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## Women's Protest Against Objectification in Haryanvi Folksongs

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### ABSTRACT

The inner world of women can be discovered by analysing their cultural traditions, folksongs, folk tales, gossip, and proverbs. The folksongs cover all phases of a woman's life from her birth to motherhood. Through the medium of folksongs, folksongs are an expression or outburst of suppressed emotions; they express the condition of women in patriarchal dominance. With the help of various kinds of folksongs, women voice out their unheard voices of being objectified, sufferings, and their suppressed dreams at the hands of patriarchal norms. This paper analyses women's voices as a protest to save their social reputation and honour in a male-centric society. Special emphasis has been put on the treatment of women as an object or commodities and its negative impact on their mental health and physical well-being. The voice of women is subdued and folksongs provide an opportunity to protest against their sexual objectification.

**Keywords:** Objectification, Social Reputation, Protest, Expression, Self-Objectification, Mental Health, Well-being.

### INTRODUCTION

Objectification theory gives a framework for understanding the experience of being a female in a sociocultural context that sexually objectifies the female body [1]. Sexual objectification posits that women who are sexually objectified and

treated as an object should be valued for their use by others. Sexual objectification of women leads to various mental and health problems (such as eating disorder and depression) resulting in self-objectivity under which they treat themselves as an object to be looked at and judgment on their

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appearance. Sex is biological, while gender is constructed. A famous statement is that a woman is not born: she becomes, is made a woman [2]. This explains that the social upbringing renders her a woman with certain inherent qualities, i.e. subordination, weakness, feeble-mindedness, endurance, and so forth. Most of these assist patriarchal males in arguing that women need to be confined into the four walls of the house as they are no longer sturdy to 'exit' into the world and be protected and controlled. Her sexuality and desires are made and dealt with as subservient to males. Feminist cultural criticism gives one major argument that woman is traditionally positioned as the 'other', or object of man's attention, in popular culture. New York Women Against Pornography group explains objectification as a process where the fragile group is taught that they are subordinate and are like an object and has to remain under the dominance of an authoritative group [3]. Man had thoughts about a woman that she cannot work in the professional world. Without giving an opportunity to work, one cannot make statements about any particular sex [4]. It simply means that man wants to stop the woman from doing any work. Sexual objectification takes place when a woman's body parts are separated from her and she is seen merely as a physical object of male desire [5].

### **I. Impact of Objectification on Women**

Objectification has a negative impact on women's self-concept, self-confidence, mental health and well-being, physical health, and well-being. It affects women's lives under which they suffer through disordered eating, depression, body shame, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and sexual dysfunction [6]. Women internalize the outsider's perspective as their primary view and begin to self-objectify by treating themselves as an object to be looked at and be evaluated based on their

appearance [7]. Sexual Objectification disrupts the development of a healthy sexual identity. Under this, women change their behavior in social interactions. Women are seen as lacking the reason for power, moral status, and mental abilities.

### **II. Folksongs in Haryanavi Culture**

Folklore is traditional customs, beliefs, or art forms preserved among a people [9]. "Folk" is any group of people who shares at least one common factor [10]. It can be any common occupation, religion, language and the most important is that the group should have some traditions in common of their own. He also argues that folk is easily recognized with rural groups of peasants from the past. He further says that folklore constantly changes to adapt to new situations.

Folksongs are the vehicle of cultural transmission, common wisdom and social concerns. Folk songs are the most powerful way to express the feelings of the mind. Their expansion is so much that there is no aspect of life and business which is not present in folk songs. The songs are sung by women in every euphoric atmosphere. Women have the power to transform the atmosphere full of joy on any occasion. The specialty of folk songs is that it is mixed with life, ever since the child is born and comes as a new guest since then he plays in the song songs for life, and in the end, ends by wrapping himself in the songs. Haryanvi folk songs can be divided into two categories: women's folk songs and men's folk songs.

### **III. Objective**

This paper explores women raising their voices against objectification using folk songs as a medium to convey their message to society.

#### IV. Methodology

A qualitative analysis of Haryanvi folksongs is done to explain the concerns raised as a protest by women against objectification. The analysis is based on the objectification theory outlined by Fredrickson and Roberts, Bartky, Martha Nussbaum, and Rae Langton. Data has been collected in the form of written documents.

#### V. Analysis Of Folksongs

##### Song -1 Naarmeribhilaage re

*Jeth                    mere                    kibadisihelli,  
hellimeainbijliketaarjeth main dekhanaayih*

*Doodhlottemeainlaayi oh oh ain kaanch ka  
laayigilaasjeth main to pyaawanaayih*

*Doodh ne to niche dhar de re hey re  
maahrechottne bhai kinaaraaj mere mannikar  
de ne*

*Jethteribetilaagu oh hot u laagedharam ka  
baapkahaylijjat ka raakhiyeh*

In this folk song, there is a context of a young woman raising her voice against her brother-in-law's unfair treatment and saving her honour. This incident occurred when the young woman went to see her brother-in-law's house with a glass of milk in her hand. He asked her to keep the milk down and do what he wanted. Finding her alone, he took the opportunity and tried to misbehave with her. As soon as she heard that, she was surprised and reminded him that there is a father and daughter relationship between them and maintain the dignity of this relationship. On hearing, *Jeth* (elder brother-in-law) says that she is the daughter of her parental home, not her conjugal home.

Moreover, he says that she is his younger brother's wife, which also means that she is his wife. Hearing this, the woman gets furious and

threatens to complain to the police, and she makes sure that her husband will testify about it. Being supported through patriarchal identities, the wife's angst is seen when society threatens her security in the absence of her husband. In this Martha Nussbaum's the ownership property of objectification can be identified where the person can be owned and bought [11].

##### Song - 2 Doob kyu namarrgya

*"Railwai saree meribhoorakachiyaghaat*

*Machine chlaaundevar ne pakadliyaath*

*Jeth ka ri beta wo karrhyadashmipaas*

*Surrender chitthilikh de gerungipatike pass*

*Chacha Ji*

*chutthiaaomaahrichachishakatbimar"*

In this folk song, a woman reveals her situation of how she is seen as an object by the males of her marital home. To save her social reputation and honour, she uplifts her concerns against this sexual objectification

This folksong has a reference to the brother-in-law molesting the wife of his elder brother, and the husband ignores this fact. One day, the woman was sewing clothes and suddenly, *devar* (younger brother-in-law) grabbed the hand of his *bhabhi* (sister-in-law). She sent letters of her illness to her husband through her *Jeth's* (elder brother-in-law) son. When her husband came and asked for reason to send letter after letter. She explained to him the whole incident, that how his younger brother tried to pester her. After hearing the whole incident, her husband responds that he is his younger brother, and there was nothing wrong with the act. She despises him and says why he did not drown before saying this, who is alive, handing over his wife to someone else. In this, the property of objectification suggested by

the Martha Nussbaum, fungibility is identified where the person is treated as interchangeably with other objects.

## VI. Result

The main finding of this study is that women convey their concerns about being sexually objectified by the male members of their conjugal family. All the males of the family including the husband consider women as a commodity or an object to be shared or used. Women with the help of folksongs raise their voices as a protest against their objectification that invokes their social reputation, conscience, etc. to ensure their safety and maintain their dignity in society.

## CONCLUSION

Women are the epitome of love and strength. The folksongs help women to raise their voices as a protest to convey their condition of how they are being sexually objectified by the male members of the conjugal family. In contemporary society, sexual objectification of women has lessened down but not eradicated completely. These folksongs act as a medium through which Haryanvi women express their inner emotions, which are somehow suppressed or unable to express directly in society. As shown in these folksongs, women's treatment as an object still prevails in society, but they have been given enough rights to voice out or protest against it. Women continue to face legion obstacles in claiming these rights in numerous parts of the world. Many people contend that change is going on, yet what we as a whole need to conquer is that change has not arrived at the apex of aggregate and complete sexual orientation balance. In any case, regardless of whether fruitful or not, celebrated or humiliated, infinite women clutched their ponies, battled the shackles bound upon them, and rose to sparkle. There is a need to sensitize people about the negative impact of sexual objectification on women's self-concept, identity, and physical and

mental well-being.

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