

## Cousin Marriage and agnatic rivalry in *Pakhtun* Society; An Anthropological analysis

Dr. Ikram Badshah<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Sarfarz Khan<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Sadia Saeed<sup>3</sup>, Muhammad Nadir Shahzad<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor Department of Anthropology Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor Department of Sociology Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor Department of Sociology Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

<sup>4</sup>PhD Scholar, Department of Sociology, PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi

---

### Abstract

The present study is to examine the institution of marriage in a village community. It emphasis on the nature and extent of cousin marriage with special emphasis on “*tra lor sara wada*” marriage with father’s brother’s daughter], along with the causes and reasons behind this typical type of marriage in *Pakhtun* society. This article is an attempt to understand the nature of cousin marriage in *Pakhtun* society and its relationship with agnatic rivalry. As both phenomena are paradoxical to each other. The research looks into that, how society maintains both and how the advent of modernity and globalization has changed the dynamics of both institutions.

**Keywords:** cousin marriage, agnatic rivalry, changing dynamics, modernity

---

### INTRODUCTION

Every institution has its own significance and utility in society, but the institution of marriage occupies a pivotal place in every society. In other societies marriage is considered as a union between two individuals but in *Pakhtun* society it encompasses every socially important aspects of their lives. It is considered not only an important relationship between husband and wife but for all socially important extended network of people including (*Khanadans*<sup>1</sup>) and clan. The pattern and rules of marriage are not determines by the personal choices of individuals but the norms, values, customs and code of conduct of the *Pakhtun* society. Marriage is an intricate institution and is interlinked with other institutions so to properly deciphered one need first to understand the structure of the society and the placement of individuals in that structure. How the interpersonal and intrapersonal

relationship works in the society and how it influenced the nature and extent of marriage in that society.

In *Pakhtun* society particularly the locale where I conducted the research the prevalence of cousin marriage is increasing. The modernity, education and technology have no adverse effect on the occurrence of marriages among cousins. Patrilineal parallel cousin marriage is an essential factor in the structuring of *Pakhtun*’s society and is especially related to the genealogy and degree of relationship in the social system. There are many types of marriages in *Pakhtun* society but cousin marriage is the most prevalent form of marriage. Such marriages strengthen already existing relation and contribute good relation between husband and wife, and kinsmen share similar interests, each party has prior knowledge of each other which add up the already existed harmony.

---

<sup>1</sup> All those people who share a common traceable ancestor are called *Khanadan*.

The *Tarboorwali*<sup>2</sup> is an important part of social dynamics in *Pakhtun* society. The literal meaning of *Tarboor* is patrilineal parallel cousin, while *Tarboorwali* the relationship of agnates with each other. The word *Tarboor* is attributed with both positive and negative sense. When one give importance to sense of enmity and competition with patrilinealparallel cousin due to common patrimony then in that sense the word *Tarboor* is used in negative sense i.e enemyand the while if ones give importance to the we feeling of patrilineal parallel cousins as a one unit then the use of word *Tarboor* is replaced with word *da tra zavi*(son of an uncle) the word indicates affection of cousins for each other. Now in order to understand the how *Tarboorwali* operates in *Pakhtun* society one need to understand its placement under the general fabric of *Pakhtunwali*.*Pakhtunwali*<sup>3</sup>serves as an ideal type of *Pakhtun* society and not only depicts values such as hospitality, honour and valor, but also provides space for the values such as competition over resources, jealousy, rivalry, conflict and revenge. Belief in adherence to *Pakhtunwali* is what creates intra *Pakhtun* loyalty and a shared identity. *Pakhtunwali* demands that all those brothers and patrilineal cousins, who shared blood, also share honour, name and property. A corollary of this sharing is that brothers and cousins protect and defend one another when an outsider or a distant relative threatens or attacked any group members. The other side of the coin, however, is that brothers and patrilineal cousins are also rivals of one another as they share property

and wealth and one's gain is other's loss. The first cousins, descended from a shared grandfather would often fight among themselves over land or inheritance, but they would join together as a member of same segment to fight more distant relatives from another segment (Banerjee, 2000).

Now in this article we will analysis how this fusion and fission of agnates influence their day to day lives and dealings. In *Pakhtun* society *khpalwali* or *Khpalvi*(close circle of relatives who participate in each other's event of their social lives and who extend help and come forward for the protection of any member as a one unit, this special type of relationship is called *Khpalwali* or *Khpalvi*) and *Tarboorwali*(agnatic rivalry) subsist side by side. If you give importance to enmity with your agnates, you are following *Tarboorwali* and if you subside your differences with your agnates and blood relatives then you are doing *khpalwali* or *khpalvi*. Cousin marriage also transforms feeling of enmity of rivalry among agnates and blood relatives into *azizwali* (treating and feeling of all blood relatives as one unit) and *khpalwali*.

The main reason of more prevalence of paternal parallel cousin marriage was that they were considered real relative and own blood (*khpala weena*) and there was a general belief that one's own blood has natural sympathy for each other as compared to other relatives. Interestingly, the maternal side is never considered as one's own blood but they do come in the line of priority after paternal side. People are of the view "just like a paralyzed part of the body is carried by remaining body, it implies that handicapped or disable will not be abandoned by relatives".

---

<sup>2</sup> Agnatic or patrilineal parallel cousin rivalry on the basis of common ancestral land is called *Tarboorwali*. There are always enmity feelings among such agnates who shares land and property.

<sup>3</sup>*Pakhtuns* lives are guided by ideal code of conducts, a like constitution.

The political aspect of such marriages are studied to analyses as either such marriages are used as a tool to appease and put a constraint on the rivalry and conflict among agnates, that it could not rupture the whole structure of kinship system, or, such marriages are practices to take revenge from uncle or cousins by the time of conflict by putting pressure on them through their married daughter or sister. Another political aspect of such marriages was the name and honour of a family, how for that aspect of culture is perpetuated through cousin marriage. Such marriages are practice, not to expose family matters with the people of other lineage. As women are main source of honour in *Pakhtun* community, so to keep ones honour in one's family, cousin marriage is exercised. FBSs are physical and moral guardians of their FBDs.

The study also focused on the stigma and *Paghoor*<sup>4</sup> aspect of *Pakhtun*'s culture and its role in continuity of cousin marriages in the society. The economic aspects of such marriages were also thoroughly analyzed from critical perspective. FBD marriage will be likely to avert intrusion on a brother's share of the property if a brother is intended to do so, eventually it would damage the living of one's own daughter as the wife of brother's son. The study also explored FBD marriage as an approach to avoid the fragmentation of land by passing in to the possession of an outsider.

The study has attempted to analyses and understands the changes that are constantly taking place in the pattern of marriages due to modernity,

---

<sup>4</sup>*Paghoor* generally means taunt but in *Pakhtun* society it one of the main factor responsible for feud and bloodshed in the society. *Paghoor* is the taunt where a *Pakhtun* failed to protect the honour of family members especially girls, or failure of any kind of taking revenged inflicted by any person of the society.

mobility, economic differentiation and urbanization. Both cousin marriage and agnatic rivalry is very much there in the *Pakhtuns* society in present time. The modernity has changed the dimensions of both cousin marriage and agnatic rivalry but not` cousin marriage and *Tarboorwali* itself. Now the surge of competition and *sially*<sup>5</sup> is there but not in the traditional way. Now due to modernity they are competing with agnates in other newly created avenue of influence such as education, health, philanthropy and welfare activities at the village level.

## METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from 70 respondents by employing Anthropological tools and techniques, interview guide and case study method. The rigorous interpretation of verbatim and proverbs helped understanding structural blocks of agnatic rivalry and cousin marriages in *Pakhtun* society in an attempt to have acquaintance with their ratiocination of structures in various socio-cultural contexts.

## Pakhtun identity and Village association

The *Pashto* proverb: "no matter how far you go, you'll eventually return to your village" ("che ze ze no Abazai la ba raze") asserted the firm dogma of *Pakhtun* identity embedded in the ideological paradigm of the local villagers and in the heart of rural normative structure and said by many khan and Babine for being embodying *pur*er form of *Pakhto*<sup>6</sup> by Khan and..... . The predominant role of landlords is pivotal in shaping the composite structure of the society in which villagers rely on the patronage, hospitality, congeniality and land resources of the

---

<sup>5</sup>*Sially* is the typical sense of competition with the agnates in every aspect of life. Such compitive spirit ones developed against his *Tarboor* since childhood through the process of socialization.

<sup>6</sup> The ideal code of conduct in *Pakhtun* society

landlords. *Gham-khadi*<sup>7</sup> holds the ceremonial manifestation of the *Pakhtun* social lives, primarily to engage in marriage or funerary rituals through which one can behold the social standing of the natives by the yardstick of their active involvement in *Gham-khadi* as an expression of veneration towards upholding *Pakhtunwali*. The basic tenets of *Pakhtunwali* (i.e. warm hospitality, vengeance, agnatic rivalry) are carried out in wedding and funerary ceremonies (*Gham-khadi*) (Ahmed, 2005).

In nearly all South Asian societies including *Pakhtun*, individual identity is unitedly shared with his/her kinsmen and with his/her social community rather to associate it with individual qualities. Each member of the society, irrespective of gender, acquires significant position in the social web of relations stretch forth to local to national level.

The manifold and condensed nature of kinship matrix in *Pakhtun* ties every individual closely with their kinsmen like parents, siblings, spouse and children extended to distant relatives and affine (often through female relatives' marriage). *Gham-khadi* is the determining element of individuals' social prestige, status and honor in the village life, binding them with the moral obligation bestowed on each *Pakhtun* male and female to be actively engaged and participate *Gham-khadi* of close and distant web of relations, which shapes the pattern of social relationship paradigm in village.

---

<sup>7</sup> The death, sorrow, sickness and marriage related ceremonies, which required a typical behaviour to participate in such ceremonies. An outsider cannot understand the nature and extent of such ceremonies. Village life identity revolves around *Gham Khadi*. The person who doesn't participate in *Gham Khadi* has no indemnity in the social set of village life.

The reciprocal nature of *Gham-khadi* bounds every person in the village to pay equal visits to each other. However, role of women in *Gham-khadi*, especially at the occasion of marriage, connects them with other families of the established social web in which each woman is morally bound to abide by the obligations of *Gham-khadi* and *tlal-ratlal*<sup>8</sup> entails the identity-making process of '*Pukhto*' for the participants. (Ahmed, 2005).

### Cousin marriage in Pakhtun society

The most celebrated and prevailing practice of marriage in the given locale is endogamy or kin marriage. In *Toru*, marriages are consanguineous. The local terms of "*khpallo ke wada*" [marriage in one's kin and relatives] and "*prado ke wada*" [marriage in who are not from the same kin and who have no blood relation]. Marrying your daughter outside of *Khanadan*<sup>9</sup> or *Khel*<sup>10</sup> is reflected as disrepute practice to avoid the danger of contaminating natal lineage by connecting ties with outside groups. The *Khel* members collectively shared same blood as they are believed to be descendent of same forefather.

*Ezzat* (honour), *sharam* (shame) *bezati* (insult), *da khanadan waqar ao nomm* (family's status, standard and name), *ghairat* (prestige) are bedrock values of the marriage structure and are conferred to local villagers in accordance to their actions and behavior.

In given traditional society, marriage is not confined to the mutual agreement of the couple, but it aids in linking strong reciprocal ties to both families. It

---

<sup>8</sup> Reciprocal visit of each other on different occasions and different socially important events

<sup>9</sup>

<sup>10</sup>

influences the social web of the whole *Khandan*, which fairly distributes responsibilities to the either families.

Some of the proverbs in reference to the kinship especially patriclan are entrenched in society to accentuate the significance of these relations in *Pakhtun*. One of such proverb is “*Da Pagray Khaple ao da Pansi khaple*” [*da pagray khaple* means the person from your father’s side which share honour and integrity of family]. In *Pakhtun* society, Turban (*pagray*) denotes honour, and *da Pansi khaple* refers to a person from maternal side with carrying lowest honor value for you, as *Pansi* signifies the underneath part of *Shalwar* and trouser, while head symbolizes honour and feet connote secondary status in *Pakhtun* society. In gist, the proverb implies the paramount status of father’s family and thus, one prefers to marry within the father side kin rather maternal relations.

To strengthen social capital in the society, kin are binding force as their identity is rooted deeply in the family web. In given locality, the famous saying “blood is thicker than water” have undertones of belongingness and identity. Kin are supposed to have shared values, collective interests and common cultural frame.

The emotional connectivity among siblings strengthen the practice of Cousin marriages by forming social capital through increasing the level of kin solidarity. The ratio of Cousin marriages is directly proportional to the ratio of social cohesion and social solidarity, which in turns give rise to the social and emotional capital.

### Role of *Gham Khadi* in Consanguineous Marriages

The socio-cultural norms have been remained unaffected by changing dynamics of modernity due to the two influential variables of Village identity and

*Gham-khadi* in *Pakhtun* society. Though, some change can be observed in some aspects of *Pakhtun* society, but following *Gham khadi* is a traditional expression of their submission to the old norms and values.

### “*Khadi pa Khanda kha khakari ao mari pa jhara*”

[Laughter looks good at a wedding and tears at a death].

As Benedict Grima contends “*Pakhtuns*’ ritual ceremonies can be divided into two categories: *Gham*, which expresses grief and sorrow and *khadi*, which denote happiness and festivity. *Gham* entails the sad events of death, sickness and losses worthy to mourn, while *khadi* consists of the joyful events like birth, marriage, circumcisions and some other events worthy of celebrations and congratulations” (Grima, 2007).

*Gham Khadi* is the most essential component of the *Pakhtun* society as whole social fabric revolves around it. To be engaged in such sad or joyful events, a suitable and adequate emotional behavior is demanded by society, especially women are obliged and committed to participate in reciprocal visits of *Gham khadi*. *Gham khadi* is a yardstick to gauge honor, prestige, power, authority and political influence on the basis of level of participation of the people. The firm and rigid rules are established to be followed in *Pakhtun Gham Khadi*. (Ibid, 2007).

The pattern of cousin marriage is also influenced by the variable of *Gham khadi* as certain rules and behavioral patterns are constructed to participate in *Gham khadi* and socialization process also comply with same rules and patterns in society. If one prefers to marry in cousins, he or his wife will not be alien to the *Gham khadi* duties in certain family and hence, no hurdle will be faced by them in carrying out their responsibilities during *Gham khadi*. The roots of the social identity can still be traced in *Gham khadi* of



the any *Pakhtun* society. (Ahmed, 2005)<sup>11</sup>. It refers to the fact that *Pakhtuns* notions of honor and prestige is defined by the level of contribution one puts in *Gham khadi*. A notable person of the village is supposed to have large social capital and so as his wife, which made them obliged to be actively engage in all *Gham khadi* events and place more burden with wife to be vigilant of every *Gham khadi* event happening in village so that her husband's social status can be elevated.

. ***“Pa gham khadi ke takra kheza da insan shamla ochatai, ao da kar sirf da khaple khanadan kheza koli she, Zakir Khan”*** [It is an active and willing wife who participates in ceremonies related to marriage and death enhances spouse's status in the society. Such duty can be performed vigorously by a woman from his own Khanadan].

*Badal*<sup>12</sup> refers to the adequate social and moral conduct to maintain relations, especially through prevalent practices of gift exchanging and reciprocal visits. *Badal* is the dominant factor of manifestation of social presentations. In *Pakhtun* society, performing *pakhto* signifies *gherat* or honor, but each act comes under the umbrella of *badal*. *Badal* holds different meanings for men and women. For men, *badal* is to seek vengeance for kin's blood and to settle scores for women honor and shame. For women, *badal* is to commit in a reciprocal relation of gift exchange and paying visits to their social circle during *Gham khadi* events. This allocation of different responsibilities to both genders set different standards for men and

women in society. Reciprocity is the key element of interactive social and communicative patterns of the society among *Pakhtuns*.

(Grimma, 2004).

### **Blood Purity**

In *Pakhtun* society, women are key symbols of honor and purity for their families and village. By associating the concept of honor with them, their protection becomes the matter of great concern for their kinfolk. They consider it their sheer responsibility to protect women's honor and in order to do so, cousin marriages are given preference to protect them even after marriage. According to the natives' conviction, a family, who prefers to marry with their own family girls deserves more prestige and honor in the society. Father side kin are labelled as agnatic kin and are entwined in a shared moral conduct of responsibilities, obligations and the property.

A local saying, ***“kha khalak sirf khaple khalak ve”*** [only good people are the kin], refers to the general perception of people who prefer to renew or reinforce already existing relationships by marrying within the family.

The perpetuation of cousin marriages has been reinforced by two potent variables of keeping blood pure and keeping land within a family. One of respondent, Aziz Khan, share the local perception that marrying in other castes will make your wife deal a lot of hurdles, for instance, female family members of the family will pass derogatory remarks to a bride for being inferior to them. A bride from other caste will not earn a respect from family members for being outsider and she will whine about that all the time to her husband, making her husband to be irked or indignant to that and thus, strife and conflict will arise in the family.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ahmed, Amineh. 2005. Death and Celebration among Muslim Women: A Case Study from Pakistan: *Modern Asian Studies*, 39(4), 929-980.

<sup>12</sup> Reciprocity in social relationship in events of social importance is the domain of women.

The structure of kinship organization involves agency and its' dependency on the kin network in manifold ways. This dependency lies on several factors and is a part of a legitimization; genes related to ideas of relatedness and purity of blood to play a pivotal of creating mutual commitment and legitimating network of dependency. (Ibid, 2011).

### Role of Norms and Values

The socialization process in traditional societies always aim to inculcate the values of obedience and silence, especially in front of the elders like father and grandfather. The children are taught to observe silence while elders are sitting in *Hujras* in a company of other prominent elders. The allocation of the space also reveals the elevated status of the elders in a society as younger people are destined to sit on the lower part of coat while elders are made to sit on the upper section of the cot as an expression of reverence for them. Elders are also authoritative of taking the marriage decisions of the younger ones keeping in view the pros and cons of the potential spouses. Parents, usually father, is a dominant figure in taking matters of marriage in his own hand and no one has audacity to question his decisions. The experience and knowledge of parents are regarded more enrich than youngers and they are believed to take better decision for their children in light of their life experiences.

### Role of *Purdah* in Cousin Marriage

*Purdah*<sup>13</sup> is the salient feature of the cousin marriages in *Pakhtun* society. In case of marrying

outside the family, brides have to observe strict *purdah* from the male family members of in-laws. On contrary, marrying within a family loosen restrictions of observing *purdah* as a family shares common values. The movement of females inside the in-law's house becomes more relaxed and can be done without seeking permission from husband. According to a local respondent, *Purdah* issue becomes an apple of discord in many families.

*“Ko chari sata wrandar da bahar ye ao da kor nur khazi da hagi da lor ya plar na purdah oki nu da die ziat bezathi garanri she”* [If your brother's wife female observed *purdah* from father or brothers of a woman married outside, this is considered as worst insult and most serious quarrels erupted in the families due to this reason]. To eschew from such discord and conflict, people prioritize cousin marriages. Females are seen to observe *purdah* from those males who are not part of close kin. This norm helps perpetuating consanguineous marriages in the area.

### Economic Reason

The existing literature has well grounded arguments and sustainable findings that consanguineous marriages are mostly observed among poor and middle class to serve their economic interests. This argument is also substantiated by some of the respondents. These respondents back the idea of cousin marriages for being economical by saying that cousin marriages are affordable as family members does not demand dowry and all the conditions were mutually decided between groom and bride family. Family members are well aware of each other socio-

---

<sup>13</sup> Strict segregation of unrelated males and females from each other comes under the domain of observing *Purdah*.

---

The word *Purdah* is also used in veil context where the females hide their face from non-relatives.

economic conditions and they take care of each other's capacity of spending.

The edge of marrying within a family is a chance of expanding social capital from the both sides, providing both with an opportunity of securing more respect in a society. It also strengthens the political alliances within a family group and helps in increasing unity and solidarity within a family, which garners respect from every section of society.

This reinforces the idea of family's honor and uncompromising family's integrity, especially on the outsiders. However, some exceptions can be traced in this marriage structure. Few of consanguineous marriages are happened to be costlier than non-consanguineous marriages. Marriages are performed as a mean of exhibiting status in *Pakhtun* society. *Tarbooran* (Father side parallel cousins) are born competitors of each other and by displaying extravagant marriages and spending whopping amount of money, they race to dominate their superiority of status in society. In a race to compete with agnates, some *Tarboors* vends their land to spend sumptuously on their marriages. So, every cousin marriage is not inexpensive as it is supposed to be.

A respondent Asid Ullah Khan repudiated the general perception of cousin marriages being more economical than outside marriages. The respondent asserted that in terms of spending lavish, cousin marriages are costlier than exogamous marriages. *Tarboors* are bound to spend extravagantly to exhibit their superiority. To perform marriage ceremony at an exorbitant price is a message for *Tarboors* to compete beyond the means or accept their defeat and less superior status. In case of daughters' marriage, their family is concerned to throw a fancy marriage ceremony for them and give precious dowry to help

their daughters competing with other married relatives at in-laws' home and dowry is a key to elevate her status at in-laws' home. In case of son's marriage, big feast is arranged in comparison of other relatives' feast to ensure high social status among agnates.

One of other respondent, Alamgir Khan recount the events of his brother's prodigal marriage, which was profligate and lavish only because of the existing competition with agnates and to convey a message to them to compete in this race of superiority. The local landlord Gohar Khan also augmented this viewpoint and reassure that cousin marriages are now an instrument to reinforce one's dominance and prestige among *Tarboors* by spending in abundance on marriages. One is also bound to spend beyond the means in daughters' marriage to elevate her social worth at in-laws' home by providing her lavish dowry. In gist, cousin marriages serve economic benefits to only middle class people, while rich keep spending and throwing grandeur marriages under the umbrella of *Tarboorwali*.

### Role of Joint Family Structure

In traditional societies including *Pakhtun*, joint family system is encouraged as a symbol of solidarity and unity.

In local village, Cousin marriages are given preference by those people who want to stay part of joint family system. In the light of this fact, it can be concluded that family structure has persuasive influence in perpetuation of consanguineous marriages in the area.

According to one of respondent, "*Pa khaplo ke wada yao faida da hum da che stata da bachi khyal ba da khandan noor khezi laka da khple bacho satae*" [In consanguineous marriage your children are



treated by other female members of family as their own children having the same family roots].

In process of socialization, joint family system has potent role to play as a joint enterprise. Whole family is engaged in the socialization process of children and they were treated and guided equally by everyone as their own. If a wife comes from same family, chances of any discord minimized and level of peace and harmony increases within a family.

In local village, considerable number of girls practice celibacy to keep ancestral land and property within a family. Such cases were found in seven families of *Khankhel*, where one or two daughters refrain marrying out of fear of land distribution. In these cases, lack of suitable partner within a family prompt them to let their daughters practice celibacy than marrying them outside of the family. The landlord of area approved of cousin marriages to eschew land fragmentation. The respondents shared these details out of hostility with *Tarbooran* and to let down them.

### Propinquity

The propinquity is the another driving force to practice cousin marriages in the area. People are very interactive and social in the local village. Everyone knows about everyone and this element of knowingness paves ways for marriages within a village. It is convenient for people to attend *Gham khadi* with less mobility involved, if the marriage is within a village perimeter. The element of propinquity makes it easy for people to be aware of formal mode of practicing *Gham khadi* in the certain group. In case of marrying outside of the area, that group extended to ones' in-laws and their family members, who are alien to the existing circle of *Gham khadi*, as told by one of

the local respondent. So, in case of marrying outside the family, *Gham khadi* requires more money and time to be engage.

### Cousin Marriage and Support Mechanism

The high success rate of consanguineous marriages is due to the prior knowledge of both families about each other and this element of familiarity make things go smoothly after marriage. Divorce is highly stigmatized in a society and a complete taboo in case of cousin marriages. People disdain those families who consider a divorce to a family girl and to intact their honor in society, people prefer to opt conflict resolution mechanism through any member of *Khaandan*. The attitude of husband and in-laws will be more generous and less discriminatory with a family girl as compare to that of outsider. One of the respondent shared his perspective; "I recommend cousin marriages as both families have shared norms and practices like *Purdah*, *gham khadi*, and every aspect of social life is known by all family and they also share blood".

### Cousin Marriage and Feud Resolution

Feud resolution is the another convincing factor of the cousin marriages as they are practiced to convert *Tarboorwali* into *Rorwali* or *azizwali*. To unify the bonds of brotherhood and to have congenial relation between brothers, people prefer to marry their children at brother's home.

The societal norms induce hostility and feud between the Tarboors, but the practice of cousin marriage can eliminate competition and antagonism between the brothers. The honor of such person is at stake, who refuse to marry within a family as people

attach negative connotations with whole *khandaan* for not even accepting each other as a potential candidate for marriage. To refrain from being stigmatized by society and to evade fragmentation of social capital, cousin marriage is exercised to mitigate the stress and discord already existing between agnates.

As per to one of respondent Asfundiyar, “During a ferocious fight with fellow villagers, my father killed a man while fighting along with his agnates in order to protect the honor of agnates. In retaliation, my father was murdered by resentful party and that binds both families in a long chain of rivalry and hostility. My father lost his life for his agnates’ honor but same agnates are not willing to help us in this crucial time. My story is a lesson for people about the evil side of their agnates. My father was a very generous and powerful person who took care of the expenses of education of all of his agnates. We have become orphans because of our agnates who occupy influential position in local politics but refused to lend a helping hand towards us.

In an another unfortunate event of our family, one of the agnate poisoned my teenage brother and held my uncle culpable for it in an attempt to plot a scheme to deprive us of inheritance share. Then, he handed over a pistol to my elder brother, who was in 8<sup>th</sup> standard at the time, and incited him to assassinate my uncle for the false blame of my younger brother murder. During a heated altercation between my brother and uncle, my brother fired a gunshot at him and killed him. My brother was later forgiven by the deceased’s uncle wife for his underage, but our agnates proved to be worst enemy of my family. To resolve the discord with deceased uncle’s family, I had to marry with his daughter as an act of solidarity and reunion with the family and to bridge the mistrust created by our

agnates. The respondent further added that marital ties based on the blood and honor should be prioritized over apparent beauty, education and status etc.

The study of (Kressel 1986) substantiated these arguments by contending that agnates preferred to marry their daughters and sisters within a family to help each other through a strong committed ties and to elevate their common esteem.

### Cousin Marriage and Family Business

Noor-ul- Bashar Naveed, a celebrated *Pashto* drama writer throw a light on the character of local Rajjar methai walay, who made his daughters practice celibacy to keep his special recipe of sweet, a secret, within his own family and by doing so, he maintains the hegemony of his sweets business in the area. In an another case, a notable Badayuni pera of Mardan also intended to keep his daughters unmarried for their whole lives out of fear of divulging of his secret recipe. The two tales of Rajjar sweet walay and Badayuni Pera walay spills beans on the entrepreneur reasons of preference of cousin marriages in an order to keep their hegemony on the local businesses.

### Perception of the People about Genetic Abnormality and Cousin Marriage

Upon inquiring, majority of respondents were found to be agreed to the statement that cousin marriages cause genetic abnormalities. However, the dominance of traditional discourse of mate selection over biomedical discourse is established in the area. A local respondent shared the same incident of vision imparity in his family due to cousin marriage, he said, “*Zamung Khanadan ke da yao stergi nazar masala dira aam da, zama da yao lor ao dwa zamuno*

**da masla da. Zama nya ao nick che dwara ristadar wo, da haghvi hum da yao stergi nazar kum yo"**

[vision impair in one eye is a common abnormality in our family, and my daughter and two sons have the same eye sight problem. Even my grandparents who were cousin of each other shared the same problem of eye sight].

Visual imparity is found to be prevalent in the area especially among the *Khankhel*, who only exercise cousin marriages, but still they do not refrain from practicing endogamy as family's name and honor is deemed as more valuable than individual health being. Secondly, many of respondents held fatalistic view that it is God who pre decides everything including genetic abnormalities. The destiny is written and cannot be altered or changed by a man. This faith dogma is responsible for the continuous perpetuation of cousin marriages in the area despite of having genetic disorders. Even the educated people of the village are also in favor of consanguineous marriages and held a view that prior medical tests before marriage is the viable way of avoiding genetic abnormalities.

Doctor Saleem is the only doctor in the village and he also approved of cousin marriages by asserting that a better understanding can only be develop within family members about the needs and responsibilities of the family and cousin marriage can further strengthen such relation. In case of marrying outside family, the wife will face obstacles with adjusting with the new patterns of norms, values and *Gham khadio* of the family and will face a lot of petty issues, which will make her life living hell. On contrary, marrying within a family will make a lot of things easy for her and nobody will let her down.

In cousin marriages, children of couple received equal treatment of affection and attention from both side of the families. The burden of rearing and bringing up the children will be equally shared between both families.

Doctor Saleem shed a light on the genetic discourse of cousin marriages and said that prior medical tests of a couple should be conducted to avoid genetic abnormalities after cousin marriages so that doubts and fear can be eliminated. Science has tremendously progressed in medical field and thus all genetic issues can be sorted out pertinent to cousin marriages.

His concluding remarks were, "**khaple khaple ve ao predi pradi ve**" [Blood is thicker than water].

### Understanding Cousin Marriage through Proverbs

The prevailing proverbs in the area are evident of the potent role of the cousin marriages in the societal structure of the village. One of the most common proverb, quoted by almost all respondents was:

**"Ka da tra lor de okra, che sra de okral, ao ko da mama lor de okra no spin de ao ko da bahar na de okra no hasi hesh khashak de"**

[If you are married to patrilineal parallel cousin it means you have got the gold and if you are married to maternal uncle or daughter of mother's sister, you have got the silver platter and if your wife is not from your family (*Khanadan*) then you get a straw which is good for nothing]

The social significance of cousin marriages is revealed by this thinking mind set. However, cousin marriages are sub stratified in patriclan and matriclan pertinent to the social worth of the both relatives. Marrying within patriclan is regarded as gold while marrying in matriclan makes' you achieve the silver status. Exogamous marriage is considered unworthy in

comparison to both and least practiced marriage form in the village.

**“Da pagray khaple ao da pansi khaple ke farak ve”**

[There is a hell of difference between the patriclan and matriclan].

This is the most famous proverb in the village. *Pagray Khaple* denotes the kin who share turban with each other. Turban symbolizes honour, identity and superiority in the Pakhtun society and referring turban with patriclan signifies the importance of patriclan in the society especially in the context of identity. *Pansa* implies the inferior and subservient status of the something as its’ literal meaning is lower part of the trouser, and associating it with matriclan reveals the insignificant worth of matriclan in terms of identity. During elections, those who preferred to vote for matriclan’ candidate over patriclan are despised by people. Such people are treated with contempt by natives who prioritize matriclan over patriclan in any socio-political context.

**“Gwakha ao nook na sara juda kegi”**

[Flesh and finger nail cannot be separated]

To be distant with close relatives is not feasible in the traditional kin web of the area, the agnates may be your bitter rival but also a protecting armor against outsiders. The blood is thicker than water.

**“Las chi mat shi no gharhi la razi”**

[Finally the blood relatives would take care of]

*Pakhto* operates under the mechanism of favors and opposition and contingent on segmentary lineage system which is guided by complementary opposition. *Pakhto* helps in regulating and retaining *Azizwali*.

**“Speene pagre saro ta speen patkee khizo pa sar kare de”**

[White turbans are given to men by their women]

Women’s status in society are related with the normative values of *nang* and *namus* of the tribe and the family. On contrary, men enjoy prestigious position in the area except in the case of their females being stigmatized by the society. If the females of their families bring disgrace to them, men are deprived of all privileges of honor and dignity in the *Pakhtun* society.

**“Sare ghrona de ao khazi arramona de”**

[The men are the mountain and the women are their support]

The common misconception that women’s role in *Pakhtun* society is very minimum is wrong on so many levels. Women stand firm behind the backs of their males and provide full support to them in daily life matters. Women encourages them in the time of hardship and adversity to fight with it with strong nerves. The women folk helps in making a person dealing with mishaps and come out of them as a triumphant.

### Modernity and Cousin Marriage

*Pakhtuns* are distinctive in terms of their normative value structure. They cherish and glorify their tribal legacy and proud to continue that. The West and non-Western modernist, however, stigmatized the word “tribe” as taboo, while *Pakhtuns* continue to derive their identity from their tribal roots. Wherever a *Pakhtun* goes, he returns to his native area “*che ze ze nu abazo la ba razi*”.

The tribal identity is deeply ingrained in the *Pakhtun* social life which hold out against modernity and modern social structures. *Pakhtun*’s idea of modernity is contrasting with the idea of western society.

Modernity has been conceptualized in the terms of modern communication system and its' influence on the value apparatus of the society is conspicuous. The changing dynamics of normative value structure of the society brings change in different societal institutions of Pakhtun's like family, education, marriage, *Tarboorwali* and *Pakhtunwali*. The modern education plays pivotal role in changing the marriage dynamics and meanings among the *Pakhtuns*. The marriage ratio is still intact like the older times, but the meaning and significance attach with marriage structure is transforming owing to the prevailing modern technology, mobility patterns and education.

The average age of marriage has been increased in the current time as compared to the past. In parochial times, men preferred to marry with a younger, poorer and less educated girl to keep their dominance over wives. The modernity has drastically changed this parochial mindset and now males want to see their wives educated and well established. The average age of marriage for girls was 16-18 years in the older times, but now it has increased to 22-25 years due to relatively high literacy rate among females, while males are marrying in 25-30 years now as comparison to 18-20 years of average age of marriage among males in past.

The number of children are also in decline as compared to past. Under the influence of modern education, ratio of children is dwindling among educated class. Educated people are keeping the two of three number of children. In past, the reason of keeping larger family was to get support of children in agricultural sector, but now changing subsistence pattern are making a child as a liability rather than an asset. Parents are obliged to invest handsome amount

of money on children's education without making them indulge in earning.

In current times, the decision of marriage is not solely taken by parents rather the consent of children is also taken in this matter. Cousin marriage is still practiced in a larger section of society, but the educated son is free to choose an educated cousin as a life partner. Personal choice of children is regarded now as compared to past when taking consent of children was considered as shame. A respondent narrated his experience "*mata masher ror wovi che ta mu da tra da lor sara kwedan okra, ma ke dumra haya w ache ma tri da tapos hum wonoko che da kum tra da lor sara*" [I was informed by my elder brother about my engagement with my cousin. At that time I did not have courage to ask my brother which cousin I got engaged to]. He further added that he accepted his parents' decision of his marriage, believing that it would be in his own favor.

The modern paradigm has shifted this authoritative approach of parents and they are aware of the needs of an educated son and prefer to seek his consent, especially for marriage and entertain his personal liking as well.

In recent past, newly-wed couple was given the old rooms of the house to reside in. Now, girls wish and expect for well decor, newly constructed and fancy rooms at in-laws home. The construction work of houses before marriage is becoming a norm these days even if it is cousin marriage. The past times honored societal norms and values over personal choices and likeness. The concept of privacy did not exist for newly-wed couple. Now, the adequate privacy is given to couples by the family and separate corner rooms are constructed for them to provide them seclusion in the home.



Parents, while searching for a bride of their sons, lay emphasis on the socio-economic status of the brides' family like her *Khanadan, nasal, nasab*. So, A *khankhel* chooses to marry a mediocre *Khankhel* who is less prosperous in the context of status, money and honor over an opulent family. This norm has undergone change and people prefer to give their daughters hand to a well-established person, who earns enough to give a financially secure future to their daughters regardless of his family background. The older times yardstick of choosing a bride was her beauty, outlook, manners, obedience, celibacy, simplicity and piety. The modern times has replaced this yardstick with education and heavy dowry of bride as symbol of honor. On the other hand, boldness and braveness were the qualities which bride's family seek in their future son-in-law, but now education and remunerative job are the preferable qualities in son-in-law. In gist, the criteria of mate selection have been shifted from being traditional to economical.

The modernity has also casted its' impact on the family structure by changing preferences of extended family to a nuclear family among the educated class. Parents do not interfere in the decision of their sons and his family for shifting to a city for job purpose. The western system of nuclear family has inspired the educated segment of the society and they primarily preferred to opt it. The village also gives liberty of constructing own house to a newly-wed couple on the ancestral land. This a very recent approach developed by native people.

The practice of refusing a less educated person for their daughters is prevalent in a village. In the recent past, parents were flexible in this matter and education of groom was not a primary matter of concern rather

his belongingness to a same family was considered enough quality to be a groom of their daughters.

Now, parents are well aware of mental incompatibility of their educated children with less educated people and they seek for educated wife for their educated sons and vice versa. The mobile technology is also responsible for changing normative apparatus of the society pertinent to marriage. Boys are not hesitant of having virtual relation with their would-be wives on mobile. This norm of talking with a future spouse is established in a village with allowing a boy to visit his in-laws home before marriage, which was a strict social taboo in a recent past.

Noor Ul Bashir Naveed is a celebrated Pashto drama writer and a respondent, who exchanged his views on this topic and said that modernization is dividing a society into two segments; an old generation with *rewai* (tradition) and a younger generation with modern norms of personal space, personal choices and education etc. The *Sawara* custom was practiced in older times in which a girl, regardless of his younger age, was married without her consent into a family, whose member was murdered by a bride's family to settle a score. Such girls encountered severe hardships at in-laws home as they were treated bitterly and ruthlessly to seek vengeance of their murdered family member. Some of them are reported to commit suicide to avoid the savage attitude of their in-laws. This custom is fading out in the village and no recent case of *Swara* is reported in the village since 2000. Majority of respondents held view that education coupled with awareness are dissolving such practices along with fear of modern judicial system as *Sawara* is now a legal crime.

## Conclusion

Modern transportation system coupled with swift urbanization are playing a potent role of changing the normative social apparatus of a society, effecting the rural areas of Pakhtuns. The cousin marriage is still largely practiced norm of the area, but modernization has shifted some of its' dynamics including the acceptance of personal choice of an educated son in selection of a life partner among the marriageable group of cousins. The customs of Swara (marrying a daughter to settle a score for blood) and child marriage are deemed as repressive and punishable act and high literacy rate and social awareness helps in evaporating such oppressive customs of the society.

Agnatic rivalry is still a salient societal institution of a *Pakhtun* society, though the modernization has changed it's some dynamics. The competition between agnates is still rife but the avenues of competition has changed under the influence of modernity, for instance agnates compete in the realms of education, social welfare, jobs with `purportedly authority and construction of fancy *Hujras* and houses. The new generation has embraces some aspects of modernity in the social sphere of cousin marriage, agnatic rivalry and *Pakhtunwali* which brings ostensible transformation in such institutions while the very existence and role of these institutions are inseparable part of social fabric of the *Pakhtun* society.

## REFERENCES

1. Ahmed, Amineh.(2005). Death and Celebration among Muslim Women: A Case Study from Pakistan: *Modern Asian Studies*, 39(4), 929-980
2. .Akhtar, M. Akhtar(1997). *Da Pakhto Mataloona* ( Pashto Proverbs). Swat: Shoaib Sons Publishers.
3. Banerjee, M. (2000). *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition & Memory in the North-West Frontier*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
4. Bittles A.H. (2002). Endogamy, consanguinity and community genetics. *Journal of Genetcs*,81, 91-9.
5. Grima, Benedicte (2007). *The Performance of Emotion among Pakhtun Women. The misfortune which have befallen me*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
6. Hussain, Rafat(1999). Community Perceptions of Reasons for preference for Consanguineous Marriages in Pakistan. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 31(4), 449-461.
7. Korotayev, Andrey. (2000). Parallel-cousin (FBD) Marriage, Islamization, and Arabization. *Ethnology*, 39(4), 395-407.
8. Scupin, R. (2012). *Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective*. Charles: Lindenwood University.
9. Murphy, R. F & Kasdan, L. (1959). *The Structure of Parallel Cousin Marriage*. University of California