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Haryanvi Wives: Changing Expectations of Their Husbands

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Abstract - This paper offers an analysis of changing expectations of the husbands from their wives in Haryana state of India. This paper explores the alterations in gender relationship pattern in the Haryana region that has experienced major socio-political and economic changes in the last two decades. Positional survey research design was used for the present study through interview schedule comprising open ended questions. Husbands from different socio-economic background reported the continuing influence of traditional values that still govern the gender relationships in the family particularly husband-wife relationship.

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Haryanvi Wives: Changing Expectations of Their Husbands

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I. INTRODUCTION

For the past two decades, a remarkable shift in gender roles within the family is witnessed in Indian societies and gender relationship became an important object of academic study. Gender relationship is a vital practice that influences the lives of men and women in any society. It is so important that it affects the roles we play and the relative power we wield, it determines the opportunities and privilege we have. Walby (1990:26) asserts that the concepts of private and public patriarchy may be especially useful in understanding the relationships and mechanisms by which male members of household and the state shape the lives of women. Private patriarchy is based upon household production as the main site of women's oppression, and public patriarchy is based principally in public sites such as employment and the state.

Researchers emphasized the influence of broader social changes and the transformations of intimacy on the changes in the familial life in the late modernity (Giddens 1992). Scholars from different disciplines started to analyze the interaction between husband and wife and its effects on them, children and society. According to the research conducted in the United States of America, young educated couples are the ones who most often attempt to create egalitarian relationships and an egalitarian family (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001).

A women and men's attitude towards each other is an appropriate measurement of family

traditionalism and egalitarianism. David J. Maume (2006: 861) argues that the best way to examine egalitarianism of a family is to compare measures which prompt people to evaluate family and work responsibilities and chose in favor of one or the other.

Foucault (1980) advocates a radically different way of conceptualizing power. According to him, modern power is 'capillary' because it is exercised strategically at all levels of society from the 'macro-practices' to the 'micro' everyday social practices.

Family Sociologists have long been interested in investigating women status in private sphere. The husband-wife relationship in the family not only reflects and reproduces the cultural understandings of family, love, personal satisfaction but also structures gender, class and race relationships. A husband's marital power over his wife is recognized as legal in many countries, while a 'wife's power over her husband does not seem to exist in any language in the world, let alone in law' (TomaSevski, 1998:550). The researchers also showed that the husband-wife relationship in the family reproduces gender as a social category and reinforces male and female roles, identities and attitudes. It has been observed that although all women lack power in relation to men, in general. Duggan (1997:103) argued that 'households are the nucleus of women's subordination, a condition that may change in form but which survives shifts from agricultural to industrial societies and from feudal to capitalist modes of production'.

Egalitarian attitudes are significant predictors of men's involvement in housework. Wives with more liberal attitude are more likely to have role-sharing husbands (Barnett & Baruch, 1987). Studies find that the more husbands and wives hold similar egalitarian views of marriage, the more household responsibilities are shared, although unevenly (Antill & Cotton, 1988). Notably, however, that couples in which both spouses have egalitarian beliefs are not the norm. Men are much more likely than women to espouse traditional values (Hochschild, 1989).

In the light of the above, this study aims at finding out if this traditional husband-wife behaviour pattern has changed over years, given the influence of education and awareness in our community. Finally, this work consistently leads to new research questions and agenda that can enhance our knowledge and understanding of the culture, power relationship among

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couple and how these affects role expectations, child bearing and rearing practices in India. The perception of women as being merely at the receiving end especially in their domestic roles as wives, is however very superficial because wives, even in an patriarchal society like India, constantly seek subtle ways to influence the process of family life in spite of the pervasive cultural inhibition and society's expectation of them as obedient and dutiful wives. This, points to the fact that wives are rational social actors who constantly evolve various strategies of coping with their subordinate position in their marital homes.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section sets the scene by attempting a critical appraisal of previous discursive and empirical studies from India as well as those from other parts of the world that are generally relevant to the current research. Ideas about gender equality, linking women's sexuality with family honor, male dominance, and condoning violence against women might not equally prevalent among men across the diverse cultures and societies of the world. Likewise, men's differential faith to the traditional ideas about treating women differently in different aspects of gender relations may determine varying conduct with them in families.

sbazard@gmail.com Obbo (1980) based her study on data collected from low income women in Kampala, Uganda, and rural women from neighbouring villages, and found that in reaction to dominant behaviour of men, the women, rather than engage in direct confrontation with the men, evolved some power strategies, which made men feel quite uncomfortable and threatened. Husbands consistently saw the need to control women.

Lloyd (1965) observes that a good number of Yoruba women traders share economic responsibilities of their households with their husbands, and have much economic power, yet they practice obedience when approaching their husbands. They would kneel to serve their sitting husbands food and for drink. Thus, although a woman may be dominant in other spheres she must be publicly seen as submissive to her husband. Even men who try to tolerate dominant wives do so only so long as such wives defer to them in public.

Cohen (1967) notes that Kanuri women of North Eastern Nigeria would publicly despise men who in principle have authority over them and that in such circumstances, men would anyway allow the women to have their way in order to avoid the embarrassment of being exposed as lacking control over their wives. He also observes that threats of divorce by married Yoruba women often serve to force their husbands to become more caring and attentive.

Caldwell and Caldwell (1987) observe that the patriarchal system in most of West Africa leaves the role of reproductive decision-making within the household to men while the wives are left to bear the economic

burden arising there from. Furthermore, Adams and Castle (1994) examined reproductive decision-making within and beyond the households in rural West Africa and identified the complex of gender power relations which determines women's control over resources as one of the factors that influence women's reproductive options and behaviour.

Denich (1974:259) equally argues that 'keeping the behaviour of women in line with group unity involves a problem of control, and the elaboration of coercive mechanisms shows that women are not by nature submissive, but must be prevented from acting in their individual interests'. Their mode of socialization makes them 'less individuated than men'

Wolf (1974:159) observes how traditional Chinese women cope with their subordinate position in a highly androcentric and male-dominant society. The customary patrilocal rule of residence ensures that a good daughter-in-law respects the 'three obedience'- to her father before marriage, to her husband after marriage and to her son as a widow'. Yet many women are in control of their own fates and often of their husbands and at the same time, they expect and receive the obedience of their adult sons.

Chinweizu (1990:11) argues that despite their lack of access to those public structures which form the domain of male power, there are other modes and centers of power which women monopolize. For Chinweizu, woman is the ultimate boss because women rule the men who rule the world. He mentions 'five pillars of female power' namely; the womb, the kitchen, the cradle, psychological maturity, and biological make-up are rather what constitute the source of men's superordination over women especially as husbands. These are the very tools that men use to suppress their wives and to restrict them to the confines of the house as domestic beasts of burden.

From her empirical study in New Mexico and Arizona, Lamphere (1974) theorizes that a direct relationship exists between the power structure of the family unit and the relationship between women within the relevant domestic group. That is to say that where power and authority are shared between men and women in the family, women are usually able to cooperate and form close ties with one another. However, where men alone monopolize power and authority, individual women work secretly to influence the men.

In his study Conklin (1973) stated that couples are acquiring new roles and developing new relations and that changes are closely related to education, urbanization, and the possibility of acquiring non-farming jobs.

Kapadia, K.M. (1964) approved the view that Hindu marriage is a sacrament as is extracted from Hindu system of marriage idealized which has aims of 'Dharma' (Duty), 'Pooja' (Worship) and 'Rati' (Pleasure). This is a chronological position of aims in marital life. He considered marriage as not ordinary; not profane thing

but 'Panigrahan' makes it a sacred affair. Marriage is sacramental for three reasons one sacred rites performed, second, marriage is essential for women since rites are to be performed with her husband throughout his life and third, irrevocable marriage that can't be dissolved and believably sustains in next birth, like previous birth. However, wife and husband try to adjust their taste and temper, ideals and interests with zeal and sacrifice.

I.P. Desai (1964) introduced familial relationship and its range, types, the rights and obligation towards each other in families particularly in joint families. He further attempted to analyze the interdependency in various set of relationships – parents and offspring, husband and wives, and in-laws dependency. He emphasized the jointness of family as a structural element fixed by norms. Dube, S.C. (1990) investigated gender relationships taking structural approach and with reference to the presence of the ideology of subordination of women pervasive among Hindus which influence the whole Indian society. According to him, the principle area of woman control is the sexuality, the man keep vigil and enforces regulation of her sexual purity. This situation makes man every time skeptical, that means some restrictions are in operation that shapes the relationship. However, male gets some relaxation in his sexual conduct and wife takes it as pardonable. Dube attributed patriarchy as major characteristic feature of Indian family system which clearly means male domination and female subordination.

Sociologists and social anthropologists around 2000 have come to touch corners and sectors in pieces that indicate and explain the wife-husband relationship. The approach behind these studies has been empowerment of women in relation to men. Hence, frequent reference has been made to patriarchy, power and authority.

III. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The whole idea of the study is to investigate the changing expectations of husbands from their wives in Haryana. The study also seeks to observe the changing pattern of interaction between husband and wife in the family situations. The study has the following immediate objectives:

- To examine the changing expectations of husbands from their wives in the area of study.
- To explore the present attitude of Haryanvi men towards their wives.
- To identify the reshaping of husband-wife relationship in families of Haryana.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Positional survey research design was used for the present study through interview schedule comprising open ended questions to explore the

expectations of husbands from their wives. The researcher personally interviewed the respondents and statistical sophistication is avoided in data analysis.

To select the respondents, simple random sampling method has been used. Total 100 married men from nuclear families have been interviewed in equal proportion from rural and urban dwelling. All the respondents are literate and from the age group of 24-45 years.

V. THE STUDY AREA

Haryana is a landlocked state in northern India. It is located between 27°37' to 30°35' N latitude and between 74°28' and 77°36' E longitude. The altitude of Haryana varies between 700 to 3600 ft (200 metres to 1200 metres) above sea level. An area of 1,553 km² is covered by forest. Haryana has four main geographical features. i) The Yamuna-Ghaggar plain forming the largest part of the state ii) The Shivalik Hills to the northeast iii) Semi-desert sandy plain to the southwest iv) The Aravalli Range in the south.

According 2011 Census of India, Haryana's population has reached 25,353,081 comprising male 13,505,130 and female 11,847,951 respectively. Haryana feeds approximately 2.09% of India's total population. As per report of Census 2011, Haryana has literacy rate of 76.64% which is above national average of 74.04 percent. In 2001, Haryana had 67.91% literacy rate. Hindus are majority in Haryana and are about 90% of the population, Sikhs 6.2%, Muslims 4.05% (mainly Meos) and Christians 0.10%. Haryana is a State which astonishingly combines both-antiquity and plenty. It has been a cradle of Indian culture and civilization. The people of Haryana are simple, straight-forward, enterprising and hard-working. They are still conservative and continue to follow old practices as a matter of routine and custom. Hindi has traditionally been the dominant language spoken by the people of Haryana. Punjabi is second official language of Haryana. In towns and cities, English is still to be adopted as the household lingo, but is spoken in a hazy mixture of Haryanvi. Despite recent industrial development, Haryana is primarily an agricultural state. About 70% of residents are engaged in agriculture. Wheat and rice are the major crops. Haryana is self-sufficient in food production and the second largest contributor to India's central pool of food grains.

VI. DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

a) Gender

The concept of gender is used in this study to mean socially defined and imposes characters for females and males and socially defined functions and attributes of being a woman or a man in a society.

b) *Power*

The probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests' (Weber).

c) *Family*

Family is used here in its nuclear form to mean a man, his wife and their dependent or unmarried children (whether biological or adopted). The family is characterized by ties of marriage and blood; division of labour including gender roles; and a common domestic management- Each member considers a particular household as a common home and decisions made here are considered as binding on the collectivity. The concepts of family and household are used interchangeably in this study.

d) *Patriarchy*

It is a social and ideological construct which considers men (who are the patriarchs) as superior to women. Sylvia Walby in "Theorising Patriarchy" calls it "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990).

e) *Perception*

The subjective view or opinion of an individual as regards a particular subject, in this case, women's direct participation in household decision-making.

f) *Expectations*

Expectation is what is considered the most likely to happen. An expectation, which is a belief that is centered on the future, may or may not be realistic. A less advantageous result gives rise to the emotion of disappointment. If something happens that is not at all expected it is a surprise. An expectation about the behavior or performance of another person, expressed to that person, may have the nature of a strong request, or an order.

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to investigate the changing expectations of husbands from their wives in the study area. The respondents were personally interviewed by the researcher and inquired about their expectations from their wives regarding some daily activities like cooking of food, washing of clothes, cleaning and maintenance of house, child care, dressing, outside stay and interaction with outside male.

Male supremacy is embedded in the gender division of labour. Indian men continue to work mainly in the public sphere while women work often remains restricted to domestic sphere (Kishwar:1991). There is much type of activities in the household performed mainly by the women. It is interesting to identify the Type of domestic work in which respondents' husbands expect as some of the activities are absolutely

distinguished for women only. Table-1 below shows that 2/3rd of husbands expects from their wife that she should cook food for him and family.

Table 1: Expectations regarding Cooking of Food.

Responses	Frequency
Wife should cook the Food	65
Both can cook Jointly	5
Any One can cook	30
Total	100

The second question was asked about the expectations of husbands regarding another major work traditionally performed by wives in indian society i.e. washing the clothes. Table-2 denotes that more than 1/2 of the respondents expect from their wife that they should wash the clothes.

Table 2 : Expectations regarding washing the Clothes.

Responses	Frequency
Wife should wash the clothes	55
Husband can wash	3
Both can Wash Jointly	35
Any One can Wash	7
Total	100

Thirdly responses are taken regarding maintenance and cleaning of the house and data in table no. 3 depicts that 57% of the respondents assign this work to their wives while slightly more than 1/3rd are agree to share this responsibility with her wife.

Table 3 : Expectations regarding Maintenance/Cleaning of the House.

Responses	Frequency
Wife should Maintain the House	57
Both can Maintain Jointly	35
Any One can Maintain	8
Total	100

In the next question respondents are asked about their expectations from their wives regarding child care tasks pertaining to personal care of children-bathing, feeding, care during illness, playing with children and education of the children. The data in table no. 4 reveals that half of the respondents agreed that they will share this liability with their wife while 37% expect that their wife should take care of their children.

Table 4 : Expectations regarding Child Care

Responses	Frequency
Wife should Care the Children	37
Husband Can Care	6
Both Care Jointly	50
Anyone	7
Total	100

Many studies regarding domestic work (Chakraborty,1978; Rani, 1976) concluded that husbands are beginning to increase their domestic work, although wives continue to have primary responsibility for family work. The above mentioned findings of this study are similar to these studies but there are additional considerations i.e. a greater reluctance is found in Haryanvi husbands in sharing the domestic work. They consider these works as womenly duties and expect from their wives to perform these tasks.

Srinivas (1974:61) concluded that 72.6% of the women in Haryana perform the purdah (Veil). It denotes that a strict code for dressing behaviour of women prevailed in the region and data given below in table no. 5 indicate that less than 1/2 of the respondents expect wearing of traditional Indian Dress and near about 1/3rd of the respondents expects Western Dress. It means Haryanvi wives are getting more freedom from their husbands in the context of dressing choices.

Table 5 : Expectations regarding Dressing and Wearing Clothes.

Responses	Frequency
Saree and Salwar Suite (Indian Dress)	46
Skirt,Top and Jeans (Western Dress)	30
As She like to Wear	24
Total	100

Derne, Steve (1994:208) in his study on Indian Hindu men described that all the men he interviewed wants their wives' behaviour outside the home to be restricted in some ways. To protect their family's honor, husbands expect their wives to be modest, shy, ashamed and docile when they venture in public. In his study he reported that many men restrict their wives public movements because of their overriding concern with avoiding negative public opinion. The data in table no.6 also shows similar result where majority of the husbands denied the outside stay of their wife in the night even for working or employment liabilities.

Table 6 : Expectations regarding her Stay Outside home in the Night.

Responses	Frequency
She shouldn't stay	70
She can Stay Outside	30
Total	100

Sharma, Ursula (1980:3) reports that Men tells their wives they may venture out only if accompanied by another family member, and also restrict them from acting too openly outside te home and warn daughters against jeopardizing their marriage prospect and the family's honour by talking with boys and laughing too much. Our date is in accordance with above report reveling that more than 3/4th of the husband don't expect their wife should have any interaction with outsider male.

Table 7: Expectation regarding the interaction with outsider man.

Responses	Frequency
No	81
Accepted to Some Limit	12
No Problem	7
Total	100

Traditionally women's domain is private sphere that means home while public sphere is male's domain. Several forces like education, employment, politics etc. are now pushing the women in male's domain. But in this era also Haryanvi husbands expecting that their wives will restrict themselves to the household and maintain the family's honor.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

In this study we have examined the expectations of Haryanvi Husbands in Indian settings and explore further the perception of husbands about their wives in traditional society that is now undergoing social and economic changes. On the basis of analysis of data collected the following conclusion can be drawn:

1. Our main objective was to examine the changing expectations of husbands from their wives and found that husbands reflecting their traditional orientation tend to agreed on the gender based division of labour.
2. The continuing influence of traditional values which still govern the gender relationships in the family particularly husband-wife relationship.
3. Husbands see their status superior to wives and wanted to maintain their supremacy by practicing some restriction on wives. In contrast few husbands are showing liberal approach.
4. Haryanvi husbands show more care towards their children.

5. Husbands are still expecting the continuation of the patriarchy as an institution.

The findings of this study are limited in the sense that the sample is small comprised husbands belonging to different socio-economic background. In order to make meaningful generalization about Indian society, future studies should focus on large sample.

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