

## Dominant Patterns Of Racism In Pashto Proverbs About Hindus



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**Abstract:** *The current study is about racist ideas in Pashto proverbs related to Hindus. Proverbs are a genre of the folklore and a social discourse as it is a well-known fact that discourses play an effective role in shaping the psyche of the folk of a society. Pashto proverbs about Hindus have evolved amongst the Pashtun majority about the Hindu minority and are apparently expressive of their jealousy towards them, may be based on a bias towards them as it naturally happens in traditional cultures. Hindu minority in the dominant Pashtun culture was a trading and business class, who were richer than Pashtuns. It is a natural phenomenon that communities develop jealousy about those groups, who are prosperous than others. Biases in societies about different communities about one another are undermined with education, enlightenment and open approaches. Hindus and Pashtuns along with other racial and religious communities had lived for centuries in harmony, peace and brotherly feelings towards one another. Even if the larger populations of different communities live in harmony, some sections of the same communities still grow biases towards one another. There may be similar inherent reasons about the evolution of proverbs in Pashto about Hindus, which are the transmitters of bias about a community, who were smaller in number than Pashtuns but were an important part of the population as business remained in their hands. Racist ideas in Pashto proverbs about Hindus does not signify the collective biased approach towards them by the whole Pashtun majority nor do these proverbs speak of an injustice and inequality towards them. One of the reasons of Pashtun bias and aversion, expressed through the proverbs about Hindus, can be their riches and prosperity, which may have put Pashtuns psychologically into an inferiority, compared to them, as there could be so many psychological factors behind the bias, which people of one community feel and thus express for others. There can be other reasons to the hatred and prejudice, which Pashtuns feel for Hindus, consciously or unconsciously expressed through the proverbs and which can be attributed to the religious and racial bias. The critical analysis of discourses, which are based on illogical bias and preconceived notions need to be explored and these have to give way to rational approaches. Things have changed rapidly in the modern world and so is the case about the orthodox and conventional approaches. Individuals need equal respect and approaches to opportunities in a world free from discrimination on the basis of race.*

**Keywords:** Pakistan,

### Introduction

The phenomenon of race is as old as human history, as it has its origin in human nature. Shiao et al (2020, 495) believe that “racism is an important word in the lexicon of contemporary

sociology.” The authors further argue that there can be no precise definition of the word racism or its definition as racism is a wider term and cover not just one but so many aspects on the basis the term has evolved in the modern world.

According to Smedley (1997, 1), “race is an invention of the modern times, a folk idea basically and not having origin in scientific research.” Racism is strongly connected with human feelings and emotions, likes and dislikes and all those other preconceived notions and beliefs on the basis of which individuals form opinions about others in general and people other than their own community in specific. The views are then followed by communities and are transferred to the coming generations and during the course of centuries take firm roots in the social structure. Many of the racist ideas about individuals and other communities, on the basis of so many other things are also based on ignorance. Racist concepts and ideas are nourished by communities without questioning their authenticity. So many ideas when questioned lose their authenticity as validity as these basically evolve from human biases and ignorance. When ignorance is removed with knowledge and enlightenment, racism in ideas also lessens. Shelby (2014) is of the view that racism is basically a kind of ideology, and furthermore, comes up with a definition of the term, which says that “Racism is actually a set of those beliefs which are misleading and the context in which those notions take birth are hegemonic of certain privileged groups over the ones who are not the privileged ones.” Shelby (2014) had earlier said that “an ideology is a set of loosely connected beliefs which misrepresent social realities and further perpetuate a social system on the basis of the same beliefs, which promote social injustice and inequality.” If looked at from this perspective, the word ideology springs up from two sources, one is the epistemic and the other is moral. Epistemologically, it reveals the distortion and misrepresentation of facts and morally, all those conditions which make the distortion and misrepresentation of facts possible. Shelby (2014, 71) further elaborates upon the same idea about racism and is of firm opinion that “racism is an issue of social injustice where the basic individual rights such as justice, liberty, approach to resources and also right to education is put at stake by the privileged groups of the marginalized and oppressed, mostly in minority.” According to Bobo et al (2009), three

meanings of racism can be identified, to which sociologists often refer. These three meanings are attitudes, culture and structure. Attitude is the mental state of individuals, which is reflected in their behavior and is also affected by it. Bobo et al (2009) are of the view that attitude is the sum of conscious and unconscious disposition, evaluation of other individuals and their personal beliefs. Culture (Sewell, 1991: pp. 7-8), according to sociologists, cover a large number of schema. Humans make sense of the world with schema at all levels. It affects all the connotations of social groups. Moreover, the schema provides a given society fundamental tools for thought at all levels, from top to bottom, the frames, narratives, scripts and all boundaries (Lamont et al, 2017: 1). Culture even provides the larger networks or defined systems of schemas, like language, ideology and religion (Brubaker, 2015).

According to Smedley (1993, 1), the idea of racism and bias on the basis of race, as an ideology arose out from the context of African slavery. The author further argues that it does not mean that people had not been enslaved on racial grounds before the African slavery. There are instances of the enslavement of people not on racial grounds only but on so many others, which had to do with other kind of hostilities. The English had tried to enslave the Irish in the 13<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of hostility in which the racial element was not involved.

According to George Fredrickson (1987), racism minimizes those qualities of humans that make them human. He argues that before 1830 that idea about the black inferiority was not common. It was, as he says, by the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that “negro inferiority” dominated both the common and also the scholarly thought. Once an idea or a common belief enters the scholarly mind, it evolves into a formal ideology even though in a gradual form. Stepan (1982), in ‘The Idea of Race in Science’ argues that the idea of race got its roots deeper when the conception of human differences in the very extreme form was legitimized by scientists and scholars through the ideas of the folklore. Any idea, which is legitimized through folklore gets embedded into the psyche of the folk. It conveys

the idea in a visible form that a person on the basis of race is a lesser human being compared to another. According to Smedley (1993, 2), "it was in the 1830s that Dr. Samuel Morton initiated the field of craniometry, scientific study of the human skull, the first school of American anthropology, who advocated the ideology of race, with a very strong scientific support. Dr. Samuel Martin collected samples from different populations, measured the crania with its insides and provided an evidence in support of his argument. The argument was that Negroes had smaller brain compared to the whites and Indians' brain was in between the two." There had also been debates about whether blacks and whites were the creation of the same creator or of different lesser creator. These debates had been going on in a society where there were Biblical explanations for every issue was not something normal. It was through the customs and practices of the policies for the public that the majority of Americans expressed their worldview about racism and racial ideology and it went on throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To put it in brief, according to Smedley (1997, 3), racist ideology was a mechanism through which inequality and injustice through social groups was justified, which had already been established. It was from the same mechanism that the idea of who should have an access to privileges, power, resources, opportunities, riches, and who are the other those ones, who should not have an access, took birth. Racism or racist ideology has origin also from the conquerors. It is through this mechanism and strategy that that colonial masters would rule over the natives by developing in them a sense of inferiority. The inferior treatment of the natives by the colonial masters would also slowly adopt racist discrimination of the natives by the masters. In that case, the natives were even deprived of the resources of their own land, which they would consider it as their ultimate fate, as something decided by the Almighty for them (Smedley, 1997; p. 3). The same policy, which was later on adopted in the form of an ideology was used by Europeans against other Europeans and touched the climax in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the form of Nazi holocaust. Despite

all these arguments, it is an established truth that intrinsically, human biology is diverse, which is the product of natural evolutionary forces. The need is to develop an understanding for the fact that race is not a natural phenomenon but a social creation (Smedley, 1997; 3). Smedley's view does not mean that human beings should be treated inferior on the basis of race on the taken-for granted assumption that race is a natural creation. Human beings in different regions of the world grow up with the same taken-for-granted assumption that they are superior to others in so many ways. With the development of the modern theories in the social sciences from the second half of the twentieth century to the first two decades of the twenty first century many speedy changes have taken place in approaches and outlook towards the traditional established beliefs. Racism is also an established approach of the humans which also need to be changed as it is like other traditional issues is not a natural but a social construct.

#### PASHTO PROVERBS WHICH PORTRAY RACISM

Racism exists in cultures through different discourses and which, through repetition, go deeper into the psyche of the people and in this manner common opinions, approaches and beliefs grow into established beliefs about groups and classes. Racial bias and discrimination exists in societies and cultures at the background of which there can be so many factors. One of the reasons of racism can be that those classes against whom biased discourses evolve are considered as inferior and secondly, those who express such views about them, give vent to their implicit or explicit jealousy towards them. In Pashto language there are a large number of proverbs amongst the Pashtuns against other Pashtun tribes and classes. Through the biased views expressed through discourses, members of one tribe or clan target the traits of other tribes and clans. This narrow-mindedness is found amongst the Bannuchis and Wazirs as well, when they express their views about other classes of Pashtuns (Maghmoom, 2014; 6; Thornburn, 1876). Maghmoom further says that similarly, Pashtuns express in abusive and disparaging language their views about

Hindus and Hindkais. According to Maghmoom (2014), Hindus were hated on the basis of their religion and also their riches. Moreover, Hindus were more business-minded and they used to be richer than Pashtuns, so giving rise to a natural jealousy in Pashtuns against them. This feeling of ill-will and jealousy has been expressed through discourses in different ways on different occasions. Many of the Hindus were very energetic and active people, they used to cultivate lands and lived a thriving life. Others were more into business and trade and lived a prosperous life due to this profession. It was natural for the larger population of Pashtuns to be jealous of the smaller number of Hindus, who lived a better life compared to them. On the basis of the above mentioned argument, it can be assumed that jealousy is also one of the elements of racism and so many other factors also add to the biased feelings of one community for another. One of the factors for bias can be religious hostility towards others. Pashto proverbs related to Hindus also more often depict religious prejudice towards them, the language of which clearly reflect their deep-seated aversion towards them on the basis of religion. There is a Pashto proverb, reflective of racism on the basis of religion, which says that “Hindu has got tired but could not please God” (Hindu starey aw khudai naraza) (Sultan-e-Room, 2013; 2014). This proverb is an evident display of bias on the basis of religion, as Hindu has not faith in one God like Muslims, his worship cannot make God happy and it cannot win him paradise. Muslims believe that all good acts and prayers are useless if one does not believe in God. To them life after death is the lasting one and for that matter faith in one God is of cardinal importance. All his prayers and good acts, according to Muslims will end in futility as he has no faith in God. A proverbs about Hindus says that “Look at the plenty of bundles of cloth in a Hindus’ shop and at my mother’s rags” (Da hindu pa hut shevay zerawa aw dama da mor da landa laghara wrazerawa). The proverb mentioned here speaks of Hindus’ involvement in business and as a result their riches and the poverty of Pashtuns. There is a background story to the proverb (Barlotti & Khattak, 2006; 271). The story goes like this that

a young man from Waziristan went to bazaar and there he saw a Hindu shop, full of cloth bundles. The young man thought of his own poverty and the rags of his mother. That is why he cried that “look at the plenty of clothes in the Hindu’s shop and the poverty of his home and his mother.” According to Barlotti and Khattak (2006, 271), Pashtun nomads used to go to Calcutta and would buy cloth from Hindu capitalists on credit and would bring it across the subcontinent on camels. They would bring the cloth for profit. The whole description speaks of the fact that Hindus were more into business and money and it is obvious that they were the richer class of society. Pashtuns even used to borrow money from them and they were also known for being tightfisted. There are positive traits as well about Hindus but due to the religious and racial bias, Pashtuns have ignored the positive ones and have more focused on their negative characteristics. There is a proverb which says that “The Hindu cannot be considered a man as the donkey is not considered an animal” (Na Hindu sarey de na khar zanawar dey). This proverb is evidently depictive of racist ideology. To elaborate it further, the views put forth by Smedley (1993, p.2) can be applied to the idea expressed in the proverb, which if explained further, says that Dr. Samuel Morton, on the basis of the study of human skull, some races like negroes have lesser brain compared to other ones. Ideologies are promoted in the same manner. Humans on the basis of religion, color or race are portrayed with certain traits and then those ideas get embedded into the psyche of the people, which are then accepted without critical evaluation. It is on the basis of color that the idea of negro inferiority with a smaller brain, compared to whites, has been promoted. The same idea of discrimination on the basis of religion has been promoted in the Pashto proverb about Hindus, where Hindu has been compared with donkey on the basis of a preconceived notion of inferiority in traits compared to Pashtun superiority of themselves on the basis of religion. Now if this idea about racial bias, which bring humans to the level of a beast of burden, is viewed in the context of what Collins (1990, 68) says about racism in the context of cultural mobilization. According to

Collins, “Cultural mobilizations are those networks of an organized schema, the aim behind which is the maintenance of inequality in terms of human dignity and honor.” Implicit efforts are also made so that groups internalize these ideas. In the above mentioned proverb Hindu has been compared to an animal, considered the lowest among animals and which is used for carrying loads. Comparing a human being, rather a whole race of humans to the lowest in animals on the basis of bias and jealousy and more than that making it a part of the discourse is injustice. People start perceiving, thinking and reflecting through discourses and the collective thinking of communities become their collective beliefs about other communities. The basic point whether the belief is true or wrong is not even thought about in the process. When beliefs about certain groups and cultures take roots in the psyche and thinking of people, then these are accepted without any question. The questioning and challenging of all those biased ideas, which have taken roots in the social systems through discourses in traditional cultures is an uphill task and begins with the coming of enlightenment in which the major role is played by education.

There is yet another proverb, expressive of the bias and feelings of ill-will towards Hindus on the basis of the fact that business was more in their hands, which tells that they were richer than other communities living near them. A proverb about this aspect of Hindus’ life says that “When a Hindu becomes bankrupt, he looks up his old account books” (Hindu che Diwali shee no zaray potai rawakhli) (Maghmoom, 2014; 13). The proverb once again refers to the business oriented approach of Hindus and the idea has been expressed in a mocking manner by Pashtuns. The proverb says that when a Hindu because of some misfortune becomes bankrupt in business, he looks up his old account books, whether there are any outstanding items. If there are any, the Hindu adds interest to them, which brings relief to him in difficult times. The basis on which Bobo et al (2009) refers to the three meanings of racism, can be appropriately applied to the Pashto proverbs about Hindus. These proverbs focus on all three meanings of

racism, to which sociologists refer most frequently. These approaches are embedded in the three meanings of attitude, culture and social structure. The pervasiveness of racist views in societies, both consciously and unconsciously, shapes the mental state and psyche of social groups and individuals in a biased manner since childhood. Throughout their life their response to the other groups are according to the same thinking patterns. The other two meanings of racism, which are culture and structure, cover different aspects in the larger context of shaping racist views and opinions. If the whole approach of a social group towards another group is that they are business oriented and fond of the worldly riches, then discourses with similar outlook will evolve from them. It is clearly observable from the larger number of proverbs about Hindus that they were the richer class of society and on that basis, a bias and jealousy, besides the religious aversion, existed among the Pashtuns about them as a minority. Pashto proverbs about Hindus reveal the fact that Pashtun majority was psychologically obsessed with the idea of Hindus as richer than them. This obsession of Pashtuns with Hindus’ wealth and money has brought an uncommon simile into one of the proverbs which will be brought under discussion now. Hindus shave their beard when they are in mourning and similarly, wealth cannot stay with a person for longer, who possesses it. Moreover, Hindus remain in strong connection with their extended family in a joint system, signifying that they are more often in mourning for the loss of any member of a family in the extended family. Similarly, a person may have plenty of money today and tomorrow he will have nothing with him. It says that “Wealth is a Hindu’s beard” (Dawlat da Hindu geera da) (Maghmoom, 2014; 87). The proverb clearly speaks about the pursuit of wealth as the love of money is an inherent desire with humans. It is an undeniable fact that humans long for good life but better life can be lived with money. The desire for wealth lives in the heart of humans without any distinction of race, color and religion and the power of money and the desire for it is an undeniable reality. There is also the universality of ideas in the discourse of proverbs, which exists across cultures. A Pashto

proverb says that “Wealth is a Hindu’s beard” and in English it is like this; “Riches have wings.” Another proverb again expresses Hindus’ lust for wealth and conveys the impression that Pashtuns have not lust for money. It says that “Hindus’ only interest lies in making money and Pashtuns’ interest lies in winning honor” (Hindu paise gatti, Pakhtun qisse gatti) (Sultan E Room, 2013; 204). The proverb explicitly conveys that Hindu is not concerned with other things except for one and that is his obsession with worldly wealth and riches. The dominant subject of Pashto proverbs about Hindus is that they live life only in this world and their entire focus remains on the life in this material world. Pashtun is being praised in the discourse for winning honor but this not a neutral view as there can be so many Pashtuns who have lust for wealth. The views expressed through the discourse of Pashto proverbs about Hindus is not a universal phenomenon but these are the views of one community about another, not based on neutrality. Love of money is in human nature and it is an undeniable reality. The proverb speaks of a bias against Hindus amongst Pashtuns and also that they are better people from Hindus as they value honor in comparison to the worldly riches and wealth. The proverb, which present Hindus as lovers of money and Pashtun as the lovers of honor goes against the very basic nature of man. The idea has not a universal application as humans are the combination of different traits and people of all cultures and nations possess different traits. Another important aspect of these proverbs, where Pashtuns have praised themselves as these proverbs have evolved from them and Hindus have been treated either with abusive language, or with contempt and denigration, have not come from a neutral and unbiased source but from Pashtuns’ with a jaundiced approach about another community and treating them inferior with inferiority and discrimination. The authenticity of these views, which have evolved from Pashtuns, on the basis of racist approach and religious bias, cannot be completely relied upon, as these have not come from neutral and unbiased minds.

Racism is a dominant theme in Pashto

proverbs about Hindus. These proverbs have set a discourse against a minority, which has adopted the form of an ideology against them amongst the Pashtuns as common people think through discourses and rarely analyze critically the views expressed by them. It is only through a critical approach that the motives as well as psyche behind discourses is explored and analyzed. A proverb about the same subject says that “The Hindu has accepted fire for worldly wealth” (Hindu oor da dunya dapara qabool kare de) (Barlotti & Khattak, 2006; 342). There is a background to the proverb. In Hindu religion, the dead are cremated, while Muslims are buried. This religious idea of cremation has been used against Hindus in the racial context. There can two connotations to the idea expressed in the proverb. Hindu loves money so much that he has accepted cremation for it in return. The second connotation can be that that Hindu has preferred riches over embracing Islam, otherwise he may escape cremation after death. Another implication of the proverb can be the fire of hell which has preferred for the worldly wealth. Racist bias is clearly visible in the proverb. Hindus are the worshippers of another religion, the basic beliefs of which are different from those of Islam. The two religions are the representatives of monotheism and polytheism. Hindus are polytheists, while Muslims are monotheists. Hindus adopt the basic beliefs of their religion since childhood and then follow those beliefs till death and so do Muslims follow the basic tenets of Islam. The proverb conveys an opinion, contrary to this view. It says that Hindu has preferred wealth over the fire of hell. A proverb expresses a view about the cowardice of Hindus, which is based on racist bias. It says that “Hindu would like to commit theft but is afraid of dogs” (Hindu ghla kawi kho da spo na yareghi) (Barlotti & Khattak, 2006; 342). The explicit meaning in the proverb is that Hindus are too coward to take a plunge into difficult or risky wrong acts. Such preconceived notions become a part of different ideologies and which are then spread against certain classes. The idea about the sense of superiority about one’s own religion, race, color, caste and class is a social construct. We think and feel what is inculcated into our brains since childhood and then we

behave towards people in the same manner. In the modern educated societies, where racism is discouraged, individuals think and behave differently. They judge people not on the basis of race, religion or ethnicity but on the basis of their traits as humans. Moreover, in the modern systems humans are judged on the basis of their personal talents and potentials. Racism, according to Smedley (1997), is about access to opportunities, privileges, power, riches and resources. When the powerful groups are successful in monopolizing the resources, they bring down the oppressed groups through ideologies, which are spread against them in the social structure through discourses. On the other hand, in case of the Pashto racist proverbs about Hindus, it expresses just the otherwise. Thornborrow (2002) has been cited by Shiao et al (2020), who has put forward an important aspect of ideology from the Marxist perspective. According to him, in Marxism, the term ideology, is a means, by which the oppressed groups are made to believe in and also accept their oppression through it. Those ideologies, which the oppressed groups accept about themselves are not correct and are contrary to their interests. Ideologies, according to Marxists (Thornborrow, 2002), are not natural but are imaginatively created for the way things are in society, so as to serve the interests of those, who want to maintain their domination in society. Althusser (1984), one of the Marxist theorists, is of firm belief that states also play an enormous role in the creation and promotion of ideologies. He says that it is through the state oppression that ideologies constitute people into individuals. Individuals, according to him are easily and manipulatively duped by ideological pressures, of which they are mostly ignorant. This ignorance allows individuals to be play things in the hands of ideologies.

A point is evident from the Pashto racist proverbs about Hindus that these have evolved on the basis of limited approach of Pashtuns that they (Hindus) were richer than them (Pashtuns). Hindus were a minority in the Pashtun dominated majority region and were richer than them as they were more into business and Pashtuns were poor financially as they were into

farming. Pashtuns used to treat with contempt the business classes of society. The biased and racist proverbs which have evolved from Pashtuns, as a discourse, are centered mainly on this approach. The focus of racism against Hindus, which is evident from proverbs is based on two dominant ideas, mostly their love for money and their religion. This idea has been expressed through a proverb, which says that “Hindu lost all his wealth but still did not accept Islam” (Hindu khwaar shoo kho musalman na sho). If viewed in the context of Bonilla-Silva’s (1997, pp. 466-67) three meanings of racism in which she has expanded her concepts about the phenomenon, the racist views expressed through Pashto proverbs prove appropriate to the concepts of racism by Bonilla-Silva. Her three concepts of racism are its ultimate psychological phenomena, the cultural processes as a result of which racism evolve as a powerful ideology and the structure of the social system which adopt social ideas into ideologies. If analyzed critically, all the three concepts of racism aptly apply to the proverbs about Hindus as the psyche, cultural processes and the social structure, all play a pertinent role in the shaping of racism, as has been expounded by Bonilla-Silva (1997). The first concept of racism, according to Bonilla-Silva holds immense significance as any idea, which becomes a part of the psyche of a people adopts the form of a universal truth for them, although the admitted fact is that cultural truths are not universal. Cultural ideas and truths are not time and keep on changing according to the requirements and demands of new times. There is a proverb which says that “When Hukam Chand (a Hindu) does not want to play, he says, “It is dark” (Hukam Chand che laibe na kawi tiara da) (Barlotti & Khattak, 2006: 217). The proverb deals with the racist psyche of humans, on the basis of which, one race in the social structure forms a firm belief about another race as inferior. The racist psyche is expressive of the innate instinct in humans of superiority over others. The proverb deals with the psyche of children that when child does not want to play, then he makes lame excuses. Children have similar psyche all over the world but the proverb specifically targets a Hindu child in the context. On this basis, it can

be assumed that racist ideas get embedded into the general psyche of children, when they repeatedly hear racist expressions from their elders.

Sociologists firmly believe that “racism” refers to four constructs in the social system, the first one of which deals with individual attitudes, which in turn are expressive of the collective psyche of groups. Children also look towards things from the perspective of elders and what they hear from elders. Eccentric ideas affect the psyche of children deeply without having a deeper understanding of them. The above mentioned proverb can be analyzed in the light of the first concept of racism by Bonilla-Silva (1997, pp.466-67), where she declares the first component as the “ultimate psychological phenomenon.” The proverb has at the background the psyche of children and that is when a child does not want to participate with other children in playing, he makes an excuse that it is dark. The basis on which the proverb can be put into the category of racist proverbs is that the name of the child mentioned in it is Hukam Chand, a Hindu name. According to Rogers Brubaker (2015), many West Indian immigrants to America socialize their children in a manner to regard themselves as better than “American Blacks.” Through this strategy the relational positioning of whites and blacks is determined and furthermore, reinforced. **Brubaker (2015) has coined a term for it, which he calls the categorically unequal social distribution of honor. Proverbs are an important discourse and it represents the views and ideas of a culture or community on the basis of their perceptions, observations and experiences. These are the best medium for the expression of different ideologies, out of which, one is racism.** Mary Waters (1999), in her *Black Identities*, has listed the experiences of West Indian respondents very openly that they are socialized about the African Americans to be untrustworthy, less intelligent and other resources compared to American whites. It is due to the same reason that (Brubaker, 2015) West Indian immigrants socialize their children as better than “American Blacks.” Children develop such attitudes due to their socialization

in the similar manner. The views of both Mary Waters (1999) and Brubaker (2015) have close relevance with the Pashto proverb, where it is said that when Hukam Chand (a Hindu child in the group of Pashtun children) hesitates from playing with other children, he makes excuses that he cannot play in the dark. It is an instance of how children are socialized about their racial superiority over others through the socially constructed discourses. It is also expressive of the fact that children are trained in accordance with the socially constructed norms and deviation from these in traditional cultures becomes very difficult. The breaking away of these discourses also takes time and determination.

Claire Kim (1999, 106) is of the view that from every day public discourses about the relative status of groups, the racial positions of different groups evolve and then are established. Once the discourses about groups take roots in the social groups, then it is not easy to outroot them. Moon-Kie Jung (2015, 35), further extends Kim’s theory of racial positions and sums up with key assumptions about racism that it stands on three key schema. The third assumption of the schema, according to Jung (2015), is the presumption of superiority and inferiority on the basis of race, being the most common and the most discussed. There is a Pashto proverb, which says that “It is Hindu who is poor as he is poor in faith” (Ghareeb kho Hindu yee che imaan ye na yee) (Sultan E Room, 2013: 158). The proverb explicitly expresses Pashtun’s superiority over Hindus (as Pashtuns believe that they are superior to them Hindus), on the basis of being the followers of a superior religion. The implicit meaning in the proverb is that Hindus may be richer in the worldly sense but they are poor as far as faith is concerned. According to Woody et al (2020, 500), researchers on racist studies mostly use racism as a mechanism to bring into light two processes, the first one of which means racial domination and the second one is for the purpose of drawing boundaries on the basis of race. A Pashto proverb about Hindus says that “The Hindu’s cooking circle is purified with dung” (Da Hindu chooka da lado pa akhbarr paakeghi)

(Maghmoom, 2014: 13). The explicit meaning in the proverb is that animal dung is not clean and stinks but the Hindu uses it as a cleaner and purifier for his cooking circle. The explicit meaning in the proverb is that an unclean man cannot be purified of the impurity, even though whichever the means he applies for cleaning himself. Implicitly Hindu can never cleanse himself of the impurity. The proverb is full of racist bias and deep aversion on the basis of religion and on that basis, the second process about racism mentioned by Woody et al (2020, 500) can be appropriately applied to it. The process is about boundary-making on the basis of racial orientation and keeping individuals out of the social circle as unclean and impure. It was not a one-sided but two-sided affair. Pashtuns considered Hindus as unclean and so did the Hindus and the positive point about it is that despite all these differences they lived together. Pashtuns and Hindus lived for centuries in harmony without any strict religious and racial hostility. There is a positive proverb also about Hindus which is very often cited. The proverbs about Hindus used to be cited by Pashtuns in the past are cited by them even now as and when are required. The proverb says that “Hindu has eaten beef for his friend” (Hindu da yaar da para ghwakhe khwarale de). There is a background to this proverb. Hindus consider cow as holy, they do not slaughter cow and do not eat its flesh. The proverb has been said or may have evolved under the context of Hindus steadfastness and loyalty in friendship, that for the sake of friend Hindu may do a thing which is forbidden for him by his religion. As proverbs have come down from oral traditions, so, there is a possibility that the proverb cited here may have come down from the ordinary country folk, which may have been based on their interaction and experience with Hindus as loyal in friendship, saying that “Hindu has eaten beef for his friend” but in the written versions of the proverb specifically the word cow is used, which says that “Hindu has eaten cow’s flesh for the sake of his friend” (Hindu da yaar da para ghwakha khwarale da) (Sultan E Room, 2013: 204). This proverb is depictive of the fact that religious has been set aside and a true and neutral analysis has been made about Hindus’ sincerity and loyalty in

friendship. According to Bannaji et al (2021, 2), systemic racism exists at every level in cultures and societies, including practices, norms, policies, beliefs, values, habits and behaviors but the intention behind them cannot always be harmful. There can also be views expressed through traditional discourses, which are free from bias and religious intolerance, as has been depicted through the above mentioned proverb. These views portray the simple, harmless and light-hearted approaches of the general folk in a society. Neutral and unbiased views expressed through traditional discourses are rare but still such instances can be found, which speak of tolerance and open-mindedness. Although the racist feelings expressed through Pashto proverbs are not part of a large system, where religious minorities are treated with intense cruelty, rigidity and inferiority, like minorities in other parts of the world. It cannot be said about Pashto proverbs about Hindus that these are from religious bias and ill-will. Contrary to the biased views expressed in other proverbs, the view expressed through the above-mentioned proverb about Hindus’ loyalty and faithfulness in friendship, is based on neutrality. Here the loyalty of Hindus in friendship has been highly commended. Hindus regard cow as sacred animal and do not eat its flesh but as the proverb says that Hindu has eaten flesh for the sake of his friend, which connotes that he will do anything for his friend despite the difference of religion or creed of his friend. A Hindu will go out of way of the basic beliefs and tenets of religion for the sake of his friend and if he asks him to eat beef for his sake, he will do even that for him.

According to Bannaji et al (2021, 3), psychologists had remained silent on the topic of racism but in today’s modern world, psychologists have been trying hard to lessen the gap that exists between the individual brain and society. Salter et al (2018, p. 151) are of the view that racism comes out of the roots of human subjectivity, which then through different mechanisms become evident in their actions. The racist actions then become a part of everyday activities of humans, sometimes consciously and at other times unconsciously,

thus becoming a part of the norms of behavior of individuals of a community. There are two Pashto proverbs like “The Sikhs won their battle far away, but Hindus here cocked their turbans in pride” (sikhano khkata ghata wokra Hindwano dalta paghrai kage kekhwey) (Tair & Edwards, 2006: 295) and “The cow is a god and the “Pipal” tree is also a god, let them fight it out” (Ghwa hum khudai de aw pipal hum khudai de) (Tair & Edwards, 2006: 307). These proverbs deal, in the words of Salter et al (2018, p. 151), with the very subjective views of Pashtuns about Hindus. The first one of the above mentioned two proverbs, may refer to a group of Hindus who took pride in the bravery and martial power, as the Sikhs are well-known for their martial qualities and the stories of their valiance in wars are famous. The incident about one such situation has been applied to the whole Hindu race by associating cowardice with them and its repetition has converted it into a racist idea about the whole race. The second proverb again can be the view of one individual, a Hindu, whose cow was rubbing against a pipal tree and when told by a Pashtun of the damage to the tree through rubbing, may have spontaneously said that “The cow is a god, the pipal is also a god; let them fight it out.” Both these subjective approaches from the psychological perspective have become part of racism against a group. Racism is a social construct and it takes root in the psyche of the individuals of a culture through informal training but once it gets embedded into the depths of the psyche of a people, it cannot be outrooted easily. In the modern world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has become very important to deconstruct those traditional discourses, which have become a hurdle in the way of way of different groups to development or which discriminate certain groups against others. The established discourses in traditional have to give way to new concepts and beliefs so as to pave the way for tolerance and harmonious ways for living with cooperation without discrimination and in justice. The traditional discourses are not absolute truth but have evolved from those groups who have always established their superiority over others to promote their interests. For centuries the traditional discourses have remained victorious in the suppression of groups

by the other stronger groups but now is the age where these ideas have lost their validity. The deconstruction of established discourses will face hurdles in the beginning as all the rotten ideas and beliefs, which take roots in the psyche of larger groups cannot be rooted out with ease but these can be slowly diminished.

## CONCLUSION

All the Pashto proverbs about Hindus, which have been discussed above clearly speak of a religious and racial bias again of a larger community against a smaller community. The bias and aversion, which Pashtuns feel for Hindus and which has been expressed through the popular discourse of proverbs, clearly portray the jealousy, aversion and feelings of ill-will of a larger community about a smaller community, the purpose behind which is to prove them inferior in many traits. The trend and approach of the majority about the minority, as has evolved slowly and gradually has become a part of the psyche of the general folk of the Pashtun community about the minority of Hindu community. The feelings of jealousy and inferiority have existed among Pashtuns about Hindu minority for longer periods of time, the reason behind which has been mainly religion. Pashtuns always considered Hindus inferior on the basis of religion and mocked their customs and religious rites. Due to the strong feelings of dislike and aversion about other communities, which are also the result of superior feelings about oneself and inferiority about others, need to be explored and critically analyzed. The critical analysis of the deep-rooted discourses put forth the fact that these do not stand on a strong foundation and have been the result of age long ignorance of people, which they had not the courage to question. In the modern social systems, people are judged not on the basis of race and religion but their personal merits and potentials. Moreover, the analysis and evaluation of discourses through the modern frameworks reveal the true and the deeper reasons at the background of conventional beliefs and it is these conventional beliefs, which also prove a hurdle in the way of social development and progress of smaller groups, while living with bigger communities, who have

different religious beliefs. The smaller groups also feel alienated due to the bias against them on religious or racial basis, which needs further research, as these discourses need to be revisited as these prove outdated in modern democracies.

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