

Oral History of Bericho Community in Hunza



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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the Bericho Community of Mominabad.

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CHAPTER - 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The title/theme I have chosen for my research is "Oral history of Bericho Community in Hunza" which is based on the Bericho (In Brushaski, Doom in Shina) community of Hunza. Hunza is located in the extreme north of Pakistan sharing the border with the Xinjian province of China. This community resides in a small village called Berishal in the District of Hunza (Gilgit Baltistan – Pakistan). The word Berishal means the place where the Bericho community lives. Berishal can be literally called as heart of Hunza because of its strategic location (which I will discuss thoroughly in Area profile) and because of the material they used to make and transport to the whole state of Hunza.

This Thesis is going to explain the basic concepts and importance of the community. The focus of discussion in the chapter would be.

- The names of the community and the village, which are changed now to create a different self-perception.
- Language of the community.
- Skills in the field Blacksmith
- Culture of Hunza and Music

The name of Berishal has been changed over the passage of time to Mominabad because of the discriminatory and derogatory biases associated with the word 'Bericho' or 'Berishal'. It was always considered as stigmatic to use these words in Brushaski language. The name has been changed by Allama Nasir-ud-din Naseer Hunzai . Allama Sahab writes in his book "*Ilmi Bahar*"¹ that I gave suggestion to the Regional council to change the name of this place from Berishal to Mominabad because the people living here are equally respectable and they are our spiritual brothers/sisters. Then he stresses that they are equal in our religious terms then why

¹ Educational Blossom

they are seem to be unequal and why they are not treated equally and given equal rights”. (Hunzai A. N.-u.-d., 1965)p.21, 22)

The name of Berishal has been changed to Mominabad with conscious efforts of the Scholar and the Ismaili Regional Council² of Hunza to integrate these people in the mainstream community of Hunza. Ijlal Husainpur in his Article “No more Domaki Please” says that: *“the people of Berishal do not use the word Doms for themselves or Domaki for their language because of the derogatory associations and stigma with their professional life and the restrictions once imposed on them by the local rulers.”* (Reserchgate.net 2014)

Hunza region is divided into five ethnic groups on the basis of language. The first ethnic group is the Royal family (Thamo or Ayeshkuz in Brushaski), second is the local Brushaski speaking group (Brusho of Hunza), third in hierarchy is the Shin or Khwar (Shina and Khawar speaking people of Hunza), fourth are the Wakhi speakers and then the last in order (and the subject of my research) are the Bericho of Hunza who spoke Beriski.

The Bericho community has a completely unique isolated language called Beriski (Domaki in Shina). The word Beriski means –The language of Bericho”, it is an Indo-Aryan Language which is distinct from any other language spoken in Hunza. This language has its own phonetics and phonology. It has unique sounds, words, pronunciation, and sentence formation rules which gives it a place of different languages from the rest of languages in Hunza. It has two dialects. The one spoken in Hunza and the other spoken in Nagar. According to International standard organization (ISO), the norms for identification or the basic criteria for defining a language in relation to dialects are.

- Two languages are considered to be the dialects if the speakers of both languages can understand each other without the need of learning the other variety. If cannot understand on their previous knowledge then it is a different language.
- The spoken intelligibility is minimal, but they have common literature and ethno linguistics that both can understand is still considered a dialect.

² An organized body of Ismaili faith which deals the religious, cultural and social matters of the regional Ismaili community

- If there is sufficient intelligibility to communicate but there is remarkable amount of standardization of literature and ethno linguistic identities, then it is considered to be a different language. Ethnologue (languages of the world),2018)

If we keep the International standard organization's criteria in our mind and then compare Domaki with other languages, it becomes a distinct language. According to the common understanding in the field, the surrounding languages have no intelligibility with it, they have no common literature and if someone needs to learn Beriski, they would have to learn to speak and understand a whole new language. One of my respondent Habib Ullah Jan said *that " I feel so disappointed that the Brushaski speakers around us always try to learn other languages of Hunza like Wakhi and Shina but I never saw anyone who has taken interest in this language"*

Language gives this community a completely different and unique identity. But just as the word Berishal, the word Beriski has also been changed to Dawodi. The people of Mominabad call their language –*Dawodi Language*” (The language of Hazarat Dawood) and not Beriski anymore. The rationale behind changing the name of the language is same as the name of the place.

By trade, Bericho's were highly skilled blacksmiths. They used to make tools from the very basic, like a comb to brush hair, to most complex, weapons for warfare. This profession was only related to the people of *Berishal*, *Fida Ali Aesar writes about this community in his book "Riyasat-e-Hunza, Tariq wa Saqafaq ka Aayene ma"*³ (2015) *"Hunza State was highly dependent on Bericho community for their Engineering, forging skills (weapons) and developing agriculture tools and day to day material. The Bericho community were also skilled artisans, creating and playing musical instruments". (p145).* The work in the Royal castle whether they were the ornamentation of the wooden work in the making of the castle or the tools like the pots, agriculture items (for cutting, ploughing, digging etc) and weapons for war (swords, arrows, bows and later on even guns) to the tools in each and every house of Hunza from cooking pots and repairing them, making of agriculture items and repairing them was the responsibility of these people.

A specific Blacksmith was designated for specific villages. It is said that in Berishal each and every household had a special Blacksmith Burner at every house. According to the common

³ The State of Hunza, In the Mirror of History and Culture

knowledge among the community (but not highlighted in the previous literature) the survival of Hunza state was basically dependent on three main aspects. The first was agriculture, second was tool forging for basic infrastructure and household use, and lastly warfare. Warfare was one of the most important elements in this state because of the fact that the state of Hunza and Nagar were at constant war with each other. Litner clarifies this in his book –Dardistan in 1866,1886 and 1893” as –Nagar is only driven to make a common cause with their hereditary rivals and foe Hunza because of the danger of the loss of their independence.... He repeats in the same book that between the states of Hunza and Nagar there is a permanent hostility, They are literally rivals, being separated by river. Nagar fort on one bank and Hunza fort on the other. (1999,P5,7)

Music is another very important element of Culture of Hunza. Hunza community at large, has a lot of festivals and celebrations which are totally incomplete without music. These festivals starts from the first month of the year (January). The festival of *“BOO FAW”* (seedling) starts when the water channels are opened and the water comes from the glaciers for the agricultural land. Then comes the festival of *“Ginani”* (Nowroz)Which is called as the celebration of spring in the locale followed by the celebrations of Imamat (In Hunza majority of the population is Ismailies, Theses celebrations are related to their religion) in July and then in October. Finally, the festival of *“Sheeri Badat”* comes in December. All these festivals and many other celebrations such as marriages, community gatherings, are based on the music. The festivals depend solely on the musicians. The event starts with the arrival of the musicians and ends when they leave. Therefor the Bericho or the set of musicians who are called to the festivals and celebrations are the first ones to come and the last ones to leave. The whole celebrations are based on dancing. The men dance and women cheer and clap for them.

There are Musical tunes for every family according to their achievements, status and many other rationales. When a person does something heroic, he is greeted with a tune. When a person gains some achievements in a skirmish with Nagar, the musicians performed these tunes and the tune owner and his kin group would be dancing on the specific tune. ...”. (Schmid, 1997 As cited by Brown & Johnston, 2007, p.116)

This is a very common understanding among the local people that Bericho were the only artists who knew which tune was for which person, family, occasion/ceremony along with the tune's history likewise, marriage ceremonies were/are considered incomplete without music. In Hunza

traditional music at the marriage ceremony is as important as the food. Nowadays recorded music is mostly played via speakers but regardless, live music is still preferable.

This music or the musical band involves a set of three musicians, a drummer (called Dadan in Brushiski) two small drums (called Daamal in Brushiski) and a pipe (called surrani). Bericho not only used to play these instruments but they were the only craftsmen who could make these musical instruments. The people of Hunza always quote Bericho for their art work who used to prepare the musical instruments without use of any machinery. Given the nature of their job, it can be said that the Bericho form the silent foundation of the community of Hunza. They were present there to meet all the needs of everyone and without whom; survival would have been very difficult.

Despite the critical importance of the Bericho community, they were not treated and regarded equally in Hunza. To say that the Berichos were not treated fairly would be an understatement. *Weinreich while discussing the attitude of the bigger society with the Doms (Bericho) says that, they were surrounded by the host community which treated them as outsiders. Until at least 1970s they had the most inferior position in the community. They were forced to live in specially designated places in the outskirts of the villages. Beside the jobs of music and blacksmith they were forced to do all sorts of menial work. The surrounding communities did not give their daughters in marriage; even they do not consider them worthy enough of sharing a meal with them. The position of Doms (Bericho) in Hunza and Nagar was in such a position that even it felt like the untouchables in India. (2010, P 43-56)*

This begs the question, “Why so?” To understand this question, we would have to dive deep into the region’s history and culture.

1.2 PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

Anna Schmid an anthropologist who has worked in this community back in 1940’s was of the view that “The Social, Political, Economic and cultural change after 1974 is a big challenge for this community because they have to integrate in to the wider community and overcome their social status and position. She says that they must organise their own way of life with their own

differences and unusual way of living... (Schmid, 1997 As cited by Brown & Johnston, 2007, p.116)

Anna Schmid was on point to be scared of the extinction of the culture of this community. My reason for choosing this community for my research is to study and document this community before its extinction. By trade they were highly skilled blacksmiths, craftsmen and artisans. The Hunza State was highly dependent on this community. According to my respondents from the Bericho community (and outside the community), it prevails that over the passage of time this community has completely forsaken their highly skilled blacksmith trade along with their skilled crafting of musical instruments. The skilled musical 'ustaaads' are also dying out and being replaced by Brushiski speaking (Brusho) young talented locals of Hunza, as the stigma of playing music is also changing slowly. All those who played music were considered to be inferior.

Bericho's, now outsource all their agriculture based work. Presently, this community has integrated with the society at large and now is serving in the Armed Forces, education sector and various other fields of life. Furthermore, the unique language that this community speaks, Beriski (Doomaki in Shina), is slowly dying out in the favour of Brushaski Language.

- My aim is to study this radical change in the culture, language and integration of the Bericho community with the wider community at large, through oral history, and see which direction is it heading towards, and its future.
- The purpose was to record and document the oral history of this community as much as possible because it remained ignored by the sociologists and Anthropologists of the area.
- Self-construction is very important and through this oral history I have tried to make a narrative of the self-construction of the Bericho Community.

I have focused on Oral history of this community because of the fact that not much has been written or studied on this community. *—Oral history is the type of history which is built around the common people. It thrusts life into history itself and it broadens its scope. It permits the heroes not only from leaders and elite but from the unknown and ignored majority of masses.*”(Thomas, Voice of Past” as cited by Perks & Thomson, 2003, P28)

From Thompson's quote, it can be stated that Oral history gives an alternative perceptive about any community and specially a community which remained ignored and underprivileged over a course of time.

Oral history gives a voice to marginalised part of the society. Therefor I have recorded the history of Bericho community according to their point of view and their frame of reference.

–Reality is a complex whole and it is always multi-dimensional. This is the basic benefit of oral history that it allows the multiplicity of the history to be recreated to a greater extent” (Frish, 1990, as cited by Perks & Thomson, 2003, P 24)

I was keen to learn the factors which led the Bericho to this cultural shift and upward social mobility at the cost of their identity.

In the Article “No more Dumaki Please”, the writer Ijlal Husainpur strongly recommends the objectives which I am trying to do in my research.

–In most of the places in Gilgit-Baltistan the people of this distinct group have abandoned their vocation and assimilated the culture and language of the dominant communities in the region. This makes it even more urgent to save the language and culture of the last few hundred surviving members of this brilliant community in Hunza. It is not easy, especially when the native speakers themselves have developed a negative attitude towards their language and, sadly, perceive its demise as tolerable to ensure their upward social mobility in the larger Burushaski-speaking society.”(2014)

Bericho community is a marginalized community. Not much has been written about this community. There is a drive for upward social mobility among the community through forsaking their language, culture and occupation. The research aims to document the change in their culture and language and how do they construct themselves through oral history and according to their surroundings.

1.3 LOCALE

My locale for the purpose of this research was the village of Berishal (Mominabad) which has 76 households with a population 756 people. Mominabad is in Central Hunza. Its location is one of

the most important locations regarding landscape, tourism and commerce point of view. This is a landlocked village with only the indigenous Bericho Community.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

My objectives were to gather the oral history of the Berishal community focusing on the following points.

- To explore the process and factors leading to upward social mobility.
- To investigate the process of identity construction

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Methodology is the combination of tools and techniques that I used to collect information for the purpose of my research. I had adopted some particular methods in accordance to my relevant research topic and the problems I addressed during fieldwork. The tools and techniques which were utilized while collecting data with validity and reliance were adopted accordingly with the field requirements of the locale.

Methodology is the systematic knowledge and ‘log-in-use’ of the ways for the qualitative research. It’s the way through which we get our set of objectives so I used all those techniques which helped me in the collection of data. *Research methodology is a way where the researchers shuffle the data and information up and down the ladder of abstraction so they can systemize and increase knowledge. (Pelto & Pelto 1970; 02)*

Various techniques and tools of research that I used during my research were as follows:

1.5.1 ORAL HISTORY

Valerie Raleigh Yow in the book, „Recording Oral history a guide for humanities and social sciences“ quotes that Charles Morrissey found the origin of the term Oral History from New York’s citizens of nineteenth century. Nevins called what he was doing as Oral History. Oral History is a taped memoir, a type of written transcript, and a research method which involves in depth interviewing (Raleigh, 2005)P 3)

I used oral history method as the basic data collection method in my research. For the first week in my field I only observed and concentrated on appropriate selection of narrators for the interviews. Firstly I made a tentative list of the narrators with the help of my focal person. Then I visited each and every narrator for making them comfortable and developing an understanding for the research.

Then I scheduled the interviews according to their availability. One benefit I got was the maximum time of the respondents; this was because in Hunza the winters are mostly cold, windy and snowy. People prefer to stay indoors around the *Bukharies*² (Local stoves for heating). I documented the interviews by recording writing and making pictures. Make a separate section on reflexivity and state it there.

1.5.2 RAPPORT BUILDING

Rapport building is the base in anthropological research. Good rapport building is the most important technique because it provides help to use other methods more efficiently and effectively such as interviews, group discussions formal and informal interviews etc. However it requires a lot of patience, energy and time. It does not mean to have just friendly terms; the real thing is to develop confidence, to have deep understanding of social setup, behaviors and norms of the people.

It is also essential for conducting the research and acquiring data from various sources through anthropological techniques. For the rapport building I went to my field for first week and hung around. I loitered around with the people and engaged with informal conversations over tea. This created a gentle friendship with the locals which further helped me in my inquiries.

The first day at my locale was a snowy day. It was snowing, all white and beautiful and I was roaming around in the Mominabad. I got to meet Habib Ullah Jan sahib who invited me for a tea at his house. I was lucky to meet him on the first day because he is the ⁴ ‘Namberdar’ of the community. I accepted it very happily and told him about the purpose of my visit. As it was very important to start through properly channel.

⁴ Namberdar is the head of a caste in Local social construction. There is one Numberdar in every caste.

For a week I was just getting acquainted with the community and its norms. It was cold and I preferred to have tea and sometimes lunch in the locale with the community. They would be more than happy when I stayed for lunch with them. This gave me a very good rapport in the field. When it was a sunny day I use to stay with the elderly women in their streets and gardens while having long casual conversations with them.

Apart from houses and the people I used to visit a school every second day. There is the only secondary school in the locale. I got to know the teachers the head and the students. This helped me to build a rapport and understand the education system as well. Some time I helped the students to do their school work. This made the students comfortable with my presence in their community. The students were comfortable with me when I roam around in the locale they accompanied me to different houses and people.

1.5.3 KEY INFORMANT

Key informant is a knowledgeable person of the society or an institution who holds a lot of information about the present and past projects of the institutions which are happening or has happened in the institution or society. Bernard defines key informant as ~~–~~someone who controlled a lot of information about culture and is willing to talk to you.”(Bernard, 1988).

I selected two key informants from the village. Mr. Gohar Ali, a top notch musician along with Mr. Mollah Madad, an experienced teacher. The combined wisdom and experience of my key informants helped me understand the local behavior and customs. Whenever I got stuck with conflicting details I use to go to Mr. Ali Gohar for sharing my notes and for the clear understanding of the ideas. They were also instrumental in aiding me with my research.

Mr. Gohar Ali’s experience in music helped me understand the importance of music and its association with the region. I also got to know about the evolution of music, from the classic and into contemporary. Mr. Mollah Mada was very involved in the social and educational section of the village. He had remained a teacher throughout his life. He assisted me in getting to know the locals who would further help me in my research. Without the assistance of my key informants, my research would have taken much longer.

Mr Mollah Madad is a short heighted, witty and well informed man. My first meeting with him was very interesting. For the first week when I was just begning to intermingle with the locals, many of them talked about Mollah Madad. One day I went to meet him by asking his address. When I went near his house just for confirmation I asked a man about Mr.Mollah Madad. ~~He~~ He said oh yes! I know him, let's go I will show you his house". I went along and he was very friendly and nice. He came along to the house sat there and told the girl in the kitchen to make a hot soup for him. I was confused and surprised that why this man is behaving like this in his own house. Then at last he told me, ~~Yes~~ Yes Maam! You can ask me whatever you want, I am Mollah Madad". We could not resist laughing. Then his daughter-in-law told me he is witty and jests with everyone. It was a very nice ice breaker. From then he helped me for most of my research in the field. . He introduced me to some very useful resources and elders whom I visited and interviewed. Whenever I got confused or wanted to share notes on education, social issues and religious affairs I always visited in very comfortably.

1.5.4 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

In-depth interview is another technique of obtaining data during the research. Taping in-depth interviews involved open-ended and unstructured questionnaire and were based on prolonged session of questioning and conversation with the local population. In-depth interviews gave me the chance to probe different topics which I could not ask earlier. This technique not only provides the details of various aspects of Music and language but also in depth culture of the people. Interviews are the integral part of the verbal observations. The aspects which needed to be probed could only be researched, when interviews are in both the formats. I conducted both formal and informal interviews from people and use to jot down them. According to Bernard, ~~The~~ The researcher should try to remember conversation heard during the course in the field. This requires constant jotting and daily sessions which can be possible through excessive interviews. (Bernard: 1988)

Some of my in-depth interviews even lasted for hours. The more I spent time on the interviews, people use to take more interest and give me more details. These interviews were conducted with male and female respondents of the community using semi structured interviews guide. Because I was focused on the oral history of the community therefor most of my respondents were elders.

This was again a positive edge for me because the elders were ready to be my respondents and they were more than pleased to recollect their thoughts and ideas about their lives in those winters' useless days.

1.5.5 SAMPLING

Sampling is an important tool used in collection of data whenever a small group is selected from a population and the group must be the representative of whole community. It is defined as, –A sample, is a smaller representation of larger whole.”(Goode & Hatt: 1981) –Samples are used to estimate the true values or parameters of statistics in a population and to do so with a calculable probability of errors.” (Bernard, 1994)P.11)

Sampling appeared as the most important method to approach my community. My locales had total 76 households with an exact population of 756 people. In each household average 7 persons resided. I took a sample of 54 people. I used snow ball sampling. My key informant introduced me to one of the elders. At the end of the interview I always ask about to whom should I go next and my respondents' were kind enough to guide me.

1.5.6 GROUP DISCUSSION

This technique is adopted by the anthropologists in field work, and it was also used by me for crosschecking of the data collected through interviews and other tools. I conducted two group discussions. The first was conducted with elders, male and female both and one was conducted with the youth. The youth of this community was very helpful to me, Naila (She is from the same community but also a school teacher at Ganish) and Sajida (student of graduation) both remained throughout the discussions. These two girls helped me to arrange these discussions by selecting the community hall in their village. They called all the elders to the hall and helped me to treat them with tea also.

The group discussion with youth was very interesting as it gave me a different perspective to think about. It came up with the ideas and thinking of the youth of this community towards the bigger one. Some of the Youth were very disappointed with the behavior of the bigger

community at their schools and colleges and some were confident. (This I am going to discuss in detail in chapter 5)

1.5.7 PHOTOGRAPHY

Through photography, the visual data of different sites in the village under observation was taken which helped me a lot in the documentation of thesis. Some empirical information about different sites and events such as interviewing sites,, the only school , all the living legends of this community Like Gohar Ali (who is now considered as a living legend of music in the bigger Brusho community also. I used this method in the field and got photos of my interview subjects. This visual data have supported other data collected in the field. It made data collection more qualitative, authentic and valuable.

1.6 SECONDARY DATA

Use of secondary data during my research from various sources. Secondary data included data about Hunza, Berishal community and their histories. It was also used in knowing the history and constructing background of the topic. All changes suggested above hold for these sections.

1.7 REFLEXVITY

Reflexivity is the method in which a researcher reflects on him/herself to get more real and unbiased breakdown of the research. It is to get more effective, impartial and independent analysis. It is the evaluation and conscious examining and accepting of the presuppositions and preconceptions one bring into their research.

Every Human being has a unique experience with life and is the product of his own upbringing, surrounding, thoughts, environment, opinions, ideas, and formulations. The understanding of the world is based on these unique experiences and constructed thoughts regarding anything in the society. Thoughts are constructed on the experiences we are exposed to. The social, political, economic, environmental, physical and religious experiences construct our minds.

These thoughts and ideas are effective in whatever we see and experience new in our lives, we will react on the base of the well-developed patterns in our mind.

In research we can get maximum objectivity on the base of reflexivity. The community in which I was working was the one which is considered as the most alienated because the bigger community kept them so. So being a girl from Hunza who is well aware of the thoughts everyone is keeping according to the community and the thought of being judged when I will visit the community every day and spend my whole time with the people was always in my mind.

One day early in the morning in the winter's season where everyone in Hunza prefers to stay at homes and consume maximum heat and dry fruits. I was out in the street roaming around and was about to enter the community when one of my Father's friend saw me and said ~~what~~ what are you doing here and in a way that I felt like he is thinking that I might have to go somewhere else and was very wrong to be here, but when I told him about my research his words were hurting enough to ruin my day. He said there is a saying in Brushaski language that *"DURO APEE K BERISHALAR"* It means *if you don't have anything to do you should go to Berishal*.

This was my first week at my locale. Throughout my stay I have to face these sorts of sarcastic things, in terms of language, and gestures from my extended family, friends and known ones.

Once I called a cousin to come along with me so it could be easier for me to get more photographs and videos while I am interviewing. But he refused to come with me by saying ~~I~~ cannot come if I do so the people around me see me as a characterless person going there for hidden motives". I was surprised to experience the attitude of the people around me towards this community which I only heard of, in terms of stories from my childhood.

Then comes the part when I entered the community where I make a lot of friends, had a lot of chitchats and conversations, collected data and heard them pouring their hearts out to me. It was a very unique experience I must say a pure experience where they saw me as a friend and a researcher and trusted me to tell me things about their past present and future planning's. Some of the people told me that I was the only Pakistani researcher who is spending time in this locale. The ones who have wrote about them in books haven't spent any time with them here. This was a complaint from them that creating narrations about them without doing proper research had done a lot to ruin their image more.

There were informants who cried while telling me their stories and their past though they were very aged. I feel very sympathetic and i get sensitive many times when I saw constant tears in their eyes, when I saw constant sadness and fear in their expressions while remembering their past. I feel pleased when they get happy on their presents and on the thoughts of changes from their generation to the present generation.

Once I was interviewing the most aged person in the field. His name is Gohar Ali and now he is considered to be a legend in the field of music because of the knowledge, experience and expertise in this field. He has students from all over Hunza and not only from Mominabad. In his conversation he scolded the Brushaski speaking population around them he expressed his anger for taking over the music and playing which has affected their source of income. At this point I felt very happy that there are people who can now speak for themselves and against the majority around them.

Here I was happier because of my love for the minorities and as a social worker and maybe I was feeling more like a social activist and less like a researcher.

CHAPTER - 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HISTORY OF BERICHO COMMUNITY

There is not yet any proved theory about the history of Bericho and Hunzikutz due to lack of any formal documentation. However, a few writers have briefly mentioned the history of Bericho in their books. Lorimer was a political agent and a researcher who came to Hunza in 1924. He conducted extensive research on Brushaski language and the Hunza community. Following is an extract from one of his works:

—The history of Bericho is as theoretical as the history of Hunzukur. There are various things that has been written down and said about the history of Bericho, that from where they come from. (The Bericho form the only 6 caste" in Hunza in anything like the Indian sense.

The story goes that long ago-two hundred years or so, perhaps-some prince of Hunza rendered a service to the ruler of Baltistan, and was duly asked to name his recompense; He coveted neither gold nor horses, but begged for a few families of artisans. These were presented to him and allotted land in Hunza where they settled and multiplied, supplying the Burusho with blacksmiths for such rare iron as they could obtain, and with musicians to enliven their feasts and games of polo) (Lorimer D. , 1935a/1935b/1938)p.163-165)

Lorimer again, writes the history of Bericho in such a way: *—They call themselves Doma and their language Dumaki, and they are doubtless of the same stock as the Doms of Gilgit; the combination of name function must further denote some connection with the Doms of India. Tradition represents them as comparatively recent immigrants from Baltistan, whether they had earlier made their way from Kashmir. Their ultimate origin in that quarter is supported by the fact that their verb "to be " is of the distinctive form found in Kashmiri and in two or three of the minor languages to the south of it. Their entrance from Baltistan presents no improbability. Though at the present day direct communication between Baltistan and Hunza-Nagir is impossible, that state of affairs has not always existed. Tradition arms the existence of*

practicable routes and of some amount of intercourse, not only some hundreds of years ago, but, also in comparatively recent times.

Apart from these local traditions, Professor F. W. Thomas deduces from Tibetan records that there were open communications between Baltistan and Nagir in the eighth century A.D. Finally Colonel Schomberg has now found indications of the closing of certain routes giving access from Baltistan to Hunza by the advance of glaciers in recent years. We thus have evidence of some amount of intercourse between Hunza-Nagir and Baltistan, which must have brought the Balti and Burushaski languages into touch with each other. (Lorimer D. L., 2006)P 66)

Lorimer is not alone in his view that the Bericho's were gypsies and most probably came from Baltistan. Following is an extract from another historian who wrote:

The Bericho were actually gypsies who had come to India more than 2,000 years ago. From India, as good gypsies would do, they fanned out to spread themselves in small groups over the entire country. Some ultimately settling in Baltistan, from whence a colony were sent off to Hunza. (Sidky, 1994)

They migrated from India to Baltistan and ultimately to Hunza, Bericho were a skilful minority. They were living in the heart of Hunza but they were treated in a very biased manner. This marginalized community was forced to do sanitary work and treated as an outcast.

Ijlal Husainpur in his article writes about the history of Bericho by quoting the work of another writer, which changes the whole dimension of this community's history.

—There is another fascinating story about the origin of the Mominabad community quoted in Barbara Bower and Barbara Johnston's book on Disappearing Peoples. The one that tells their community and the ruler "belong to the same family." According to this narrative, an ancient ruler of Hunza had four sons. He designated one of the princes to become his successor and sent the other three to receive education from A teacher at a far off place. On Their way the three princes ended up with another old man who taught them to play musical instruments. On their return, the king was both disappointed and overjoyed at the same time. He did not like their training but enjoyed the sweet voices of the musical instruments. These three sons could not assist their father in the affairs of the state but accompanied him everywhere and played music.

To announce his arrivals, departures and other actions. Despite their relegated ranks the princes were able to raise the status of music and musicians in front of the ruler.” (Hussainpur, 2018)

2.2 ORAL HISTORY

Pippa Virdee quotes Bornar et al that, *“For the oral historians the interview is always more than the recorded and transcribed words, it is a process in which the narrator, the interviewee, is actively constructing and creating an account’.” There is also in many ways a power imbalance between the two agents; it is ultimately the interviewer who has the ability to interpret, recount and analyze the interview before narrating it and the interviewee has no power or control during this process. Some oral historians may share a transcript with the interviewee but this approach is not standard. However, the process of collecting these personal histories has enabled historians to broaden what history is about,” it has democratized history and enabled hidden voices to be incorporated into our wider understanding of society” (Virdee, 2013)*

When a lot of dominant histories and discourse come together and came in conflict, Oral history is the one which can resolve many things in the history of a community. Here is where Charles Morrissey says _oral history is the oral form of a personal testimony in recordings‘

Unfortunately the oral history of the Bericho has not been recorded in this area. There could be various reasons for this, as they were not considered to be a vital part of the society, they were the lowest caste which was considered not worth enough to record about them. The elite class or ruling class of the society always goes for writing about themselves and creating and making the history in their own way –*Oral sources are a necessary (not a sufficient) condition for a history of the non-hegemonic classes; they are less necessary (though by no means useless) for the history of the ruling classes, who have had control over writing and leave behind a much more abundant written record.” (Yow, 2007)*

“Oral history research thus becomes crucial to obtaining a picture of the total society because the viewpoints of the non-elite who do not leave memoirs or have biographers are presented.”
ibid

As Alessandro Portelli's book on a World War II tragedy, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome*, explains that Oral history research may also reveal that actions of individuals, who have no one to witness for history their heroism or provide for future generations the evidence of their tragedy.

The same is with the Bericho community, they have been heroes in their own way in the history of Hunza, they have been the support system in the survival of the Hunzikutz, but they are the least ones who have been written about.

*“Oral histories tells us about the people who are illiterate or those groups who have always been ignored either they missing their histories or by distortion. They give us the content about the daily life and culture of these groups”*ibid

The most important thing that makes an oral history different is that it focuses on the meanings of events rather than the events themselves. This doesn't mean one can doubt the validity. These histories often uncover unknown events or unknown aspects of the known events. They always explore new areas and new aspects of the day to day happenings of the non-hegemonic class like women and other oppressed ones.

The most precious aspect upon which the oral history focuses upon is the subjectivity of the speaker. If the approach to the research is broad and articulated enough, a cross section of the subjectivity of a group or class may emerge.

“Oral history not only deals with the oppressed, non-hegemonic communities it also creates a space for that half of the population who's voices are always make silent as the history was mostly written by men. Marie was working on the Italian American society for whom she said, their history has been more delayed because of their internal culture. (Pugliese, 2005)

History remained mostly in the hands of the powerful segments of the society whether it in the ruling elite or the powerful patriarchal system. Oral history provides ~~a~~ way to record resistance to the patriarchal worldview and thus negate the stereotypical posture of feminine passivity. Allowing women to speak for themselves provides an opportunity to tell their life stories, define their personal identity, and interpret the meaning of their own lives in their own words. *ibid.*

“Origin and culture are not adequate in differentiate between oral histories from the various sources used by social histories. This is because, for example Emigrant”s letters have the same content and origin but they are in written form. On the other hand many oral histories have been collected in writings. So many theories of oral histories are basically the social histories. The content of oral sources, on the other hand, depends largely on what the interviewer puts into it in terms of questions, dialogue, and personal relationship. It is the researcher who decides that there will be an interview in the first place. Researchers often introduce specific distortions: informants tell them what they believe they want to be told and thus reveal who they think the researcher is. On the other hand, rigidly structured interviews may exclude elements whose existence or relevance were previously unknown to the interviewer and not contemplated in the question schedule. Such interviews tend to confirm the historian”s previous frame of reference Even the same interviewer gets different versions from the same narrator at different times”. ibid

Oral histories or sources tell us more about the common masses and their activities, what they did, what they wanted to do, what they believe they were up to, and what they now think of their doings. Oral history may not give us enough things for adding to the previous ones but it always tells us the Psychological costs.

Psychological cost is all about what they went through when the events were happening in that era. The psychological cost is always precious because it’s all about those who could not do the things they always wanted to. This implies on the Bericho very effectively as they were the most oppressed part of the society. They were not allowed to spend their lives according their own terms and conditions. Though they were the one of the main foundations on which the society was laid upon (this I will discuss thoroughly in a next chapter) but still they were not allowed to do anything of their own. So while discussing these things Alessandro Portelli’s article *“What makes oral history different”* in the book *Oral History reader*” by Robert perk and Alister Thomson reminds us that:

“Untrue” statements are psychologically “true” and that errors in fact may be more revealing than factually accurate accounts. He insists that the “importance of oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in. (Thompsan, 2003)

Research argues that oral history testimony based on memory can be informative about actual events. And just as important, it informs us about the significance of the events. When other oral testimonies and written documents do not corroborate the narrator's statements, we can surmise that the narrator's Oral History and Memory of testimony is possibly not true historically, but we may have evidence for a different kind of truth, perhaps a psychological truth for the narrator. We can ask, what does the discrepancy between the speaker's truth and the truth of other evidence indicate? Always, in critiquing an oral history document, the oral historian must look at the memory involved and ask questions. Especially we should be concerned about the historical context for recalling and sensitize ourselves to the influence of collective memory on an individual's testimony. Historians Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn offer a succinct rule: *—Whenever memory is invoked we should be asking ourselves: by whom, where, in which context, against what?*"

Joanna Bornat is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Health and Social Welfare at the Open University in Britain in his article Oral History as a social movement which was Reprinted from *Oral History*, 1989, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 16–20, where he writes *that During 1960s and 1970s new ideas were taking shape in the areas of Psychology of old age. Psychologists interested in ageing process were of the ideas that reminiscing, the past was an abnormal or pathological idea which should be discouraged. Then Robert Butler published a paper in 1963 which was in the favour of Oral history and historians. He started oral history as a social movement and encourage those historians who were working with elder people. He said it is a „Life review” and argued that looking back to the past is a normal thing and it is a universal experience in the old age. ibid*

Rosen suggests that we pay attention to personal accounts “because (1) the power of narrative in general corresponds to a way of thinking and imagining, (2) it speaks with the voice of „common sense,” (3) it invites us to consider not only the results of understanding but to live through the processes of reaching it, (4) it never tears as under ideas and feelings; it moves us by permitting us to enter the living space of another: it is perceived as testimony, (5) it specifically provides for the complicit engagement of the listener.” (P16)

–the Life reviews, life narrative, life history taped memories, all of them shows that there is someone who is creating the topic, inspiring the narrator to remember his thoughts, memories and life experiences and put them down onto a paper” ibid

Oral history not only helps in the understanding of the society in a static way but it helps to understand the change, the transition and the transformation of cultures, societies and languages. Paul Thompson points out the use of oral history to help us understand change over time, to achieve not a static view of human experience but a dynamic view. *Thompson writes: “Oral history is a connecting value which moves in all sorts of different directions. It connects the old and the young, the academic world and the world outside, but more specifically it allows us to make connections in the interpretation of history; for example, between different places, or different spheres, or different phases of life.” Ibid p35*

Oral history is not necessarily an instrument for change; it depends upon the spirit in which it is used. Nevertheless, oral history certainly can be a means for transforming both the content and the purpose of history. It can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry; it can break down barriers between teachers and students, between generations, between educational institutions and the world outside; and in the writing of history—whether in books, or museums, or radio and film—it can give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place.

At the other extreme the social purpose of history can be quite blatant: used to provide justification for war and conquest, territorial seizure, revolution and counter-revolution, the rule of one class or race over another. Where no history is readily at hand, it will be created.

Pipa Virdee said that “oral history can play an important role in constructing an alternative history”. For Pipa Virdee the value of oral history is that it creates a link to the written archives with personal experiences. It provides those aspects of humans which are mostly missing in the dominant political and social histories. Oral history creates a connection between present and past. Yet there is also something quite democratic and encouraging about using this form of methodology because there are no restrictions on access in the same way as we are restricted in our access to the archives, especially those records which are deemed to be highly 'sensitive' and held back. The problem with the archives is multi-fold, the lack of proper awareness regarding

documents is one and secondly the State and Provincial archives are poorly equipped and lack the necessary resources.

Oral histories make their ways to break the discourses made over long periods of time. Sometimes they create discourses against the minorities while the oral histories could be completely opposite. ^{ibid}

As in the article ‘Reproducing History of Family Identity through culture’ Dr. Sadia Abid and Dr. Azam Chaudary narrates about the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh that ‘History has been ‘unjust’ and unfair to the Sikh emperor, As the written history is based on the biased perspective of Muslims where they always associate the Sikh ruler with unrest, Loot and plunder but the artefacts at the Faqir Khana museum and the associated narratives through the Faqir family has a completely different and opposite narrative’.

2.3 SOCIAL STANDING OF THE BERICHO'S

The Bericho, despite being the most skilful, were considered the lowest caste of Hunza. As I have mentioned above that they were the silent foundation of Hunza community, but still they were treated in a very discriminatory way. They were treated as the lowest class, whose needs were restricted and feelings never considered. Calling someone a Bericho is considered an insult even in present times. Lorimer in his books wrote down:

“These (Bericho) were presented to him (The prince of Hunza) and allotted land in Hunza where they settled and multiplied, supplying the Burusho with blacksmiths for such rare iron as they could obtain, and with musicians to enliven their feasts and games of polo. These strangers in the midst are treated with courtesy and kindness, but remain "foreigners" and social inferiors. The Burusho will not intermarry with them. A threat to a troublesome daughter is said to be: "If you don't behave, I'll marry you to a Bkritis"; but we never heard the threat employed, still less a case of its being carried out. Each Burusho household pays a small yearly tax to the Bkricho community, and in return the blacksmiths tour the villages once or twice a year and make or mend whatever is required.” (Lorimer P 163, 164, 165)

“In both Hunza and Nagir, in the midst of the Burushaski-speaking population, exists small alien colonies speaking 'an Indo-Aryan language. These are the Bericho, who are the professional

blacksmiths and musicians to the joint communities. They call themselves Doma and their language Dumiiki, and they are doubtless of the same stock as the Doms of Gilgit ; the combination of name and function must further denote some connection with the Doms of India.” (Lorimer D. L., 2006)

Similarly, Matthias Weinreich wrote that:

—Moreover, until around 40 years ago Dooma were part of a social structure in which they as a group occupied the most inferior position available. They were compelled to live in specially designated places at the outskirts of the village and forced to perform, besides their traditional occupations as blacksmiths and musicians, all kinds of low and dirty work. Members of their host communities did not give their daughters to them in marriage, and most people would not even consider them worthy of sharing a simple meal with. In short, the Dooma's position in the traditional society of the Nager and short, the Dooma's position in the traditional society of the Nager and Hunza Principalities was such that visitors familiar with the situation Hunza Principalities was such that visitors familiar with the situation further to the south, often felt reminded of the status of Hindu untouchables there.

Dooma are still considered by many members of their host communities as a kind of low casts. It has discrimination has many faces. For example, all over the Northern Areas calling somebody a "Doom" is not perceived as a statement about the concerned person's ethnic affiliation, as would be the case with designations like "Brusho", "Shin" or "Kho", but counts as a serious insult, which asks for an immediate response. (Weinreich, 2010)

The Bericho community has taken drastic steps to leave behind the stigma of their heritage and in the process, are carving out a new identity for themselves.

"In this way, even the Doomaki speakers themselves avoid their traditional self-denomination, and use their clan names instead. Unfortunately, the surrounding society's prejudiced attitudes do not exhaust themselves solely in verbal abuse. They also reflect on the availability of educational choices, job opportunities, and even bank loans. So, it will come as no surprise that the majority of Dooma would be all happy to get rid of their problematic group identity, in order to attain a social position which is based on their individual merits, and not allotted to them according to their ethnic background" Ibid

CHAPTER – 3

3.1 AREA PROFILE

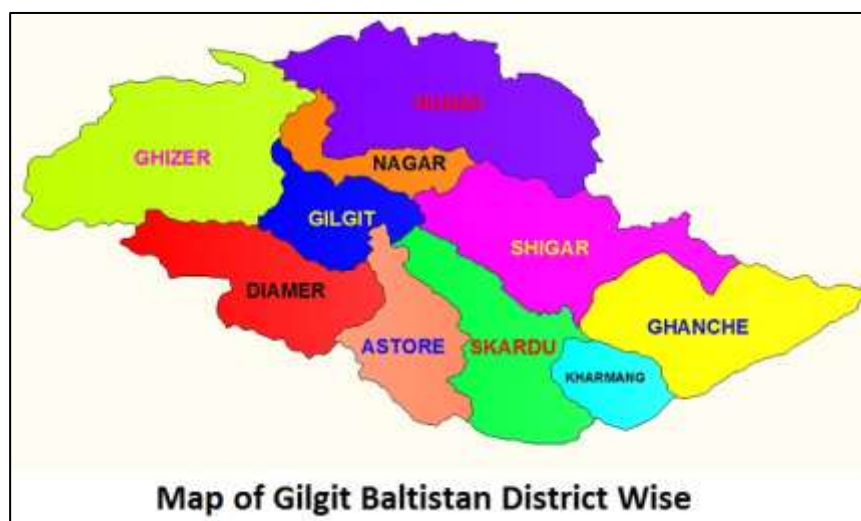
Pakistan is situated in the continent of South Asia. It is a country with four provinces i.e. Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It also administratively controls Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan which are given a semi provincial status despite the fact that both these regions have a strategically important geographical location. Pakistan is a country with diverse culture and languages. The Landscape of Pakistan contains a range of wonders ranging from deserts, plateaus, mountains, forests to fertile lands for agriculture. Pakistan is a country blessed with all the four seasons of nature (spring, summer, autumn and winter). The Population of Pakistan is approx. 20 million, making it the 6th most populous country in the world. The literacy rate (**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write) of **total population:** 57.9% (**male:** 69.5% **female:** 45.8% - 2015 est.) (CIA Fact book, 2015)

Pakistan is an agriculture based country and 57% of population depends on Agriculture (Government of Pakistan 2002). Agriculture accounts for one-fifth of output and two-fifths of employment (CIA Fact book). The total land of Pakistan is 796,000 squares Kilometer and it shares its borders with China in the North, India in the East, Afghanistan in the west, Iran in the South west and Arabian Sea in the South.

Gilgit-Baltistan is located in the North of Pakistan, sharing its International borders with China's Xinjiang province in the North, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the West, Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan in the North West. Jammu and Kashmir (Kashmir administered by India) in the South (South East). Gilgit-Baltistan was referred to as the Northern Areas of Pakistan up till 2009 after which Gilgit-Baltistan received somewhat of a provincial status and thus the name officially became Gilgit-Baltistan. This step was taken to align this region with the main stream politics of Pakistan. Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has now its own Legislative Assembly (GBLA). It covers an area of 72,971 km and has a population of around 1.249 Million people. (<http://www.gilgitbaltistanscouts.gov.pk/geodemo.htm>)

This region is famous for its beautiful land scape and the tourism Industry thrives because of this natural beauty. It has extremely high altitude snow covered mountains and is the junction point of the three largest mountain ranges (Hindu Kush, Karakorum and Himalayas). The headquarters of GB is Gilgit city. This city is the Political, social and economic hub of this region. GB has been divided into smaller administrative units called districts. All together there are 10 districts in GB.

1. Ghanche
2. Skardu
3. Shigar
4. Kharman
5. Gilgit
6. Diamer
7. Ghizer
8. Astore
9. Hunza
10. Nagar



<https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=Map+of+Gilgit+baltistan+district>

Fig: 3.1 – District wise breakup of Gilgit Baltistan

Division	District	Area(km ²)	Population	Headquarters
Baltistan	Skardu	8,700	305,000	Skardu
	Shigar	8,500	85,000	Shigar
	Kharman	5,500	60,000	Tolti
	Ghanche	4,052	108,000	Khapulu
Diamer	Diamer	10,936	214,000	Chilas

Gilgit	Astore	5,092	114,000	Gorikot
	Gilgit	14,672	222,000	Gilgit
	Ghizer	9,635	190,000	Ghakuch
	Nagar	5,000		Sikanderabad
	Hunza	7,900	70,000	Aliabad

Sir Francis Younghusband says that, there are various reasons which can attract a person towards these regions (Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral). These reasons include Political and Military. Younghusband further narrates Mr. Knight's book (titled *—Where three Empires meet—*). In it is written, *—The India, Russia and Chines all meet here and where such three empires meet naturally it turns the interest of those who inhabit it.*” (Younghusband, 1895)pp. 409-422)

There is no other place in world probably where such large amount of supercilious mountains are found in such a narrow place. These enormous amounts of mountains intersect huge deep valleys. (Biddulph, The tribes of Hindukush, 1971) P 1)

3.2 HUNZA

Hunza is called as Khunjoot in Wakhan, Sirikol and Yarkand, though this name is not used by the residents of Hunza nor used by the people of hindu Kush. The name most commonly used by the inhabitants of this place is *—Hunzoo—*. *In the olden times it was called as „Chalhj Bultum“; which is not used by anyone now* (Biddulph, Tribes of HinduKush, 1928). *The word Hunza reflects the fact that this land belongs to the „Hun“people while in oral history the ancient name of Hunza is „Hi Hayoo Dass“and the people of Baltistan used to call this „Hahayal“ (The land of Happiness). When the Hun people settled over here it was called as Hunza* (Hunzai F. A., 2015)

Hunza is located in the majestic mountain of Karakaroram range. It is nearly hundred miles long and two miles wide (Hunzui 2015). *The altitude of Hunza is 8,400 feet.* (ibid p25)

—When entered into Hunza territory, the valley is very narrow and impressive. You can observe Rakaposhi (7788m) rising majestically above the landscape. The valley eventually widens up

again and one can find the fruits and crop fields in abundance. Wild roses and aromatic trees give a perfume scent which strangely reminds one of orange blossom. The journey from here on to Baltit was a sheer delight, for every turn in the road brought fresh glimpses, either of Rakaposhi or of the wonderful mountain behind Baltit, Boyo Shubran, of which Boboli Moting, or the "Finger Peak," is the most prominent feature. A little below Baltit is the village of Aliabad, some 7000 feet above sea-level, and from this place one obtains what I would venture to call one of the finest mountain views in the world, certainly one of the most magnificent in the whole Himalaya. The height of Rakaposhi has been computed at 25,550 feet; Aliabad has an uninterrupted view of some 17,000 or 18,000 feet of snow and ice. As we passed there was hardly a cloud in the sky, and the wonderful array of hanging glaciers and precipitous ice-cliffs gleaming in the brilliant sunlight and rising vertically above the emerald fields of the village was a sight never to be forgotten" J Morris writes the above in his journal (ibid pp. 513-531)

Hunza till the integration into Pakistan's political and administrative structure remained a princely state until 1974. The monarch is referred to as *–Thum* in the local language. The Thum had the sole authority over the state. His population was mixed and composed of four different ethnic groups, Brusho, Shina speaker, Wakhi speakers and Dom (Kreutzmann, 1991)

3.2.1 ORAL HISTORY FOR THE ORIGIN OF HUNZUKZ

The most common and authentic oral tradition for the origin of Hunzuktz which is passing through generations is as follows:

"It is difficult to determine through the ancient settlements regarding the origin of the first inhabitants of Hunza. However it is a very common oral narration that when Alexander the Great's army passed through the region (Hunza), a few of his ranking officers became dangerously ill near the river bed and It was decided that these officers would stay back. Four of the officers (Shanoo Hari, Safar, Mamoo Hari and Diram Hari and Safar Hari) settled in Baltit, Whereas Fuloolo was settled in Ganish and lastly the one settled in Altit was a Hun origin officer because of whom the place was named as HUNU KUSHAL." (Ibid p 25)

Though it's a theory and the origin of Hunukutz is not authentic but the above story is the most common one which is transferred from many generations.

3.3 MOMINABAD

Hunza is divided into three main parts Lower Hunza, Central Hunza, and Upper Hunza. Lower Hunza is dominated by the Shina speakers. Central Hunza comprises mainly of Brushiski Speakers whereas in Upper Hunza, Wakhi speakers are in majority. In Central Hunza, a small village called Mominabad is my focus in this thesis. Mominabad is a very small unit of Hunza whose Social, Economic and Political aspect is interrelated and dependent on the main structure of Hunza.

There are 76 households in this village with a population of 546 exactly (Jan 2018). All the inhabitants living in Mominabad are primarily ‘Bericho’ by caste. Their language is ‘Beriski’. The geographic location of this place is very much interesting which explains much about the whole society of Hunza. This will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

Mominabad is about one kilometer away from the main Karakorum Highway (KKH). In fact the part of KKH which connects Karimabad (the oldest and the main town of Hunza) with main KKH goes through this small Village.

3.4 SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Hunza remained semi-isolated and bounded by wildernesses for centuries because of which this society attained to a degree, its own cultural and social stratification and political centralization. Hunza become one of the chief self-ruled 'princely states' by 19th century as a part of the British Indian Empire (Staley, 1969)229). However then the British involved this part of the world in its geo-political scenarios (referred to as the ‘Great Game’) with Russia, it brought significant changes in the mid-1800s (Keay-1979). The British invaded Hunza in 1891 and made it a part of Gilgit Agency in Jammu and Kashmir State (Litner, 1899). Thereafter Hunza's autonomy remained relatively unchanged until the British removal from India 1947. Shortly after partition of the subcontinent, and the dispute over Kashmir, the Hunza proclaimed commitment to Pakistan. For the first two and half decades of Pakistani rule (from 1947 to 1974), the Mir/Thum retained internal administrative powers. This autonomy was ended 1974, when the Bhutto regime abolished the privileges of the Princely states.

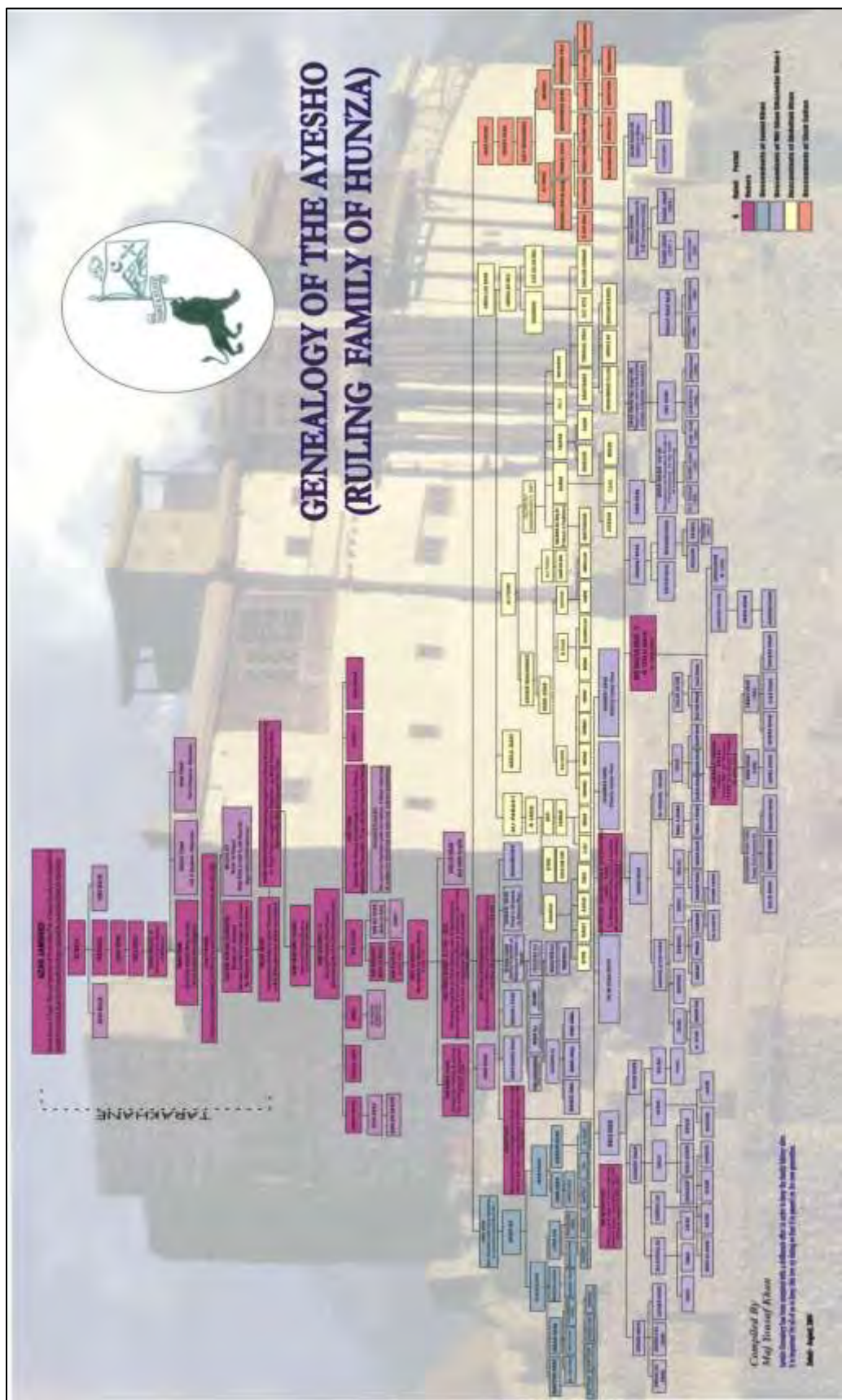


Figure: 3.4 – Genealogy of Ayesho family. Collected from the family

Hunza state was now brought under the administration of Islamabad, and became a sub-division of the Northern Areas District

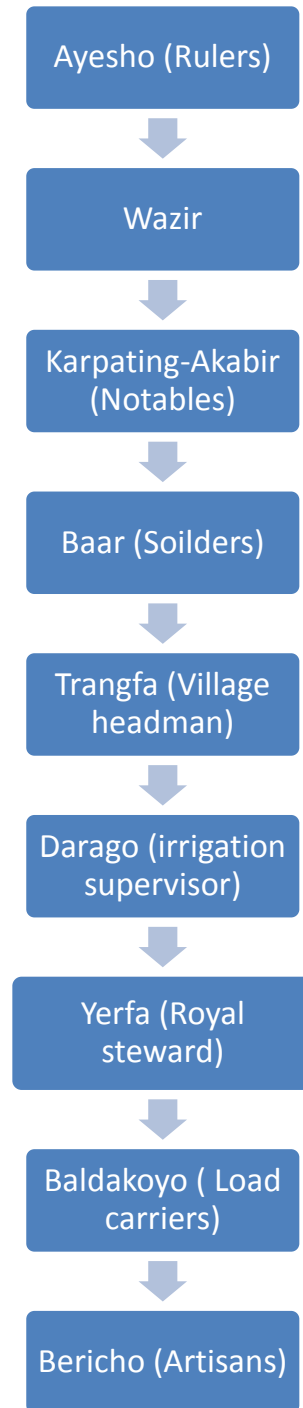
At the peak of the traditional political hierarchy state was the Mir, an autocratic ruler who also went to brushaski title of Thum. Not only did the Mir command authority, but he was deemed also to be the source fertility able to control the melting of glaciers, produce snow and rain and quell storms (Baig, 1980)p.219).

The Mir of Hunza was chosen strictly from the successional family that traced its descent to rulers of centuries past. Only the family members could claim to the throne. In the political setup of the castle and society, Mir was followed by a very well managed administrative hierarchy comprising officials who held hereditary posts. At the head of this administration was the Wazir, who functioned as prime minister, mediator, and military commander. He was duty-bound to serve the ruler. The basic unit of political organization was the village community. Each village had a Trangfa, or village headman, who was accountable to the Wazir. The Trangfa was responsible for the everyday affairs of their villages and arbitrated minor disputes.

The allocation of water was one of the major responsibilities of the Trangfa. Trangfa also arbitrated disputes over the allocation of water, and he used to appoint the Darago‘, officers who guarded the water channels and were responsible for the channel’s maintenance. Lastly, village headmen were responsible for making the members of their communities fulfill their duties to the state. Most of the land in nearly every village belonged to the Mir. The Ayerfa‘ or royal steward supervised the sowing, watering, reaping, and harvesting of the ruler's estates.

Wazir and Trangfa were drawn from a small class of landed aristocracy. The Karpating‘ (The Aristocrats) below this aristocracy were a large class of cultivators, who worked small land holdings, usually one to two hectares. The Karpating and small landholders were permitted to carry arms and were compelled to perform military service. The Baldakoyo‘, meaning load carriers, were tenant farmers, a class ranked beneath the small land holders in traditional Hunzakutz society.

3.4.1 Social Hierarchy of Hunza



(Hunzui, 2015)

Baldakoyo were obliged to provide compulsory labor for the Mir: carrying his goods from village to village, and making his lands fertile. In return these load carriers received an annual payment. The Baldakoyo also had to provide two men to work for each Karpating family.

In spring and fall, these Baldakoyo were bound to work as gold-washers for the state, under the Wazir and Trangfa. The Baldakoyo were prohibited to have arms and, in times of war, functioned as military porters.

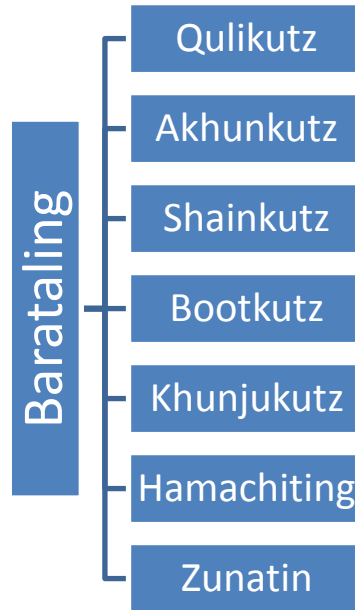
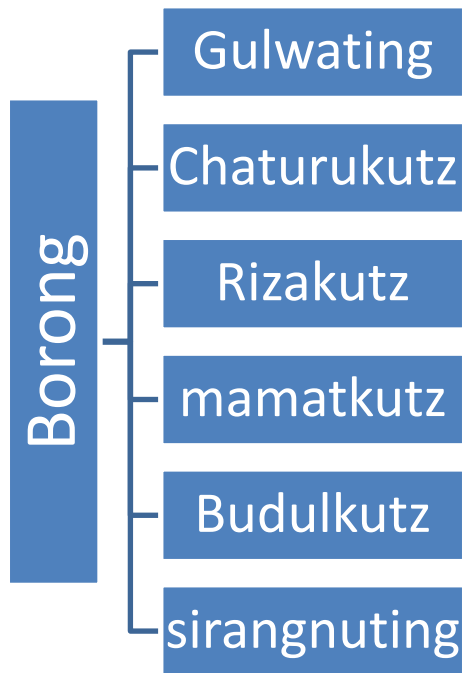
As I have explained above that my locale is dependent on the bigger society of Hunza for its social, political and economic life. Bericho, held the lowest position in the society. They give their services as musicians and blacksmiths, and used to provide compulsory service to the Mir himself, such as fetching firewood, or, occasionally, taking care of his livestock. The Bericho were also forbidden to keep and use weapons, but they were enrolled in wartime to perform the dangerous jobs of spying. The class of small landholders and tenant farmers were obliged to provide *Rajaki*, or labor. The Hunza state was running without a formal currency and relied on a complete barter system.

3.5 SOCIAL STRUCTURE

3.5.1 TRIBES (QOAMS)

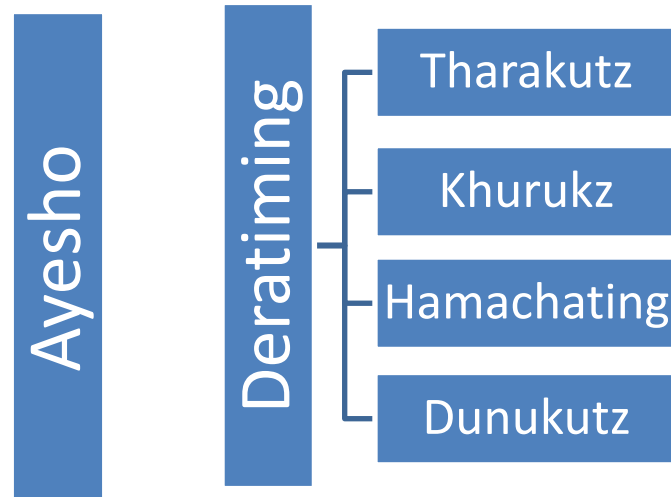
According to *Lorimer* originally there were three tribes in Hunza. The *Hamachating* at Ganish, *Thapkients* at Baltit and *Usengumuts* at Altit. There was no concept of a Tham (monarchy) at that time in this region. These tribes were very powerful and they used to collect taxes and distribute among themselves. Monarchy started from the lineage of Girkis and after that the Thams of following time started to collect the taxes. All these tribes were massacred by different kings of Hunza. Fortunately somehow a pregnant woman managed to escape and gave birth to a boy from Hamachating Tribe and the origin of Dirmiting was created. . (Ibid p 237-241)

Presently there are six main *qoams* (tribes) in Central Hunza, namely *Thamo*, *Borong*, *Barataling*, *Derramating*, *Khorukutz* and *Bericho*. These main qoams are divided into sub *qoams* which are:



Bericho *

** **BERICHO**: They don't have a sub caste but they have different families which will be explained in the next*



Ayesho (also known as *Thamo*) are the ruling monarch family and has no sub castes within it.

For the purpose of my thesis, I have chosen to research the *Bericho* Qoam of Hunza.

Describing the socio-cultural seating in Hunza in early 80s, *Ahmed* describes, “*Hunza is a dream place of every western writer, they love the idea of Hunza. They are fascinated by the longevity and come here to learn its secretes. The apricots? The glacier water? (Muddy but said to contain very healthy minerals) the climate? Or maybe the local wine? These physical factors may be important but not that much. The main factor is the social organization and social behavior of this place. They have traditional and a relax life, there is no forced authority, all the people are in a state of middle class, you can’t find very rich and very poor people. The population is small and homogenous*” (The Ismaili sect of Muslims). (Ahmed, 1986)

A lot has changed since Ahmed’s description, especially in the last three decades. Social organization still remains the same however, technology, media and the shift from agriculture to the corporate sector, has changed the people. Hunza has become a combination of traditional and a modern life, as if we are stuck in a time machine. Life is no longer lax and carefree over here now.

3.5.2 FAMILY STRUCTURE

Extended, joint and nuclear families exist in the locale. An extended family consists of three generations, parents, children and grandchildren. A joint family consists of two or more brother and their families sharing one household. Nuclear family consists of two generations parents and children.

In the locale, familial bond is very strong. All agricultural, construction and business activities are done collectively. The land and houses are owned by the elder of the family i.e. father or elder brother. In the past extended family system was very popular. Though it continues to exist but now young families are inclined towards a nuclear family. It is common for the married sons or brothers to construct household in the vicinity of their father’s house thus forming a cluster. Joint families are also present in the village where the families are of usually two or three brothers.

3.5.3 PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

The residence pattern is *Paternal*, thus in the family the authority goes to the eldest male of the household. The grand parents are treated with respect; they play a vital role in all major and minor decision makings, nurturing of children and maintaining contact with the other villagers. These family Patterns are not even changed after the introduction of technologies because these are the strong assets of their culture.

3.5.4 MARRIAGE

Marriage in the locales is a very special event and is celebrated with great joy. On the Wednesday of the wedding week, *Daw washiyas* (cooking for the wedding) begins. „*Baghundomuts*” (soft breads) are prepared. On Thursday *Khamaliching* (flat breads) are prepared. On Friday the family prepares a sheep and invites all their neighbors from the village for midday meal of mutton and „*Shabat*” (a kind of cracked wheat meal). Bericho are brought to the event to play music.

On Saturday the groom's family comes directly with the „*Barat*” along with the bride and her family, to the Jamat Khana (religious center) for the *Nikkah* ceremony which is conducted by the *Khalifa* (Religious figure). After the Nikkah, both the bride and the groom with their respective guests go to the bride's home where the host has prepared a meal (*Sharbat*, *Qamaliching*, and *Supra*/ boiled meat).

After meal groom shakes hand with everyone and kisses the hands of his Father & Mother-in-law before departing for his home. The bride departs with dowry and gifts for close relatives and family members of her in laws.

On Sunday all of the bride's family and close relatives go to the groom's house for „*Daghoon gashap*” (sprinkling flour on shoulders of the newlyweds). The next day the same ritual is repeated for the groom's side of the family.

3.6 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

3.6.1 OCCUPATION

Hunza was basically an agriculture based society. The people of village are attached to agriculture directly or indirectly. The main crops grown are wheat, potatoes and fruits. Potatoes have a high commercial value and is demanded everywhere. Nowadays farmers can cultivate potatoes and earn livelihood for a whole year. Breakthrough in Agricultural tools and techniques has greatly improved the living standards of the farmers.

Women play a major role in the sector of agriculture. They cultivate the fruits and vegetables which are later on sold by the men. These days, because of the increase in population and scarcity of land, the major part of population has shifted to the corporate sector. Entrepreneurship has given way to a lot of business opportunities for the women. A large number of women create fashionable designs in embroidery, carpets and other garments for selling. In Mominabad the situation is the same as it is in the rest of Hunza. Females are considered equally important in the household economy as any other part in Hunza.

3.6.2 IRRIGATION SYSTEM

During the period of Meer Shah Silim Khan (1790-1824) he planned and executed the idea to construct large scale irrigation channels to cultivate the land which was barren up till then. Before this ambitious irrigation channeling project, most of the land in Hunza was barren (according to the local tradition). Central Hunza was only confined to three villages Altit, Baltit and Ganish. While some evidences suggest that the channels were constructed because of the increase in population and economic pressure on the fertile land (Kappel 1974).

The local tradition or the oral history of Hunza gives a quiet different reason for the water channels. There is a narration that Meer Silim Khan was taunted by the Meer/Thum of Nagar for having such small settlements (Altit, Baltit and Ganish). Meer Silim Khan was deeply insulted by this taunt and vowed retribution. The traditional way of showing strength was by raiding the

Nagar villages, taking people captive and then selling off the prisoners as slaves in Badakshan (Afghanistan). However, Meer Silim Khan found a better way to avenge his insult. He started expanding his domains by constructing channels and building new villages throughout his land. He built a great network of water channels and due to this; three more settlements were created (Aliabad, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad).

3.6.3 AGRICULTURE

In Hunza the agriculture system is a basic way of livelihood which is carried out by almost every house hold. The land is used to cultivate different vegetables, fruits and crops according to the seasons. This cultivation is usually managed by the females. Plugging, digging, cultivation and harvesting of crops, all is done by both men and women collectively.

Different vegetables and fruits are cultivated in Hunza, such as, salad, spinach, potato, tomato, apricot, carrot, onion, apples etc. These fruits and vegetables are then shifted to the local markets to be sold. Even now, traditional tools are still used for harvesting (Shovel, Sickle, rake, *reg*, *kha* etc.). Modern tools and machine are also popular these days. Tractors and trucks are widely used for cultivation and logistics.

Apart from the cultivation, a small area is always specified for the livestock (sheep's, buffaloes, hens etc.). Managing the livestock is also done by the females.

3.6.4 LIVESTOCK

In Hunza as the people are linked to agriculture, often there is a dependency created for livestock. It is very common for households to keep a herd of sheep, goats, cows or even poultry.

In summer the animals are taken to high altitude pastures for grazing as to avoid the crop being eaten by the livestock. As winter approaches and slowly engulfs all the grazing grounds with snow, the animals are brought down again from the pastures and are fed stored fodder.

These livestock are a great source of providing manures for fertilizing the soil, the milk collected from cow, sheep and goat is used for the production of yogurt, butter, milk, *lassi* etc.

3.6.5 RELIGION (SECT)

In Mominabad there are 100% Ismailies. The development made by Aga Khan Development Networks (AKDN) organizations could easily be observed all over Hunza. This development has positively affected community development, living standards as well as preserved the culture of Hunza. A stark contrast can be observed in the neighboring Nagar valley.

3.6.6 JAMAT KHANA

Jamat Khana serves as the center of religious orientation. The Ismailies offer *‘Namaz’* (prayers) at the Jamat Khana. Every settlement in Hunza has its own Jamat Khana. The Jamat Khana affairs are run by a *‘Mukhi’*. The office of *‘Tariqa board’* (ruling body for Councils) is also in the premises of the Jamat Khana. There is a local council which is run by regional council and then national council and all these are under international council.

Jamat Khana’s offer religious education for young children, this program is called *‘Night School’*.

3.6.7 MODERN AMINITIES

3.6.7.1 EDUCATION

There is a great tendency towards education all over Hunza. Likewise in Mominabad the inhabitants educate their children in best way possible. There is a network of Diamond Jubilee (DJ) Primary Schools (Aga Khan School) throughout Hunza. After completing their primary education, children are usually sent to Karimabad, Aliabad or Ganish for further education. This Schooling network is considered to be the main element in the educational change in this area. Both girls and boys are given equal facilities in education. For higher studies there is also Karakoram International University in Gilgit.

The small village of Mominabad boasts about its 90% literacy rate amongst its children. No child is out of school in Mominabad. Parents here take their children's education very seriously. For the parents, educating their children is the first priority. The poor will remain hungry and yet still send their children to get an education.

The teachers in the DJ School told me that the parents in Mominabad are very motivated towards education. As one of the teacher was telling me that –For the locales the first priority is not their houses, agriculture or jobs it is education because not a single parent in Mominabad misses the parent teacher meetings. They are very serious about the attendance of their children in schools”. She told me that I am saying all this because I have been teaching in the surrounding villages also.

3.6.7.2 LITERACY RATE

There is 89% literacy rate in the locale. This I can tell from my research in the locale.

Literacy rate according to Sex group

Description	Total Nu.	Literate	Illiterate
Male	181	158	23
Female	191	148	43
Total children	174 (under 14)	116	58 Under school
Total	546	422	66 illiterate

There are several different systems of education being run simultaneously in Hunza. The government and private school system disparity also exists.

3.6.7.3 MEDICAL FACILITIES

Due to a small population (along with other reasons that will be discussed later on), There is no medical facility within Mominabad. People have to visit either Aliabad or Karimabad for their

treatment. There is a proper Government Hospital operational in Aliabad alongside Aga Khan Health services.

3.6.7.4 COMMERCE AND TRADE

Aliabad is the commercial hub of Hunza. This market place is usually buzzing with activity throughout the year. People usually come to Aliabad for trade and other businesses. In small villages like Mominabad, there are plenty of shops for the day to day use items. As I have mentioned earlier The main Karakorum Highway (KKH) which connects Karimabad with the rest of Hunza goes through Mominabd. Earlier when the road was in its phase of construction the people of Mominabad were very upset for their lands. They were scared of the changes and the imminent changes with the new road.

Anna Schmid quoted by Barbers Brown, writes about the construction of the road and reservation of the people of Mominabad. She says the happy are not happy for new road because they think it is a disturbance for the people; it is a trouble and land loss. (Barbara A. Brower, 2007) p118)

But now the people are very happy as tourism is on its boom in Hunza and the people of Mominabad are equally taking benefit out of it. They are making new hotels, restaurants and developing small areas for tourists.

3.6.7.5 TRANSPORTATION

Most of all major roads in Hunza are metaled. There is metaled road in Mominabad which links this small village to the other villages like, Karimabad, Aliabad, Altit and Ganish. Vehicles have become very common in Hunza and those who do not own a vehicle, avail the services of public transport.

3.6.7.6 ELECTRICITY

The facility of electricity is there in Mominabad. Only not electricity Mominabad got all the modern facilities of Life. Electricity, Mobile phones, television, cable system and Internet.

CHAPTER - 4

4.1 HISTORY

The History of Bericho Community can be divided into two parts. First part, they view their history from a source of pride. Secondly the one which reminds them of the biasness.

Different writers have written different versions of the origins of the Bericho Community. Most of the writers are of the opinion that Berichos came from Kashmir to Baltistan and then from Baltistan they migrated to Hunza. This is a peculiar theory about this community which is not proven yet or the authenticity of this theory is as ambiguous as the History of Hunzukutz. Anna Schmid writes the history of this community, narrated by a local of Mominabad as following:

“There were two brothers called Majun and Dishil. They lived in Kashmir where life became very tough for them. They have to go through heavy crises, and they don't have food to eat and survive. They decided to migrate to some other place in search of good livelihood and a respectable place to live. They came to Hunza and Nagar (the state opposite to Hunza, it is on the left bank of Hunza river). When they reach they decided to get separate and went to different states. Dishil went to Nagar and Majun went to Hunza. They were expecting a better social position from these new lands. They promise each other to stay by side in the hour of hardship and failure. They kept their language Domaki so whenever they have to talk secretly they can. After coming to Hunza, Majun got some land and became inhabitant of Hunza.” Ibid

The above narrated story is another history of Bericho in Hunza. But the oral history of this community is quite different from the above. To understand the history of these people we have to understand the families or clans in the Bericho community, the history of each clan will tell a whole different narration.

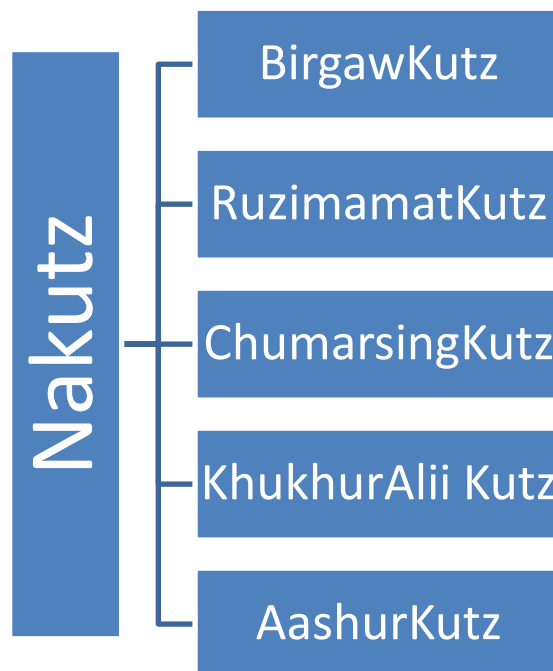
There are basically three different clans in this community. Each clan has its own story to tell about their history and migration to Hunza.

The three clans are.

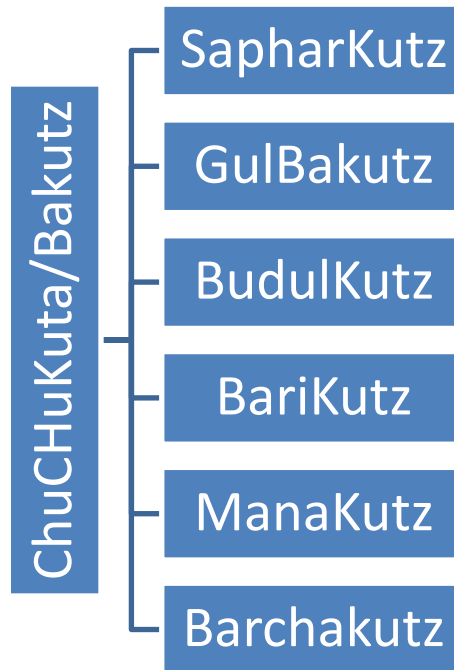
1. Nakutz
2. ChuChukutz/Bakutz
3. Tootukutzer

These subfamilies trace their own origins. They know where they came from and they have their own stories. The subfamilies are not necessarily from the sons and the same generations. They keep on coming to Hunza and attaching themselves to the already existing clans.

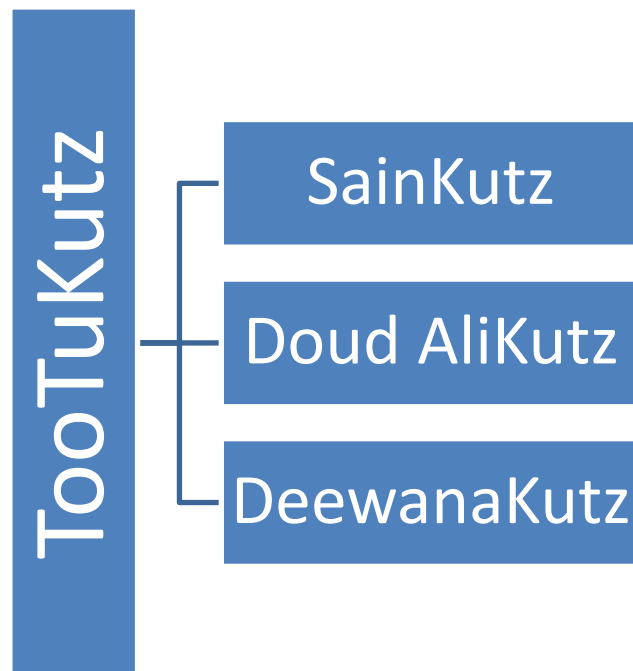
The Sub families of the Clan Nakutz are as follow:



The Sub families for ChuChuKutz are as follow:



The Sub families for Tootukutz are as follow:



4.2 HISTORY OF THE BERICHO CLANS (ORIGIN)

4.2.1 NAKUTZ

The clan of Nakutz includes the sub families of:

- Chumarsingkutz
- Birgawkutz
- Khukur Alikutz
- Ruzimamatkutz
- Aashurkutz

Every family is not sure about the history of how and why their forefathers have travelled to this part of world or what their reasons for migration were. Few of the families trace their history about the previous lands from where they have travelled, however, these are only oral narrated stories and they have no backing or documented proof.

The *Birgaw* family narrates that they came from Kashmir. One of my respondents said that:

—A very wrong narration has been created for the history of this community that they all came from Kashmir, this is incorrect, not everyone came from Kashmir, it is our family BIRGAWKUTZ that came from Kashmir only”

KhukurAlikutz made the ChumarsingKutz settle in this area (Hunza). For the history of ChumarsingKutz one of my respondent ‘Mol̤h Madad’ told me the following story:

“Chumarsing was a little boy when he came to Hunza and specifically to Mominabad. There he met one of the elders of Khukhurkutz. The man was a blacksmith and he kept Chumarsing as his assistant at his work. The little boy Chumarsing was very sharp, diligent and hardworking so he also became very good at the skills of blacksmith. With passage of time the little boy became a very skillful blacksmith. The man who kept him at work had arranged a marriage union between chumarsing and his daughter. Because Chumarsing was not from Mominabad, he had no property here. The man gave land of his own to his daughter and his son-in-law and make

Chumarsing settle in this place. This is how the KhuKhurkutz settled the Chumarsing family in this place”

Another respondent Karim Sahib, who is a religious Scholar and belongs to the same family, narrated to me the story that *“Chumarsing”’s original name was Muhammad Auff who came from Wakhan Russia. Because he had expertise as blacksmith, that”s why he was called as Chumarsing as the word Chumar is Iron in Brushiski language”*

4.2.1.1 CHUCHUKUTZ/BAKUTZ

The clan of *Chuchukutza* or *Bakutz* (Its one clan with two names) includes the following seven families:

- Sapherkutz
- Gulbegkutz
- Barikutz
- Budulkutz
- Gulbakutz
- Manakut
- Barchakutz

4.2.1.2 SAPHERKUTZ

These families have their own history of migration to Hunza. Sapherkutz have a conflicting narration about their original place of migration. Some mention Afghanistan whereas others claim they came from Puniyal (a place in Ghizer, Gilgit Baltistan).

4.2.1.3 GULBAKUTZ

Gulbakutz claim that they are basically from Puniyal. They came from Puniyal to Hunza in search of a better place and better livelihood.

4.2.1.4 BUDULKUTZ AND BAKUTZ

Budlukutz and Bakutz trace their history from Baltistan. They say that their forefathers were skillful therefore they came to Hunza on request of the King to build their houses and infrastructure. The very common narration of *“Shah Khatoon”*, who belonged from Baltistan and was later on married to a prince of Hunza. When she got married she brought along a lot of human resource with her in which this family was also included.

4.2.1.5 BARCHAKUTZ

Barchakutz narrate that they came to this area somewhere from china.

4.2.1.6 TOOTUKUTZ

Tootukutz includes the following families in their clan.

- Sainkutz
- Doud alikutz
- Deewanakutz

4.3 FAMILY VISE PROFESSIONS

This is a prevailing narration in the Mominabad community that the Bericho community was so organized in their professions that specification of their professions whether it was music or blacksmith was always there. There were specific families for specific professions and they were best at their work. They were very fine and skillful in whatever they did.

While talking about music, a band of musicians usually comprises of three people with three different instruments. First one plays the Drums (Dadang), second plays the pipe (Suranai) and third one plays two smaller drums (Damal). The combination of these three musical instruments and musicians make a fine set of music. Every instrument is equally important in the band. These three are played simultaneously while producing the tunes of music. Most of the tunes are not soothing to ears, rather, it's the type of music which is used during wars, to induce excitement. In these tunes, the sound of drum always dominates.



Figure: 4.3 - Bericho musician: Drummers of Hunza Gohar, Karim Ali and Karim
(Source: www.pamirtimes/noor)

There were specific families for the specific instruments. The family Bakutz were specified for the Pipe (Suranai). This family has produced one of the finest and famous pipe players of Hunza. Dadu and Kalbi Ali are considered to be the legends of this art in whole Hunza. Even though they have died but still they are remembered for their art. . Ustad Kalbi Ali was one of the most famous piper player from Bakutz. Here is his story.

4.3.1 KALBI ALI

Ustad Kalbi narrates that Sardar Khan (a cousin of Last Mir) took me to Mir Jamal Khan's Royal Court (Maraka) by saying that "the art of jungle is different from the art of fine court". He feels proud of being part of the musicians who used to play in the royal court. He narrates his story that, "I was a little boy when I started playing the pipe (Suranai). I started it by getting inspired from my late father Huko and eventually, I became experienced enough to play amongst the Royals and for the Mir of Hunza". He further narrates that, "The olden Mir's time was better for us because it was the time of love and harmony, it was not the materialistic time. Nowadays people just ask for money and if they can't provide the money they don't perform. The new generation doesn't know most of the tunes, there are thousands of tunes which were related to each and every person and family.

The new generation is not interested in the traditional music. In the olden time there were 24 musicians only for pipe (suranai), 24 for Drums (dadan) and a lot for Damal. Pipe was only played in Mominabad and it wasn't there in the Brushiski speakers. This is very pleasing that music is always a symbol of love and happiness. It was the olden times when musicians were considered as inferior. The times have been changed and we are getting equal respect."

Likewise Birgawutz are specialists for the two small drums (Dammal). Again this family has produced the finest of Dammal players like Darbaish from Aliabad.

The last but not least are Sapharkutz who are specialized for the playing of the Drum (Dadan). The living legend of music in Hunza, Dado Gohar Ali belongs to this family.

For these musicians, specialization is something which came from their ancestors but they are very flexible in switching their professions. Any other member of a family can play any instrument.

4.3.2 BLACKSMITH

Music is important but it is not a necessity. One can call music a luxury. Music has its own important uses in culture and heritage. Likewise in Hunza Music and musicians were very essential but the role of Blacksmiths were vital as marrow in the backbone. The reason was because Hunza was a poor state which had no currency. Historically, Hunza's economy ran on barter trade, every basic material was created or exchanged. Blacksmiths seemed to be the most important part in this system.

One of my respondents, Karim Dad narrated:

“Blacksmiths used to make everything from very basic to very important, for the state of Hunza. Hunza was a state which was dependent basically on three things or the survival strategy of Hunza was on three things.

- Agriculture
- Defense in Wars with Nagar
- The basic or everyday life.

The blacksmiths were vital for all of the above things.

1. They use to make the agriculture tools. The people of Hunza were dependent on the blacksmiths even for the basic *‘Gilli’* (a small curved wooden peg to tie down the animals in the land with ropes.)
2. For defense of Hunza, weapons were needed. Weapons like swords, bow & arrow and other items for the warfare. All these things were made in Mominabad. The Blacksmiths of Mominabad used to make all these essential materials. There is an idiom in Brushaski language that *–Duru APee k Berishalr Nee*”, it means, *–If you are idle, then go to Berishal (Mominabad)*. If somebody deconstruct this idiom one can get the meaning that, the people of Mominabad were hard workers. They used to work day and night and it is said that there was a blacksmith in every house in Mominabad.

There is a very famous oral story in Mominabad which I heard from most of my respondents that *“In the olden times, a British agent came to Hunza and stayed in the royal castle. One fine day he went to get a tour of Hunza, he went to each and every*

village, people were sitting idly in the sun and doing almost nothing. At last while going back to the castle he went to Barishal and he saw that in this small village each and every person was busy with their work. Some with forging Iron while some were curving tools of wood or making musical instruments. It was to an extent that nobody was free in this small village, he was surprised and said “In Hunza everybody consumes food but only the people of Mominabad work to digest it”

3. Lastly the people of Hunza needed the basic materials for their household and daily lives. They all were prepared in Mominabad. Bowls, spoons, even the basic combs were made by this community.

For the art of Blacksmith there were three families who were famous and specialized.

- Chumarsingkutz
- Ruzimamatkutz
- Gulbekutz
- Manakutz

Manakutz were the ones who specialized in the making of bowls and utensils (kharat ka kam). These families were giving services to every village of Hunza. Different famous Blacksmiths were appointed for different villages. These Blacksmiths were responsible for all of the work in the specified village. For some villages, the Blacksmiths have completely shifted and for some, they have decided a specific day to work for. There were separate royal blacksmiths who were only specify for the royal family.

4.4 BLACKSMITHS SPECILIZED FOR DIFFERENT VILLAGES

The famous blacksmith who use to serve in the Palace was Ghulam-e-Shayoo. He was responsible for all the work in the castle.

- Dado Dulatoo was resspensible for Ganish
- Qurbano was responsible for Dourkhun
- Miraman was responsible for Garailt
- Ghulam was responsible for Baltit

4.4.1 HISTORY OF WATER CHANNELS IN HUNZA

I have already narrated the story of Shah Saleem Khan, that when he was taunted by the Mir of Nagar, for having very limited settlements, Shah Saleem Khan decided to expand his kingdom rather than plundering Nagar in retaliation. He executed the plan to make water channels from the Ulter Glacier to Aliabad, Karimabad and other villages of Hunza.

My respondent Nambardar Habib-Ullah Jan narrates that. *“It was our forefathers who took the local Baskets (Giran) on their backs, tied themselves with ropes so they could hang themselves to a level of a mountain to dig and blast the mountain to make the water channels. All the technical tools were made in Mominabad for the making of these channels. The people of Hunza have worked very hard to make these water channels but whoever has written about the making of these channels had forgotten to write about the foundation of this hard work, the people who basically worked day and night for the making of these channels. This is because all the people of Hunza were used to work for specific days. Specific clans have to work on specific days for the state whereas Berichos were the only ones who had to work every day. This is called Rajaki (The unpaid work of state). It’s a common sense that the technical people were all from this community but there is no mention of this community anywhere in the hardworking and leading chapters of Hunza.”*

4.5 LANGUAGE

The community of Bericho speak a different language called ‘Beriski’ (Beriski means the language of Bericho) in Hunza language, where as in Shina, it is called ‘Doomaki’ (language of dooms). Nowadays, Beriski is also referred to as ‘Dawoodi’ (The language of Hazrat Dawood) by the community of Mominabad. By doing so, Berichos relate themselves with Hazrat Dawood, as he was also a blacksmith.

Nambardar Habib Ullah Jan narrates about Beriski that:

“The making of this language is very interesting. As this is understood that when the skillful people from different places use to migrate to Hunza. The Mir allotted all of them in to this place

Berishal. When humans come together they always use a language to interact with each other. So all of the skillful people were from different places with different languages.

They first used gestures with words to make the others understand what he/she was trying to convey. These words and gestures then became familiar. With the passage of time and inter marriages, the children from the next generation used all the words and made a fluent language. This may be the origin of the Beriski language. Beriski is mixture of the following languages:

- *Shina*
- *Brushaski*
- *Persian*
- *Balti*
- *Saraiki*
- *Hindi*
- *Kashmiri*
- *Khawar*

We can speak Brushaski very fluently because we are more interacting with the Brushaski speakers. The problem with our language is that we can't speak it openly because of the biasness related to this language. The younger generation is not very keen on speaking Beriski. They have created an idea that learning Beriski is an inferior thing. So our children do not consider it an important one.

We have to face a lot of derogatory and taunts from the surrounding communities because of our language. We speak Beriski with a nasal sound and in the same manner we speak Brushaski. The native Brushaski speakers can easily identify us because of our dialect and taunt us on the basis of our language. They point out our people and make them feel ashamed of themselves just by the language. Because of all this, our people and the new generation has left speaking Beriski all together"

Another respondent Farman Ali told me about the situation that:

—Language never makes us bad, our deeds do! If we are good with our deeds, we are good, it has nothing to do with our language. We always have been associated with this language and have

been looked down upon. That is why the elders can speak the language but the younger generation cannot. They prefer speaking Urdu, Brushaski and English.

The decline in our language is because of the education system in schools also. The students speak, Brushaski, Urdu and English. The delivery of lectures is in Urdu and English, while all the students around them speak Brushaski.

4.6 HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THIS COMMUNITY

4.6.1 (CASE STUDY OF USTAD MOLLAH MADAD)

Education is the basic element which can cause rapid changes in any society. The communities which focus on education can grow flourish and develop. The community on which I conducted my research was one which was considered the lowest in the State of Hunza. Though till 1960's the layman of Hunza was also unaware of education and its consequences. There were very few primary Schools where Hunzukz used to study.

In this condition, the people of Mominabad were more into their skillful work. I will quote the history of education from the first teacher in Mominabad, Ustad Mollah Madad, with reference to his life story and how he influenced his community for education and religious teachings.

He started his story as:

"Even the smallest of thing like Gilli (which is a basic tool to tie the animals in their lands) our elders did and "i think the standard of music and happiness has been deteriorated with time because of the lack of good musicians and with the development of area and flourishing of education".

According to Mollah Madad, 'Ghulam Ali' one of their elders used to say *"I remember there was a school where the children of Royal family were studying in Karimabad and one of the student was from Mominabad, who was very sharp as compared to other students. The teacher beat him up and made him quit school by saying that, "he will do better as compared to the Royals and that is not acceptable"*

He further narrates, *–Same thing happened with me in my time. When I was a child my father sent me to One of the Nobles of Karimabad to study from him, his name was "Sangi Khan". I studied the „Quaida“ (first level of education) from him. This was in 1955. I was very keen to get education but it was my misfortune that my teacher died and I was left without a mentor. My curiosity for education did not die along with my mentor and I remained determined to continue my education“. I was not only curious for worldly education; I was also keen to get religious knowledge. My passion for both ran parallel in my life. My interest in religious matters started from one of our elders named Noor Shah.*

"Noor Shah" was a blacksmith in our village (Berishal) who went to Sarat (presently know as Attaabad). He learned how to say Namaz, when he came back he was the only person who use to recite Namaz for all of us. He was a blacksmith but a very intellectual man. The present „Ala numberdar" Habib Ullah Jan and myself, learned Namaz from that person and used to recite it for all in this area. I felt very proud when it was my turn to say Namaz. It filled me with joy."

"When the concept of schools started in Hunza few students from Berishal were also enrolled. It may have been a surprise for the Mir and his notables because for them, education did not belong to "people" like us! This I am telling because of the following story:

"One fine day, some boys were going to school from Berishal when Ayash Khan, the Secretary of State (more commonly known as Sakatar saab), came across the boys and started conversing with them. He was very happy to see these children getting an education. He inquired where the children were from, to which the children replied, "Berishal!" Upon hearing the reply, He became furious and started beating the children with his walking stick and exclaimed, "If you are going to study then who will be the musicians and blacksmiths? Who is going to work and serve us?"

"There was no school in Berishal. The nearest school was in Ganish. We were a group of 17 students from Berishal who were studying in Ganish. The Sectary of State, Sakatar ordered the teachers (Master Sikandar and Master Ali Gohar, 1957-58) that if anyone educated Bericho's, they would be banished from Hunza!

The next day, Master Sikandar called our group of 17 students and told us that his horse is hungry and needed some food. We lot being from a very poor background had hardly any excess

food yet we all mustered something or the other from our homes and presented it for the Head Master's horse. After collecting our tribute, we were all gathered at the end of the morning assembly. Master Sikandar addressed us and told us the Executive decision made by the Secretary of State. We were told to pack up and leave that very instant"

As I was recording Ustad Mollah Madad's narrations, He was teary eyed as he recalled his past memories. I believe the hardships he faced still haunt him now in his old age. Regardless of his emotional state, he continued:

"After the executive order by Sakatar, all the children from Berishal gave up on education. Some took up music whereas some took on the trade of blacksmiths. Regardless, I was passionate about studying so I kept a „Quaida" book in secret. I used to hide the book in my armpit and used to study it whenever I was alone or had free time.

Eventually some of us went to Karimabad's Barbar Jamat Khana to continue their education. There was a basic school in Barbar Jamat Khana. Unfortunately one day, one of my fellow's (Darbeesh) shoes (HUUCHOO) were wet, "HUCHOO CHUM HUMACHIN DUSEEMEE" means his shoes are filthy. The teacher used this as an excuse and did not let us inside the school by saying that these people make our school dirty. Fate was playing a cruel joke on us"

"With the passage of time, some of Hunzukutz whose conduct was kind with us, convinced us to take up schooling again. These kind people even went to the Mir of Hunza, along with some of the elders of Berishal and pleaded our case for education. These notable Hunzukz went as far as to tell the Mir that his throne was not in any danger with our education. They asked for permission, for the community to read and write, after which, the Mir allowed us to go to school"

"I started school again in 1961 or 1962. I used to work hard and I did work day and night for my passion. The result day was here, at that time in Karimabad polo ground our result was announced by an AD(Assistant director). I had topped in entire Hunza. I got prize. which came all the way from Karachi, it was a small English diary. I passed 5th class in 1965 with a lot of pride"

“I went to Gilgit for my further studies, there was a hostel in which I was supposed to enroll but due to late admission, I couldn’t get accommodation. I spent three months in Gilgit and it was very tough on me. I spent many nights out in the cold and slept on the footpaths. When I came back for my summer vacations, I caught a disease of the backbone and was once again unable to continue my education in Gilgit.

Soon enough, a school opened in Berishal. It was a primary school and I started off as a teacher here. I was paid Rs.500 at that in 1970s. I used to teach the disabled as well as regular students in the same class. Once some directors came from the education department and took an evaluation test from my students. The directors questioned my disabled students and made them write on the board, to which they did. The directors were very happy and gave me a performance allowance.

From 1975 to 83, I taught here at the school but once again I became unfortunate. I was relieved from my position under the pretext that I did not complete my Matriculation. I did not let this setback deter me and after a break of 17 years, I set out to complete my Matriculation. I attempted to clear my exams but after attempting twice, I failed in six papers but had passed in 4 (said with pride). Again, I worked hard for my papers. Master Zawara from Ganish helped me a lot with my preparation. As luck would have it, I remained unlucky, and on the very same day of my matriculation paper, my father passed away and I could not appear for the exams. I was an only child. I had to look after my step mother. My father used to be a security guard in a guest house.

In 1990, I again attempted my Matriculation exam. My hard work paid off when I cleared all subjects but unfortunately the school didn’t give me my old job again. Apart from education, I was also into religious matters. I started „Khalifa Garri“ (fulfilling religious rituals like marriage ceremony, death ceremony etc). Later in 2010 the Regional council offered me to teach in religious school (night school). I taught in the night school for about 2-3 years after which I was offered to teach Islamiyat in the New Beacon School – Altit due to my experience and skill set (I could read, write and speak Arabic fluently). I taught in this new school for over nine years”

4.7 THE SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR BERISHAL COMMUNITY

4.7.1 WAZIR QADEER KHAN

A monument has been built in the center of Mominabad by the Civil Beurocrates of Hunza. The following words have been inscribed in honor of Wazir Qadeer:

“A gift from the past to our future. This site has been built to give voice to the people of Mominabad and appreciate the genius of Qadiro. The original sage and Wazir of Hunza, with anticipation that he would be remembered as SAADI of Persia and SHAKESPEAR of English by the future linguistics of Burushaski”

In the State of Hunza, the royal court's hierarchy comprised of The *Thum* (King), his *Wazeers*, *Karpating* (Notables), *Soldiers*, *Trangfa* (village headman), *Daroga* (Irrigation supervisor), *Yerfa* (Royal Steward), *Baldakoyo* (Load carriers) and lastly the *Bericho*. (ibid)

This is the general understanding in the community (not only the Mominabad but in Hunza) that In the above circumstances where *Bericho* were considered the lowest in the hierarchy and were treated in the same manner. There was a man who convinced all the people of Hunza and specially those who were higher in the hierarchy, that he was intellectually very sound and a problem solver. His name was Qadeer Khan (also known as Dadu Qadeero, Dadu means Grandfather) where as he was referred to as *“Bata Qadeero”* (Bata means Bald, in this context it was used as a derogatory word) in rest of Hunza.



*Figure: 4.7.1 - Wazir Qadeer Chok in Mominabad
Picture taken by the researcher*

4.7.2 FAMILY TREE OF WAZEER QADEER

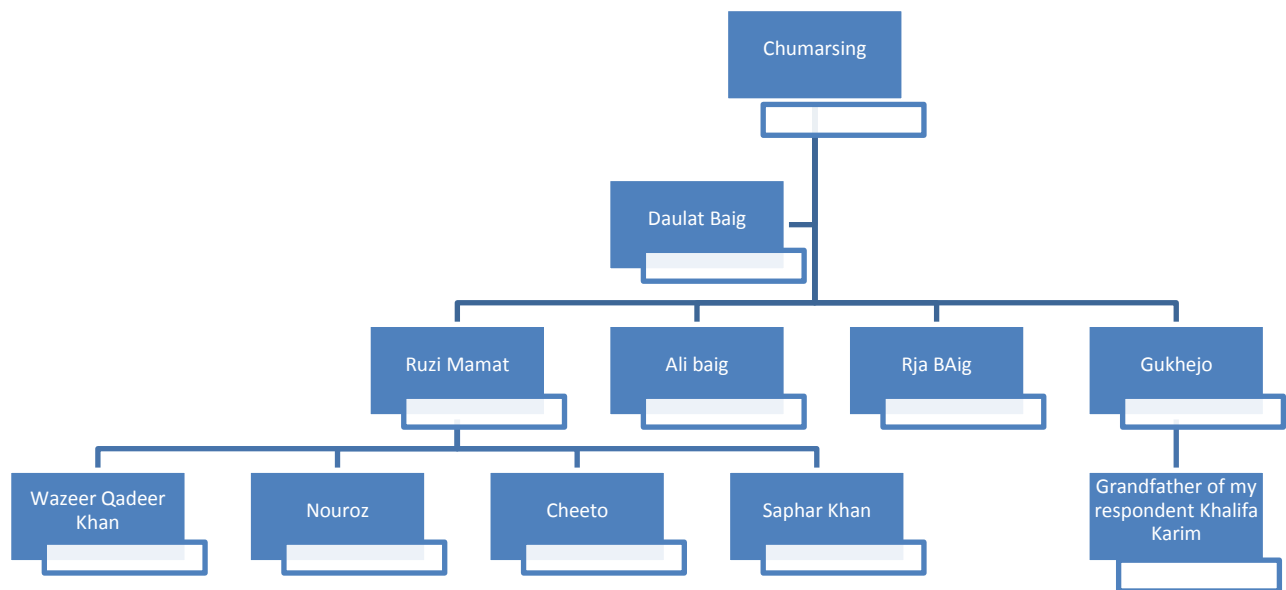


Figure 4.7.2 - Provided by Khalifa Karim, The closest relative of Wazeer Qadeer Khan

He was given the status of Wazeer in the Royal court because of his intellect. He belonged to the clan of *Nakutz* and the family of *Churamsingkut*. He was the son of Ruzi Mamat. He was born in 1870 and lived till 1957. It is said that Wazeer Qadeer was only called Wazeer when he was not present in the royal court whereas in his presence, he was always called Bata Qadeero, just for derogatory purpose.

The story of Wazeer Qadeer starts with the intellectual war among Hunza and Nagar. Hunza is on the North of Hunza River and Nagar is on the south. These two states remained rivals from the very beginning of the kingdom of Girkis and Maglot. (Whose story I have explained in the previous chapter). These Two kingdoms fought various wars and often killed each other's men. Hunzukutz use to Plunder Villages of Nagar and sell the men for slavery in Kashgar. With passage of time the physical wars converted in intellectual wars.

The King of Nagar use to send Intellectual problems and codes to the King of Hunza. There are various examples which were only solved by Wazeer Qadeer while rest of the Wazirs were clueless and stunned at his intellect.

Once, Wazeer Qadeer was sitting in his house when the Royal Guards came and summoned him to the Court. The Thum (King) told Wazir Qadeer that the Thum of Nagar has sent a problem to solve and nobody else is able to understand its meaning. Wazir Qadeer was very brave, resilient and straightforward. He answered the King –“what about your Court's Wazirs who only eat delicious foods and enjoy the royal court whom you accompany?” The Thum convinced him to listen to the problem and offer a solution. The Nagar Thum had sent a stick asking which side of the stick was the stem and which was stalk. Wazir Qadeer thought for a bit and asked the workers to bring a pot full of water. He then kept the pot on a flat surface and put the stick in the water. One side of the stick sunk into the water while the other end floated on top. Wazir Qadeer smiled and told the king that the part of the stick which had sunk into the water was the stem whereas the floating end was the offshoot.

Another story is narrated as: The Nagar Thum sent The Mir (Thum/King) of Hunza a message that –“Please send me an old women as I feel very cold in winters!” The Court of Hunza became very chaotic at what the Mir of Nagar had asked for. The Thum quickly asked the Guards to bring Qadeer from his house. When Wazir Qadeer came, some of the Wazirs were suggesting the names of old women to send to Nagar. Qadeer became very angry and stated that it was dishonoring your own state by sending an old women to your rival King. He further told the Royal court to be ashamed for planning what they intend to do, when it was clear what the Nagar Thum actually meant something else. Then Wazeer Qadeer explained what the cryptic message meant. By saying –“I feel very cold in winters” it meant that the Thum was asking for a Quilt

cover or a warm Yak skin from Kashgar (China). The Nagar Thum was well aware that the rival Thum frequently travelled to Kashgar.

The stories of Wazir Qadeer's wisdom were endless, another example is: Once, Nagar Thum sent a hand full of Barley to Hunza's Thum without offering an explanation. The Thum and his Wazirs were again not able to understand the rival Thum's cryptic message. Wazir Qadeer was summoned again and offer an explanation. He told them not to worry but requested the king that He had to travel to Nagar alone with a hen. Wazir Qadeer further instructed to keep the hen hungry for two days. Everyone was very annoyed and puzzled at the made request. Wazir Qadeer told the Royal court to be patient and that he would explain after his visit to Nagar. He went to Nagar with the hungry hen and some barley. When he reached the Royal court of Nagar, He left the hen at the door and walked towards the king while spreading the Barley. The Hen was hungry; it ate all the Barley within a minute. He returned to Hunza and then revealed the story that, ~~by~~ sending handful of Barley, the rival Thum meant that the people of Hunza were very few and could be crushed easily! My answer was that we are few but very strong and that we will swallow you as a hungry hen does barley".

Wazir Qadeer not only solved the problems for the state, he stood for his own community as well. He was brave as he stood for his people in circumstances where no one was able to talk and ask for something for this underprivileged caste. For this, I will narrate the following story.

Once, the Nagar Thum sent two identical dogs to the Royal court of Hunza and demanded to differentiate between the mother and its offspring. The problem was that both the dogs were of the same color breed and size thus making it difficult to differentiate. Again the Thum and his Wazirs failed to solve the problem and Wazeer Qadeer was called in. Wazeer Qadeer asked for a very hard stick and when it was bought to him he started beating the dogs one by one. The riddle was solved when Wazeer Qadeer was beating one of the dogs and the other came to attack Wazeer Qadeer in defense of the other dog. It is very obvious that every creature protects its children, same was done by this dog.

Another example of Wazir Qadeer's wisdom: It was the rule of the State that if a man died and had no male heirs; all his land/property would go to the State. Once, a man died in the Bericho community who had no heir. Wazir Qadeer warned everyone not to touch the dead body till he

returned and left to meet the Thum. The Berichos around him were very irritated and agitated at this act of Qadeer but no one dared to confront him. Wazir Qadeer went to the Thum and told him, –Respected King! I am here with a request that your brother in Bericho community has died and I am here to call you to give him bath and arrange for his burial and rituals”. On hearing this, the Thum became furious and demanded what Qadeer meant by this? Wazir Qadeer replied that the deceased has no male heir and since the Mir is going to confiscate all his property which should be his brother’s property. On hearing this, the Thum understood the cleverness of Qadeer, and smiled. The Thum understood Wazir Qadeer’s perspective and declared that the state will not take the lands of such people and that the ownership of the property of the deceased will be transferred to the respective family members.

Wazeer Qadeer had changed a lot of prevailing norms which were targeted against the Bericho community. To understand the following story, it is important to understand one of the basic duties imposed on the Bericho community. When Hunza was a state, this community was responsible to provide fire wood for the castle. This was a difficult task since Hunza had a rough terrain with limited vegetation. Berichos used to take all the wood from their houses just to please the Thum. Wazeer Qadeer was fed up of this duty because he knew what hardship this task entailed. Arranging wood on a daily basis for the Castle was very time consuming and difficult. Qadeer went to the Thum’s court with an old rotten wood. The king was displeased and asked him about the specific wood. Wazeer Qadeer replied, –Your honor! As it was my turn to provide wood today, I broke the wooden bed on which the dead are given the final bath (*Gootase Gandal*) and bought it here for your fire. The Thum was sympathetic and realized the amount of burden on the people. The Thum changed the rule that forced the Berichos to provide the daily wood.

Wazeer Qadeer is not only the source of pride for the community of Berishal (Mominabad) but he will be always remembered as source of pride for the whole Hunza community. He was no doubt an intellect and a rational man who made powerful speechless with his gestures and rational actions, and not just words. Currently, the old class system is still prevalent in the minds of certain groups in Hunza. These few individuals still do not accept the intellect and wisdom of Wazir Qadeer. They think that the word Wazir should not be sufficed with his name. These

individuals are not happy in the erection of the monument in tribute to Wazir Qadeer but the people of Mominabad are the proud of his name.

4.7.3 PHULOLOO

Phuloloo was a Bericho from the *‘Tootukutz’* family and he was a skilled pipe player. The State of Nagar and Hunza were at constant war with each other. In one of the skirmishes, the people of Nagar attacked the Hunza State. Phuloloo’s smart thinking saved the Hunza State from losing men from this war. At that time, certain sounds of music were used as war signals and alerted their respective armies of eminent danger. When Phuloloo saw that the enemy army was on the march, he hid himself and played the Drum pipe and *‘Daamal’*. The enemy army heard the war music and thought that the Hunza army got wind of their attack and was counter attacking.

The strategy of Phuloloo was very clever. He had hid on a cliff which led directly into deep end of the river. As Phuloloo played his war music, he simultaneously ran from one corner of the cliff to the other, creating an impression of a large army as the music echoed from the cliff walls. It was a big surprise for the attacking army and they assumed that the attack was coming from higher ground. It was a split second decision and the Nagar army retreated without any verification of the counter attack. A large number of soldiers quickly jumped into the river to escape but were swept away by the strong currents. Nagar army faced many casualties by this hasty retreat and the danger for Hunza was averted.

The bravery of Phuloloo was worth appreciation or even a reward but since Phuloloo was a Bericho, his reward was to go around Hunza, collecting grain as a beggar.

As the *‘Namberdar’* (village headman) narrated this story, he stated that: *"we were even rewarded in a manner to belittle us, this was not a reward! Phuloloo was told to beg in reward to his bravery and cleverness"*.

Those Berichos who used to play for the Royal family were considered to be a bit more respectful because of their affiliation to the Palace and the Royal family.

4.7.4 PASTURE BY MANAKUTZ

They are Closest of Bakutz. Once the Thum was travelling to his winter house (Gulmit) from central Hunza on horseback. As he was crossing the ice covered lake, his horse slipped and both, the Thum and his horse fell into the lake. The Thum was travelling with a servant from the Manakutz family. It is said this servant was very strong and powerful. He jumped into the water and dragged the horse along with the Thum out of the water, thus saving the Thum from drowning. The Thum was so pleased with the servant that he asked him to demand whatever he wanted. The servant requested that his community needed a pasture for their cattle. The Thum obliged and granted the request.

4.7.5 COMPOSITION OF TUNES BY BUDULKUTZ

Budul's actual name was Bulbul. After distortion of his name, it became Budul and from his clan, his family name was derived. Budul was actually one of the finest pipe player in the history of Hunza. He was in the era of Mir Nazim Khan. Mir Nazim Khan demanded from Budul to compile a tune on his name. Ustad Budul compiled the tune of Mir Nazim Khan (called *Nazim khane Daani*) which is one of the most famous tunes in Hunza. After the composition of the Tune for Nazim Khan he actually made a tune for himself also. That tune is called as Budul-e-Danni (tune for Budul). Even now, whenever any member of the Royal family dance, they dance on the tune of Mir Nazim Khan. This tune has been associated with the whole Royal family now. As I mentioned before that there are specific tunes for specific people and special achievements.

4.8 SENSE OF DEPRIVATION AND BIASSESS

4.8.1 LOCATION OF MOMINABAD

The Location of Mominabad says a lot about this place. It is surrounded by the main villages of Hunza. They were historically very important villages. The small village of Mominabad has been created in between the villages by bordering the lines from the land of Ganish, Karimabd and Altit. All of these villages are the oldest and the most important villages historically. Karimabad

and Altit were the Royal places where the Meer and his families reside in their Forts. The Karimabad Fort still stand high in Karimabad which is said to be 900 years old. The Altit Fort is said to a bit older then the Karimabad fort. Both fortes have been renovated by the Aga Khan Cultural Support Program. The present Meer and his brothers have donated theses forts to the public of Hunza. Now both of these forts are used as museums and they are very big attractions for the tourists visiting these areas.

So Mominabad was created through well planning and well execution. The people of Mominabad say that, this village was created just under the nose of Karimabad fort and Altit fort for many reasons.

- First the Mir of Hunza was afraid of the conspiracies of Nagar that if he came to know that we have such skillful people, they are going to convince them or plunder and kidnap them and took them to Nagar.
- Secondly they were afraid of the chances that they will run away from Hunza, as they themselves knew that they were treated discriminately.
- Thirdly they were needed always for the castle and the villages, they keep them very close so they can call them whenever they need.
- This small village was Hub of every need. From the smallest of utensils to warfare materials and human resource. They needed to be at the center so every village can access them very easily.
- The location of Mominabad was very important strategically, economically, and socially.

4.8.3 RAJAKI (THE COMMUNAL WORK)

In Hunza there is very strong concept of communal work. If there is some communal work like working on some communal construction or working on the water channels which are usually destroyed by floods in the summers. The responsible people use to call all the people for this communal work and in Brushaski language it is called as Rajaki. In olden times the concept of Rajaki was very importan. No clan or family could miss the Rajaki because there were no money

to pay or there were no paid worker to make them work. Therefore every clan and family has to attend Rajaki. The process was in a way that every week a different clan has to supervise and do the Rajaki. So each clan gets time to rest for a week till their time comes but it was not in such a manner for the community of Mominabad. These people have to attend every day with every clan without being absent.

4.8.2 STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF MOMINABAD



Figure 4.8.2 - Hand drawn map by researcher

4.8.4 DEROGATORY IDIOMS IN BRUSHISKI LANGUAGE

In Hunza the Community of Mominabad is all surrounded by The Brushaski speakers. This community is most influenced by this language and culture. The Brushaski speakers and language shows discrimination and derogation not only in their behavior but also in their language through idioms which are as follow.

- *Sheelijin berich boo*: This idiom means Girls (married unmarried Both) are Berich. This is because in past Girls were always dependent on their families specially the parents, and they use to ask for things. That's why they call the girls as Berich because both always use to ask for things.
- *Meereen Berich Bila*: This idiom means our hands are Berich. This is because our hands used to do every work even clean our butts that is why they call hands are berich.
- *Beriski moras*: This means Divore in a Bericho Manner. When a women got divorce in a very bad manner. In a way that she was humiliated very badly then it is called as Beriski moras.
- *Bericho Kheer Ka*: This means Even this Bericho doesn't care. This means if somebody doesn't care about anything at all then even the Bericho doesn't care.

4.8.5 INTERMARRIAGES

Intermarriages were strictly prohibited in the community. The Brushaski community use to consider it very faulty to get involve in marriages with the Mominabad community. The process of intermarriages started hardly a decade ago. Taking their daughter was still considered acceptable but giving them a daughter was taken as very bad. The process of intermarriages was out class in the community.

4.8.6 BERICHO MANN

Hunza is a place where it remains cold most of the year in past. But because of Global warming the situation is quite different now. Because of cold the housing pattern in Hunza was in a way that it should trap most of the heat. The roofs are made of wood and soil. It was mostly a single unit where the whole families use to live. This single structure was a big space with divisions in it. It has a stove area in the middle of the hall, for the purpose of all the cooking and heating .when you enter the house the first place is called as *Yourchi*, *they use to keep their shoes*. Then comes the main cooking area. The cooking area is a bit lower then the rest of the places. On both sides of the cooking area are two *Mann* (a little high area from the cooking place) One side is always a bit bigger than the other. Now in this house there are specific places for specific people.

- The bigger Mann is always specified for the men and elders of the house.
- The smaller mann is specify for women and children of the family.
- The middle area is for cooking.
- Yourchi is for keeping shoes
- And then with yourchi there was a small place (~~mann~~) which is called Bericho Mann. This place was specified for the Bericho. Whenever they were at anybody's home they use to make them sit at this place. This is considered to be the lowest place in that house.

CHAPTER - 5

UPWARD MOBILITY AND SELF CONSTRUCTION

5.1 UPWARD MOBILITY AND ITS CAUSES

The community of Mominabad has moved their standards in a short span of time. Within four decades or less than a half century (from 1970s till now) they have moved their social status significantly higher. The State of Hunza was integrated to Pakistan in 1974. Till this period, they have been treated as untouchables in India as said by Weinreich.(ibid). But the present scenario is quite different from this. They have a very comfortable living standard in terms of material and living. I have visited most of the houses in the community and in every house had all the required amenities were available. They do not have any lesser living standards than the surrounding community.

All this upward mobility has root causes in the back. Theses causes can be understand under the following headings.

5.1.1 CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION

The history of education in this community has remained not much bright. As I have explained in the previous chapter, the individuals have been expelled out of the School. They were not allowed to attend Schools but still regardless of all this the literacy rate in this community is 89% now. Not a single child is out of School currently. The change of this behavior of these people was triggered by many reasons. The first School in this community was built by the Aga Khan Education Services. It was a primary School where few students were enrolled only (from the school sources). It was composed of one room in the premises of their Pray hall (Jammat Khana). Then with the passage of time this School was upgraded to secondary school. Now it has a very

well managed building in the community. Through this School, the community gets to know the importance of education and its impacts with the passage of time.

In this community there are individuals in every field of life. In Government, education, Army, Art, and in International organizations as well. Son of my Key informant is retired from Radio Pakistan as a Director and his son is now working in the World Bank. This is a single example. There are captains, majors in the Army. This community is very proud to say all this because for rest of Hunzukutz it was easy to get all this but for them, the struggle was real.

5.1.2 CHANGE IN ATTITUDE OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The dominant community of Hunza always considered this community inferior because of their history. We can also say that it is also because it was the accepted and prevalent attitude for generations. But the attitude of this wider community changed with time and some incidents.

I have mentioned various times that the community of Mominabad and the surrounding Hunzukz are Ismailies in majority. They are a sub sect of Shia Islam. They follow Prince Karim Aga Khan as their 49th hereditary Imam. The chain starts from Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) as the last prophet, then Mollah Ali as the First Imam and then the chain of Imamat continues till the current Imam. The spiritual leader visits his followers from time to time. He has visited Hunza five times in the last sixty years. According to the community of Mominabad, with every visit, the Imam leaves something symbolic for the community of Mominabad.

- In 1987, before his visit, the engineers came to analyze the required specifications of the helipads. The most feasible helipad was in Mominabad. It was very shocking for the rest of the community to acknowledge the fact that the Imam will be landing in Mominabad. They were not only shocked but also resisted. Regardless, the Mominabad helipad was chosen and the Imam landed here. This was the first incident which calmed down the attitudes of the surrounding community and made proud the Mominabadi's.
- The next visit of Ismailie's Imam to Hunza was in 1996. It was very exemplary and well defining change for this community. This time Imam and Prince Charles Visited Hunza

for the inauguration of Baltit Fort (The 900 year's old fort, renovated by Aga Khan Cultural support program AKCSP). After the event, the Imam stayed at Gilgit Serena. He sent his helicopter to get the best piper player from Mominabad so that he could appreciate some music of Hunza. This example is still quoted in the wider community of Hunza. The people attitude was changed completely towards the people of Mominabad. Not only Mominabad but also Music and musicians.

This incident has affected the attitude so much that the Brusho (the Brushiski speakers) started to pursue their careers in music.

5.2.1 DENTITY CRISIS OF THE COMMUNITY

The community of Mominabad has gone through several phases. They have experienced marginalization based on their social status. They have continued to struggle against this marginalization. transitional phase of coming out of that state (from being untouchables to being considered normal humans) . They have struggled to educate themselves to mix themselves with the main stream society. At present, they are at a stage where they are in a process of re-constructing their self-identity and forsaking their previous associations that were attached with their cast/tribe (professional occupations, skilled trade, and economic dependencies). This is causing an identity crisis in this community. They, after being given access to formal education to the level of tertiary education, have become highly educated. They are increasingly leaving their ancestral profession of being blacksmiths and artesian, for the sake of trade and employment in other sectors of life. They are in a constant struggle to be comfortable in their own skin and with their own identities. These identities are most of the time not only self-constructed but also socially constructed.

Slowly and gradually, this community has deconstructed its identity even at its fundamental level, Language. They prefer to speak Urdu rather than Brushaski. When I walked around in the locale, I saw the young girls speaking Urdu language even though Brushaski is more dominant in their surroundings. The stigmatization of the history has affected them in a way that they are now retaliating towards the surrounding.

5.2.2 SELF CONSTRUCTION

The community of Mominabad has been changing its identity and self-construction with the changes in their economic, social and cultural conditions. A friend of mine, Ali narrates the story; ” we had a Doom family at our village that used to take care of our lands, cattle and house while we all used to live in Gilgit city. When we were kids we used to play with the caretakers children who were of our age. The called us *-kaka*” (it means elder brother in respect) throughout our stay. I left my village went to Islamabad and after some years returned back. I met the same caretaker’s son while he was purchasing a car. He saw me and referred to me with my first name very casually. The change of his tone from *kaka* to my first name was quiet amusing.”

This story tells the change of self of the boy that they were respecting because of been the honors and not out of respect. When they got financially enough strong they reacted them in an equal way. Which shows the change of speech thought and self-identity from been a care taker to a financially strong man.

The changes are not only in attitude but in their narration, names and identities.

5.2.3 BERISHAL TO MOMINABAD

The name of Berishal (Berishal means the place where Bericho lives) has been changed over the passage of time to Mominabad because of the prejudiced and disparaging biases associated with the word 'Bericho' or Berishal‘. The Brushiski speakers always use this word as derogatory terms. They use these words to belittle someone in a conversation.

One of the stories, that from where the name has been changed to Mominabad is as follow. My respondent Karim Sahab narrated as —*This was the era from 1965 to 1970, when there were very few people in Hunza who were educated and who knew to read and write. This man from Mominabad named Shayoo, wanted to write a letter to his son- in-law who was somewhere in Lahore. He went to Allama Nasir Sahab (he was a writer and scholar of Hunza) and requested*

him to write a letter for him from his side. After completing the letter Allam Nasir sahib while writing the senders address said “because it is consider derogatory to say Berishal so I will not write Beishal on the senders address instead I will write Mominabad and he write it so” This was the first time when someone used the name Mominabad for Berisahl. Then they approved this name from Meer Jamal Khan In 1971 and from then Berishal was called Mominabad formally. This story is the oral narration from the locale.

This change of name can be seen from literature from the book of the same person who changed the name. He has suggested in his book that the responsible people should change this word from Berishal to Mominaabd as it is considered as derogatory in the Brushaski language and the wider community of Hunza. They are human beings and spiritual brothers\sisters of the wider community. (ibid).

The name Berishal has been changed to Mominabad with conscious efforts of the Scholar and the Ismaili Regional Council ^{and} the people of Mominabad. This was done to merge up these people in the mainstream and the bigger picture and community of Hunza. Ijlal Husainpur in his Article “No more Domaki Please” says that: “the people of Berishal do not use the word Doms for themselves or Domaki for their language because of the derogatory associations and „stigma „with their professional life and the restrictions once imposed on them by the local rulers.(ibid)

This is the situation which still prevails in the community. The people of Mominabad are still not accepting the word Berishal for their Village. Even though this is as natural as any other name of a place. They want to called themselves the people of Mominabad. The word Mominabad itself tells the story of their deprivation. This word Mominabad means the place where prayerful people lives. This name was suggested and accepted to change the self- identity of the people of Mominabad.

5.2.4 BERISKI TO DOOMAKI AND NOW DAWODI

The language is the same but the names have been changed with time. I have explained in the previous chapter that the community has a different language from rest of the languages in Hunza. It is basically called as Beriski (means the language of Bericho). This is a common

understanding in the locale that, In Hunza specifically this language was called as Beriski till 1970's. No one in the Hunza knew this language with any other name till this time.

With the passage of time and flourishment of the community they completely forbid calling it Beriski and call it Doomaki. Though the word Doomaki means the language of Doods in Shina language. The same caste which lives in Gilgit and surrounding areas are called as Doods. For decades they called this language as Doomaki in Hunza also. This was because they wanted to get rid of the word Beriski and the biasness associated with it. They were changing their identity and the name of their language.

After Doomaki now the community call their language as *“Dawoodi”*. The language of Hazrat Dawood. *In the very beginning once I asked one of my key informants about the language by calling it Doomaki, He got offended and corrected me immediately by saying its Dawoodi not Doomaki.* I probed him why it is called Dawoodi. He answered me as *“As Hazrat Dawood was a blacksmith and master of ironmongers. We are also the sons of blacksmiths that's why we call our language as Dawoodi. The language of Dawood. The change of the name of the language is clearly the construction of the identity. Relating them with the Prophet and calling their language as the Dawoodi.*

5.2.5 CHANGE IN OCCUPATION/PROFESSION

With the passage of time the Berishal community has changed their professions. I have repeatedly discussed in the previous chapters that the people of this community were very skilful artisans, blacksmiths and musicians. But the current scenario is different. There are 76 households and 576 is the exact population in this small village. The history tells from the narration that, historically all the population would have been in the profession of Music, blacksmith and doing small odd jobs for the rest of the surrounding communities.

But currently only five people are earning from the job of blacksmith. A few others are earning from music. But no one is into the artesian work. While the surrounding community of Brusho has adopted theses occupations. They are in to the work of Blacksmith, artesian, and music.

When I roam around in the locale I see the people doing odd jobs like plugging in the fields, spreading the organic fertilizers in the fields. When I inquire about the workers they told me that

—*we hire people for these sorts of jobs*” it is very difficult for us to manage our jobs and agriculture at a time that’s why we pay and make our odd jobs stress-free.

6.1 CONCLUSION

Bericho community is the one which can be called as the silent foundation of the Hunza state. Till 1974 Hunza was an independent state where Berichos were considered as the lowest caste. Despite being the lowest caste, they were the ones responsible for facilitating the State for their agriculture, war fare and utensils.

This community has always been treated in a biased way, which can be even seen in that the musical instruments were made and played purely by this community but the words for these instruments are in Brushaski and nobody out of the Berishal community even know what these instruments are called in Beriski.

There are basically three different clans in this community. Each clan has its own story to tell about their history and migration to Hunza.

The three clans are.

4. Nakutz
5. ChuChukutz/Bakutz
6. Tootukutz

There are subfamilies in these clans. The subfamilies trace their own origins. They know where they came from and they have their own history. The subfamilies are not necessarily from the sons and the same generations. They keep on coming to Hunza and attaching themselves to the already existing clans. In these subfamilies the division of labor was also very serious. Each family has a specific profession to do.

The music players or the musical set is a group of three men. One the drummer, second the small drums and third the pipe payer. A specific family was designated for the specific instrument.

Majority of the Bericho families are not sure about the history of how and why their forefathers have travelled to this part of world or what the reason of their migration was.

Currently there are three (3) popular theories regarding the origin of the Berichos. The first theory explores the possibility of a migration of this community from India to Hunza (via Kashmir and then Baltistan).

The second theory builds upon the myth of two brothers who migrated from Kashmir. One of the brothers settled in Hunza whereas the second relocated to Nagar. Both the brothers settled down and eventually formed a community.

Lastly, the third theory builds on the story that the forefather of the Berichos was a son of a king who learned to be skilled musician.

During the course of this research and the collection of oral narrations of the community, I have come to the conclusion that there are three (3) main clans in the Bericho community and that these clans are then further divided into sub families. Each clan has its own version of how they came about to Hunza. My research further inspires me to formulate my own theory of how the Bericho community originated. My theory is linked to the common characteristics of the origin stories, narrated by the clan members.

I theorized that each time someone would migrate into Hunza, as was the custom, they were presented before the king to determine the usefulness of the person. If that person had some skills to offer to the state of Hunza they were put into this area of Berishal. Therefore each family has its own history of arrival to Hunza. They continued to travel to Hunza from different regions and the skillful people were settled in this landlocked part of Hunza. Few of the families trace their history about the previous lands from where they have travelled, however, these are only orally narrated stories and they have no documented proof/ evidence.

Music is important but it is not a necessity. One can call music a luxury. Music has its own important uses in culture and heritage. Likewise in Hunza Music and musicians were very essential but the role of Blacksmiths were vital parts to play in this state. There were specific families for the profession of Blacksmith who were expert at this profession. It is said that there was a blacksmith burner at everyone house in Mominabad in the past. The situation in today's

era is quite different. The specification and expertise in the music and blacksmith has been drastically reduced. The reason for this is the surrounding community. They have been biased with the Bericho community for a very long. This is why the young generation of this community has changed their careers and adopted a lot of other professions for their survival.

The people of Mominabad were not only in the profession of music and blacksmith but there were also some personalities which were the sources of pride not only for the Village of Mominabad but also for the State of Hunza. One such example of these remarkable personalities was Wazir Qadeer who was considered a very rational and wise Wazir in Hunza. He was responsible for a lot of problem solving for the king.

The second was Phulolo who saved the Hunza state, all alone from the attack of Nagar. Despite Phulolo's actions, his reward was a reminder of all the mistreatment faced by the Berichos.

The people of Mominabad have done conscious efforts to change their identity. They have changed the name of their village from Berishal (means the place where Bericho lives) to Mominabad (means the place where true believers lives). This was a conscious effort of some scholars on the request of the people of Mominabad. They wanted to get rid of their identity which was more prominent from the name of their village. The second identity crisis is the name of their language. They changed the name of their language from Beriski (means the language of Bericho) to Dawodi (means the language of Hazrat Dawood).

The people of Mominabad are also differentiated from the rest of Hunza because they have a different language. This language is at the verge of being extinct. The reasons of this extinction are several:

- First the Village of Mominabad is in the heart of Hunza. It has a very small population of 576 with 76 households. These people are surrounded by the Brushaski speaking population. They interact with the Brushaski speakers on a daily basis. Their children go to schools and colleges with the Brushaski speakers. This is why they prefer to speak and be fluent in Brushaski and not in Beriski.
- Secondly the surrounding population always makes them feel derogatory because of their language. They can be easily recognized by the accent of their language. Even if they are speaking Brushaski they are pointed out because of their thick Beriski accent.

- The youth of Mominabad always prefer to speak Brushaski or Urdu and not Beriski.

This is why the people of Mominabad changed the name of their language from Beriski to Dawodi to have a different self-construction.

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