

Women Imagery in Folk Wedding Songs: An Ethnographic Study of Rajput Folksongs

Abstract

Folksongs play an important role in the social construction of identity as well as cultural promotion of particular areas. As an oral tradition, Folksongs are unlimited in their forms and subject-matters that ranging from simple to complex. The objectives of this ethnographic research are to investigate analysis and interpret Rajput women folk wedding songs as explicated by Rajput women themselves in their cultural context. The research conducted in a village, Wahando, near Gujranwala (Punjab, Pakistan) where many Rajputs families live. The research methods used is in-depth interviews through which eight women are interviewed and twenty folk wedding songs collected from them. Most of the songs collected from a mirassan (a professional singer) locally known as Dadi who sings folk wedding songs, other songs narrated by women of the family and written by the researchers. However, men perspectives about folksongs limit the study. The men images in the folksongs presented, interpreted and understood by women singers through conducted interviews. This research article concludes that folksongs reflect the sentiments and expectations of the bride towards her parents and in laws, which she otherwise unable to utter. It is also significant to mention that the research also informs that folksongs play a key role in reinforcing the stereotypical roles of women and men in subtle ways. Further, these folksongs provide a platform and a space for women (including bride) from where they can verbally express feelings and emotions vis-à-vis to their kinship.

Keywords: *Women, Folksongs, Rajput, Wedding, Birth songs*

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INTRODUCTION

Folk music and songs play an important role in the social construction of identity as well as cultural promotion of particular areas. Folksongs are intricately music from specific rural localities has the potential to represent the lives, grievances and celebrations of people living in the respective areas. As an oral tradition, folksongs are unlimited in form and subject-matter tied to the cultural expression of specific areas. Folksongs rang from very simple to relatively complex and are passed on from generation to other representing traditional variations of the area over the time. Folk songs encompass under the large umbrella of folklore. It is one of the genres of folklore. Dundes (1966) states folklore includes myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters. It also includes folk costume, folk dance, folk drama (and mime), folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music (e.g., fiddle tunes), folksongs (e.g., lullabies, ballads), folk speech (e.g., slang), folk metaphors (e.g., to paint the town red), and names (e.g., nicknames and place names)¹.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms defines” Folk song, a song of unknown authorship that has been passed on, preserved, and adapted (often in several versions) in an oral tradition before later being written down or recorded. Folk songs usually have an easily remembered melody and a simple poetic form such as the quatrain. The most prominent categories are the narrative ballad and the lyric love-song, but the term also covers lullabies, carols, and various songs to accompany working, dancing, and drinking. Folk songs are one of the verbal forms of folklore and sung by common people during work or social activities. One of the most important characteristics of these songs is that they are part of oral culture. The melodies and the texts are learned by imitation and participation rather than from written sources such as books. Additionally, folksongs have been an important part of the Rajput culture especially at weddings. Wedding, among the Rajput culture is an important traditional custom and an event of family get together. It is also considered as a major landmark in the life of every individual specially women. Whether a woman is getting married or women are invited on the occasion, wedding is supposed to be very special event for them. Since, it provides ample opportunity to meet each other and spend time together. This event also offers women a space where they can have fun and entertainment, in addition to through songs express themselves.

¹Online resource :Folklore Studies - What is Folklore - University of Missouri.mht)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review evidences that there are multiple ways through which researchers have defined folk wedding songs, and the images which they produce. Primdahi (1993) defines that the wedding songs that are sung at each ceremony are general songs named as *mangala*, meaning auspicious. It may be proper to call these songs as songs of women because these songs are primarily sung by women folk, women either of the house or neighborhood or invited relations. Narayan (1986) explains that friendship and folklore locate marriage/wedding as termination of the past, and preparation for the future in collective experience. She discusses that although women's songs are collectively performed, their meanings are never fixed and uniform but rather complex, diverse, and often vague. Each song presents a set of images or thematic elements which provide collective symbolic forms and individual interpretations due to individual's own unique experiences, memories, and aesthetic pleasures that cause songs to remain differently in the hearts and minds with different emotional experiences for them. She also mentions that women of all ages sing *suhag* because wedding comes as a transition period of a girl on her way to become a woman.

Yagi (2008) studies an Indian village and illustrates interconnection of the women with wedding songs *mangal gīt* (auspicious songs). These women's songs and erotic dances of fertility and reproduction connote auspiciousness and the locals believe that auspiciousness contributes to the prosperity and fertility of their family and lineage, whereas evil spirits are inauspicious and bring misfortune or disaster to them. The singing of *gālī* (abuse songs) and symbolic erotic dances are performed primarily by married women who are called *sagunihiya* (fortunate woman with husband). They take a leading part in the rites performed by women. Women's auspiciousness lies with their *sakti*. Although the difference is that married women's *sakti*, i.e., the capability of bringing fertility and prosperity to the family and lineage' is considered positive, whereas unmarried girls' *śakti*s considered dangerous because it often brings danger to society due to their sexuality. Jacobson (1975) discusses the women songs including wedding songs of a village in Central India in *Nimkhera* (UP). According to her the songs are sung to elaborate significant events in the life cycle: births, engagements, weddings and funerals.

Tiwary (1978) in his Indian village study, talks about the gloomy folk wedding songs where marriage is accustomed specifically with the painful separation from family and friends that a woman undergoes when she marries and moves to the household and village of her husband. Gold (1997) in her research study in Rajhistani village, describes songs which are sung by women to express the expectations and desires of women 'in women's stories which tend to show husbands as "yes-men" carrying out

female commands' and men in a husband and wife relationship. Rosenhouse (2001) in her comparative study of wedding songs of the Middle Eastern countries compares women wedding songs of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities found little differences which were largely with communal-religious factors rather than strictly structural or linguistic ones, i.e. to sociolinguistic issues. Jordan and de Caro (1986) talk about another song genre and compare it in Greece and Ireland. This genre is commonly the property of women--the ritual laments sung in a number of cultures. In Ireland and Greece, such laments are associated with death as they may be in India, though there "tuneful weeping" is much more associated with marriage, or, more specifically, with the painful separation from family and friends that a woman undergoes when she marries and moves to the household and village of her husband. Wedding laments are also sung in Finland, and were sung traditionally in China. In the Ingrian region of Finland, laments sung by the bride or her mother are a major part of wedding ceremonies.

In China, the bride traditionally sang laments for several days and nights before the marriage, especially expressive of nostalgic toward her mother whom she had to leave. Narayan's (1986a) study of *Kangra* village (India) on Rajput women analyzes folk songs sung by women in their socio-cultural context. She infers that these songs are not only sung for entertainment purposes, but reveal a socio-cultural context of patriarchal community in which these women live. These women express themselves by singing these songs on marriage ceremonies. These songs describe the separation of a daughter from her maternal home, and her departure to her in-laws where she will live after marriage. The songs depict her pain of separation from her parents, siblings and expectations from her husband. The lyrics of the songs provide opportunity for the women to express their emotions, anxieties, feelings and expectations which otherwise they cannot express. So through folksongs especially the wedding folk songs Dumount (1970) and Naryan (1986a) highlighted that in Rajput family relations, their hierarchical status can be understood while observing the domination of males over female, especially in case of kinship and marriage where one can observe status of bride-receivers (groom family) as superior and bride-donors (girl family) as inferior in status. So, the past researches highlight how folksongs have been a way of expression, a tool to share the patriarchal customs and practices and to console hearts. The present study fills the gap by studying the women imagery in Folk Wedding Song from Pakistan. It analyzes thematically how Rajput women's images are represented in their songs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in a village *Wahando*, in District Gujranwala (Punjab). The village is 45 minutes' drive from the main city of Gujranwala. Besides, Rajputs other

ethnic groups like *Arain*, Kashmiri migrants and Christian (a small minority) also live there. Rajputs living in *Wahando* migrated from India (Ambala) soon after partition of subcontinent in 1947. Rajput living in *Wahando* traces their genealogy from the *khashtery* clan of Rajputs. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Rajput word is derived from Sanskrit *raja-putra*, "son of the King" and constitutes a member of the patrilineal clans living in Pakistan. They became prominent from the late 6th century CE and continued to dominate many regions of central and northern India until the 20th century. Most of the Rajputs residing there use the surname as *Ranas* and are large and medium landlords. The harvest rice, wheat, vegetables, and fodder for animals. Trading through shop keeping and stock markets is done by *Arain* (a clan grouping in Punjab) people. Kashmiri migrants and Christian do the minor and temporary manual jobs in the field of these Rajput land lord. The Rajputs living in village are religiously conservative. There have been many *madrassas* in the area and outskirts of *Wahando* where small children are sent for Islamic teachings. Girls preferably stay at home after age of ten years and if they wanted to study, they are encouraged to study privately while staying at home. If some families allow their daughters to attend school, they have to observe Purdah and family men will accompany them for school. As in normal life, women are discouraged to go outside unless they have some very important task to do. If they outside, women strictly observe purdah which may be in a form of *Burqa* or big shawl covering their face and body. They have to accompany a family man/boy while moving outside of their homes.

The research paradigm used for the present study was qualitative and in-depth interviews are conducted from the Rajput women. Few women who know about folksong, refused to sing or narrate for us. They were of the strong opinion that singing songs or even narrating them is not desirable in Islam. Therefore, they have forgotten singing songs as it is highly discouraged within the community. It was a common but firm belief that Rajput women belong to a noble social class so they should not sing songs as this activity belongs to lower class women like *mirassan*. Her voice should not go outside of their homes and no stranger men should be able to listen to Rajput women voice that will lesser her family honor. Therefore women who narrated songs were sacred of their family men and did not sing and allowed us to record the folksongs in their voice. Due to strict purdah observation of women, they did not agree for pictures as well. Therefore, only *Dadi Sugro* who is professional singer (*mirassan*) had no objection on her picture and folksong recording. Even while looking for the song collection, we found very few women who can sing or narrate folk songs to us. We took interviews as we need to interpret these folksongs in their culture context and more precisely in women' own voices and understandings. Otherwise the main essence of interpretation of the folksongs would have been irrelevant. Questionnaire was constructed for professional and non- professional

women folksong singers. Questionnaire included the questions which were asked the meanings, context and significance of the particular song in their culture. On average, interviews lasted for 2-3 hours. Eight (8) women were interviewed and twenty (20) folk wedding songs were collected. The interviews were conducted in Urdu. However, few women conversed in Urdu and *Haryanvi* language (an Indo-Aryan language. It is native to the regions of Haryana, Delhi and some part of Rajasthan and Punjab of India/Pakistan). For more understanding, we took key informant with us so that she may help us in some words of Haryanvi language for translation of folk songs and as well as interviews. Women who know or can sing folk wedding songs are the participants of the research study. Most of the songs are collected from a *mirassan* (professional singer) *Dadi Sugro* who sings folk wedding songs on weddings in Rajput families. Other songs are narrated by women of the family and written. Men perspectives about folksongs are excluded from the study as after preliminarily investigation, we were told that there is no man in the village who may sing a folksong. Therefore, this research study lacks men's perception of folksongs and interpretation of the folksongs. The men images present in folksongs are interpreted on the understanding of women singers by conducted interviews.

Though wedding songs are important part of the wedding celebrations in the past, it was informed by the local women that folksongs have lost their popularity against CDs songs. People prefer wedding songs on composite disc (CDs) instead of live folksongs. They narrated some reasons for change. Firstly, Rajput men of the family do not like their women signing on the weddings as they consider it below their family honor and un-Islamic act. There have been many madrassas in the area where Islamic teachings are taught to girls and boys. Secondly, as singing songs was supposedly discouraged by men of the family, majority of women and girls do not know their own folksongs as they are not sung for many years. Thirdly, as compared to CDs songs, folk wedding songs lack contemporary musical catchy style so majority of people prepare CDs songs. There is no doubt that composite discs (CDs) and other musical instruments have somewhat replaced the women live singing in the various events of weddings; however, still few families in which some elder women or through *mirassan* (professional singer) sing their traditional songs for a specific ceremony like *Sehra Bandi*, *Butna* and *Henna*. Nevertheless, it is done in women only gatherings and men are not allowed to enter in these women spaces.

Wedding in Rajputs is endogamous within the caste and exogamous to the clan. Marriage outside Rajput clan is not desirable at all and as one of the residents informed me that it did not and cannot happen here, even not by error. In a patriarchal society like one understudy, birth of the girl is not celebrated, therefore wedding brings celebrations to that invisible girl into limelight and she gets the attention which she never had in her whole life. As un-married woman, she was never allowed to

wear gold jewelry and expensive dresses. Now she may have gold jewelry and costly dresses for her use. She will have a large dowry which is considered a symbol of reputation and prestige for Rajput families. Dowry may be a primary means of calculating *izzat* (prestige) where one can define and represent their position as 'big' or small'. Besides giving dowry to their daughter, her parents also give many gifts in the form of clothes and jewelry to the groom relatives. The asymmetrical flow of gifts shows the lower social status of bride (girl) family and support patriarchy within the community. As far as the role of the women in the family is concerned, they are expected to be the stereotypical and submissive. Relationship of daughter-in-law with her affine is expected to be polite and respectful. Complaints, grievances and conflicts arise as a result of a girl's changing family status from natal to conjugal family. With the onset of wedding days, she is dreaming of her new home as well as bearing the pain of leaving her parents. She may be apprehensive about her new home and relatives (in laws and her husband). All of the feelings she is supposed to not express or share with anyone as it may not be considered good on her part specially the romantic feelings regarding her husband as it is culturally disapproved. If she does so, she is considered a shameless lady who don't has respect for her parents and family honor.

In this situation where one is not allowed to express her emotions, fears and nervousness for new relationships, folksongs provide a channel for verbal expression, which is sanctioned by the family as well as society. The apprehensions and other anxiety related sentiments that are reflected in the songs arise due to various reasons. The general reason that can be understood in this context is her altered role in her natal and affine home. In simple words, a young girl's status in her conjugal family contrasts with her status in her natal family. There are two important relationships between woman and her female relatives are important yet estranged. Much as these songs are sung for entertainment, they also play a significant role in socializing the bride and groom into their new status as husband and wife. Besides, these songs also inform the bride about the circumstances she may encounter in her married life. Most of the songs that were collected address women, or women address them to rest of the family. Therefore, these songs make the impression that the success or failure of marriage depends on the behaviors and attitudes of the woman towards her in-laws family.

Folksongs also make it possible to let us understand the organization of maleness and femaleness in relation to a particular society. From an artistic point of view, the lyric of the songs are the most interesting. They reflect the bride's life in its entirety: her touching farewells to loved ones as she departs for the wedding ceremony or her husband's home, intuitions about the future, relationships between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and the innermost thoughts and emotions of the would-be bride.

Jassal (2012) expresses that songs, being the representatives of people's oral traditions, illuminate the social construction of gender through which overarching caste and gender ideologies are transmitted and reproduced.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The present study's result is based on the thematic analysis. Once the data on folksongs was collected, the next step was the translation of the collected songs. We took help from key informant who knew the language well. She translated some of the words which we could not understand, she also help us while we conducted interviews. After that classification was done and folksongs were categorized into major themes. Themes were constructed on the basis of the folksongs meanings and content as told by local women singers. It is important to mention here that most of the folk songs which were sung on weddings have overlapped meanings. For example one song may talk about the relationships with kinship along with abuse and satire. When this kind of situation occurred, then the categorization was done on the basis of dominant idea narrated in the song. Only some specialized songs like *Sehra* songs were slightly different in their content from rest of the ordinary folk wedding songs. Keeping songs contents in consideration, the following themes were made after collection of the folksongs;

1. Blessings and Praise Moments for the Bridegroom
2. Inert -Personal Familial Relationships
3. Abuse and Satire in Songs
4. Existence /Support/ Protest for Extended Family System
5. Plight of the Bride

Theme 1: Blessings and Praise Moments for the Bridegroom

In the Rajput community, like any other Pakistani patriarchal community, birth of a male child brings all the happiness in the family. A boy becomes darling of all his maternal and paternal relatives. Right from the day he was born in the family, her mother and sister start dreaming about his marriage. The attachment of his mother and sisters to his marriage, and especially his *Sehra* ceremony, is very much awaited moment in their lives. The marriage of a son brings happiness as well pride for the family. The lyrics of the *Sehra* songs have good wishes and prayers for the groom who is going to enter into new life. As birth of a boy is the moment of joy for the parents, similarly wedding of their boy is the ultimate joy they can enjoy. While singing the *Sehra* songs, the singer congratulates every near and dear relative of the groom, and asks them to give lots of gold and other expensive belongings of them to poor people on this joyful occasion. In this song for example,

Congratulations! On this blessed moment of *Sehra*

mubarik ho sehre ki gharee ...
mubarik ho sehre ki gharee
Aaj tera aba lotawe undan sona
Amman lotaween here ki kale mote ki laree

Today, your father is so happy that he will bestow countless money
 Your mother is so happy that she will bestow countless money (on this occasion)

This *Sehra* song depicts the happiness of parents as well as other relatives on the occasion. In the lyrics of the song, every relative male and female is invited to give some money as a *wale /bukhsheesh* (money given to poor people as charity) to the professional singer. The amount of the money hypothetically determines the happiness of the relative on this occasion. Through songs, groom's maternal, paternal uncles and aunties are invited to share their happiness as well blessings for the groom. These songs are sung by female women relatives or *mirassan* at the departure of the *Barat*.

Theme 2: Inert -Personal Familial Relationships

Family life has a very central part in the Pakistani society and among most of the ethnic groups living in Pakistan. The familiar network, politics and family ties are very much part of all the folksongs. The folk wedding songs reflect the nature and traits of the family relationship. The songs are sung both by the groom and bride family's family. The wedding songs sung by the girl's family express and evoke sentiments of sadness, departure from parents home, whereas wedding songs sung by the boy's family provoke a festive climate and happy feelings of celebration and possess humorous, even with suggestive lyrics. Almost all of the songs that are collected talk about family relationships with reference to bride, groom and baby boy. Some of the wedding songs reveal that the adolescent girls are never docile, submissive, or passive and rather bold, daring, and fearless. In real life, however, girls have hardly any say in their marriages. The songs mostly express girl's feelings which they otherwise cannot say aloud. As I studied the songs, I found out two types of interpersonal relationships. One is consanguineous (natal) relationship and other one is affine relationship. Consanguineous relations referred in the songs consist of father-daughter, mother-son, brother-sister, uncle-nephew, aunts-nieces, Uncle-niece. Affinal relations talk about comprise of husband and wife, mother in law and daughter-in-law, *jeth* (husband's elder brother) and *jethani* (husband's elder brother's wife), *devar* (husband's younger brother), *nanad* (sister-in-law or husband's sister). In couple of songs, relations with mother-in-law and sister in law (*nanad*) are

discussed repeatedly making them most important and controlling in the future life of the bride.

A: Consanguineous (natal) Relationships

I. Father--Daughter (*Baap--Beti*)

The relationship between a daughter and her father is somewhat different from other relationships. Their relationship starts as estranged at birth, but gets emotionally strong till the departure at the wedding day. Father, who becomes unhappy and does not celebrate the birth of a daughter in his family, loves his daughter very much and his daughter respects him. However, daughter takes liberty of his love and becomes sweet heart of his father. Off course, her liberty is limited in the real life as compared to the folk songs. It was observed that there is no informality and distance exists between a father and a daughter when she is young or at marriageable age. However, folksongs supposedly express sentiments of love and care between father and daughter are very much noticeable. Songs might have fantasized the young girl's affectionate relationship with her father and expressed her desire to be loved and pampered by her father. Marriage is an important occasion in family life especially for girls. Therefore, the dowry given to girl also determines the honor and status of the bride's family. Thus Rajput people tend to give large dowry to their daughters for their prestige and honor of the family. Bride also knows this tradition so she wanted to have large dowry of her choice. For example, in this song

*Meree ronaq jhonaq ladoo khele guriyaan
Baba easaa baar dhondio jis kee kothee khotla ho...
Tankhawa panjsoo ho
Gharee time wali ho*

My young beloved daughter who is wearing lot of jewelry is playing with a doll
O father look for a match for me
Who has very large house
Who has salary 500 rupees!!
Has a wrist watch which shows time!!!

After listening to the songs, it appears that daughter is more close to her father than her mother. Her father, though an authoritative figure in the house, spoils her with his love and care but the element of respect remains between them. Her father calls her *laado* (pampered daughter). She takes liberty of the leniency of her father's love for her, and demands too many expensive things from him for her wedding. In one song the girl makes demands from her father regarding her future husband. She wants a rich husband who has a big house and handsome earnings; she longs for a happy and economically sound life.

This song also reveals that women economically depend on men for monetary items. In other songs it may be noticed that women ask for many monetary items from the men relatives whom they think are only providers. The songs also inform the stereotypical role of a girl in Rajput culture that getting married and having a financially good husband is the destination for a girl. Before marriage, she is dependent on her father and brothers who support her financially and socially. After leaving her natal home, she may be dependent on her husband. Taking refuge of the folksong, the girl says all these demands to her father which in real life she, because of *sharam* (*shame*), respect and social norms, cannot speak to her father directly. It is not considered to be decent for a girl to talk to her father about her marriage prospect and related issues.

11. Brother-Sister (*Bhai–Bahen*)

In the joint family system, the brother-sister relationship is ranked second only to the mother-son relationship. Sister is proud of him and shows an extravagant hospitality when he visits her on festive occasions. In this song

Joore ki lut khoolo...
Ahe behno, bayoun piyareyan...
Joore ki lut kholoo

Untie your hair dear one
 Sister's and brother's beloved
 Loosen your hair

The lyrics of the above mentioned song reveal the love of sister and brother as she is referred as brother's darling in the song. Traditionally, a sister is sent from her in-laws to her parents' home with her brother only. Coontz (2000) writes that the relationship between brother and sister is such that 'Brothers and sisters do not need to explain things to each other, because they understand each other. The sister does everything for a brother a wife would do, except have physical contact.' Brothers like their sisters more than their brothers because their sisters are in no way challenges to their authority and power. For example, in one song on *butna* ritual, while untying bride's hair for applying perfumed oil on it, friends of the bride address her as 'Beloved of the brother, let us put oil in your hair'. Brother is expected to protect and support the whole life of his sister, and visits her with gifts during festival seasons and also ushers her to her natal home (*Mayka*).

III. Maternal Uncle (*Mamu*)

Another emotional aspect of brother-sister relationship is that in all children's marriages, first ceremony starts with the welcoming of her brothers as she herself, as a ritual, goes to invite her brothers. Although the traditional relationship between the child and the mother's brother and his wife (*mama and mami*) is one of informal affection, it has special significance. Respect and emotional love for the sister's son (*bhanja*) is greatly emphasized in the Rajput way of life. On the birth of his sister's child, he and his wife are asked to spend lots of money on deserving people as a good will gesture on this happy occasion. One song (mentioned below) narrates that *mamu* will buy rocker for the child and *mamee* (*mamu*' wife) will rock him slowly with love.

Buy a crib

Le le palna mool...

Yo.palna tere mame ne gherwaya...

Yo.palna tere mame ne gherwaya...

Aahe mamee jhoole de gee palna mool

This crib is brought by your *mame* (maternal uncle)

Your *mamee* (maternal aunt) will rock your crib slowly....

The responsibility that *mamu* and his wife begin on the birth of the child remains significant throughout the life of the child. For example, on marriage of niece (*bhanji*), he performs a ceremony *putrautarna* before she becomes a bride. It is a ceremony on the wedding day morning when the bride -to be takes a bath before dressing up as a bride. His maternal uncle gives her a substantial amount of money as a wedding gift. After taking that gift, she starts preparation for herself as a bride. Same is with his nephew on his marriage. On his *Sehra Bandi* day, his *mamu* performs the *Sehra Bandi* ritual. He ties *Sehra* (a decorated turban) to his nephew head and gives money to *mirassanas* and other servants of the house to avoid evil eye. These expectations of money are emotional as well as economical from the maternal side of the bride and groom.

IV Paternal Uncle (*Chacha*)

The relationship between a parental uncle, nephews and nieces entails affection and care on the part of the uncle, and respect and obedience on the part of his brother's children. Traditionally, an uncle is like the father. It is culturally sanctioned that female cousins (paternal uncle's daughters) are considered like own sisters and the marriage with female paternal cousins are prohibited in the family. The reason they told is that sister cousin also share the same blood as he so marriage with her is

unthinkable. This shows the relationship between paternal uncles with his nephews is like father and son. The nature of relationship that is based on the expectations of nephew from his uncle dominates the folksong' lyrics such as;

Mubarik he sehre kee gharee
Mubarik he sehre kee gharee
Tera chaacha lootayan undhan sona
Teree chachee lotayen herey kee kali – motee kee laree
Lo... Mubarik ho sehre kee gharee

Congratulations on this blessed moment
 Congratulations on this blessed moment
 Your uncle may give countless money
 Your paternal aunt (chachee) will give diamond flower and pearls
 Congratulations.... on this blessed moment!!!

Both of the relatives are expected to give away lots of money on the joyful occasion of marriage. *Chacha* is also treated like *mamu*; however, the expectation attached to *chacha* is not like that of *mamu*. He does not have the same obligations as *mamu* has, who takes important part in marriage ceremony for his sister's children. This relationship may also change on property issues and sometimes, tension may create between paternal uncles and nephews.

B: Affinal Relationships

Since a girl remains in her affine home after marriage, her inter-personal relations are the subject matter of a great body of songs. The most discussed and repeated in almost every songs are discussed below.

I. Husband-Wife

The relationship between wife and husband generally expected to be formal in nature. In Rajput community under research, the husband-wife relationship is not an informal one. It was observed that they are not supposed to show their love for each other publicly in the joint family system, wife usually remains busy in household chores, taking care of children elders and other relatives of the family. Men mostly spend their time outside their home which is considered to be a woman domain. Most of the Rajput families have *Deras* outside their home where men only meeting for family/ Biradari (kinship group) disputes are discussed and social gatherings take place. Women are not allowed to go there. Old men usually do not come to home and live in their *Deras*.

However, married men do come to home and live with his family. Culturally, men are expected to spend their time separately from women of the family including their wives. They are supposed to be aloof and distant from the women .it is culturally approved that men should remain detached with their women (wife) otherwise they are considered *less than a man*. That man is not only mocked but socially ridiculed by the community. So even a man doesn't like this kind of attitude towards her wife, he has to do it because of social pressure of the community. This personality of Rajput man reflects in many songs, especially in relationship with his wife. In most of the patriarchal societies, women are supposed to be subservient to all men of the family. However, this behavior becomes more demanding as when she becomes wife and daughter in law. Her role as a wife and daughter in law expected to be docile and submissive.

Even, a newly married couple is not supposed to talk directly when in-laws are around. The new bride knows this situation before time. One reason may be that she has noticed it in her home, too, with his brother and sister-in-law. So she is apprehensive and conscious about her coming days with in-laws. The songs represent the feelings of the bride who wants to be close to her husband who usually does not give her full time. The wish to be alone with her husband is very apparent in the songs. As one of the folksong express this feeling

Mean niya reehoon gee banre
Mean niya reehoon gee banre
Jhajj adelaanj abara liyoon banree
Teree maan laree gee banree
Qanchi se jeeb kater duyoo gee banree

I want to live on upper story house
 Your mother will fight with me my prince, I will cut her tongue with scissors my prince

The biggest fear which a bride has is the parting of her husband to some other place because of economic reason which is also expressed through songs. Estranged from her husband who is away or going to be away for occupational reasons for long time, the Rajput woman sings and expresses her anguish and intense longing for her husband. Fear of being abandoned by their husbands always remains in the back of mind of these women. As their husbands go somewhere, they feel helpless, vulnerable and at the mercy of their in-laws who are not at good terms with them. In most of the husband- addressed songs, the bride asks for more jewelry, attention and expresses a fear that as he going away he might not abandoned her. She wants attention from her husband by asking him many monetary items for herself.

II. Mother-in-Law

The relationship of mother in law and daughter in law is problematic in most of the folk literature of wedding songs. In most of the songs that are collected, the bride is sure that her husband will have a separate house for her. Jacobson (1975) researching in central India, also mentions that women's songs express social distance between a woman and her husband's kin (p.46). In one song, it is revealed that she is anticipating the fight with her in laws and she warns her husband that she will not remain silent and will cut their tongue (acute aggression) if they fight. She will also react in an aggressive way which is very essential for her survival there. This folksong expresses the same feeling as;

I want to live alone my prince

Mean niya reehoon gee banre
Mean niya reehoon gee banre
Jhaji adelaan jabar aliyoon banree
Teree maan laree gee banree
Qanchi se jeeb kater duyoo gee banree

I want to live alone my prince
 I want to live on upper story house
 Your mother will fight with me ...my prince
 I will cut her tongue with scissors ... my prince

Jassal (2012) mentions that through these oral traditions the social construction of gender takes place which depict mother in law as such which is always cruel, quarrelsome and trouble maker. The folksongs not only construct gender ideologies but also transmit and reproduce them. The conventional nature of the conflict between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law place the responsibility of successful marriage on women. The conventional portrayal of mother-in-law in literature and folk proverbs depicts her image as one of the major causes of unhappy life of her daughter-in-law. Therefore, through songs and folk proverbs, her image is exaggerated making the bride already biased about her role and character in her future family life. This type of conflict is succinctly explained by Gluckman (1965, p.59-60) by saying that the success and happiness of a marriage does not depend so much upon the couple but also upon his parents and other relatives that they may live with.

II. Sister in Law (Nanad)

Karve (1996) in the same way mentions one type of enmity between a woman and her husband's sisters. It is surprising that a woman who waits for many years for her

brother's marriage so impatiently becomes cruel to her sister-in-law after a couple of days and tries to ridicule her off and on. Hivale (1946, p.193) indicates the rivalry between wife and her husband's sister is found to be so great that the bride tends to regard her as her co-wife. (As the songs picture, even though a *nanad* (husband's sister) has no specific authority in her own hands, she may try to control her brother's wife with her domineering mother and remains in constant tussle against her brother's wife. This situation is not much different in Rajput community. The unmarried *nanad* may not be as controlling sometimes as compared to a married or divorced/widow sister-in-law. In this situation, sisters feel that their brothers are obliged to support them and their children. They may even accuse the daughter-in-law of ill-treating and discriminating against their children (Gluckman, 1965, p.70-72). Therefore, majority of songs depict a relationship between them based on mutual conflict and jealousy. For example, in this folk song;

Nanandia mange heroon jaree
Ae... jeveroon mein mera tika bharee...
Wo bhi nanandia ko de doo
Nandee ke veera jago... ..
Nanandia tika leti nahein
Nanandia mange heroon jaree

Sister in law is asking for diamond jewelry
 My tikka is the heaviest among all my jewelry
 But ... she doesn't want to take it
 Wake upBrother of my sister in law
 She is only insisting on diamond jewelry of mine

It is a tradition in Rajput that on the birth of her nephew, sister in law expects a expensive gift from her brother's wife. As the nature of relationship between two ladies remains conflicting, so the sister in law (*nanad*) usually tries to ask for the gift of her choice. She knows traditionally that that at this joyful event, her brother's wife has to give her whatever she demands. So at time, sister in law (*nanad*) wants to upset her brother's wife by asking an expensive gift which was given to her brother' wife by her parents. This particular song narrates that story as the brother's wife offering her *nanad* various jewelry items earrings, bangles etc. as a gift but she (*nanad*) is insisting on the gift which is given to her brother' wife by her parents. So there is a tussle going on from both sides that shows the nature of relationship between them.

II. Husband's Elder & Younger Brother

In real life situation, the relationship of a bride to her husband's elder brother (*jeth*) is of respect and is highly tabooed. The bride is supposed to respect and avoid talking

informally to him. As relationship of any sort is strictly prohibited between bride and her *jeth*, therefore the mockery is made for fun, just to embarrass both relatives. Some songs also reflect the possible tussle that might exist between jeth's wife and the new bride. Jeth's wife can be angry or jealous with her as she is expressing her romantic feelings for her husband. This shows that life in in-laws house is not easy. She has to make her space there, and the stereotypical hostile situation of in-laws is depicted through the song. In the strange and hostile husband's home, *devar* in Rajput culture, as told by the respondents, is a brotherly figure and supports her sister-in-law in domestic fights. Sometimes, he becomes the sister-in-law's closest ally, and he gives her sympathy and friendship. In folk wedding songs, the relationship is friendly and open. Bride likes him as he resembles in many ways to his brother (bride's husband) so she takes latitude of friendliness with him. In one songs, the bride is comparing her *devar* with her husband whom she loves. While comparing her husband, she outclasses *devar* in every dressing sense. She flirts with *dever* and say that she got confused by the dressing of her dever who dressed up like her husband. Because of this confusion, she mistakenly woke up her *dever*. Thus she ridicules and seduce him and in the end, she declares that there is no comparison between him and her husband.

Theme 3: Abuse and Satire in Folk wedding songs

Humorous-satirical wedding songs often include fun for the groom or bride, and further, the groom and his groomsmen, brothers, friends and relatives. These songs are also related to various wedding rituals; melodically, they are similar to other songs in the wedding songs and are lyrical in nature. Singing satire songs on wedding have many explanations. These kinds of songs are locally called *gali* songs in India-Pakistan continental context. They have a deeper social meaning. These *gālīs* relate to social relationships. *Gālī* song texts are classified into two types. One type insults the bridegroom and his relatives while the other has a sexual meaning. For example, in one song it was obvious that the girl is calling her husband's brother's son as having a loose character because he tries to flirt with her.

Mere jethkalarkabarapapi
Waa to mara seen kahachachee
Maen tikka le aya mere chachee
Zara la kadekhade mere chachee
Mere jethkalarkabaraapaapi

My jeth's son is very wicked (loose character)
 He hints me naughtily and says
 I brought a tika for you my chachee
 Just wear it for a while

My jeth's son is very naughty

In another song, she calls her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law overweight and ugly women. So both of these songs, in a subtle way, convey the sexual and ridiculing messages, but in a comic way, so that people may entertain themselves and enjoy the moments.

Theme 4: Existence /Support/ Protest for Joint Family System

The family structure pictured in the Rajput songs is patrilineal and joint family system. Where in there has been a little change in the joint family structure as some families are separated in way that they shifted to the next door home from their parent home. However, the same trend is still followed in the community as most of the household were joint family homes where three generations live together. They might have separate kitchen but they share a big courtyard (*Sehan*) jointly. As our data reveals that in the song mentioned below, the wife is ridiculing her mother and sister in law as her husband is going away from home and leaving her with his relatives. This song expresses woman's overt negative feelings of a wife who does not like to live her in-laws;

La gia santare ka per rhumara jia legnee noo

Chore gia sandheesi bobo humare sang larnee noo

You planted an orange tree for my pleasure

But you left your overweight and ugly sister who fights with me

Supporting institution of arranged marriage and involving paternal and maternal relatives in the wedding ceremony shows how much these relationships are important and necessary for a couple who is going to be married. In almost every song, all the paternal and maternal relatives are invited to participate in the wedding rituals and spend bundle of money to show their love for the soon-to-be-married couple. The new couple also gets the subtle messages through songs that many people are pleased with their marriage and keep them under pressure as they have to live together for the rest of their lives. Her expression of the feeling of anger, helplessness and desire to live with her husband is prominent in some of the songs. She thinks that she is left alone with her in-laws where she is unaided and helpless.

Theme 5: Plight of the Bride

Under the authority of a father-in-law, the male head of household, it becomes hard for the wife to persuade her husband to stay with her. Generally the husband due to economic or other daily life necessities works far from the home. Even living in the same house is unlikely that wife can influence her husband and make choices for themselves. Usually wife in songs try to hold her husband back by seducing him. In some of the Rajput folksongs, the lyrics of the songs depict the fear of separation of a wife / bride that her husband may leave her for other woman or will go away from home for work or job. These songs represent the covert yet bold expression of her emotion to a normative way of life where husband leaves his wife for many months for buying earnings and goes away. It is not considered to be a normal routine for women as they are not supposed to mention or protest this in their routine life. It is considered shameful for a wife if she questions his departure. Conversely, folksongs give her that space sanctioned by society and voice to express her lonesomeness. Even before leaving her parents, she is skeptical about her this feeling. She thinks that one day her husband will also leave him for his work and will go to some distant place. She will have to stay with her in-laws in difficult circumstances.

As one of the folksongs collected presents the same sentiments of a newly married girl who is asking her husband who was not with her;

*Raja kahaangae the mare khulla para
gharbaar*

*Raat Raja kahaangae the mere khulla
para gharbaar*

*Doobkiyonna mar gae the mare
yareenumernadaan*

*Gore wahangae the tharakantegharya
saree raat*

*Gore wahangae the tharakantegharya
saree raat*

My king where you went last night my
whole house remained open

My king where you went last night my
whole house remained open

You should be ashamed of your
behavior as I am so young (and you
left me alone at night!)

My dear I went to gold smith for
renovating your earrings

My dear I went to gold smith for
renovating your earrings

In couple of songs specially addressed to husband, the some fruits and other symbol are used. When interpreted, explain the sentiments of the wife that her courtyard tree is having fruit but she didn't. Roy (1975, p.95) and Trawick (1990, p.105-106) decipher that juicy ripe fruit and the craving to enjoy it mixed with a longing for an absent husband. It also conveys her sexual intimacy feelings in subtle way. The other meaning can be deciphered as the complaint that she cannot enjoy eating alone permeates this song. The main theme conveys her loneliness and separation from her husband.

CONCLUSION

Songs are integral to people's lives, therefore they describe about caste, kinship and marriage, work cultures, gender, power, sexuality, family life, patriarchy, and the forms of agency in the cultural context from where they belong to. Folk songs forces and reinforce ideologies and roles within the community from one generation to another. In this way they maintain the social order in the community who practice it and acknowledge it. Similarly, Gluckman (1963) rationalizes these verbal tones (songs) of everyday behavior found in many "rituals of rebellion that allow social unity and the dominant ideology otherwise to prevail in everyday life. Similarly, the expression of women through the songs is one of the reactions to the power structure; songs are the platform that helps women to voice themselves. Folk Wedding songs serve many purposes. They entertain people and challenges the patriarchal order of the family in which women remain docile and submissive, both physically and emotionally. However, they make possible for a woman to express her romantic and sexual feelings even for her husband loudly. Moreover, through songs, she articulates her sentiments and use humor and funny ways. Through songs she can talk about her fears, insecurities and oppressive sentiments as the same songs suggest how dominant ideologies are not merely accommodated, and reinforced but also resisted and interrogated. Folk wedding songs in many ways agree to the dominant ideologies of gender and kinship, however, they also express their resistance to these ideologies into their everyday lives. This type of resistance is misunderstood by many western feminists who think that women of the underdeveloped countries are docile and don't protests against patriarchy (Mohanty, 1988). On the basis on data obtained and then analyzed, it can be concluded that these women protest their oppression but in their own cultural context that suits them. In this case, women through their agency of song are protesting and making satire on the relationships which they otherwise cannot. Patriarchal relationships like husband, father, brother, father and mother in law are challenged, mocked and ridiculed in their own way. Therefore singing folk wedding songs women not only express their thoughts and emotions to others but also establish an agency to convey their message of protest according to their own cultural paradigm.

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