

THE RURAL SINDHI MEN: THEIR IDEAS OF MASCULINITY AND THE IDEOLOGY OF PATRIARCHY

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Abstract

In this study, the respondents were engaged in discussions about their idea of masculinity. In this study, the Sindhi word used in discussing masculinity is 'Maradangi' (Manhood) and the rural men generally understand this as having two aspects of meaning: the physical and behavioural characteristics that define a man and the other is the sexual characteristics and behaviour of men. In the first instance of the meaning, the concept of maleness, machismo, manliness and masculinity and different perceptions, beliefs, and notions about the characteristics and features of a man (biological & non-biological) are described profoundly by the rural men of Sindh. The rural men generally give these characteristics to describe a typical man: brave, strong, unemotional, aggressive, even someone who is bold enough to pick a fight. The men feel that in rural cultures, it is very necessary for a man to adopt such features and characteristics in order to survive in the community. Itulua-Abumere (2013:1) defines masculinity as consisting of "those behaviors, languages and practices, existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine". Thus, masculinity may exist in two forms as positive attributes, where they

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have offered some means of identity significations for males and negative ones, where they are not the 'other' (feminine characteristics). The narratives of the rural men in this chapter contribute to the understanding about the perspectives of rural men about masculinity and to the discussion about the persistent ideology of patriarchy in the rural society, taking into account Dobash and Dobash (1979)'s and other similar scholars' discourses on the influences of society's patriarchal constructs on the pervasiveness of domestic violence. The masculine characteristics and patriarchal mindset of men reflect the societal depiction in detail on how they physically and socially consider and value women.

Keywords: *Manhood , feminin , machismo , society's, domestic violence.*

INTRODUCTION

Masculinity, as a socially constructed and culturally embedded concept, occupies a central position in discussions about gender roles, power relations, and societal expectations. In many patriarchal societies, including rural regions of Sindh, the idea of manhood is not merely a biological attribute but a culturally reinforced identity shaped through everyday practices, behaviours, and communal norms. The Sindhi term Maradangi—commonly translated as manhood—captures this complex interplay of physical strength, emotional restraint, sexual behaviour, and socially approved masculine conduct. For rural men, these expectations are deeply rooted in cultural traditions that associate masculinity with bravery, aggression, dominance, and the capacity to assert control in social spaces. Such conceptualisations align with global scholarly debates that view masculinity as a set of behaviours and values defined in opposition to femininity and reinforced through social institutions. These constructions often contribute to hierarchical gender relations, privileging men while marginalising women, and reinforcing broader patriarchal ideologies. Scholars such as Itulua-Abumere (2013) and Dobash & Dobash (1979) emphasize that these cultural ideals intersect with power dynamics that shape interpersonal relationships, sometimes contributing to the persistence of gender inequality and domestic violence.

In the context of rural Sindh, examining men's narratives about Maradangi

provides critical insight into how masculinity is understood, enacted, and transmitted across generations. Understanding these perspectives is essential for interpreting the social foundations of patriarchy and the ways in which cultural norms shape male identities and their attitudes toward women. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the lived experiences and conceptual frameworks through which rural men define masculinity, offering an important contribution to ongoing discourses on gender, power, and social structure in South Asian rural settings.

THIS RESEARCH COVERS FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. *To discover the Pakistani men's ideas about masculinity and traditional narratives about women.*
2. *To evaluate the narratives of the men in relation to their understanding apropos masculinity and domestic violence in rural Sindh, Pakistan.*
3. *To examine the ideology of men in relation to their understanding about patriarchy in rural Sindh, Pakistan.*

RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF STUDY

1. *What are the Pakistani men's understanding about masculinity and traditional narratives about women?*
2. *What are narratives of men in relation to their understanding about hypermasculinity and their relation to domestic violence in rural Sindh, Pakistan?*
3. *What is the ideology of men about patriarchy and domestic violence in rural Sindh, Pakistan?*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

This research study is designed qualitative in method with phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of men regarding the idea of masculinity and ideology of patriarchy. The total number of the participants were (N=13- Thirteen) from district Dadu rural Sindh Pakistan. The participants were males whose age ranged from (18 to 65) years old.

RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The recruitment of the male participants was solely based on voluntarily basis with inclusion and exclusion criterion in of sound health and age ranged from (18-65), and were residence of selected areas of Dadu district

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rural sindh Pakistan. Before starting the collection of data and going into the filed rapport relations were established with respondents, community and the heads/ chiefs of community.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

In this research study, (N=13 men) were employed with purposive and snowball sampling uring the data collection to approach the respondents, owing to the sensitive areas of research and topic. Data collection tools included semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews. As mentioned above, the respondents in this study was identified using the purposive sampling (non-probability) method, particularly employing the snowballing technique. The first point of access to the respondents is through organising formal meetings and gatherings with community leaders and influential figures in the communities. The sampling process further employs these inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting the respondents for this study.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- 1. Male resident of rural district Dadu, Sindh, in Pakistan.*
- 2. Adults (18-65 years old) at the time of interview.*
- 3. Either married or unmarried male.*
- 4. Consist of all levels of education (up to PhD).*
- 6. Not currently suffering from chronic diseases or psychiatric illnesses.*
- 7. Language requirement: speaks Sindhi and belongs to Sindhi culture.*

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Subject who is not willing to give written or verbal informed consent.*
- Subject who is not a male resident of rural Dadu, Sindh, Pakistan.*
- Aged below 18 years or above 65 years.*
- Do not speak/ understand the Sindhi language.*

In the inclusion criterion, only Muslim Sindhi and Sindhi-speaking respondents are selected because in Sindh, Pakistan.

PHENOMENOLOGY APPROACH

In this research Phenomenology approach is employed to get the in-

depth and subjective experiences of men about ideology of patriarchy and ideas of masculinity. This approach basically engages the in-depth experiences, exploring text to explicate the spirit and real meaning of verbatims of respondents (Grbich, 2012:92). Phenomenology approach in itself is employed to know rich and in-depth 'lived experiences' of people or the phenomena. Those lived experiences are investigated, explored, portrayed, interpreted, and communicated possibly. "This is also recommended where there is fewer amount of data is available, such as domestic violence, high-risk leisure activities and sexual pleasure has been a favorite among these phenomena" (Grbich, 2007:84).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION OF RESEARCH

Ethical consideration is most vital part of conducting any research. Respondents were requested to give their written and verbal consent for the research, such as they had right not to answer any question if they feel uncomfortable. Moreover, they had right to withdraw at any time, and researcher promised them to use the pseudonyms in narrations of the respondents and protect their social identity and privacy of data. However, Community heads, Moulvi (religious head) were briefed about the research before conducting interviews. Above all, inclusion and exclusion criteria were also included.

LOCALE OF RESEARCH

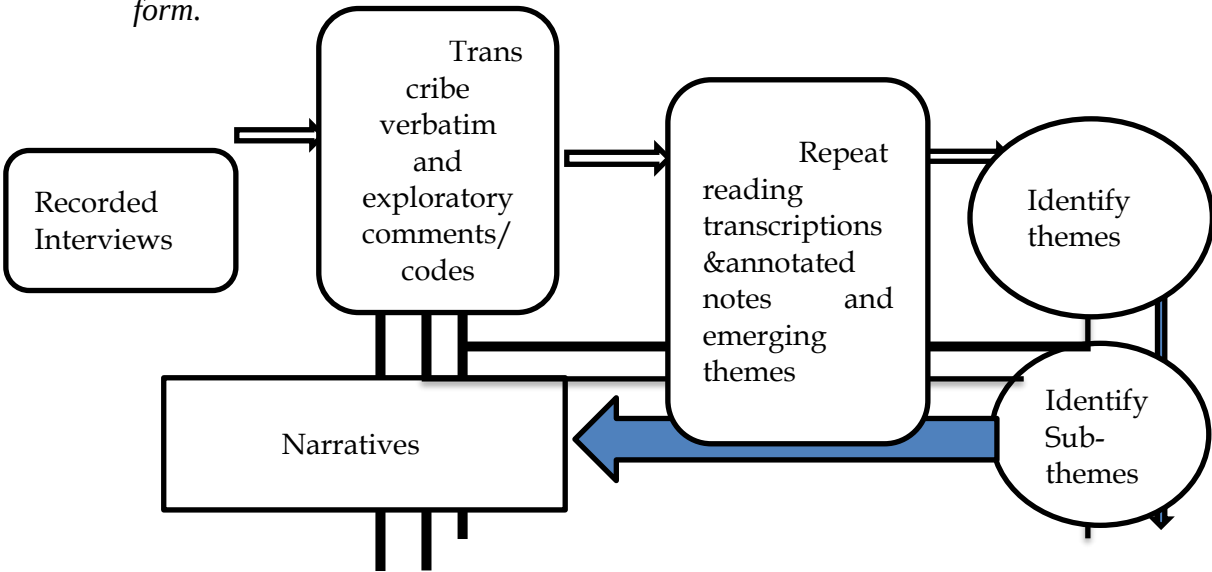
Locale of this study was rural Sindh; one rural taluka (Mehar) (sub-unit of district Dadu) was selected on convenience of the researcher and because of limitations of time and resources.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was started by open code, the categories and themes, codes were analyzed with the support of the narrations of the respondents. First data was transcribed into Sindhi later into English version with forward and backward methods to check the language errors. The interviews were translated from Sindhi to English language and repeatedly were checked by the researcher for its coding and patterns (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005). Transcribed data and verbatim were written together with field notes, observation, and memos accordingly. Khan and Hussain (2008) states that to analyzing the data researcher first needs to transcribe verbatim with edited transcriptions. Simultaneously, categories and themes were established and rare categories were developed and coded properly. Time

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to time; the interviews were read line by line (open coding) and emerging themes were coded, categorized, and analyzed by the way (Piatczanyn et al., 2016). The processes of data analysis can further be presented in graphical form.



Adapted from “Psychological experiences of patients with chronic pain: A qualitative study” (Talaie et al., 2015:10).

RURAL SINDHI MEN AND HYPERMASCULINITY

The respondent (Kutub) shared his observation and experiences that Pakistani rural men are the most violent, aggressive and fierce men and he used the word *Jhagrало* (a fighter or someone who is not afraid to fight) to describe them. This word refers to a person who is always engaging in disputes and fights. This word was also used by many other respondents in the interviews for this study. Even some of the respondents took it seriously and called this an important adjective and character for rural men in Sindh. The concept of a “fighter” in some rural areas is strongly prevailing, where a man needs to be good fighter and very aggressive to show his bravery and aggressive behaviour. This is necessary in rural set up due to some unavoidable situations like fighting between two castes or tribes or some called it necessary for the job of enforcement like the army and police. If a man is not a *jhagrало* in such situations, he will not be able to face crisis situations in the society where he lives in or during the war with enemy and

criminals. In addition, such aggressive behaviour of men affect women at home, who are usually victims of domestic violence from such hyper-masculine person.

Mard mana bahadur, jazbati taqatwar, khofnaq, aee kadhe kadhe jhagrало, aee tashdud waro, ihe sabh khasytoon mard hujан laae lazim ahen. Ihe sabh khasytoon mard lae zaroore ahen. Bahryen maslan aee andryen maslan khe control kren lae.

“Men are bold, brave, fierce, aggressive, robust and forceful, sometimes a “jhagrало” (“fighter” and violent; these are fundamental characteristics of a man. These are necessary for men to keep internal and external things under control and are necessary for all men”. (Kutub, 58 years old, married).

Sardar pointed out that for rural men it is required and necessary to be bold, brave, strict and violent sometimes. These fundamental characteristics are necessary for a man to fit himself in the mainstream of life. A man must be strict enough at home and outside as well to make himself livable in the society.

Bahadur, sakht aee tashadud pasand hujан mard lae ihee khasiyton hujан zaroore ahe. Agr eene na thendo te Fouj, police aee bia force saan lagapiya idaran mein kein kam halando?

“Bold, brave, strict and violent are fundamental characteristics of a man. If he is not bold and brave, how will he be recruited in the army and other armed forces departments, like police, air force and paramilitary forces departments”? (Sardar, 39 years old, married).

This view further indicates that in his opinion, only men are suitable for the jobs in the army, police, air force and paramilitary force.

Qalandar also narrated that fundamental characteristics of a man, like bravery, bold, aggressive and being a fighter are necessary in rural culture for his survival to face the difficulties of living in the rural setting. Otherwise, people would laugh at him and make jokes that he is an effeminate man in the society. This is an orientation and training that are given to children in the rural areas since childhood, in order to be called a man.

Bahadur, jazbati, jhagrало sakht, tashdud kren waro manho aee khasyto hujан zaroore ahen. na te zindagi jo gado na halando. Mard khe bahrare mein zindagi eene e guzarne pawande. jekadhe ihe sabh khasytoon na

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hondyon mard mein te hin khe manho tana denda aee unn manho ya mard khe 'auratano mard sadenda.

"All fundamental characteristics like, brave, bold, manly, aggressive, likes to pick a fight, strict, violent are necessary to be called a man. That's how you should lead a life in society". If such qualities are not found in a man, he will be called 'womanly male'. (Qalandar, 65 years old, married).

(Nawaz, 34 years old, married) also argued that the natural characteristics of a man are to be hard, bold, and macho because in rural areas the concept of 'taqat' (physical strength or power) is very important. This concept has two aspects. First, it refers to a person who can fight and protect his family (from internal and external threats) and second, a person who has the power to control over the decision making and resources in the family.

The rural men in this study often describe their ideas of manhood by making opposite comparison with characteristics of women. Imran defines masculinity by contrasting its meaning to what he thinks a woman's characteristics are. It is shown that there is a strong belief amongst rural Sindhi men that women are weak and fragile, both biologically and in behaviour.

Saifullah thought that physical strength and toughness are the main characteristics and features of men, compared to women, in rural Sindh.

Baye insaan ahen par mard taqatwar ahe, and mazboot pinn. Aurat jismane toar te mard khan muktakif ahe, aee aurat nafees aee naziq ahe.

"Both [men and women] are human beings, but men are stronger and more powerful. A woman is very different to men in physical shape and that is natural. A woman is sensitive and delicate". (Saifullah, 46 years old, separated).

The implication given about these attributes of women and men is that men have the more positive attributes while women the negative ones. Imran confirms this view:

Auat dijne, khoof khaendar, buzdil, takree, aee naziq pinna he. jetoneek aurat nandhe honed khaan dijne aee khamosh kaye waye ahe. Mard bhale jismane toar mazbootahe, par aurat kamzoor, aee buzdil ahe.

"A woman is timid, fearful, sensitive, cowardly, hasty and fragile as well.

However, she is made fearful and depressed by men since childhood. Physically, a man is strong; a woman is weak and cowardly". (Imran, 23 years old, un-married).

Latif viewed men as strong, bold and brave compared to women who are weak either biologically or in the mindset.

Mard mana bahadur, sakht jan, aee bardasht waro, jadhe te aurat nadhan maslan te jaldi preshan thee wache thee jestaen ko maslo haal thie. aurat rayoon kre thee aee royeen khee panhje hathyar toar istamal kre thee kam je jagah te.

"Man means brave, bold, strong and resilient whereas a woman becomes worried suddenly on petty matters and cries on every matter until resolved. She uses crying as a weapon to solve the problem at home and other places, like at the workplaces". (Latif, 38 years old, married).

Many of the rural men made associations of the idea of masculinity with the role or job in the armed forces. Ikram expresses this and further associates' masculinity with men's roles as leaders in different structures of society such as development and nation building.

Mard sipahi ahe, aee mard maana bahadur, aee mard muashre mein tarqe jo sabab pinna he. Mard asal sabba ahe muashre mein tarqe jo aee nasal wadhaen jo. Mard asal mein qanoon, hikmat amle aee bia mukhtalif qirdar adaa kre tho duniya mein tarqe laee.

"A man is a soldier, a man is a development agent, and a man means bold and brave. A man is the real cause of society's development and generation. A man is also responsible for development of law, system and policy. Furthermore, a man has an important role in developing the world". (Ikram, 34 years old, married).

As discussed, earlier maradangi (manhood) in Sindhi also has the meaning of sexual virility and power. Thus, in rural Pakistan, masculinity is also associated with sexual superiority and possessiveness (Ambreen and Akifa Imtiaz, 2014). The sexual virility and ability are also associated with the ability to produce offspring (Rozan et al., 2017). This ability is seen as an important role for men in rural communities, as can be seen from Haji's point of view:

Mard samaji wajood rakhe tho, mard jo kaam nusul wadhaen ahe, mard maana taqat aee bahadure. Jadehn te aurat maana khoobsorat aee nazuq ahe. Aurat maana qurbani, aee bardasht jo nalo aahe muashre mein.

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“A man is a social being whose job is to produce children and increase the generation. The man means boldness and strength. Whereas, a woman means beauty, sensitive and fragile”. (Haji, 64 years old, married).

The implication for men's sexual power and freedom is that women will be at the receiving end of sexual demands from men. Men have been recognized to believe that they are authorized to demand “sexual acts” at any time from women. This recognition is often supported by religious teachings in the rural areas that if a woman refuses to have sexual intercourse with her husband, she is committing a sin (Qayyum et al., 2013).

It can be seen that the rural men in Sindh tend to attribute what they see as positive characteristics (physical strength, bravery, provider of the family and so on) as belonging to men and the opposite characteristics which they see as negative (physically weak, timid, cowardly, complaining and so on), as belonging to women. This is also a reflection of the patriarchal structure and underpinnings of life in rural Pakistan where men are seen as having the dominant role in society.

The views of masculinity as presented above are inculcated in the society since a person is very young. A man who does not possess the required masculine characteristics was not viewed as a good omen for male in the Sindhi rural setup. The decent and coward person will not be able to live; hence this is necessary for men to be bold, brave, and aggressive to survive in rural society. And respondents share the views that parents should also train their children, particularly boys, to be tough, brave, and aggressive because they will be the protectors, saviors and breadwinners. He has to face all the weathers, ‘Tatti and Thadi’ [hot and cold weather, good and bad atmosphere, easy and difficult], and the overall atmosphere of the society. Therefore, for rural men, it is necessary to have all fundamental features and characteristic different from rest of people particularly living in urban areas. Shafique shared his views that for men all fundamental characteristics are necessary to face difficult situations either in terms of natural or societal contexts. This is because men bear many responsibilities in life, such as being the protector and maintainer of the family.

Asan jo muashro khatrak ahe. Hite shareef manho ahe buzdil jo rahan dukyo ahe. Mard khe bahadur, jazbati thiano pawando muashre mein rahan

lae. asaan ja waldeen aee mushro be sekhare tho te ken mard khe bahadur aee sakht jaan thian ghurje. Cho jo mard jo kirdar hite tahfuz karen aee bachaen waro ahe unn khan poe mard kamayen waro pinna ahe. Mard khe sabh tatti thadi aeesabh laha charha disna pawan tha. Aee subh mahol dukhyo ya kharab muashro saan mard khe halno pawe tho Unn lae iho zarore ahe te mard khe sabh bunyadi khasytoon hujan zaroore ahen.

“Our [rural] society is dangerous. The decent and coward person will not be able to live happily in the society. A man must be bold, brave, and aggressive to live in this society. Our society and parents also train their children, especially boys, to be tough, brave and emotional because they are the protectors, saviors and breadwinners [of the family]. They have to face all weathers, “tatti thadi” (“hot and cold” or good and bad), easy and difficult, and the overall atmosphere and dealings of the society. Therefore, for men, it is necessary to have all fundamental features” (Shafique, 38 years old, married).

The respondents share that in rural Sindh, if a male child is seen as lacking in maleness or masculine characteristics, he would be given proper attention and training to improve the masculine traits. The society put importance on socializing male children so that they can survive living in a masculine society.

Iho manho laee zaroore ahe te uho bahdur, aee himat waro huje, jang je wat aee dushman saan jhere mein mard khe bahadure aee himat je zrorat ahe. Poe uha dusman jo border huje ya, bioo kujh. Aee chokre khee bee iha training dibe te mard ja sabhe khasytoon hun mein mojood hujan.

“It is very essential for a man to be strong, macho, hard, powerful, strong, tough, hard, and to have warrior characteristics in times of fighting and in quarrel with the enemy in society or during the war, with the enemy at the border. These fundamental physical features are very necessary for him and boys will be trained to be like this”. (Sher, 65 years old, married).

Socialising boys to have all the masculine traits as already mentioned by the respondents earlier, are very important to be accepted as members of the rural community in Sindh.

Sakht jisam, mazboot aee kadhen kadhen jhagrало be hujan zaroore ahe, cho tea san je bahrare je muashre mein ko bhe amun amaan aee riasat taraf khaan saholat ghat haen. hit rozano agwa, phuroon, dhara, ahen. Hite unn lae mard khe jaghrало aee mazboot hiano pawando. Agr na thendo te

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muashro hin khe rahan na dendo.

“The features of tough, hard, strong and being a fighter are the requirement of the society, law and order are very scarce [in the rural areas] [and men need to deal with violence such as kidnapping, robbery and so on. So, if a man will not be hard, tough and a fighter, rural society will not let him, and his family live in a peaceful manner”. (Qadir Bux, 60 years old, married).

Ghulam Rasool agrees that boys need to be taught the “real man’s traits in order to be accepted by society.

Jekadhe mard mein himat, mazboot aee jaghraloo waryn khasytoon na hondyoon te manho hin khe panhjo saang/ rishto bhe na denda. cho jo hoo asal mein murs manho ahe eek on.

“If these features like strong, macho, hard, a fighter are not found in man, rural people/community will not appreciate him as a true and ‘real man’ and will not give him girl for a marriage”. (Ghulam Rasool, 57 years old, married).

Respondents make a point that sometimes a man needs to be “Jhagralo” or a fighter and act with violence to even cause death because this may be necessary for him when living in a rural set up where states are failing to protect the people.

Kadhe kadhe mard lae wirhan aee maran zaroore ahe, unn khe mardangi chawabo. Na te hinn muashre mein hee qabil qabool mard anhe. Cho te bahrare je muashre mein na insafee thende te mazboot mard bhe qamzoor thio wache. Hitte, police aee bia idara manhan je tahfuz kren mein nakam wiay ahen unn lae asaan khe sabh kam krna pawan tha. Iho asan je rahan laee tamam zaroore ahe te jhgraloo thion.

“Sometimes, fighting and even killing are necessary abilities of the man, it is called Mardangi (manhood/virility). Otherwise, he is not an acceptable man at all, especially in a rural society where injustices can make even a strong person to be weak. The police and law enforcement departments are failing to protect the people, so we have to perform all the duties ourselves either legally or illegally for the sake of survival in society”. (Sikandar, 56 years old, married).

These ‘mardangi’ (manhood) characteristics of being strong and able to

fight are seen as necessary for boys and men living in rural cultures. Mulazim thinks that it is necessary for you to fight back, and this is called masculinity and masculine character. If a boy or a man lacks this characteristic, people will oppress him.

Misal toar te tawah saan na Insafe thie thee aee tawh wapse mein wirho na thaa aee khamosh rahoo thaa te, tawah murs manho na ahyo. aee twah mein murse jo akhr nahe. unn laee tawah khe wapse mein wirhno pawando, poe tawah murs ahyo.

“Suppose anything happens to you or you are a victim of oppression, but you do not fight back, and you are silent on the matter, this indicates that you are not fit to be called a ‘murs manho’ (‘real man’)] and you are not masculine. You must fight back, and this is a sign of a real man”. (Mulazim, 37 years old, married).

Ahmad and Baig (2015) conducted the study “Construction of Masculinities through Stereotypical Masculine Attributes in Things Fall Apart”. According to them, Pakistani men define masculine attributes as physical strength, power, aggression bravery, emotional strength, beating, violence, warrior ship, wrestling and fighting but these are not natural, rather, they are constructions by the people, community and society. Bravery and aggressiveness are the most identifiable masculine characteristics amongst different cultures in Pakistan. In the case of rural Sindh, Pakistan, masculinity is strongly associate with harsh and violent behaviour. These attributes are in the category of what is called hyper-masculinity which is a psychological term used for the exaggeration of male stereotypical behaviour, like stressing on physical strength, aggression, and sexuality. Seymour (2009) states that the idea of masculinity and gendered power has a very close link with the pervasiveness of violence against women. The hyper masculine attributes, such as expressed by the men of rural Sindh can be linked to domestic violence because they promote physical and sexual aggression towards people who are seen as less powerful, particularly women. Because of these hypermasculine views of the men of Sindh, there is likely to be pervasive and severe cases of domestic violence that are endangering women in the rural communities.

MASCULINITY AND THE PATRIARCHAL CONSTRUCTS OF RURAL SINDH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

In the context of family and community, the ideas of the rural men of

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Sindh about masculinity can be strongly related to very patriarchal views about the structure of the family and community. Men's dominant position as the breadwinner, provider and caretaker of the family and community is highlighted in the men's views about the definition of a good man. The ideal man in Sindhi rural society is considered to be he who takes care of women, children, relatives, friends and neighbours. A man who earns for the family, offers prayers, fasts, pays zakat (religious tithes), respects the elders and parents and who is not involved in adultery, drug addiction and other vices is considered an ideal person. Moreover, an ideal man must be helpful to the poor and must earn honestly and fulfil the economic and social responsibilities of family. He is also a man who is a good earner and has control and authority over women and in family matters. These are the ideas and perspectives that come out from the responses of rural Sindhi men in this study. Thus, according to Gul Hassan, a government servant:

Sutho mard uho jeko ghar aen baar sanbhale, par unn saan gadd ghar baar aee waselan te b un jo qabzo huje.

"A good man is he who takes the responsibility of home and children. A man should be the controlling authority on everything from family to resources". (Gul Hasan, 44 years old, married).

Ghulam Qadir believes that:

Sutho manho uho aahe jeko muashre mein hakare qirdar ada kre, baar, ghar muashre, dostan, aae maaetan jo khyal rakhe. sutho manho uho aahe jeko hamesh hakare kirdar adan karan saan gaad, panhje kam danh dhyan dyee. Aee sutho manho uho aahe jeko auratun, baaran aae maitan jo khyal rakhe.

"The ideal man is he who plays a positive role in society and takes care of family, friends and relatives as well. An ideal man is he who plays positive role in every situation, either good or bad and must be focused on his work. Moreover, the good man is he who takes care of women, children and relatives". (Ghulam Qadir, 42 years old, unmarried).

The ideal man is also someone who is caring, friendly and have good relationships with members of his community. Likewise, Arshad states in the following way:

Behtree manho uho ahe jeko sabhne khyal rake, ghar jo khyal te baghir

b rakhe to, pet te kuto be pale tho, par mard uho jeko sutho wartao kre.

“An ideal man is he who takes care of all things. Even wolves also take care of their families and dogs also fill their [families’] bellies. [Further, a good man] means one who behaves properly with everybody and deal with people in good manners and must have [a sense of] “bhaicharo” (“brotherhood” or mutual support within group or community)”. (Arshad, 35 years old, married).

According to the respondents, other than criminals, bad men are those who do not respect their parents, elders, friends and neighbours and do not satisfy the needs of family. A man who does not support women, children and is selfish indicates that he is a bad man. According to Meer:

Kharab manho uho aahe, jeko muashrete dohan mein shamil huje. Aee gharelo zaroorartoon pooryon na kre saghe, aee nandhan aee wadan jo khyal bhe na kre.

“A bad man is involved in societal crimes and does not meet the needs of family and does not respect the elder family members and youngsters.” (Meer, 36 years old, married).

Caring for the family in terms of earning for the family is a very important masculine trait in rural Sindhi because men who do not conform to this trait will be sanctioned by society. Jaafar stated that:

Asan je ilaqe mein iho qable qabool nahe, aae sabhne lae iho sach b nahe, par jekadhe ko mard aurat khe majboor kre qamaen lae, uhe hunk he zan mureed and majoo sadenda. In lae jehro des tehro wess.

“In our area, and I know this many not be true for all, but jehro des tehro wes (“when in Rome, do as the Romans do”) ...[here] people will not accept [if a man makes his wife earns for the family]. They will call him a man who lives his life on a woman’s earning, which is culturally bad and locally he would be called “majoo or zan mureed” (“henpecked or uxorious”). (Jaafar, 38 years old, married).

Aslam opines that a bad man is he who does not meet the needs of the family and home and he who does not earn. Not conforming to this trait is seen as being more serious than committing violence:

“Par, aurat khe maran waro khrab manho nahe, khrab manho uho ahe jeko samaje aee mazhabi zamawre na nibhae. jeko tashdadud kre uho be khraba nahe, par saqafati toar iho qabil qabool aahe. par agr tawah qaldeen aee aee wadan je izzat natha kayo te tawah kharab manho ahyo.

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“A person who commits violence is not bad man... A bad man is he who is lacking social and religious responsibilities...he who commits violence is not bad man rather it is acceptable culturally. However, if you do not earn or respect parents and elders you are a bad man”. (Aslam, 56 years old, married).

This idea about being violent or fighting back against violence towards your family is a good trait is supported by Jaffar:

Najaize na sahan mardangi ahe, poe uha ghar mein huje [aurat], ya bahr ko mard huje. iha mardangi je khilaf ahe.

“If you tolerate subjugation or cruelty by [any person outside or inside the home] then you are not real or powerful man”. (Jaffar, 38 years old, married).

Several respondents think that men can be gentle and emotional by showing gentleness and softness towards their children and other family members. However, Ikram (34, years old married) thinks that this depends on situations and circumstances. Most of the time, he thinks that authoritative behaviour towards children and the family is necessary to control them. The respondent further thinks that a man can be gentle with his parents, friends, neighbours, girlfriend and with his immediate boss. However, he feels that when speaking, a man needs to speak nicely and gently with everyone. Conversely, Ikram thinks that a man can be emotional/aggressive in certain circumstances such as when he finds his wife or any woman in his home having an illicit relationship, refusing to do housework or when his wife refusing to have sex with him or not obliging him or his parents. On the other hand, Qadir Bux (60, married) viewed that:

“A man as a father must be an authoritarian person”. If a father is soft, then he will not be able to control his family and children. The respondent further thinks that men can be gentle in their relations mostly in the family and children, but he must be often being rough and strict also with the family to control it. He thinks that a man can be emotional in many circumstances especially when something happens against his will since this is a nature of man. A man can be emotional when he could not find things at home, when food is not ready on time or when his wife or women in his home do not oblige his demands.

Saifullah shares his experience that a man can be emotional in matters, where the dignity and honour of the family are being negatively affected by someone. One specific situation where this is considered happening is where a woman in the family loses her “chastity”.

Ghar je maslan khaan sawa, mard aurat je izat aee nafslae be jazbati thendo ahe. aee jadhe aurat jo kenh saa ko najaiz taluq huje, ya ghair mard saan dithe wende te mard jazbate thendo

“Apart from [matters about caring for the family], another issue related to home where a man could be emotional is when a woman [of his family]’s chastity or honour is devalued, [an example is] when a woman is found to have an illegal relationship with a man”. (Saifullah, 46 years old, divorced).

The perspective on emotion that are mentioned by the rural men in this study mostly refer to the men’s “rights” to be angry if anything happens in the family that goes against their wishes, rules and ideas about how the family members should behave.

As Arshad shares:

Jekadhe kaa bhe galh mard jee marzi khilaf thende, aee baaran jo maslo, aurat jo mard khe izat na diyan, mard khe jazbati kre tho. Aee mard unn waqt b jazbat thendo jadhan hun ja jee haq talafi thende. Y ate ho, ghar ya riasat je taraf khaan nazar andaz kayo wendo unn waqt b mard jazbati thendo.

“If anything happens against his will, or in the matter of children. When women do not oblige a man, he becomes emotional. A man can be emotional if his rights are suppressed and when [his rights] neglected: at home and in the family too. A man can be emotional when his honour is devalued or failed to be recognised”. (Arshad, 35 years old, married).

Latif further supports this idea that:

Aurat jee nafarmani, baran jo maslo, un saan salharyal masla mard khe jazbati kaan tha.

“[When] a woman disobeys [a man], on the matter of children and matters like this, men become aggressive”. (Latif, 38 years old, married).

These responses show that in rural Sindh patriarchal ideologies widespread and deep. The men are given the freedom to use violence in the name of protecting their family and community and also have control over decision making and resources of the family. This is the opposite for women where they are considered to be under the power and will of the men in the

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family and community. The men are considered responsible for guarding the dignity and morality of the family and the women are seen as the main factor for the family dignity and morality to be tainted. Men are justified to show anger when this happens. Women who are considered to be defaming the family name can be punished, usually by men. Men feel violence is justified to control women's behaviour if the latter do not conform to a certain kind of behaviour or responses.

The World Health Organization (2005:94-95) reported that in many communities beating is justified to discipline women because men are thought to be the head and have controlling power over their wives or women at home. Examples given in the WHO study of men's justifications for beating their wives or intimate partner violence include when the women do not them, they argue back, they did not prepare food on time, they question the men about money or about the men's relationship with other women, they are seen as not looking after the children and home properly, they go out of the house without the men's (their husbands'/ partners') permission, when they refuse to have sex with the men (their husbands/ partners) or when the men suspect that their wives/ partners are disloyal to them.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented findings about the views and perspective of rural men of Sindh, Pakistan on the idea and concept of masculinity. The study focused on highlighting the respondents' narratives that contain their beliefs, observations and interpretation about the characteristics of the ideal and bad men in their rural society. The narratives generally indicate that men in rural Sindh are guided by beliefs and behaviour that can be associated with the idea of hypermasculinity in rural settings of Sindh. Their narratives have also brought out the evidence of the ideology of patriarchy in the structures of the rural Sindhi family and community, which are deeply rooted in in rural areas of Dadu Sindh, where patriarchy and masculinity is norm of sindhi communities. The concept and belief of patriarchy, masculinity and hypermasculinity are part and of this culture and pervasiveness of those ideologies have the acceptance in the sindhi society. Those harmful social belief and notions of rural values have devalued the

women and their acceptance of those social, religious and cultural beliefs of masculine and patriarchy ideologies men have controlled the women and their socio-economic life. Resultantly women have been suffering from many socioeconomic, psychological and physical traumas and lag behind in every development aspects of life. The dire need is to break the sociocultural and religious taboos to free the women from social evils to empower them to lead their independent life. The presentation and analyses of these views and narratives are important to establish their interconnectedness with the rural men's views and interventions of men regarding the responses to the issue of domestic violence and rest of abuses women face on daily basis at home and in community by the male perpetrators due to their masculine and patriarchal mindset.



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