
Sometimes open sometimes closed eyes show
Streaks of *kajra*[1]
The blushing of cheeks shows the acceptance of the heart
gajra[2] in hair, earrings in ear, and *chunri*[3] full of streaks
-Song Title: *mehandi ki ye raat*

These wedding songs stereotypically portray the women, the bride to be specific, as symbolic of beauty or perhaps a goddess who has to look beautiful on her wedding day. Moreover, the women in these songs are addressed as the ones who have fair complexion, '*gori*[4]' and '*goriyo~*', which itself is stereotypical representation of beauty.

2. *Marriage- the fulfilment of a girl's dreams:*

The event of marriage, which might be a boy's or groom's dream too, is portrayed in such a way as if it is one of the girl's biggest dream being fulfilled and as perhaps it was the aim of her life to be a bride. There are many lullabies which are sung to girls in their early childhood, one of which is;

guRyaa raani biTyaa raani
pariyo~ ki nagri se aik din
raaj kumar ji aaye~ge
mehlo~ me~ le jaae~ge

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[1] *kaajal* or **kajra** is an ancient eye cosmetic, traditionally made by grinding galena (lead sulfide) and other ingredients. It is widely used as eyeliner to contour and/or darken the eyelids and as mascara for the eyelashes.

[2] A **gajra** is a flower garland which women in South Asia wear during festive occasions, weddings or as part of everyday traditional attire. It can be worn both on the bun and with the braid coiling.

[3] **chunri** is a long, multi-purpose scarf that is essential to many South Asian women's suits and matches the woman's garments.

[4] **gori** is a female with fair complexion. Often it is used to address pretty girls or good looking women because of the stereotypical notions of beauty attached to the fair complexion. The plural of *gori* is *goriyo~*.

My doll and princess daughter
From the fairyland one day
A prince charming will come
(who) will take you to the palaces
-Song Title: *guRyaa raani biTya raani*

So, this dream of getting married is fed into girls' minds right from their early childhood that a prince charming, her knight and shining armour will come and take her away with him. The fulfilment of this dream on the part of the bride is also evident in the lyrics of these wedding songs as it can be seen in the following;

aai mehandi ki ye raat
he laai sapnou~ ki baraat
The night of *mehandi* has come
(it) has brought the fulfilment of dreams
-Song Title: *mehandi ki ye raat*

3. Bride as calm and quiet:

In the Pakistani-Urdu speaking culture, many rituals and expectations from the different gender roles often display the subjugation of women in such a manner that the woman herself seems to be unaware of. It has become part of the culture for the bride to remain silent and her silence, which might be denial from the marriage or anything else too, is assumed as the rite that the bride must adhere too. It is assumed the bride is being stereotypically shy, quiet, and composed. For instance,

chaahe kero na koi baat
sab ne jaan liiye jazbaat
even if you remain silent
everyone has come to know your feelings
-Song Title: *mehandi rachche gi tere haath*

4. Submissive postures:

The female's submissive posture is yet another theme that was found. Often in the Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs there is certain

kind of hint or direct assertion to what posture is appropriate for the bride according to the customs;

aa~gan me~ simTi hui
beThi he kyu~ is tarha~
ese zara saath chal
saaya chale jis tarha~
why are you sitting so reserved in the orchard
walk with me like my shadow does
-Song Title: *mehandi ki xushbu se*

The above mentioned chunk is taken from a song sung by a male artist who at first elaborates the kind of behaviour appropriate for a Pakistani bride and then questions why is the bride doing so and that she should join the her male partner, the groom, to walk along with him like his shadow. It appears to be that the male is actually questioning such attitude of women, which at first seems to be in favour of women, but soon he invites the bride to walk with him like a 'shadow', which is inanimate, thus objectifying women, and not inviting to walk side by side like partners do. This shows that the man does not want to equalize woman's position with him. Another such instance of submissive postures that the bride is expected to take is evident in the following;

bhaiya ki dulhan aaey gi sar jhuka ke
sister-in-law will come with bowed head
-Song Title: *Dholak baja ke saheliyaa~ bula ke*

5. Makeover- bride's main concern:

The social pressures on women to be 'beautiful' are classic examples of patriarchal societies. These songs portray that women must be and are mainly concerned with beautifying themselves. The reinforcement is such that women believe that they have to at least make an attempt to be conventionally beautiful for social acceptance. For instance,

> *kesa sohaana same he milan ka*
> *mujh ko sa~varne se kaam*
> it is such a pleasant time of union
> I'm concerned with adorning myself
> -Song Title: *mehandi se likh do re*

The chunk mentioned above is taken from a song sung by a female singer who emphasises on how much concerned the bride or the women in general has to be. On analysing it, this chunk appears to be comical as it says that even at such an important time of union, all that the woman (bride) is mainly concerned with is beautifying herself for the acceptance from her beloved (groom).

The following chunk is taken from a song sung by a male artist who constantly keeps on singing the same lines over and over again, emphasising the importance of the makeover that the bride has to do.

> *gori karat si~ghaar*
> *oh gori karat si~ghaar*
> *gori* adorns herself
> oh *gori* adorns herself
> -Song Title: *mehandi ki ye raat*

It shows that women have become saturated with this notion of adhering to the social standards of beauty by adorning themselves since childhood because of the patriarchal society's emphasis on a certain kind of beauty.

6. Women's dependence on men:

Yet another theme of women's subjugation that is prevalent in these wedding songs is women's dependence on men. These songs explicitly propagate the message of male dominance over females and this idea is presented not only with respect to the husband-wife, bride-groom relationship, but is also evident in the sister-brother, and father-daughter relations. In the following chunk a sister sings the following lines to her brother;

sajaniya saajan ke he saath
rahe haatho~ me~ ese haath
The female lover is with the male lover
(may) they hold their hands like this (forever)
-Song Title: *mehandi ki ye raat*

The ordering could have been vice versa, but through such order, female dependence on male is emphasized, thus, weakening female's position.

7. Woman- the submissive prototype:

In the Pakistani culture it is normal for women to be submissive and apologetic. It is believed that women maintain relations and this belief is highlighted in the following;

ham Ghalat the ham ne maana
tum bhi vapas le lo taana
laRne ka ye kab he moqa
kya kahe ga ye zamaana
I accept I was wrong
You too take the blame back
It is not the right time to fight
What will people say?
-Song Title: *zara Dholki bajao goriyo~*

This chunk represents the apologetic nature of women as her male partner does not apologize for the inter-gender witty repartee that takes place throughout this song. It is again the women who is submissive as she seeks apology and is also concerned about the society as she says '*kya kahega ye zamaana*'.

Another, even more serious, incidence of submission of women in evident in the following, where the female takes the stereotypical gender role of being the caretaker of men, as she sings that she fans her beloved.

> *pa~kha jhalu~ to ka~ganva khanke*
> *ka~ganva khanke tou mann un ka dhaRke*
> *dekho lagan mera tum dekho sakhiyou~*
> *kese me~ lu~ unka naam*
> Whenever (I) fan the bracelet jingles
> His heart beats with the jingle of (my) bracelet
> Look at my devotion friends
> How do I take his (husband's/groom's) name?
> -Song Title: *mehandi se likh do re*

Moreover, it also elevates the male gender to such a high status that the female out of her love and devotion is unable to even take his name. The husband/groom/male beloved is portrayed as more dominant of the couple and this notion is reinforced by these lyrics to confirm this hierarchy.

8. *Women as naive and innocent:*

Traditional gender roles dictate that women are considered to be naive, foolish, childish, immature, silly and innocent. It has been argued that this gender arrangement has been fed to the masses non-stop through media (Wood, 2005). This theme is present in the lyrics of wedding songs as well communicating the idea that women are crazy, naive and less rational than men.

> *balle balle naachche he ye baavra jiyaa*
> *balle balle[5]*
> this silly heart dances
> -Song Title: *balle balle*

In the above chunk, the female singer calls herself, her own heart as silly, while in the following the singer calls her sister as innocent, not knowing and naive.

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[5] Balle balle is a phrase used in many songs to depict a feeling of happiness. It is used in the same way as the English expressions, "Hooray!" or "Hurrah!"

> *bholi bhaali behna diivaani hogai*
> Innocent, naive sister got crazy
> -Song Title: *dhiire dhiire shaadi ka bahaana ban gaya*

Female singers voicing such lyrics reinforce the idea of women accepting and continuing to promote the gender arrangements that are prevalent in the society.

9. Woman as the Weak Party

Another recurrent theme that is present in not just the lyrics of these songs, but also forms a major part in the videos of these songs is that of the bride and the relations mapped around her projected as weak beings. Often these songs consist of the heart-wrenching separation that will occur in between the bride and her relatives, friends, etc. It is also portrayed that the bride will be weak as she is going alone to her husband's house where she has to live with her in-laws who are from the 'stronger party'. This sense of weakness and strength associated with the bride and groom and their relatives is mainly because of the 'give' and 'take' ideology that is in the Pakistani-Urdu speakers' minds. The bride's relatives are the 'bride-givers', which make them weak as they are giving away someone they love, and the groom's relatives are the 'bride-takers' who are taking the bride with them, making their position stronger. Such kind of mindset is also evident in the lyrics of these songs. Consider the following;

> *chaand si banno meri tere havaale*
> I hand over my moon like bride to you
> -Song Title: *chaand si banno meri tere havaale*

Consider the following chunk in which the father of the bride is giving advice to his daughter that she might feel alone and weak and what to do in such case;

> *saa~s ruk jaae to*
> *aa~kh bhar aaye to*

jab kabhi koi aata ho yaad
par tum Gham na karo
kya he mushkil kaho
tere apne to he~ tere saath
When it gets difficult to breath (because of the hardships of
married life)
Eyes get full of tears
When you start missing someone
But don't you be upset
Speak (to us) about your problem
We are with you
-Song Title: *yahi to he vo apna pan*

10. Abusive/mocking songs

Apart from the songs celebrating the marriage and the union of
the bride and groom, there are songs of that are of highly subversive
nature as well, as they venture into off-bound territories of the
Pakistani-Urdu culture, especially in public spaces. These songs are
usually sung at *mehandi*s and *Dholkis* when there is a singing
competition between the bride and the groom's side. Therefore, these
songs become one of the ways of taunting and teasing where the
singers and relatives of each side make fun of each other. What is
ironic is, that even in such mocking songs it is women who are
abused, and even more ironic is the fact that these songs are sung by
females themselves humiliating and insulting their own gender.
Relations like sister-in-law, groom's wife and groom's sisters (*na~de~*
and *bhaabi*), mother-in-law (*saas*) of groom and bride are made fun of.
The female singers overstep the social limitations to publically insult
the most important guests by calling them names and falsely relating,
or sometimes accusing them of being promiscuous as in the following;

paRosi ka leRka (sister-in-law's name*) ka yaar he*
filme~ dikhaaye das gyaara
Neighbour's son is sister-in-law's darling,
Shows ten-eleven movies to her
-Song Title: *nande~ banii~ chand taara*

> *saas aati rahi tohfe laati rahi*
> *meri behna ko paTTi parhaati rahi*
> mother-in-law kept on coming and bringing gifts
> kept on manipulating my sister
> -Song Title: *dhiire dhiire shaadi ka bahaana ban gaya*

These songs "provide a medium for expressing emotions that are taboo topics in everyday conversations," (Jassal, 2012, p.56) subjecting these texts to close scrutiny allows us a glimpse of people's intimate worlds. In cultures, like the Pakistani culture, that do not openly discuss inner emotional states, frustration or anger, songs are the shared tradition through which emotions are expressed, thus, providing a medium for the expression of what might be taboo in everyday conversation (Jassal, 2012). For instance, in the emotionally charged song below, taboo vulgar slangs are openly hinted at. Verses of this song are given in the appendix section and not discussed in this section because of their highly offensive nature.

> *me~ allaah qasam gaali nahi~ du~gi*
> By god, I won't say slang
> -Song Title: *me~ allaah qasam gaali nahi~ du~gi*

Sometimes, as in the case of '*me~ allaah qasam gaali nahi~ du~gi*', the insults from the singer exceed the sanctioned limits. In normal circumstances, any Pakistani-Urdu speaker would be seriously offended at the mention of female relatives in such a manner, but, however, at weddings it is observed in many families to sing abusive songs containing taboo elements openly with no one taking them very seriously.

Songs Portraying the Male Gender

There is a list of themes that emerged as a result of close analysis of the lyrics and these are those themes that depict the

position and roles assigned to the male gender in the Pakistani-Urdu speaking society. These themes are discussed as follows;

1. Men's household

Power is often regarded as an essentially contested concept (Lukes, 1974; Connolly, 1993). In the Pakistani culture, however, the household, being symbolic of power, is typically associated with the male. Moreover, the females as well are conditioned to believe from their childhood that the house (being symbolic of power) is that of the male who is in-charge of it. For instance;

> *ab ke phuuli basant mere abba ke ghar*
> *pyaari amma ne aaj mujhe bheja*
> *ye piila joRa ye hari hari chuuRiyaa~*
> The spring bloomed at my father's house this time
> dear mother has sent me today
> This yellow dress, these green green bangles
> -Song Title: *mere nehar se aaj mujhe aaya*

In the above mentioned chunk it can be observed that the '*ghar*', the household, is that of the father, the male, whereas women are required to maintain relations with the relatives. Notice this similar theme being projected in the following as well;

> *banno tere abba ki oo~chchi haveli*
> bride your father's big mansion
> -Song Title: *banno tere abba ki oo~chchi haveli*

One of the main characteristics of a patriarchal community has been the male dominance and female subordination, males as economic providers and females as the economic dependents (Lateef, 1999). It is conclusive that such dependence of economy and property on males makes them less powerful when compared to men.

2. Men telling women not to be shy:

Another major theme observed in these songs is that of men asking women to be open and not shy. Men are stereotypically presented as bold, fearless and daring. Consider the following examples;

> *sharmaao na laga ke mehendi*
> *zara taliyaa~ bajao goriyo~*
> Dont be shy after applying *mehandi*
> Come on clap pretty girls
> > -Song Title: *zara Dholki bajao goriyo~*

3. The proud groom

The males, particularly the groom, are portrayed as very proud and self-confident.

> *kaha~ mile ga koi ham sa duulha*
> where will a groom like me be found?
> > -Song Title: *zara Dholki bajao goriyo~*

Notice how the man insults the woman by saying that she had fake pearls in her earrings, he is humiliating the bride to make his '*sachche moti*' (real gems) seem more important and worthy as compared to the ones she has.

4. Men as expressive and bold:

Media continues disseminating aggression as a normal male attribute (Wood, 2005). The males are projected as being more expressive, cussed and hasty in decisions such as marriage. This theme is expressed in the following;

> *kisi qaazi[6] ko bulao goriyo~*
> *abhi fesla karao goriyo~*
> *kaha~ mile ga koi ham sa duulha*
> *inhe~ dulhan banao goriyo~*

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[6] *qaazi* is a judge ruling in accordance with Islamic religious law (*sharia*), appointed by the ruler of a Muslim country. Qazis traditionally have jurisdiction over all legal matters involving Muslims.

Call some legal advisor pretty girls
Settle this matter right now pretty girls
Where will a groom like me be found?
Make her the bride pretty girls
-Song Title: *zara Dholki bajao goriyo~*

ham tere hojaae~ge
ye dil he lagaana
I will be yours
Have to hitch this heart
-Song Title: *mehandi ki xushbu se*

Exception:

The themes that have been discussed are the ones that are common in almost all the selected songs; however, there is one song that portrays the male gender in an exceptional way which makes that portrayal somewhat similar to the female portrayal in these songs. For instance, the innocent and naive theme that have been discussed in the first section of the analysis with regards to females was present in the song *Dholak baja ke saheliyaa~ bulaa ke* for the male gender as well. The exceptional descriptions of male gender in this song are as follows;

bhole bhaale bhaiya
innocent naive brother

choki pe beThe ga bhaiya sar jhuka ke
Brother will sit on the altar with bowed head

bhaiya ke haatho~ pe mehandi rachche gi mehandi
will be adorned on brother's hands

DISCUSSION

Based on the above data analysis, different themes have emerged, each in its own way suggestive of the patriarchal gender-situation in the Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs. Majority of these themes are unfavourable for women and depict the conventional gender hierarchy, normative heterosexual relationships, gender

subversions, kinship norms, and reinforce the already existing stereotypical beliefs. Overall, Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs are found to support, more than to challenge, the stereotypes that promote gender inequality, injustice, and the typical gender roles. Moreover, traditional gender schemas in the form of the conventional gender roles assigned are also found. In a patriarchal society like Pakistani, these songs are found to carry male centred ideologies, thus providing constant justification of the male dominated social structures. In other words it can be said that these wedding songs are repeated acts and images that validate society's gender expectations.

Listening to music provides a rich source of cultural information and can help scholars identify social norms and values (Korzenny & Korzenny, 2011). Knowing which messages will resonate with people can aide in a variety of fields from marketing (Korzenny & Korzenny, 2011), to cognitive therapy (Bretthauer, Zimmerman, & Banning, 2006). In sum, lyrics are a non-invasive way to learn about people and to identify trends in a society. The underrepresentation of women in media affects the boys and girls who are growing up consuming it. As Wood (2005) suggests, "the future is open. You and others in your generation will decide what it is," (p. 293). Therefore, it is time now to realize and singers and lyricists need to become aware of how important role they play in creating gender ideologies through songs. Instead of promoting and reinforcing the stereotypical notions, the focus should more be on bias free gender ideologies. And, not just the singers and lyricists need to make conscious efforts to remove the gender bias, the people who actually sing these songs and pass them on from one generation to another generation should realise the impact of these songs in constructing/ deconstructing social identities and gender roles.

There are a series of limitations that must be addressed. The first limitation is the inability of a researcher to avoid bias and misunderstanding of the content, therefore, this research study is no exception as it may not be bias-free. Although my proficiency in both languages, English and Urdu, is moderate, it is possible for other

researchers to find different messages than the ones presented in this study. Moreover, the themes that are discussed here emerged from only seventeen Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs which hint the possibility of more themes that might emerge from other wedding songs for counter-argument. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. The number of songs exclusively portraying the female gender and those that are also sung my female vocalists outnumber the ones for and sung by males. All these songs typically portray the bride in marriage with limited description of male gender roles.

Further research could expand on analyzing songs from each genre and expanding the sample pool. Moreover, since this study focused on researcher's subjective evaluation and understanding of the lyrics, research participants may also be added to this study and asked to share their views to authenticate the findings. And, because the focus of this study was gendered discourse of wedding songs, the same study can also be carried out for ethnographic studies as these songs also reveal a lot about the Pakistani-Urdu speaking culture.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Whether or not songwriters are aware of their writing or listeners aware of the messages in media, music serves as a tool that can aid self-concept, teach norms and behaviours, and make us question what we think we know. With so much power, it is important to continue to monitor media trends and media gender representations. And music is just one genre of the mass media, with wedding songs being a sub-genre of it; there are many other mediums too that need to be kept a check on to see if they are portraying the true picture of the society and if they portray one group as docile while the other quite the contrary.

The Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs mirror the societal norms regarding the expected behaviour or the assigned gender roles of both the genders. Since the themes that have been analysed in this paper do not portray a balanced or an equalized picture of the gender roles

assigned to both females and males, therefore, this analysis should be taken as an eye-opener for those who treat women in a faultily manner. Moreover, women themselves should also realize their standing in the society and speak for their rights rather than reinforcing the already existing stereotypes.

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