

**Arbaeen Walk and Socio-economic Expressions:
Perceptions and Understanding of the Pakistani Shias regarding the
Congregation on 20th Safar**



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Thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Anthropology

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Department of Anthropology
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2019**

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Islamabad, 15 February 2019

Seemab Zahra

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ABSTRACT

Every year millions of people from all over the world walk for several days towards the Karbala, Iraq. Walking on foot towards the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) is a vibrant feature of the Arbaeen pilgrimage. Though, it was banned during the Saddam Hussain's era. However, following the collapse of his regime in 2003, it once again revived with great enthusiasm. This research intends to explore the historical basis of the Arbaeen walk. The research asks certain questions such as: What are the perceptions of natives regarding the prevalence of Arbaeen walk among Pakistani Shias? What challenges do pilgrims face during the Arbaeen pilgrimage? What are the socio-economic expressions evident in interactions among participants in the Arbaeen walk? Ethnographic research methodology was used to conduct this research. Participant observation was done during the data collection. The purposive sampling technique was utilized for the selection of sample. The total sample size was 41. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the phenomenon in detail. In-depth interviews were taken from both males and females of different age groups, belonging to various socio-economic statuses and educational background. For this purpose, an interview guide was constructed to ensure that all areas are covered during the interviews. Findings proposed that every year millions of people walk towards the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S), including the large number of Shia population of Dhoke Syedan Rawalpindi, Pakistan. It further suggested that the phenomenon of Arbaeen walk does not only possess spiritual significance, rather the city of Karbala also holds economic enterprises.

Key words: Arbaeen, foot pilgrimage, challenges, social relationships, socio-economic expressions

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1. INTRODUCTION

For centuries, Muslims have endeavoured to visit shrines and mausoleums of holy personalities across the world. Many see this as a display of loyalty and love towards these characters, who have usually left a lasting legacy in the hearts of people. Such practice is not only limited to the Shia¹, but rather most Muslims in various parts of the world are also part of it. Within the teachings of most Muslim schools of thought including the Sunni² denomination, the belief in *Ziyarah* (holy visitation) has been integral, whether from the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S)³ in Cairo to the shrine of Abu Hanifa (R.A)⁴ in Baghdad (Al-Hilli, 2017, p. 5).

Every year, millions of people from all over the world, including those of different denominations and backgrounds, gather at the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) in Karbala (south of Iraq) in the form of a pilgrimage, which is called “Arbaeen” (Arabic for “forty”). It is a Shia Muslim religious observance that occurs forty days after the Day of Ashura⁵, the date of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A.S), his family, and companions in the land of Karbala in 680AD (Taher, Abo-ghniem, Albujeer, Almahafdha, & Khoshnevisan, 2017, p. 92). Following a Pakistani Muslim’s tradition of observing a 40-day period of mourning for the dead, the grieving for Imam Hussain (A.S) ends on the 40th day after Ashura, which falls on the 20th day of Safar (2nd month of Islamic Calendar). Muslims in India call the same observance as *Chehlum* (Gulevich, 2004, p. 261). On the day of Arbaeen, millions of people across the world flock towards Karbala to commemorate the sacrifice of Imam Hussain (A.S), making it the world's largest annual gathering in one place (Moufahim, 2013, p. 423). These people are called pilgrims; known as *Zawars*⁶ in Arabic (noun for those who perform *Ziyara* means pilgrimage), they travel to Iraq through different modes of transportation. A huge amount of pilgrims march towards the holy shrine, to perform Arbaeen pilgrimage on

¹ Muslims who believe Hazrat Ali (A.S), first rightly leader after the demise of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ and believe in a line of twelve Imams.

² Muslims who consider Hazrat Ali (A.S) as fourth rightly caliph of Muslim Ummah. They believe that the Holy Prophet’s ﷺ close friend, Hazrat Abu Bakar (R.A) was the first rightly caliph of the Muslims.

³ The third Imam of Shia Muslims with direct lineage to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, considered as the Prince of all Martyrs (*Sayyid al-Shuhada*).

⁴ Imam Abu Hanifa, (699 — 767 CE / 80 — 148 AH) was the founder of the Sunni Hanafi school of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence).

⁵ Ashura falls on the tenth day of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim year. The word Ashura means “tenth” in Arabic.

⁶ Singular is *Zair* and plural is *Zaireen*.

foot. This is a special phenomenon that is referred to as the *Mashi* or the walk when it is practiced from different cities of Iraq, it is known as “Arbaeen walk”. In order to walk to Imam Hussain (A.S)’s shrine in time for the celebrations, people set out days or weeks ahead depending on their distance from Karbala. This walk is a collective ritual, in which groups of people walk from places as far as Basra and Baghdad (cities of Iraq). The most frequented route is from Najaf to Karbala, a distance of approximately 83km (Christia, Dekeyser, & Knox, 2016, p. 15). People not only walk from different cities of Iraq but they also walk from different borders to reach Karbala, for instance, many Iranians walk hundreds of miles, crossing their border in order to reach the holy city of Iraq (Mahdi al-Modarresi, 2014).

Regardless of the efforts of oppressors and governments to eradicate the Arbaeen pilgrimage (*Ziyarat Al-Arbaeen*), this huge gathering has its roots across history. Historical records provide us with detailed accounts of fear, harassment, and punishment for those who undertook the journey towards Karbala. This includes the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutawakil (d.861), who cut off the hands and feet of those who performed this pilgrimage (Al-Hilli, 2017). During the reign of Saddam Hussain, this pilgrimage was also not allowed. At that time, it was performed secretly by only a few number of people. After the collapse of his regime in 2003, the number of people walking towards Karbala started to increase every year (Piggot, 2014). On the day of Arbaeen, it has been estimated that around 7 million people visited Karbala on 21st March, 2006; 10 million visited on 10th March, 2007; 10 to 14 million visited in 2009, 10 million visited in 2010, 15million visited in 2011; and 14 to 17 million visited in 2012 (Hanum, 2010; Griffis, 2010; Zabeeh, 2006; Zabeeh, 2007a). Dearden (2014) noted that 20 million people from 40 countries attended Arbaeen pilgrimage in 2013, naming it to be “one of the world's largest pilgrimages”. According to the numbers released by Iraqi officials and other global observers in 2014, it has been estimated that more than 20 million people were gathered in Karbala on the day of Arbaeen (Staff, 2016). Iraqi state-run media stated that more than 22 million pilgrims have visited Karbala in 2015 (Sim, 2016). In 2016, an estimated 30 to 40 million people made the pilgrimage, terming it to be one of the largest historical peaceful gatherings of people. In the year 2017, reports say that more than 25 million *Zaireen* have visited Karbala (Hussain, 2017). Thus, the annual reports show that the number of pilgrims walking towards Karbala from all over the world is increasing every year.

Arbaeen is unique in a sense that it takes place against a milieu of chaotic and precarious geopolitical scenes. Shia Muslims are seen by Daesh (aka ‘Islamic State’) as their mortal rival, so the sight of Shia pilgrims gathering for their utmost expression of faith enrages the terror group more than anything. However, the peculiar feature of Arbaeen is that although it is a distinctively Shia spiritual exercise, Sunnis even Christians, Yazidis, Zoroastrians, and Sabians also partake in both the pilgrimage as well as serving of devotees (Haghdust, 2016, p. 4).

1.1. The Problem

Arbaeen, the annual gathering held in several days in Karbala, Iraq, which attracts millions of visitors from Iraq and another countries. In spite of the worse security situations before and during Saddam’s reign, people continued flocking towards the city of Imam Hussain (A.S). The present study intends to explore the historical background of Arbaeen walk, mainly focusing on the perception of the Shia residents of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi regarding the prevalence of such a phenomenon among Pakistani Shias. The research also discusses the problems of pilgrims encountered during the Arbaeen walk. Furthermore, the main focus of the research is to examine the socio-economic expressions in the interactions among the pilgrims partaking in the Arbaeen walk.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Karbala, Iraq is an important pilgrimage site throughout the year, but the number of pilgrims exceed more during Muharram and Safar. On 20th of Safar (Al-Arbaeen), millions of people across the world, belonging to different backgrounds gather in Karbala to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A.S), his family and companions. The Arbaeen pilgrimage was banned during the supremacy of Saddam Hussain. However the collapse of his regime in 2003 (the year U.S. military forces invaded Iraq) caused a flood of pilgrims, many on foot, to pour into Karbala and express deep joy on regaining the freedom to participate in these traditional religious rituals. Despite little media focus and coverage, the annual walk by millions grows stronger each year (Al-Jibouri, 2014, p. 124; Staff, 2017).

In order to be able to understand the concept of Arbaeen walk from the point of view of participants and its particular social context, there is a need of in-depth examination.

For this purpose, an ethnographic study has been conducted which investigates the significance of this historical event accompanied by in-depth interviews of the Pakistani Shias. The researcher chose this topic because this great phenomenon that is held every year in Iraq is under researched. Furthermore, another reason is the researcher's own religious background, so it would be easy to do an ethnographic research by participating in the walk with same religious oriented groups.

1.2.1. Conceptualization and operationalization of the concepts

1.2.1.1. Perception

West & Turner (2008) define perception as an active process in which all five senses are included: touch, sight, taste, smell, and hearing (p. 47). According to Given (2008) perception can be defined as "how we see things." However, he says, it is a process involving not only the senses but also multifaceted underlying mechanisms (p. 606). Perception is an individual's access to experience and interpret the world as it is arbitrated through the interconnectedness of mind and body. It is like a set of lenses, which evolve from different viewpoints such as: locality, subjectivity, history, ambiguity, and the web of knowledges conveyed to the individual. Through these lenses, an individual views reality (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 12).

As, qualitative researchers are most interested in individual's perception so in this dissertation, perception is used to gain access to respondent's understanding of the phenomenon of Arbreen walk. Though, the meaning of experiencing Arbreen walk is different for an individual, a culture, or social group. So, in this study respondents give voice to their perceptions regarding Arbreen pilgrimage through narratives, storytelling, actions, and reactions to their surroundings. We can say that perceptions are interpretations, and for most individuals, it became their truth. Hence, perceptions are very powerful and important in behaviours and thoughts of human.

1.2.1.2. Pakistani Shia

According to a renowned Arabic lexicographer, the word "Shia" can be defined as people who agree on something, and decide to do something collectively. Any solid and united community is also called Shia (Manzur, 1883). At that time, the word Shia was not used to refer any certain group or people. One of the famous German Orientalist, Wellhausen (1975) argued that the word Shia started to be used to refer to

the followers of Hazrat Ali (A.S) during the reign of Muawiyah. However, there are different groups of Shia, some developed and survived till the present day while others disappeared. In all over the world, there are 10-20% of Muslims who are Shia, mostly in Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Bahrain. However, they are also existing as minorities in Kuwait, Qatar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and India. The researches show that the religious composition of Pakistan is almost 97% Muslims, predominantly divided into Sunni and Shia sects. The Sunni population in Pakistan is 75-80% of the total population while the Shia population is roughly 20% (Ahmar, n.d, p. 2; Nasr, 2000, p. 139; Behuria, 2008, p. 159; Shah, 2014, p. 452).

For the present study, the operational definition of “Shia” is considering those people who believe that following the death of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, leadership have passed directly to his cousin/son in-law Hazrat Imam Ali (A.S). These Shia people also believe in twelve Imams⁷, and hence they are known as Twelvers (*Ithna Ashariyya*). The most peculiar quality of Twelver Shia is their belief in occultation (*Ghaebat*) of the twelfth Imam, known as Imam Mahdi (A.S). These Shias also believe that Imam Mahdi (A.S) has not died but disappeared (*Ghaeb*) by the will of Allah. However, by terming Pakistani Shias, it means those Shia Muslims who are the resident of Pakistan and practicing their rituals which includes: chest beating, wearing black clothes in Muharram, attending *Majalis* and offering prayers.

1.2.1.3. Arbaeen walk.

On 20th Safar of every Islamic year⁸, pilgrims from all over the world visit the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) in Karbala. Iraqi Shia also call Al-Arbaeen “the Return of the Head” (*Maradd Al-Ras*), because they believe that on this day the head of Imam Hussain (A.S) was returned from Damascus to Karbala and buried with the body after the 40 days of his martyrdom (Hamdan, 2012, p. 19). The detailed concept of Arbaeen Walk has already mentioned in the introduction section. However, in this dissertation the concept of Arbaeen walk is seeing as pilgrims who march towards the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) by taking the route from Najaf to Karbala, Iraq.

⁷ 1. Imam Ali (A.S), 2. Imam Hassan (A.S), 3. Imam Hussain (A.S), 4. Imam Zain-ul-Abideen (A.S), 5. Imam Baqir (A.S), 6. Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S), 7. Imam Moosa Kazim (A.S), 8. Imam Raza (A.S), 9. Imam Muhammad Taqi (A.S), 10. Imam Muhammad Naqi (A.S), 11. Imam Hassan Al-Askari (A.S), 12. Imam Mahdi (A.S)

⁸ 40 days after the anniversary of Al-Hussain’s martyrdom.

1.2.1.4. Socio-economics

Socio-economics is a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to economics. Sometimes, it is used as an umbrella term with diverse usages. Hence, the term socioeconomics refers to the interaction between the social and economic practices of a group of people. The prefix “socio” means to study the behaviours of people, including the ways they interact with each other or their family structures. While the word “economics” refers to the economy, such as people’s income and finances (Ashford, 2007, p. 2; Hellmich, 2017, p. 3; Socioeconomic, n.d). Socioeconomics is also known as social economics, which focuses on the relationship between social and economic aspects within a society. So, it examines these aspects to better understand how the combination of both influences something (Eatwell, Milgate, & Newman, 1989, p. 14). For instance, how a specific group, or socioeconomic class, act within a society including their actions as consumers. Many scholars have worked on socioeconomics in different ways, as it is an interdisciplinary perspective. So, to give an overview of this concept, it has been conceptualized in this section. However, this term has not been operationalized here because it has been written in detail with reference to a selected theoretical framework (see page. 12) that has been selected to be applied to the findings of the present research.

1.3. Objectives

- To document the historical basis of Arbaben walk.
- To provide the natives’ perspectives regarding the prevalence of Arbaben walk among Pakistani Shias.
- To investigate the challenges faced by the pilgrims during Arbaben pilgrimage.
- To determine the socio-economic manifestations in the interactions between the pilgrims participating in the Arbaben walk.

1.4. Research questions

- How the trend of walking from Najaf to Karbala started among Pakistani Shias?
- Despite the worse security situations in Iraq why do people flock towards Karbala?
- What social factors of interaction can be seen among *Zaireen* during the Arbaben walk?
- How this phenomenon became “world’s largest annual pilgrimage” within few years?
- What is the significance of taking part in this walk?
- Why do people other than Shia Muslims experience this walk?
- What rituals do pilgrims perform during the Arbaben pilgrimage?
- What are the spending and gift-giving practices of those partaking in the Arbaben pilgrimage?

1.5. Justification of locale and topic

Arbaeen walk, the topic is selected on the basis of the researcher's area of interest. Though, the phenomenon is most likely related to the Shia Muslim community, however, it has much importance because of being one of the biggest gatherings in the world. But, it is almost unknown to most of the people in the world and in fact in the Pakistan as well. Even, the people who belong to other sects, are also unaware of this phenomenon. So, one of the main reason for choosing this topic is my interest in this phenomenon because I myself belong to Shia Syed family. Other than that this topic is also selected to know people aware of this phenomenon, which is happening every year in Iraq. This study was conducted in more than one geographical location. The main locale of the research was Dhoke Syedan which is located in district Rawalpindi, Pakistan. While, the study was also conducted in different cities of Iraq. The reason to select the multi-locale for this study was the phenomenon of Arbaeen walk itself. As the main focus of this research is on the Arbaeen walk and the people who performed it, believe on it and want to experience it once in their life. So, on the basis of these aspects it was observed that the area of Dhoke Syedan was familiar with most of the Shia Muslims residing there and have more urge to go for the pilgrimage to Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Therefore, Dhoke Syedan was selected to study the phenomenon of Arbaeen walk. In order to observe this phenomenon in detail and to get in-depth information regarding it, participant observation was utilized. So, the researcher travelled with the respondents from Pakistan to Iraq via Dubai. The researcher has visited different places in Iraq including Al-Kazmain, Al-Musayab, Baghdad, Basra, Karbala, Kufa, Najaf, and Samarra. However, people walk towards Karbala from different cities of Iraq but most of the pilgrims start their journey from Najaf and our caravan also started the Arbaeen walk from Najaf towards Karbala. That is why multi-locale was selected for this study.

1.6. Significance of the study

Although, many researches have been conducted to study the religious pilgrimages in various parts of the world, mainly focusing on the debates of why do people visit shrines and what rituals they perform during the pilgrimage. However, only a limited number of studies have been conducted in Pakistan related to the Arbaeen pilgrimage which is the largest annual congregation held on 20th Safar in Karbala, Iraq. The importance of this study stems from the fact that it will contribute to the existing literature by exploring this neglected yet important

phenomenon. Iranian media, officials, religious figures, and citizens have criticized Western media for ignoring the pilgrimage despite its large scale and its geopolitical and cultural significance. Regardless of being even larger than Hajj pilgrimage, *Arbaeen Ziyara* remains largely unknown to the world (Mahdi al-Modarresi, 2014; Sims, 2016). So in the future, if this research gets published it would assist in building awareness to not only Pakistani people but also foreigners, who want to know about the annual walk undertaken by millions of people particularly Shia Muslims.

Every year millions of people from different parts of the world flock towards Karbala to take part in the *Arbaeen* walk, which is the most important aspect of this pilgrimage. Hence, this research is an effort to find out about the historical background of this particular phenomenon. The present study also emphasizes on analysing the social and economic experiences among *Zaireen* interacting each other during the *Arbaeen* walk.

1.7. Theoretical framework

In the 1960s, anthropologists throughout the world shifted their focus on ‘symbols’ used in each cultures. They were then more concerned with the meanings these symbols beheld, from the society’s viewpoint rather than their own and intended to interpret them from the society’s perspective. With respect to the theoretical school of Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology, culture does not prevail beyond the individual, but it does exists in individual’s interpretations of events surrounding them. Hence, with a reference to socially established signs and symbols, people tend to shape the patterns of their behaviors and try to give meanings to their experiences. Therefore, the basic goal of Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology is to analyze that how people give meanings to their reality and how this reality is expressed by their cultural symbols. One of the major premise of the symbolic anthropology has been to turn the field’s attention towards the issues of culture and interpretation rather than grand theories, which has been by far successfully accomplished (Serva, n.d).

The theoretical school of Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology, is further divided into two perspective dimension, the British school, where the main focus was on how societies maintained cohesion and this has been illustrated by the work of Victor Turner and Mary Douglas, whereas the American school was concerned with how ideas shaped individuals subjectivities and actions and this had been exemplified by the work of Clifford Geertz and Sherry Ortner. In contrast to structuralism, symbolic anthropology

was fashioned. Two characteristics about symbols are the basic statement of Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology, i.e. learned and shared. It states that symbols are vehicles of culture, i.e. they hold cultural meaning and implication. According to this, symbols can be recognized mostly by the people of that culture and very so often by the people of other cultures. Transmission of meanings and communication of the ways to the people that they should view and feel about the world, is also performed by the help of symbols (Johnson, 2013, p. 842; Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology, n.d).

Clifford Geertz, the world's most influential anthropologist of the second half of the 21st century, was one of the main key figures of interpretive anthropology. Geertz argues that culture is embodied in public symbols and actions, not a model inside people's heads. Geertz also emphasizes on the meaning of the symbols, believing in line with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance and it takes cultures to be those webs. Victor Turner, another fundamental figure of the Symbolic Anthropology approached symbolic analysis from a different angle. He examined symbols as the devices used for the maintenance of society whereas according to Geertz cultural symbols are the parameters to see a worldview of a society. Turner believed that the primary gears through which social order was renewed were the ritual symbols, which is parallel to what Sherry Ortner, the student of Clifford Geertz, studied. A ritual is considered as an important element to unmask sources and forces of cultural meaning (McGee & Warms, 2003, p. 482).

Reintroducing the concept of 'liminality' Anthropologist Victor Turner made a huge contribution to anthropological discourse. Turner was apprehensive on understanding cultures on two basis: dynamism and disorder. He sees society not as a "thing" but rather as a dynamic and dialectic process. According to Turner, culture is a constant struggle between structure and anti-structure. Turner's work on liminality, draws from Van-Gennep's triadic model of the Rite of Passage, which he elaborates to include other cultural phenomena. According to Van Gennep (2013), the process of shifting from one social status to another occurs in three stages: First is pre-liminal or separation stage, in which the individual is symbolically detached from society and his own identity. Second is the liminal stage, in which the individual is secluded from society and is supervised constantly. While, third is the reunion or post-liminal stage that makes a person reintegrated into the society but with his new statuses (p. 11). Turner took an

interest in the concept of liminality, the second phase of Van Gennep's model. Liminality, in terms of social structure and time, is an intermediate state of being "in between". While Individuals are on the verge of personal or social transformation, they are separated from their identity and establishing social differences.

According to Turner, liminality brings about a state he calls "communitas". Communitas is a relatively structure-less society which is contrasting to the normative social structure and is based on relations of solidarity and equality. The communitas is, according to Turner, the ultimate vision of a culture and achieve its meanings through deconstruction of normative directive. However, both liminality and communitas are usually temporary, structurally defined and limited. Turner's work unveiled much about the processes of social change, both from the point of view of the individual experience and through the development of common beliefs that characterize the social group. He researched the meaning of rituals and their symbolism in this context. Through developing the concepts of liminality and communitas as examples of unstructured community in which all members have the same social status, Turner proposed that in order to process change and adjust to it, human beings necessitate time and separation from their social obligations. This transition phase results in formation of deep bonds between people which may be foundational to the new phase of life they are about to enter (Victor Turner on Liminality and Communitas, 2012).

Turner distinguished that in "liminality," the intermediate state between two phases, individuals were "betwixt and between", i.e. they did not belong to the society that they formerly were a part of, and they were not yet re-incorporated into that society. Liminality is a "limbo," an abstruse period characterized by modesty, privacy, tests, sexual ambiguity, and "communitas". He used the term "anti-structure," to describe both liminality and what he has called "communitas." It meant the emancipation of human dimensions of cognition, affect, preference, creativity, etc., from the normative constrictions mandatory upon occupying a structure of social statuses, and not the structural reversal (Turner, 1982, p. 47). According to Turner, communitas is an intense community spirit and the feeling of great social equality, solidarity, and togetherness; i.e. the characteristic of people experiencing liminality together. The term is used to differentiate the modality of social relationship from an area of common living. There is more than one discrepancy between structure and communitas, among which the

most acquainted is the difference between being secular and sacred. Sacred component is somehow part of every social position that is acquired through the changing of positions during rites of passage. Part of this sacredness is achieved through the transient humility learned in these phases that allows people to reach a higher position. *Communitas* is an acute point of community that takes community to the next level and allows the whole of the community to share a common experience, usually through a rite of passage. This makes every person of the community to come at an equivalency, for example if people are higher in positions; they have experienced the lower ones at one point and know what actually that means (Turner, 1969, p.127; 2016).

The current study applies the tripartite model by Victor Turner to understand and analyze the phenomenon and concept of Arbæen walk as a Social Process. The tripartite model describes three levels of *Communitas*; Existential, Normative, and Ideological. Social Relations appear to play a major role for Shia Muslims, during the Arbæen annual gathering. Social Relations tend to reflect and connect between the social statuses of people (as an unspecified *communitas*) and the general structure of the Iraqi society. One of the most significant actions exhibited by the participants during the Arbæen walk is their collective expression (see detailed discussion in the analysis section).

Moving further in the details of the tripartite model by Victor Turner, we can observe that first level of *communitas*; The Existential or Spontaneous *Communitas* aims at the total or direct confrontation of human identities. This creates in its subject a predisposition that humanity is standardized, unstructured and is made up of groups that are unrestricted and express themselves freely in a social style that establishes their commonalities and solidarity through feelings of unity and harmony within them (Turner, 1975, p. 169). Another, the Normative *Communitas*; are the ones that require mobilization and organization of resources to keep their contributors successful and thriving. They pursue social dominance midst affiliates to flourish in their communal goals. These social groups express their existence by instituting a kind of social link to establish their relationship with the participants and to maintain the third, the Ideological *Communitas*. The third level could apply to numerous utopian groups of those devoted who find the best circumstances for the *communitas*. The main people included in this group are the religious leaders, whose guidance and teachings are

binding and certain for group members. However, Arbreen walk reflects many important aspects of Shia Muslims which has been discussed in detail in the analysis section.

Socio-economic factors are also one of the leading concerns of individuals who participate in the Arbreen walk. To analyze and comprehend the research question, related to socio-economic expressions, another very significant theoretical perspective was utilized that put forth Marx's theoretical highly debate on the concept of economic determinism. According to this theory, economic forces is the foundation at which all facets of a civilization and culture such as political, social, cultural, intellectual, and technological aspects are determined. However, along with the work of Karl Marx, Engels and the older Marxian also wrote on the theory of economic determinism (Ellwood, 1998, p. 61).

Marx also presented a very unique historical factor of historical materialism, according to this the past cannot be understood by focusing upon the people, politics, wars, legal traditions, philosophy, and religion, etc. Instead of focusing upon them, Marx says that the focus should be on material conditions formed the history, the way they altered and evolved overtime and the struggles between those in power and the subjects of their oppression. This 'historical materialism' was basically Marx's Economic Theory of History, or Economic Determinism. He concluded that economics is the main force that shaped a civilization. And so, economic determinism meant that society was fashioned or determined by the specific economic structures and relationships. Marx's theory also governed that the concepts of economic determinism were so vast they could be applied to not only to the workplace, but also to the family, law, religion, and every other part of life at a particular time (Lorimer, 1999, p. 20).

Economic determinism appears as an open-ended process. It came into existence as a result of various economic systems that have existed over the course of time. Marx referred to these diverse economic systems as modes of production. The major similarity that all of these diverse systems reflected were that these were driven by group of people who had control over the means of production. By owning the land, machines, and raw materials, the power class controlled the working class. As a result, huge amounts of wealth were accumulated for the privileged while fewer resources

were left out for the poor. On the basis of this, Marx concluded that due to such a system of power, poverty existed and prevailed within society.

Over the years, Capitalism has emerged as predominant mode of production. It was thriving for significance during Marx's era and today functions as the foundation of US economy. As per this economic system, the industry is controlled by private owners who run certain businesses to make a profit in a free market economy. From Marx's perspective the Capitalist system favoured the Owners (Capitalists) more and that too at the expense of its Workers (Proletarians). He argued that Capitalism has not always been a dominant economic force rather it is a recent and a new mode of production, leaving behind various other modes of production, such as the Slavery and Feudalism. He also put forth that just as the eras of Feudalism and Slavery ended due to the devastating existence of poverty in society, it was likely that soon Capitalism would come towards an end too. The power struggle between the Upper class (Bourgeois) and the Lower class (Proletariat) often leads to such endings of modes of productions. Marx believed that the only way the Proletariats could win over this power struggle was by establishing a 'classless society' through revolution (Cohen, 2000, p. 69-74). This entire concept of power struggle and transitions between social classes has been extensively described in one of the famous book by Marx; "The Communist Manifesto," published in 1848. In the book Marx explains how the Proletarian class have an edge over the Bourgeois class, by stating, "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic Revolution. The Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." Marx also went onto unite the 'working men' from all over the world and encouraged them to start a 'revolt' against the Capitalists. According to him, this would bring about the beginning of a new era, a new mode of production; the Socialism/ Communism. Marx assumed that a newer mode of production could drastically change the society (Lorimer, 1998, p. 11).

The doctrine of 'Economic Determinism' explains that the economic organization of society is basically the outcome of all socio-political and cultural and intellectual activities, while all the other relations are built from and by the economic relationships, hence the material world itself is simply a driving force that energizes the social structures and organizations. With respect to this perspective to understand the basis of historical progress, it is very important to determine the means of production and exchange within

a society. Marx believed that Economic Determinism (a massive superstructure) resulted because of a shift in the economic foundations (Marx, 1964). Marxists are of the faith that history is created by the consistency of struggling classes, and it is determined by the ruling class ideology. In any society, the socio economic and political edifice are the major determining factors of the whole framework and the way it is constructed. Marxists believe that this superstructure of a society is exclusively route by self-interested industrialists and then by conventional class; and the lower classes are of no choice but to accept their rules and standards by submitting to their subordination. Karl Marx dreamt about a classless society, which was entirely a utopian concept that is unlikely to ever come true when we look at it realistically. Marx said that in a classless society the state becomes outmoded and weakens in due course, as nobody owns anything but everybody owns everything in such society and each discrete individual contributes according to his capacity and receives as per his necessities. One of the followers of the Marxist ideology, Desai; a devoted writer with social consciousness, once wrote that mutual understanding amongst the different classes in the society could be a reasonable way to attain lasting peace and collective harmony (Choudhary, 2017, p. 200).

Scholars today argue and present this idea on Economic Determinism that Marx was not a total opponent of the notion that politics and people played a significant role to pave the path towards a better civilization. Rather the Reductionists held this belief and took the concept of Economic Determinism way too far than its actual capacity to explain different societal phenomenon. Marx partially agreed with them. Marx proposed that people still had some power, some agency which he called the, 'Human Autonomy' to shape up their own destiny. He explained this by highlighting the fact that humans had the gift of 'free will' that aids them to determine their future, their destiny and in doing so they can sometimes defeat the capitalistic system. This free will actually brews the revolution. Marx basically negated the notion of Capitalism and suggested a theory that explains how economy was the significant force that drives and determines the modern world and that the class struggle is the radical agent of social change (Bowles, n.d).

Based on the selected hybrid theoretical debate (though both opposes each other), the questions that have been posed are: Is the phenomenon of Arbaeen walk determined by

the economic structures as per the theory of Karl Marx? Regardless of the strong religious belief system, does this ritual encompass any economic or social factors or does it possess the combination of both aspects? Are there any material purposes behind the social relations, as per Turner, established during Arbaeen Walk? These questions have been answered in detail in the analysis section, by using the above discussed theoretical debates.

2. Literature review

Like any other religion in the world, Islam has also been subdivided into different groups; majorly comprising the Sunni and the Shia sect. The main profound belief that is the root of all the subdivisions is that Allah is one and that Quran is the final book and this is the belief that bonds all the groups. If we were to look at the major differences, that would be between the Sunni and the Shia (or Shi'ite) school of thought and their own valid arguments about how the Muslim community should be led. Therefore, where Sunnis believe that the caliphate system is the best to run a Muslim community, Shia believe that Imamate is the authentic way to decide who should be the leader of the community. The dictionary meaning of the term 'Imam' is someone who is given a position in the community that should be followed and listened to and is the one who is given the authority to make decisions on behalf of all the people under him. In this day and age, an Imam could be anyone leading the community such as president or someone who is given the duty of looking after his nation. The word 'Caliph' means someone who succeeds someone, or has been given the authority after the person before him. The Sunni Muslims comprise about 85% of the total Muslim population in the world. The term 'Sunni' derives from the Arabic word 'Sunnah' which literally means example. Therefore, the word is associated with the life of the Prophet ﷺ who is believed to have led the practical life of how a Muslim should be according to Quran. This is the reason why Sunnis believe that the Muslims should mainly focus on leading their lives by following the Sunnah of the Prophet and what is said in the Quran. In the Muslim history, there have been caliphs who have been chosen to lead the community or run a nation and did not have to be someone who had a lot of knowledge about religion. Majority of the times, the caliph was supposed to be chosen on the grounds that he must be the righteous one from the group or that they are a part of the Prophet's family or one of his descendants but over time the strictness upon this rule has been flexible as there have been kings or other rulers who have been given the title of Caliph (Hamdan, 2012, p. 40-41).

The total percentage of the Shia population is around 15% with the majority of them being in Iran and southern Iraq. Considerable amount of them are also in Bahrain and Lebanon (Momen, 1985, p. 274). Many of Shia community also resides in the following countries: Kuwait, Qatar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and India. Researches have shown that Pakistan is primarily composed of Muslims – almost 97% with Sunni and

Shia emerging as the main sects. Sunni comprises 75-80% of the population while the Shia standing second as 20% (Ahmar, n.d, p. 2; Nasr, 2000, p. 139; Behuria, 2008, p. 159; Shah, 2014, p. 452). Along with the teachings of the Quran and the life of the Prophet PBUH, the Shia give equal importance to the knowledge and following of the imams who have come in the past. Shia believe that someone who is from the direct progeny of Prophet PBUH [mainly the descendants through Hazrat Fatima (S.A) and her husband and PBUH's son-in-law, Hazrat Ali (A.S)] should lead the community, both religiously and politically. After the demise of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Shia Muslims decided that Imam Ali (A.S) should become the leader of the community. However, majority of the Muslims at the time thought Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) should become the first caliph of Islam after Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Shia have given a lot of significance and respect to their Imams since hundreds of years as they are considered to be descendants of Hazrat Ali (A.S). The love and devotion of Shia for their Imam can be said to be very similar to the love for the Pope in Catholicism.

Although the system of Caliphate has ended quite some time ago, the main difference that exists between the two major groups is about the practical following of the religion. Sunnis consider a wider range of foundations when it comes to following the teachings of the religion where Shias give utmost significance to the Imams in matters of religion and any other important matters in life as they are believed to have the most authentic knowledge and advice to give. As with any other religion, there are further divisions within the major Sunni and Shia sects. Sunnis follow the four major school of thought which are: Maliki, Hanbali, Hanafi and Shafii. On the other hand, the Shia have one major school of thought which they follow and that is the Jafari. All these schools differ in slight ways however all of them emphasise on the importance of leading a righteous life, obeying the commands, and believing in the major teachings of the religion (Gulevich, 2004, p. 48-51). Another main aspect of the Shia teaching is its emphasis on visiting historic shrines and it is encouraged for both men and women in Shiism. The main tombs that are encouraged for visit are of: Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Shia imams, mainly Imam Hussain (A.S). Tombs of famous women in Islam who have a prestigious place in Islamic history are also included such as that of Khadija (d. 620 CE), Fatima (d. 632 CE), Zainab, daughter of 'Ali (d. 682 CE), or any Muslim woman who holds a special place in the history of Shiism (Sindawi , 2006, p. 231).

Apart from the major teachings and significant figures in any religion, there is another aspect that has a lot of importance in many religions around the world – Pilgrimage and it is a very important element in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, p. 440). The meaning of the word pilgrimage is commonly known as a journey or a trip which is done due to religious obligations or as a part of a major teaching of the religion. Pilgrimage are usually done ‘to’ a place which involves visiting a sacred place and staying. The main purpose of a pilgrimage is to go on an adventure to discover yourself within and to understand your purpose as a follower of that religion (Barber, 1991, p. 1). Pilgrimage is also seen as a deed that involves profound love and emphasis on your religion and its teachings as well as establishing a greater bond within yourself for your religion and gaining a much wider and deeper perspective of the importance and respect for your religion (Singh, 2013, p.12). However, the meaning of pilgrimage has taken different levels of understanding nowadays as it has become a symbol of modern living for religious believers. There is a huge revival in the study of pilgrimage as people are now considering shrines to be as equally significant in terms of gaining spiritual freedom and peace (Digance, 2003, p. 144).

Consequently, tourism and pilgrimage can be said to be somewhat dependent on or interlinked to each other (MacCannell, 1999, p. 113). Cohen (1979) has said that on the one hand, we have the tourists who try to get out of their daily routine and countries to experience the wonders of other places and have an adventure journey, on the other hand a pilgrim’s journey is similar but in a very different way (p. 180). A pilgrim sets out to the most sacred and closest places to his heart inside him in order to fulfil the emptiness he feels or find fulfilment to his identity and where he stands in his religion (MacCannell, 1973, p. 593; Turner, 1969, p. 107; Turner & Turner 1978, p. 14). According to McGrath, pilgrimage journey is a product of the social occurrence. Therefore the term pilgrimage tourism has been gathered to mean travelling to a holy place. Although there are many other religious practices, this one is considered to be the main one. Hajj can be described as the classic example of the biggest religious gathering closely connected with tourism that takes place every year in the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia (Vijay, 2016, p. 4). Hajj and visitation (*Ziyara*) are very unique in their meanings. Whereas *Ziyara* are performed by Shia to the shrines of the Holy Imams which can take place at any time during the whole year, the Hajj is a very

different concept altogether. As the fifth pillar of Islam, it has different rulings regarding its rituals. Muslims can only go on Hajj during the Islamic month of Thu Al-Hujja in Mecca. Nowadays, literature has considered any form of religious pilgrimage to be a subgroup of the modern pilgrimage (Jackowski & Smith, 1992, p. 93), which involved going to a holy place where one is normally expected to experience the following: a) close contact with the natural surroundings such as lakes, rivers, mountains or even animals or birds, b) holy sites that could include temple, synagogue, churches, mosque or shrines, c) some sort of organized places for the daily religious rituals or commemorations (Cohen, 2000, p. 439; Shackley, 2006, p. 134).

All pilgrimages are done to different places and therefore the layout of each pilgrimage is going to be different as well and it is all detailed out in the teachings of a religion. For example, if a pilgrimage is performed on foot that would mean the pilgrimage involves walking on foot to the specific holy site (Bremborg, 2013, p. 547). If the pilgrimage is on foot, the outlines of the pilgrimage will be clear such as there will be a designated route for the people to walk on. Some religions only stick to foot trails in order to gain more authentic experience for example Santiago de Compostella in Spain, Shingon Buddhism on Shikouko in Japan (these journeys take around a total of two months to be performed fully) and the one-day barefoot August pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick in Northern Ireland. Although very rare than in the old times, some pilgrims can experience some sort of discomfort or difficulties during their religious journey but that is not very often nowadays and people usually consider these forms of difficulties to be an essential part of the entire holy experience. Foot pilgrimage has become of the most important and hot topics in the academics (Blacker, 1984, p. 594; González & Medina, 2003, p. 449-450; Hayes & MacLeod, 2008, p. 57-58; Kim, Kim, & King, 2016, p. 144-145; Reader, 2007, p. 213; Santos, 2002, p. 44). The main attention has been grabbed by the Santiago de Camino and/or walking trails related to religious ethics other than the Islamic foot-pilgrimage sites.

Looking at the Islamic sacred places, Karbala has been known as the most famous one where Muslims perform foot-pilgrimage. Karbala receives the highest number of visitors every year upon two important events. The first event is the Ashura which is in the honour of Imam Hussain's martyrdom and the second event that has huge visitation is Arbaeen depending upon when it is performed according to the Islamic calendar (Christia, Dekeyser, & Knox, 2016, p. 12). In Shiism, the events that took place during

the Battle of Karbala hold utmost significance for the followers of Shiism. The battle is seen as a source of encouragement and hope and how Shia should strive to live their life even if they are faced with hardships. The battle has so much significance that many practices that are in the Shia sect have been influenced by Karbala and have been embedded in Shia teachings (Elbadri, 2009, p. 9-18).

There is one important figure that holds utmost significance and honour in Shiism because of his historical martyrdom for not giving up his faith in the hands of the disbelievers. He was called Hussain and was the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. His martyrdom took place on the land of Karbala and the day he received martyrdom is normally called the day of Ashura and according to the Islamic calendar, is the 10th of Muharram. The story of Karbala is summarised upon the martyrdom of all the 72 people, including men, women and children, who accompanied Imam Hussain (A.S). They were all killed in the most brutal manner, and were also deprived of anything to eat or drink. The army outnumbered them by a huge 30,000. The story sends shivers down one's spines when they are retold even now. The title 'Prince of Martyrs' has been given to Imam Hussain (A.S) for his bravery and refusing to surrender to the enemies until his very last breath. The English historian Edward Gibbon recalls the incident of Karbala by saying that anyone who was given a chance to read the horrific scenes of Karbala and how all of them turned into dust in the hands of the corrupt would get anyone's heart melting for the martyrs. The total days according to Islam for mourning is usually 40 therefore the mourning period in Shiism starts from the days of Ashura and then ends few days after the forty days called Arbaeen (Haghdust, 2016, p. 6).

The battle did not end there. All the females and children of the Prophet's ﷺ family were captivated including Imam Hussain's son, Imam Zain-ul-Abideen (A.S) and Hazrat Zainab (S.A). The male members that accompanied Imam Hussain (A.S) had their heads slit and along with that of Imam Hussain's, they were all taken to please Yazid in Damascus. Upon seeing the dead bodies of the members of her beloved household on the lands of Karbala, Bibi Zainab (S.A), who was the sister of Imam Hussain (A.S) called out crying: O Prophet ﷺ, the angels in heaven have been praying for you. Here lies Hussein naked on the land, covered and flooded in his own blood and body mutilated. O Prophet ﷺ, the ladies of Islam have been held and the bodies of the companions ruptured and left to be thrown about in the air. All the captives of Prophet's

family were taken to Damascus on the first of Safar, where they came to a stop by the city's Clocks Gate. People were jumping about out of joy and were playing musical instruments upon their arrival. Sukaina, who was the youngest daughter of Imam Hussain (A.S) was asked by someone as to where they have been captivated from upon which she said that they were from the progeny of The Prophet ﷺ (Al-Jibouri, 2014, p. 136-146).

When the bodies and captives were presented in front of Yazid, he became very glad upon hearing about the brutal killing of Imam Hussain and his companions. However, he was oblivious of the fact that he did not believe in any revelations that were sent down to Muhammad ﷺ by Allah. As time passed, he realised what he had done was wrong because most of the people regarded him evil for what he had done as this crime had never been done by anyone else who called himself a Muslim, and with that much brutality. Indeed it reminded him of the words of Muawiyah which were written in his will. He inferred about Imam Hussain by saying that there will come a time when the people of Iraq will not spare Imam Hussain until he decides to rebel and stand against the wrong ones. However, if he does do this, let him do it as he has a prestigious status in Islam and was bore by the best of people. Eventually, everyone became scared of him and disliked him. Family members and other business partners started to keep their distance. *La hawla wala quwwata illa billah!* (There is neither power nor might except in Allah) were the words that could be heard from the bodies of the people who had been ordered to be killed by him.

Immediately, everyone in Damascus gradually found out about what Yazid had done. Everyone shamed him all the time for what he had done. In order to escape the insult and to remove all the attention from him, he planned to put all the blame for this act on Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad. However, everyone by that time had already known who the real culprit was. Out of fear of rebellion from his own people, Yazid decided to get safety. He decided to get the children along with as-Sajjad from Syria and demanded an'Numan and some other men to take them to Medina with care and love. When they were on their way near Iraq, they were near Karbala and it was the place where Imam Hussain had been brutally killed. Upon reaching, they saw that the family members of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the tribe of Banu Hashim along with Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari had come to visit the grave of Imam Hussain (A.S). According to Al Tusi, the

event of Arbaeen starts from this gathering as they stayed there and mourned the death of their beloved Imam for three consecutive days (Elbadri, 2009, p. 27).

In many different narrations, it has been said when the head of the Imam was reunited with the body for the burial. According to Allama Al-Hilli's brother, Al-Udad al-Qawiyya, as cited by the writer of Bihar al-Anwar on page 67 in his book where Aja'ib al-Makhlooq at, al-Qazwani suggests that it was upon the twentieth date of the month of Safar when the head of Imam Hussain was finally reunited with the body. Also confirmed by another narration of Ash-Shabrawi that the head was reunited with the body after forty days of the incident. In the book 'Sharh al-Bawsari's Hamziyya' Ibn Hajar has also said that the number of days after which his head was returned is forty days. In a final narration, the return of the head was confirmed by another authentic statement of Sabt ibn al-Jawzi that the head of Imam Hussain was given back to be reunited with the body and be buried in Karbala (Al-Jibouri, 2014, p. 98).

These forty days after the day of martyrdom are the most important days in the mourning period for the Shia. It is during these days when the mourning is done either by crying or by slightly hitting the face. Another important feature is the wearing of black during these days to signify the mourning period. Al-Tusi said in his book Tahtheeb Alahkam has reinforced the visitation during the Arbaeen as being one of the most important symbols for being a practising believer (*Momin*). This has been taken from one of the four books that Shia follow. Also, another narration of Imam Hassan Askari (A.S) has stated that among the five elements that show the sign of a good *Momin*, one of them is visiting the Al-Arbaeen. It must be noted that Ashura is the first most important action to be performed for Shia. The second most important religious attendance is of the Arbaeen. The past nine years have given a lot of attention to the study of the Arbaeen and annually it has more attendance of people than there is for Ashura (Hamdan, 2014, p. 20).

The Arbaeen is the remembrance day of the death anniversary of Imam Hussain (A.S). However, it also brings back the chaotic scene on the battle of Karbala and the bloodshed done by the army of Umayyads. The day is remembered in such a way so that it brings back the memories as vividly as possible and this is a very common practice among the Shia (Al-Jibouri, 2014, p. 54). There have been a lot of merits and rewards mentioned in various narrations for visiting the shrine of Imam Hussain on the

grounds of Karbala. According to a narration of Imam Sadiq (the 6th Imam), Allah promises to remove all the wrong-doings of those people who make a visit to the shrine of Imam Hussain because of their intention to obey Allah. When they come out of the *Ziyara*, it will be like they have been reborn. They will always be under Allah's protection whilst on their journey to the *Ziyara*. The angels will be their guardians until they have been all gone to their families after the completion of the *Ziyara* (Bin Quluya Al Qummi, Chapter 49, p. 183). The events of Karbala can be said to be the most important incident in the history of Shiism and because of this reason, it is a fact that it holds a lot of significance for Shias. The event has so much power and vividness that it carries its effect throughout the whole year and this is the event that shapes most of the lives of Shia. It is looked and reflected upon as a lesson for life as it teaches them to stand for yourself when you are truthful and deny anything that is against what is brought to you (Husein, 2018, p. 11).

The visit to the Arbäeen has been a controversial topic in the past. The visitors used to face a lot of difficulties and restrictions after going to Iraq. It was during the Baath government that there were many restrictions of performing certain rituals after visiting the place for the visitors. The war between Iran and Iraq took place in 1980. Because of this war, the government of Baath always doubted that the Shia in Iraq would end up supporting the Iranian government because of the same religious sect i.e. they were also Shia. In order to control the situation, they decided to limit the freedom given to the Iraqi Shia so that they would not be in any way able to support the Iranian. On state level, Iraq was considered a Sunni state and this they used to their advantage to cause disagreements, chaos, and riots between the Sunni and the Iraqi Shia. They went so far as not allowing people/visitors to walk the route that leads to the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) during Arbäeen. However, this caused a lot of distress in the visitors who did not step back. The visitors counterattacked and showed that they would not stop practising what they had come for from far flung places. This is exactly what happened in 1977. Because of this, the government disliked the ritual of walking of Shia to the shrine but the spirit of the visitors was so huge that they could not be stopped whatsoever. However, in many ways this act by the government added more value to the visit for the visitors. It taught them that they not only had the physical sacrifice (of walking for a long time etc.) but they also had to overcome certain problems created by the government. Hence, since then the walk has added even more

significance for the believers and it shows their bravery that anything that stops them from practising in the most important time of the year would not be tolerated (Al-Hilli, 2017).

The event of Imam Hussain (A.S) has had a huge effect on the Shia in terms of standing against injustice, even if it means rebellion against the political system or the government. This has been experienced by many Sunni leaders who have had to face a strong revolt from the Shia. The most recent example that could be used of the time of Saddam Hussain's reign between 1979-2003 in Iraq, he wanted to make Iraq a secular state and this meant that many religious places were prohibited to the public for visit. It also meant that the events of Ashura and Arbaeen also saw a huge loss of rituals and a lack of attendance for the Shia visitors. It was the year 2003 when Saddam Hussain was overruled by the US military forces that all the visitors gathered in Karbala for the Arbaeen and they were huge crowds of people – a record breaking million. The after-events of the incident brought relief to all the visitors. The army of Saddam Hussain that had surrounded Karbala were removed by the coalition army and all the pilgrims were allowed to walk up to Karbala. There were tears of joy in the eyes of people. All of them expressed their gratitude to be reunited with their holy place and be allowed to practise. Many were reciting prayers and doing *Zikr*, whilst others physically showed their obedience and joy by striking their faces and by using chains and knives. Since the political situation had become stable to some extent, many people from other countries also attempted to come to Karbala. During August and October in 2003, even the American soldiers who were on the borders of Iran-Iraq could not stop Iranian pilgrims who wanted to enter. There would be roughly around a thousand pilgrims appearing on the borders to be allowed on the other side. Not everyone is able to afford the travel and accommodation expenses therefore the poor people who wanted to perform the pilgrimage had no other choice but to use other illegal methods to enter the country such as walking for miles and miles through deserts or mountains and dangerous, unsettled areas (Gulevich, 2004, p. 265-267).

The Arbaeen pilgrimage outnumbers the 2-3 million people that perform Hajj to Mecca and Medina. Therefore, Arbaeen pilgrimage is considered as the biggest gathering around the world, currently. Although the Arbaeen is the second most important visitation and comes after Ashura but it has many more visitors. The Arbaeen has also been named '*Maradd Al-Ras*' meaning the Return of the Head'

because the Iraqi Shia believe it was the day when the head of Imam Hussain was reunited with the rest of the body after the incident of Karbala. Many Shia also perform their rituals from their homes too. This form of pilgrimage is usually quite long. The pilgrims who make such type of pilgrimage are known as '*Zawars*' in Arabic. The journey for them starts when they enter Iraq and then travel to Karbala. The '*Meshava*' or walking to Karbala is the most common type of pilgrimage type that is done to reach Karbala in time for the Arbaeen. Different routes taken from different places require different amounts of days to reach Karbala in time. For example, it would take two weeks from anyone coming from a nearby city to Karbala which comes to about 425 miles. The walk which is the most common type usually starts from Najaf-Karbala route which is the main highway and comprises 55 miles and therefore takes the *Zawars* around 3 days to complete the route. However, it could take up to hundreds of miles for someone wanting to come from across the borders (Mahdi al Modarresi, 2014).

The format of the walk of Arbaeen is very unique in its own way. There is a huge line of management all involved behind it to ensure the *Zawars* are comfortable through their journey and that no one gets to suffer physically. There is no age or gender restriction for the *Meshaya* (walk) of the Arbaeen. The dress code is the common black *Abayas* for females and black-white clothes/dresses for the males. Many banners and flags are floating in the air that are carried by the pilgrims. All have verses and *Duas* written on them. Many of them address Lady Zahra (Daughter of the Prophet ﷺ) promising that they will not forget Hussain. The food and accommodation facilities made for the pilgrims are outstanding. There are specific markings on the roads and highways to signify the route and make it easier for the pilgrims to follow. There are all sorts of food stalls all the way along the length of the roads offering different types of hot and cold beverages. Temporary tents and houses have also been built by the locals with the help of international charities in order to endure the walkers sleep well whilst on their journey. Chairs have also been aligned along the route for walkers that may want to take a break and sit down. Health clinics are also nearby to ensure no one has an injury or they would be there in times of emergencies for the old and the young. *Latmiyyahs* are poetry in the commemoration of the incident of Karbala are also played along the route. Men and women acting as masseur for the walkers if someone is being troubled by the long walk are available (Husein, 2018, p. 11).

Although Karbala receives millions of visitors in the space of forty days, there are certain methods of making sure everyone gets a chance to perform their rituals and return to their homes so that the others after them can come and perform theirs. For example, those that arrive some days prior to Arbäeen perform their rituals earlier. The number of people coming to Arbäeen is record breaking, for example in 2012 – 1433 AH there were only 17.5 million Iraqis which is more than half of the total population of Iraq itself. Further, there were about 300,000 international pilgrims. There are four main places where the pilgrims would perform their rituals. These are: In or outside the Karbala or at the Shrines of Imam Hussain and Al-Abbas. As mentioned earlier, the rituals pertaining to outside the Karbala are mainly the walking from places to reach here, doing the *Zikr* of Allah at all times, and feeding and taking care of the visitors is also part of the Arbäeen rituals. The rituals inside the Karbala are very intense and require physical strength. These all start by doing *Ziyarat* to the holy shrine of Imam Hussain. Many plays in the remembrance of the thirst and hunger of the family of Imam Hussain called *Mawakib* (Al-Dh'an and Zanjeel) are played in their honour. Food and beverages are also offered to the people, along with spaces to rest. The participants show love and devotion to Imam Hussain in many rituals inside the shrine. An emotional display of chest beating is done which brings back the events of Karbala in the minds of the participants. As far as the pain is concerned, pain is considered as a means of purification for the participants as they are expressing their inner feelings in this way, which they believe will bring peace of mind and glad tidings for them in the future. Another ritual that is performed is associated with the tablets which are made of clay and are called *Turba*. These tablets have been taken from the soil of Najaf (the place where Imam Hussain is buried). It is mostly used in prostration wherein the person praying would place his head on this tablet (Jabar, 2003, p. 15).

Known for being the top destination and holy site for mourning during the sacred times of Ashura and Arbäeen, it has exceeded quickly since the past, becoming a hub for millions of people to come and share their common identity as Shia. Also the rituals which are mostly performed in a flow bring a sense of togetherness and unity amongst the people there. Therefore, Karbala has become one of the most famous places when the Islamic holy places are mentioned. As with any other massive huge gathering, huge religious crowds like these not only help people in gaining a sense of unity but also helps them in socialising with other people who share their similar values and are

doing the same rituals as them. In this way, people feel closer to each other and a feeling of 'social solidarity' is formed. Rituals performed together like these give these people the feeling that they are all one big group who should stick by one another and face difficulties together. People also get the opportunity to learn or even spread their knowledge to and from others by meeting people from around the world with different origins, languages, and cultures. This strengthens the ties between people as everyone is present to perform the same set of religious acts and therefore learning is part of the whole experience (Hamdan, 2012, p. 239).

As more and more people of Iraq starting converting to Shiism, the number of annual visits of people to the Imam Hussain's shrine also increased since the nineteenth century (Nakash, 1993, p. 198). However, this number was also increased since the treaty called Erzurum took place and the conditions improved between Ottoman-Qajar after their two year long war (1821-1823). Many guidance books on how to perform at the shrine including the visitation have been outlined in detail in many famous Shia books including: Sheikh Al-Kulainy (864-941C.E.)'s books - to be precise the Kitab Al-Kafi,; Jaafar bin Quleweh Al- Qomi (d 978 C.E)'s book; Kamil Alziyarat, and Sheikh Al-Tusi's book (995-1067 C.E.) and Tahtheeb Al-Alahkam, which is categorised as one of the most important books out of the total four books for Shia, written by the 12th Shia Imam.

One of the main points to be remembered here that the visitation to the shrine is not only done as a religious obligation. It plays many other latent functions. The shrine plays as a significant connector between his people and the Imam; the visitation keeps the incident of Karbala alive in the minds of the people and also it becomes a special memory for the people when all the rituals are performed together as all the people have had to spend quite a lot of time together praying and performing rituals together in Karbala, which is what has given the city so much importance, both politically and also strengthening economically (Hamdan, 2012, p. 121-122). The connection with the Imam is kept strong because Shia believe Imam Hussain will intercede on behalf of them on the day of judgement hence they need to pay their allegiance to him by visiting his shrine as much as possible. It also teaches them that they must spread the knowledge they have and bring others to this truth as well. One prominent feature of the rituals is that they are the same whenever a person goes there therefore its unchanging identity is its unique quality. Therefore, the memory of the place remains

fresh as ever in people's hearts after visitation. This is what makes it so special. After so many years, the rituals seems to stay the same, with the same incident refreshed every year at Ashura and Arbaeen, strengthening the belief of the Shia community. Unlike many other rituals in religions where there is change according to the timings or the era they are performed in, the visitation of the shrine, rituals and the memories remain the same (Nakash, 1993, p. 163-167).

All religions consist of material objects in many different forms that the followers hold on to or use in their worship wherever they go. These items are considered important in order to complete a certain religious act. Pilgrimages are that part of religion which display the material side to a religion, just like in Islam. These items are used in order to complete their activities during their pilgrimage. Material items keep the rituals alive. The way an item is used depends greatly on the perspective of the believer, as suggested by many advertising scholars. Many people usually buy and then sell these items and distribute them inside and outside these religious sites (Essoo and Dibb, 2004, p. 691).

Pilgrimages are not the only times when these materials are used for rituals. Many of the items are bought for personal use to be brought back home. (Starrett, 1995, p. 53). These items are considered as symbols or indications as whoever uses them can be identified as Shia. These items remind the believers of Karbala and keep them bonded with the whole experience of being there. According to Pinto (2007), the religious items are not only for worshipping purposes but are also display around by the believers and taken special care of as special embellishments (p.110). The *Turba*, clay tablet is one classic example of this type of item. They are not only used in prayers, but are also kept significantly safe and in good condition. The use of these items help believers maintain their memories of the visitation fresh whenever it is in use, thus having a positive impact on life in general (Moufahim, 2013, p. 436).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methods that have been used for the present research. Ethnographic research methodology has been utilized to conduct this study. This Ethnographic research is based upon five months of fieldwork conducted for Master of Philosophy's degree between June 2018 and November 2018. The methods which have been used in the study included participant observation, rapport building, in-depth interviews, photography, field jottings, and field notes.

3.1. Sample and sampling technique

In this research, purposive sampling technique has been used to collect data from the study population on the basis of their specific characteristics, including age, gender, education, occupation, socio-economic status, and other areas. The total number of respondents which were interviewed are 41 (see table 1), while 27 out of them have experienced Arbaeen walk (13 Males and 14 Females), 7 of them gone to Najaf and Karbala but did not experience this walk (2 Males and 5 Females) and 7 were those who have never gone (4 Males and 3 Females). Our caravan consist of total 18 pilgrims, out of which 9 were females and 9 were males including 2 years old child and 18 years old mentally disabled boy. Total 13 interviews were taken from these pilgrims (were also the residents of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi) during the journey from Pakistan to Iraq. While 28 interviews were taken from Dhoke Syedan, Pakistan. The age range of the sample was from 17 and above (see annexure-II).

Table 1. Number of males and females who have experienced Arbaeen walk

Sr. No	Respondents	Males	Females	Total No.
1.	Who experienced the Arbaeen walk	13	14	27
2.	Who went to Najaf and Karbala but did not performed walk	2	5	7
3.	Who have never gone nor experienced the Arbaeen walk	4	3	7
	Total No.	19	22	41

(Source: socio-economic survey, 2018)

For this study, the socio-economic survey is also conducted in the research locale among hundred households, to get a general overview of the demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, education, caste system, occupation, ethnicities, and socio-economic status. The sample for the selection of conducting survey is also selected on the basis of purposive sampling technique. The reason for choosing purposive sampling technique was that it is based on the characteristics of a population and the objectives of the study. For instance, the researcher selected a specific Shia community residing in Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi, in order to study the phenomenon of Arbaceen walk.

3.2. Key informants

Key informants were primarily used as a source of information during the fieldwork. Purposive sampling has been used for the selection of key informants. In this research three key informants were selected on the basis of their social standing in the community being studied (see table 2). Two of the key informants named Zahoor⁹ and Zunaira were the close relatives of the researcher, while the other one named Abbas was also one of the family friends. The researcher has explained the objectives of the study to these key informants so that they can help in providing an in-depth information about the phenomenon. Zahoor and Zunaira helped the researcher in introducing the people of Dhoke Syedan, and also in rapport building with respondents. Abbas guided the researcher during travelling and he helped in building rapport with other group members as well. He was very active person in the whole group. The reason for choosing these key informants was that they have spent whole life in Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi which is their birth place as well. They have much knowledge about this community and its members. They have good communication skills as well as much interaction with their community members. Though, the educational level of Zahoor and Zunaira is primary and they have not experienced Arbaceen walk as well but they know much about this phenomenon and also familiar with the community members who have experienced this walk or not. Both of them are very social and attend all the events happened in that community, for example, marriage ceremonies, funerals, *Majalis*, *Milaad* and others. Zunaira's daughters are also *Noha khawan* (threnodist) due to which they interact with the community members most of time, as people invite them

⁹ Pseudonyms have been used for the key informants in order to keep their identity anonymous.

in their homes. Abbas was selected as key informant because he was the close relative of the leader (*Salaar*) of our caravan and also well-educated person in the group. He has much knowledge regarding Islamic history. So, he guided me during whole trip and also arranged interview sessions with other group members. Through these key informants it was very easy to build rapport with the respondents. In-depth interviews were also taken from key informants, which helped the researcher to gather desired information about the subject area. The information provided by the key informants was also cross checked by other interviewees during fieldwork. These key informants as well the respondents of the research helped the researcher understand the local perspective in very effective way and this research would not have been possible without the support and cooperation of these individuals.

Table 2. Profile of key informants

Sr. No	Key informants	Age	Education	Marital status	Religion	Caste	Experienced Arbaeen walk
1	Abbas	38	MBA	Married	Islam	Syed	Yes
2	Zahoor	50	Primary	Unmarried	Islam	Syed	No
3	Zunaira	53	Primary	Widowed	Islam	Syed	No

(Source: socio-economic survey, 2018)

3.3. Participant observation

Participant observation has been used as the main fieldwork method. Before conducting proper interviews, rapport was established, as rapport building is the key to building trust and confidence. In this regard, key informants played a vital role in building rapport between respondents and the researcher. During fieldwork in Pakistan, I stayed at key informant's house named Zunaira. Zahoor and Zunaira arranged meetings with the respondents. Before starting a proper interview with respondents, a relaxed and friendly environment was established. The interview started with a general talk to make the interviewee comfortable, so that the respondents can comprehensively explain his or her views and share experiences. I introduced myself as well as the purpose of the research, in order to reduce any chance of misunderstandings about the research being conducted. The interviewee was assured that the research being conducted will only be

used for academic purposes. During fieldwork, I have taken interviews in different timings and settings. Sometimes, respondents were available in the morning while others at night. All the respondents welcomed me and treat me very well. As a participant observer, I have also participated and spent time with the respondents while doing their activities, for example, attended *Juloos* (Muharram processions), *Milaad* (celebrating Holy Prophet and Imam's birthdays) and *Majalis* (lamentations) in their home as well as in the *Imambargah* (religious place) and visited *Imambargah* on Thursday. On every Thursday, most of the Shia residents of Dhoke Syedan visit the *Imambargah* named Qasr-e-Shabbir, to pay tribute to their Imams and performed various practices, such as lightening oil lamp, distributing *Langar* (sweets, rice, juices etc), licking salt and *Khaak-e-shifa* (healing ashes), praying, and reciting the Holy Quran (see annexure X, figure. 1, 2, 3, and 4).

When the visa process completed, the *Salaar* (caravan leader) invited all the group members at his home for a meeting few days before a journey and guided them regarding the whole trip. There was also the *Aalima* (religious scholar) in the caravan whose job was to guide all female members of the group. The *Salaar* told everyone about the necessary things required during journey such as clothes, extra one pair of shoes, socks (especially for women), shawls, and other basic things. Those who are taking their medicines regularly were especially asked to bring their medicines along with them during the journey. After the meeting all group members, males in one room and females in another room were served with tea and sweets. At that time, all members interacted and introduced each other. I also told everyone about myself and the objectives of my study. Finally, the meeting ended and everyone greeted each other very well. Three days later, *Salaar* sent messages to everyone and finally confirmed the tickets. I completed my preparations to take part in this walk along with my respondents.

3.4. Arbaeen walk: A journey from Najaf to Karbala

On 19th of October, 2018 the whole caravan gathered at Islamabad International Airport at 06:00 am. Everyone came with their family members and I also reached there with my family members. At the time of leaving all group members cried while meeting their family members. Some mothers left their young children back, while some young girls and boys were going and leaving their loved ones alone. I saw a women crying

while leaving her 2 years old daughter behind. Finally, all group members entered in the airport and after completing all the requirements we got our seats in the aeroplane. After two and a half hours we reached Dubai and right after landing we got our next flight for Baghdad. When all the passengers were seated in an aeroplane, all the Shia Muslims including our group members said slogans of Imam Ali (A.S) and sent curses upon the murderers of their infallible Imams. However, we reached Baghdad International airport within 2.5 hours. From the Baghdad airport, our *Salaar* booked two vans for all group members which dropped us outside the airport. Because no other local vehicles were allowed within the boundary of airport. After that, he booked another van from the local terminal for Najaf. During our way to Najaf, the driver stopped at one of the eating stalls where Iraqis were serving everyone with free boiled rice, *Daal* (grains), *roti* (bread), water, and green tea (see annexure X, figure. 5). All of us also satisfied our appetite from that stall. There was no limited food, people can ask for food as many times as they want.

Within three hours we reached in the Najaf, our *Salaar* has already booked hotel for the caravan. All group members were allotted their rooms (four persons in each room). After managing all these tasks, the *Salaar* told everyone to take *Ghussal* (bath) and get ready for the *Ziyarat* of the shrine of Imam Ali (A.S). Then, all of us went to the shrine and our *Salaar* guided all the male members of the group while the *Aalima* guided all the female members. Because men and women were not allowed in each other's sections. In order to enter in the haram, there were strict rules and all of the *Zaireens* (pilgrims) have to follow them such as: before entrance security guards will check all the *Zaireens*; no mobile phone, cameras, perfumes were allowed; and even pens were not allowed. There was an 18 years old disabled child in our caravan, her mother was not allowed to bring him in woman's section and also she was not allowed to enter in man's section. Therefore, our *Salaar* took his responsibility and did it very well. All of us went to near the *Roza* (holy shrine) of Imam Ali (A.S), everyone gave honour to Imam in their own way e.g. some kissed the door of the shrine while some said loudly "*Assalamualaikum Ya Shah-e-Najaf, Mola Imam Ali (A.S)*". There was too much crowd inside the shrine that it was not easy to touch the Imam's *Roza*. All the *Zaireen* were crying and giving condolences in their own languages. Then, we offered two *Raka'at Nafl* prayers and recited *Ziyarat-e-Imam Ali (A.S)*. We visited the whole shrine as per the guidance of our *Salaar*. There are total five gates leading into the shrine named as

Al-Faraj Gate, Al-Kibla Gate, Al-Sa'a Gate, Musilm Bin Aqeel Gate, and Sheikh Al-Tusi Gate¹⁰.

After the *Ziyarat* we planned to go back to hotel and have some rest till Fajar prayers. On our way back to hotel we experienced a beautiful scene of raining in the haram. People said that it is raining almost after one year. It is believed by most of the Shia Muslims and especially residents of the Najaf that whenever there is raining in the city, the next morning they collect *Dur-e-Najaf* (milky white moonstone) from the water gathered in *Wadi Al-Salaam* (valley of peace)¹¹. So, in the next morning we went to *Wadi Al-Salaam* and visited the tombs of Prophet Hud (A.S) and Prophet Saleh (A.S). We offered four *Raka'at Nafl* prayers and paid tribute to them. Then, we visited the *Wadi Al-Salaam* cemetery where people were buried (see annexure X, figure. 6). Our group members sat on this land and marked lines on the mud with their fingers. One of the members who belong to Sunni sect, asked the *Salaar* that what these people are doing with the mud. Then the *Salaar* explained him that it is believed by the Shia Muslims that they will be raised from this land after their death on the day of Judgement with their spiritual leader. That is why people mark lines on the mud considering these lines as graves. They just do not mark for themselves but also mark for their significant others. The *Zaireen*'s relatives specially request them to make their graves on this land. So, the Sunni brother also marked lines by following other people. However, I have observed in the *Wadi Al-Salaam* cemetery that there were more than one grave in a room where Iraqis have buried their family members together (see annexure X, figure. 7). The same tradition is common in the Peshawar, city of Pakistan, according to one of the respondents. It was observed in front of the tombs of Prophets that a man selling stones which he collected in the morning from *Wadi Al-Salaam* and sold 4 *Dur-e-Najaf* in one thousand Iraqi dinar (Pakistani one hundred rupees). Our group members also bought these raw form stones from that man (see annexure X, figure. 8). The *Wadi Al-Salaam* was very huge and we visited different *Maqaam* (places) which are most popular such as *maqam* of Imam Sajjad (A.S), Imam Mahdi (A.S), and Imam Sadiq (A.S). We offered two *Raka'at Nafl* prayers on each *Maqaam*. Then we went back to

¹⁰ For further details, see (Gates Leading into the Holy Shrine, 2017).

¹¹ It is an ancient Islamic cemetery located near the holy city of Najaf, Iraq.

hotel after spending whole day. Our *Salaar* has also arranged a cook, who cooked Pakistani dishes for us. After lunch, we again went to the shrine of Imam Ali (A.S).

Though, our hotel was near the shrine so we can easily visit it at any time. We offered prayers there and spent time till night. There was too much crowd and it was not easy to come inside the shrine again and again. Once we entered in the shrine we spend much of the time there. Because, there was a much calmness inside the shrine which I cannot explain in my words. When I discussed about that comfort with one of my group members, she said that the shrine of Imam Ali (A.S) is considered as the lap of mother that is why people feel relaxation and peace here. After spending few hours we came back to hotel at night, everyone slept. At 03:00 am I decided to go to shrine by thinking in my mind that now the crowd might be less. I did ablution and went alone to the shrine and I saw that the crowd was much more than before. I offered Tahajjud prayer¹² and came back to hotel after offering Fajar prayer. I observed that everyone, including young girls and boys were busy in prayers and recitation. In the shrine, I have observed young generation holding Holy Quran in their hands and offering prayers while some were crying by remembering the injustice happened with their Imams by the oppressors. Some group of people were paying tribute to their Imams by arranging *Majalis* and beating their chest. In the next morning, I went to marketplace with two female group members and did shopping for our loved ones. We went to a shop and asked the shopkeeper for scarfs. He just knew few words of English, thus due to language barrier we were not able to communicate properly. At that shop there was a young man belonged to Gilgit, Pakistan who was a student in Najaf, Iraq. He knew Urdu so, he helped us in the shopping. He told us about the main markets and helped us in changing the currency as well. He told me that all of us have holidays in these days and our teachers strictly ordered us to help all the pilgrims who came for the *Ziyarat*. He said, it is my honour to help you people because you are the guests of our Imam. After shopping few things we came back to hotel, took rest and went to the shrine. We spent whole night in the shrine, it was cold night. This time, I spent night with two women and a disabled boy. I observed whole night people were doing the same practices. I saw that disabled boy was very energetic, he used to say slogans of Imam Ali (A.S) and also

¹²The Tahajjud is a special Islamic prayer which is recommended (but not compulsory) for all Muslims. The Tahajjud is prayed after Isha (the obligatory nightly prayer) and before Fajar (the obligatory Morning prayer).

raised his hands for prayers. All people including Iraqi prayed for him and gave him *Hadiya* (gifts) as well. I observed that it was very safe to go outside at any time even if you were alone as compared to Pakistan.

The next morning, we went to Samarra which is another city of Iraq. We started our journey at 06:00 am and reached there at 01:00 pm. During the journey I observed that the *Zaireen* were listening *Nohas* and crying on their Imams. Some were reciting Surah from their holy books while others were saying *Tasbeehaat* (*dhikr* on prayer beads). The area leading to Samarra was not safe due to which there were a lots of police check-posts. I observed that all the vehicles were moving very fast on one side of the road while on the other side army soldiers were safeguarding all the pilgrims travelling to Samarra. As Samarra was under Daesh and still it was not allowed to stay at night there. We finally reached at the shrine of Imam Hassan Al-Askari (A.S)¹³ which is situated in Samarra. All of us offered prayers and visited whole shrine. Then we visited the place from where Imam Al-Mahdi (A.S) went into the occultation in the belief of the Shia Muslims. This has made it an important pilgrimage centre for the Shia Muslims. In addition, Bibi Narjis (S.A), the mother of Imam Al-Mahdi (A.S) is also buried there, thus making this shrine one of the most significant sites of worship. That is why, regardless of the much sensitive area people still come for pilgrimage. The last destination of that day was Al-Kazmain, where the shrine of Imam Musa Kazim (A.S)¹⁴ and mausoleum of Imam Muhammad Taqi Jawad (A.S)¹⁵ are situated. We also offered prayers there and then we came back to Najaf at 02:00 am. In the next morning we planned to go to Kufa. Before we started our journey, one of our female group members went to the shrine but she forgot the way to hotel. By mistake, she went to another gate which leads to another area which was far away from the hotel. Then she called on *Salaar's* mobile number through one of the Iraqi's phone. After that, one of the women left behind in the hotel to wait for her and we started our journey towards Kufa. On that day it was too much crowd of pilgrims on road who have started their Arbaceen walk towards Karbala. Due to mass gathering of pilgrims on road, our van was stuck in that crowd and after long hours of traveling we reached Kufa. We visited many places in Kufa and first of all we went to Al-Hannanah Mosque (see annexure X, figure.9), which

¹³ The eleventh Imam of Shia Muslims and the father of Imam Mahdi (A.S).

¹⁴ The seventh Imam of the Shia Muslims.

¹⁵ The ninth of the twelve Imams of Shia Muslims.

is also called *Masjid Ar-Ra's* (mosque of the Head of Imam Hussain). Because according to a narration attributed to Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S), the head of his ancestor Imam Hussain (A.S) was kept in its middle, when being brought to his opponent. There was a well situated in the courtyard of the mosque, pilgrims drank water from that well and also stored in bottles, believing that it is effective for diseases. We offered prayers in mosque and then moved to the next destination. The next place we visited in Kufa was Al-Sahlah Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in Kufa. It is believed by the Shia Muslims that Imam Al-Mahdi (A.S) will live after his reappearance in this mosque. That is why, in the Shiite culture, this is one of the most important mosques to visit. In the mosque's courtyard, there are different parts where some *Mihirabs* (arched niche) are built. These *Mihirabs* are attributed with different Prophets and Imams, known as *Maqaam*, which literally means a place where a Prophet or Imam has offered prayers. The different *Maqaam* were named as *Maqaam* of Imam Al-Mahdi (A.S), *Maqaam* of Imam Sajjad (A.S), *Maqaam* of Imam Al-Sadiq (A.S), *Maqaam* of Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S), *Maqaam* of Hazrat Idris (A.S), and *Maqaam* of Hazrat Khidr (A.S). All of us offered two *Raka'at* (units) prayer on each *Maqaam* and it is believed that reciting *Dua-e-Tawassul* (The Supplication of Seeking Advocacy)¹⁶ in this mosque is of great significance.

After the visitation of two mosques, we went to the mausoleum of Hazrat Kumayl (A.S) who was among the most loyal companions of Imam Ali (A.S). He is best known for the *Dua* (supplication) of Prophet Khidr, commonly famous as *Dua-e-Kumayl*. Shia Muslims in all over the world honour Hazrat Kumayl (A.S) for his obedience, discipline, and love for Imam Ali (A.S). He was one of the companions of Imam Ali (A.S), who well-preserved the secrets of the world, teachings of Imam Ali, and several *Duas* including *Dua-e-Kumayl*. All of our group members offered prayers inside the shrine and recited *Ziyarat* as well. Then, our caravan went to the tomb of Maytham-al-Tammar, who was also one of the companions and disciples of Imam Ali (A.S). We offered two *Raka'at* prayer like we did in all other shrines. The last destination in Kufa was the *Masjid-e-Kufa* (the great mosque of Kufa) where the first Imam of Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali (A.S) was fatally wounded by a poison-coated sword during Fajar prayer. This mosque also contain the tombs of Hazrat Muslim bin Aqeel

¹⁶ *Dua-e-Tawassul* is mentioned in a Shia Islamic book named *Mafatih-al-Janan* (keys to Heaven), which is originated from the book of *Bihar al-Anwar*.

(A.S), Hazrat Hani ibn Urwa (A.S), and Hazrat Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi (A.S)¹⁷. Our *Salaar* told us that just as travellers have the option to offer their prayers fully or in a shortened form in Masjid-al-Haram, the Holy shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S), and Masjid-al-Nabi, they have the same option in the Mosque of Kufa as well. There are different places in this mosque as well, which are attributed to prophets or prominent religious figures. These are called *Maqaam*, where some prayers or practices are recommended for these positions. After the entrance into the mosque, we first went to the *Maqaam* of Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S), which is the 4th pillar of the mosque where it is believed that the Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) have offered prayers. We offered four *Raka'at* (units) *Nafil* prayer on this *Maqaam*. We then moved to the *Maqaam* of Hazrat Jibraeel (A.S), the fifth pillar of the mosque and all of us offered two *Raka'at* prayer on this *Maqaam*. In the same way we offered two *Raka'at* prayers on other rest of the *maqaam* such as Dakka al-Qada¹⁸, Bayt al-Tasht¹⁹, *Maqaam-e-Hazrat Adam* (A.S), *Maqaam* of Hazrat Imam Sajjad (A.S), *Maqaam-e-Hazrat Muhammad* ﷺ, *Maqaam-e-Hazrat Noah* (A.S), *Maqaam-e-Hazrat Khidr* (A.S), and *Maqaam-e-Hazrat Imam Jaffar Sadiq* (A.S). We also offered two *Raka'at* prayer near the *Mehrab*, a place where Imam Ali (A.S) used to pray and was hit during prayers by Ibn-e-Muljim. Then, we visited the place from where the flood during the time of Hazrat Noah (A.S) started which is now became a water well from where people drank water (see annexure X, figure.10). After that finally, we came back to hotel at late night and the *Salaar* told everyone that in the next morning we will start the walk towards Karbala, which is called the Arbaeen walk. All of the group members were very tired but they were motivated and excited as well for the walk. All of us prepared our bag-pack in which we just put the most necessary things and finally all get together for the walk.

We started Arbaeen walk on 24th October, 2018 which was the 14th of the month of Safar. We first crossed the whole area of *Wadi Al-Salaam* and then the route for Najaf to Karbala started, from that route most of the people took off their shoes and walked barefoot. I also took off my shoes from Najaf towards Karbala. We started walk at 11:00

¹⁷ Muslim bin Aqeel (A.S) was the son of Aqeel ibn Abi Talib and a member of the Bani Hashim clan, thus, he is a cousin of Imam Hussain (A.S). Hani ibn Urwa was one of the greatest and closest companions of Imam Ali (A.S). While, Hazrat Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi was one of the prominent personality in Islamic history who took revenge of the battle of Karbla.

¹⁸ This is the place where Imam Ali (A.S) used to hold his court and deliver verdict.

¹⁹ A place in Masjid Al-Kufa, where a miracle by Imam Ali (A.S) occurred. This placed was named after an incident in which a girl was accused of adultery and Imam Ali (A.S) gave a just verdict to save her life.

am and then at the time of Zuhr prayer we stopped for a while to offer prayers. We went to a nearby *Mawkib* (resting place) and said prayers, after that Iraqi women served us with a lamb and salad and then we moved on to our destination. On the both sides of the road there were many stalls for *Zaireen*, rest places (*Mawkib*), and people have opened the door of their houses for *Zaireen*. These Iraqi people requested each *Zawar* to come and take rest in their houses. I saw a child during walk, who requested one of the women of our caravan by saying that Please! Come to our home. Not only children and men were requesting *Zaireen* to come but their women also requested female *Zawars* to come and give them honour. At the time of *Maghrib* (sunset), all of us again gathered on a point to offer prayers. We went to a house and did ablution there and all of us offered prayers. One room was for women and other was for men because these Iraqi people are very conscious about their *Purdah* (veil). I have observed that their rooms were not luxurious and it seems that they do not have much interest in the beautification of their homes. Their houses were very simple though equipped with all the basic needs of life. I saw a young Iraqi lady in the home where we stayed for prayers, she just gave birth to a child 10 days ago and took care of us with a great smile on her face. The young girls of the house gave massage to adult women of our caravan with great joy. I have not seen a wrinkle or any anger on these people's face while serving *Zawars* of Imam Hussain (A.S). In fact, they consider it as an honour to serve them the best. We then again started our walk towards Karbala.

In our caravan there were different people having different age ranges such as children, adolescents, adults, and older as well. There was an 18 years old disabled boy, who walked few miles and then he travelled rest of the time on wheelchair. He came with his mother, all of the male members in our caravan helped his mother in pushing wheelchair during the walk. Sometimes, pilgrims (young men) other than our group members also helped the woman in pushing his son's wheelchair. Most of the people bought trolley to put their luggage on it. I have seen a young child holding a trolley in his hand during the walk, which shows his enthusiasm about the journey. In our group, there was a 2 years old child who came with his parents. He travelled on his pram which was pushed by sometimes his father and mother as well. There were total 1452 poles between Najaf and Karbala and on each pole figures were mentioned. On the basis of these poles, our *Salaar* told everyone that what would be our next pole number for a stay, for instance, initially we used to stay after each 50 poles and as per *Salaar*

everyone have to wait until all group members get together. Though, there was too much crowd on the roads so each caravan have made a symbol for their group identification. Some have flags of their own country while others wore different coloured scarfs which represented their group. Our group's identity was an *Alam* (flag of Hazrat Abbas), it was of red colour and our *Salaar* attached a colourful *Tasbeeh* with the *Alam* because most of the pilgrims were holding red coloured *Alam*. So that our group members can identify their *Alam* from far away. On both sides of the road, there were different stalls of *Hussainite* flags and sandals (which were specially designed for walking long distances). Our group members also purchased those sandals because of their light weight and quality of material. I observed that walkers also preferred using those sandals, instead of using recognised brands.

On the way to Karbala, it was observed that all the facilities were provided to the pilgrims, each and everything of the world was present there for the *Zaireen*. For instance, different types of dishes to eat, mineral water, different types of drinks (juices, tea, coffee, and green tea), fruits, shelter (*Mawkib*) to stay, machines for washing clothes, electric switchboards for charging, Wi-Fi connections to keep in contact with their loved ones, medical camps (free check-up and medicines), bags and trolley repairing experts, and even massage for pilgrims (see annexure X, figure. 11, 12). I have seen that if someone is not able to afford any meal or drink to serve pilgrims, they offer tissue papers to *Zaireen* and even young children have been observed putting fragrance to *Zaireen*. In short, everyone was contributing according to their financial status. Most of these facilities were provided by Iraqis, they came from different areas of Iraq and established facilitated *Mawkib* for *Zaireen*. However, Indians, Iranians, and Pakistani were also seen having *Mawkib* for *Zaireen* (see annexure X, figure. 13, 14, and 15). They came from their own countries few days before walk and served the *Zaireen* of Imam Hussain (A.S). It was observed during the walk that Islamic scholars were also there for pilgrims to guide them regarding any issue, which pilgrims wanted to discuss. I have also seen during the walk that there were few youngsters who asked *Zaireen* to recite Surah from Holy Quran and then if someone not reciting it properly, they correct them and give them *Tasbeeh* as a gift. I also got a gift from that desk. Iraqis have also placed *Ta'aziyah* on the way from Najaf to Karbala, which remembered the pilgrims about the Karbala incident. The whole walk was under the high security alert, army soldiers were standing there for the safety of pilgrims during the whole day and

night. They were also serving the *Zaireen* of Imam Hussain (A.S) with water and green tea. On the middle of road, I have seen children and men polishing shoes of *Zaireen* and on the act of these people, one of the *Zaireen* gave them gifts (see annexure, X, figure.16). All the Iraqis were very welcoming as I saw a man standing on the road and holding a bag for garbage. Whenever, pilgrims throw a garbage in that bag, in return he gave them a smile (see annexure, X, figure.17). During the walk, we also experienced a rain and after it finished, all the people including, adults, youngsters, and children started cleaning all the places (see annexure X, figure. 18). On the way to Karbala, it was also observed that there were flags of different countries placed on the road, which were showing international love for Imam Hussain (A.S). I also saw *Ta'aziyah* performance during walk, in which Iraqi people including men, women and children were playing a role about what happened to the family of Imam Hussain (A.S) after his martyrdom (see annexure X, figure. 19).

During the walk from Najaf to Karbala, I have observed pilgrims including my group members while performing different rituals, such as, some were saying emotional poems (*Nohay*) about their Imam, beating chest, saying *Tasbeeh*, sending curse on the murderer of Imams and their family, reciting Holy Quran, and stay during prayer time (see annexure X, figure. 20.). It was observed that all the pilgrims were helping each other during the walk. We kept on walking for three days, though the walk can be completed within 2 days but there were also children and some old age people so it took us three days. On the 2nd day, we faced a bad storm in the evening and the night was getting colder. Due to much crowd, we were not able to find any *Mawkib* to stay for a night. Finally, we got a *Mawkib* but the vacant space was only for women. However, men have to spend night outside the *Mawkib* under the sky. We tried to manage by sharing quilts with each other and gave few quilts to men so that they can cover themselves from cold. The next morning, after breakfast we started again our journey. When we reached on 1390th pole, we find two nearby *Mawkibs*, one for male and other for females, to stay a 3rd night there. The service providers of that *Mawkib* were very welcoming and the young girls served us with water and hot tea. Though due to language barrier, they were not able to communicate but we tried to understand them with gestures. One of the young girls who came from Baghdad to provide services to the guests of Imam Hussain, she asked me about dinner. I refused her and she asked me reason of refusing. I told her that I am not comfortable of the spices they used in their

meals. She asked me the method to cook a meal which I wanted to eat. I told her to cook potatoes without using their spices and gave my own spices to add in those potatoes. It was cold night and she cooked it for me outside the *Mawkib*. It was no doubt very delicious, because she cooked it with love and affection.

On the fourth day, we reached Karbala (our final destination) at 02:00 pm and from pole number 1450 we could clearly see the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S). Because, there were separate poles for the area surrounding the shrines of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) and Hazrat Hussain (A.S) All the group members including men started crying by remembering the tough time happened with their Imam and his family. Though, it was too much crowd in Karbala, due to which it took us two hours to reach till the last pole, which leads to the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S). The shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) comes first, no matter you chose any route from different areas. The *Salaar* gave all of us the card of our hotel where we were supposed to stay. It was near the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S). The purpose of giving us cards of hotel was that if in any case somebody forget the way leading to hotel, can ask anybody to help him/her in finding their hotel. We were also given contact numbers of our group members especially our *Salaar*, so if anybody detached from rest of group members, could contact on that numbers. On the roads, young men were distributing cards, on one side *Ziyarat-al-Arbaeen* was written, while on other side *Ziyarat-al-Abbas* (A.S) was written. First of all, we gave our salaam to Hazrat Abbas (A.S) and Imam Hussain (A.S). Though, *Ulemas* (scholars) said that take bath before going to the shrines of Imam. However, regarding *Arbaeen* visitation, it was said that come to the shrine right after the walk is completed. It was not necessary to take bath first, but pilgrims can go to the shrine having the dust of Karbala on their face and clothes and Imam welcome their *Zawar* in that condition. After the visitation of both shrines we went to our hotel and everyone took bath and ate lunch. After that our *Salaar* told everyone to get ready for the visitation of the rest of the places nearby the shrines.

All of us first visited *Nahr al-Furat* (the canal from Euphrates River passed by), also known as Alqama stream. Karbala and *Nahr al-Furat* cannot be separated as whenever the Karbala will be discussed, this stream will be mentioned too. This stream witnessed the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A.S) and his companions. The *Nahr al-Furat* was most described by the scholars whenever the martyrdom of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) come

in discussion. Then we visited the *Maqaam-e-Ali Asghar* (A.S), where the youngest son of Imam Hussain (A.S) was martyred and *Maqaam-e- Ali Akbar* (A.S) where the 18 years old son of Imam Hussain (A.S) was martyred. I have observed that on the *Maqaam* of Ali Akbar (A.S), young adults came to the *Maqaam* by crawling on the basis of their faces instead of using their hands and feet. On that *Maqaam*, all the young adults were crying like babies and remembering the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali Akbar (A.S). Then, we went to a place named as *Maqaam-e-Kaff-e-Abbas* (A.S), there are two different places which are related with Hazrat Abbas (A.S). It is believed by the Shia Muslims that at one place, one arm of the Hazrat Abbas (A.S) was cut down by the forces of Yazid while at the other place second arm of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) was cut down. We also visited *Maqaam-e-Sher-e-Bibi Fizza* (S.A)²⁰, a place situated in Karbala (see Annexure-VII). Then we went to visit *Maqaam-e-Zafar Jinn*, who was an eye witness of Karbala incident. After coming back from that *Maqaam*, within 30 seconds I just lost my group members and became alone in the first night at Karbala. I saw here and there but did not find any member of my group. By chance, I wore my ID card on which the contact numbers were mentioned. I requested one of the Iraqis to call on this number then I contact my *Salaar*. He said that Iraqi to take me towards the *Maqaam-e-Ali Asghar* (A.S) and from that point I safely reached in my hotel. Everyone was worried but it is believed that no one can misplaced in Karbala as Imam helped him/her to reach on their place.

In the next morning, we went to the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) and Imam Hussain (A.S). It was too much crowd inside the shrine that it took us much time to reach inside the shrine. It was huge number of line of people on check-point, going inside the shrine. The check- point designated one path for women and the other for men. Visitors were divided into groups, who were quickly checked by guards. And until the next group's turn, they send *Salawaat*²¹ on Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his progeny; chanted to glorify Imam Hussain (A.S) and his family; and then they repeated slogans against the enemies of Shia Muslims. After entrance, we offered prayers and went to *Sardaab* (vault) of both (Hazrat Abbas and Imam Hussain), where the real graves of Imam Hussain (A.S) and Hazrat Abbas (A.S) were present under their shrines. Mobile phones

²⁰ Bibi Fizza (S.A) was known as a maidservant of Hazrat Fatima (S.A) in Shia Islamic history. Though, she was *Malka-e-Habash* meaning an Ethiopian Queen. She had been enslaved and then freed by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

²¹ *Salawat* is a special Arabic phrase, which contains the salutation upon the prophet of Islam.

were not allowed inside the shrine. Inside the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) is the tomb of Habib ibn Mazahir, who was a friend and companion of Imam Hussain (A.S) since their childhood and also a victim of the battle of Karbala. Within the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S), there was also a grave of all seventy two martyrs who are buried in a mass grave. Beside the grave of Imam Hussain (A.S) are the graves of his two sons Ali Akbar (A.S) and Ali Asghar (A.S). The shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) is located across the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) and the distance between both shrines are the same as the distance between the hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwah. The basement of the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) is submerged with water which is never stagnant, it continuously circles the shrine. The night before Arbaeen (20th Safar), we went to the *Khema Gah* also known as *Khayam-e-Hussaini*. This is a place where it is believed that Imam Hussain (A.S), his family and companions put their tents (*Khayaam*) and stayed there for few days from 2nd Muharram to 10th Muharram. In this place, I first observed the *Khema* of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) which was on the front side, and then there was a place for camels, then I went to the *Khema* of Imam Hussain (A.S), behind his *Khema* was the *Khema* of Bibi Zainab (S.A) and then the *Khema* of Imam Sajjad (A.S) was placed. Few steps after, there was a *Khema* of Hazrat Qasim (A.S), son of Imam Hasaan (A.S). On all of these places, we offered two *Raka'at* prayer. These *Khemas* are not in their original position, now it has been converted to a shrine. Then, we visited *Tila-e-Zainabiyah*, a place between *Khayam-e-Hussaini* and the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S). It is believed by the Shia scholars that from this place, Bibi Zainab (S.A) witnessed the sacrifice and martyrdom of her brother Imam Hussain (A.S) on the day of Ashura (10th of Muharram).

The whole place of Karbala, covering the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S), Imam Hussain (A.S) and other places was purchased by Imam Hussain (A.S) himself, when He came to Karbala in the month of Muharram. He bought this place on the name of his son Ali Akbar (A.S), thus known as *Jageer-e-Ali Akbar*. On Arbaeen night at 02:00 am, I went to the shrine and observed that whole area surrounding the shrine was crowded with people. I witnessed that groups of pilgrims from all over the world came together and presented their mourning rituals in their own way. In the front, there were men and beside them was the group of women. All groups first went to the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) and then towards the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) to pay tribute to their Imams. I observed that young adults were holding huge *Alam* of Hazrat Abbas (A.S)

and unfurled it in front of the shrines. Some of the group members were saying *Nohay* and beating their chest. Some of the group members were calling their Imam with loud voice, e.g. saying O' Abbas or O' Hussain. I got chance to be in one of such groups and an Iranian woman of that group let me in their group. I went to inside the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) with this group and it was wonderful experience of becoming a part of that group. I spent one whole night in the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) and one night in the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S). During my whole stay in Karbala, I have not seen the shrine without much crowd. I went to the shrine in different timings but did not get a chance to touch the *Zarih* (holy chamber) of both shrines because of the crowd present in the shrines. On the day of Arbaeen, we offered prayers and *Amaal* associated with this day. Three members of our group arranged *Majalis* (mourning councils) in different three days in Karbala. These people did all arrangements for *Majalis* such as arranged *langar* (meal) for other people. I also participated in that *Majlis* by saying a *Manqabat* and *Soz-o-salaam*. After the Arbaeen celebrations, all the group members did shopping for their loved ones. They bought different things which are associated with Karbala, such as, *Khaak-e-shifa* (healing ashes), *Sajdah-gah* (piece of mud on which Shia Muslims put their head during prayers), *Tasbeeh*, *Jaa-e-namaz* (piece of cloth where Muslims offer prayers), scarfs, *Chadars* (shawls), *Kafan* (shroud) and *Khurda* (dry fruits). On 1st of October, 2018 we gave our last salaam to our Imam and prayed to call us again in next year. In the evening of that day we started our journey towards Basra International Airport, on the way we visited the shrine of Janab-e-Hurr (A.S)²². Before going to airport, our last destination was Al-Musayab which is a city of Iraq, where the two sons of Muslim bin Aqeel (A.S) named as Muhammad and Ibrahim were buried. The dates of Al-Musayab city was very famous, and most of our group members bought the dates from the shops located outside the shrine. Finally, we moved towards the Basra International Airport. We travelled whole night, the way going to Basra was not secure as it was not populated area, and mostly it was desert. We did stay for Fajar prayer nearby hotel and then we reached in the Airport at 08:30 am in the morning. From Basra, we travelled to Dubai International Airport and stayed there for 9 hours.

²² Hurr (meaning “free”) was the name of one of the high-ranking commanders of the army of Omar-ibn-e-Saad who faced the Imam Hussain (A.S), with orders from Yazeed-ibn-Muawiyah to either get Hussain (A.S)'s allegiance for his corrupt Khilafat, or kill Hussain (A.S) and all his friends. On the day of Ashura, Hurr made a decision about leaving his position and the army which he was commanding. Right before the battle started, he joined Imam Hussain (A.S) and was the first to be killed in the way of Allah. He was killed by the army he used to be a commander of just a few hours earlier.

In those days, the condition of Pakistan was also serious due to the case of a Christian woman, Asiya. Fortunately, before our arrival all the matters were resolved and we reached in the Islamabad International Airport at 03:00 am. All of our group members met each other and asked to keep in touch. They said goodbye to each other with great smile and joy. When we came outside the Airport, all of our family members were already present there, holding flowers in their hands. They were eagerly waiting to meet us. All of them gave us hug and kisses and were very happy.

3.5. In-depth interviews

The study mainly involved in-depth interview as a major research technique. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews in order to obtain comprehensive information from respondents about the phenomenon of Arbaeen walk and socio-economic expressions. Diverse participants were incorporated in the subject area for further information and analysis. The average time taken for each interview was around 45 minutes to 90 minutes and the interviews were taken in different settings from each interviewee, such as: at interviewee's home; during walk; at the shrines of Imam; inside and outside the *Mawkib*; in the garden; in the hotel, on dining table after breakfast, lunch, or dinner; in aeroplane and airport as well.

An interview guide was constructed for guidance and to ensure that all areas were covered during the interviews. This interview guide was based on literature review with respect to the research questions. Since the interviews were semi-structured, so I adapted the interview guide according to the respondent whom I was interviewing e.g., people who have experienced Arbaeen walk, those who went to Iran and Iraq but did not perform this walk, people who have never gone to such places, and people who bring caravans to such places. All items mentioned in the interview were easily understandable to the respondents. The interview was taken in Urdu as well as Punjabi language because the respondents from whom the researcher took interviews were either from Urdu and Punjabi linguistics backgrounds. So, it was easy for these respondents to express their point of views and communicate in their own language.

3.6. Case studies

Case study methodology helps to provide a framework for evaluation and analysis of complex issues. So, in the present study, this technique is used to examine the complex

phenomenon in natural setting to increase understanding of them. The two case studies of Sunni Muslims participated in the Arbaceen walk, are discussed in the analysis section in detail.

3.7. Ethical considerations

Before starting proper interviewing the research ethics were ensured. For this purpose, informed consent was taken verbally during each step of research, such as: interviewing, photography, and recording of interviews. The researcher told each interviewee that any type of information the interviewee provided to the researcher will be kept confidential. They were also told that whenever they want to quit during the interview they can do so, and can skip any question which they do not want to answer. No psychological or physical harm was caused to the participants.

3.8. Field notes and daily diary

During field work the researcher has noted all observations and information in the form of field jottings and then made proper field notes. During data collection, after taking informed consent from the participants the researcher also used a camera and a recording device in order to record audio and visual observations relating to the study.

3.9. Limitations

There may be some possible limitations in this study. The first is the time constraints, due to shortage of time the researcher was not able to spend more time in other areas of Iraq. However, the second limitation concerns the language barrier, due to which the researcher could not communicate with other international visitors.

3.10. The research site

This section discusses the detailed information of the area, where the study was conducted. It encircle the relevant profile of the areas, i.e. Dhoke Syedan Rawalpindi, Pakistan and other cities of the Iraq, where the researcher conducted the fieldwork for the present study.

3.10.1. Geographic features of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi

Dhoke Syedan is a town located in district Rawalpindi, Punjab. The total population of the Rawalpindi cantt is approximately 207,774,000 as per the provisional results of

Pakistan's 2017 national census (Factbook, 2018). According to the superintendent of Land branches in Rawalpindi Cantonment Board, the department only focuses on the total population of cantt rather than smaller areas included in it. However, as per the natives of Dhoke Syedan, the total population of the area is approximately 100,000. They believed that Dhoke Syedan covers the area from the Dhoke Syedan chowk till the Baraf Khana Chowk, while the officials of RCB include the adjacent areas connecting to it, such as Chamanabad, Quaidabad, Mohallah Masjid Noor, and Tench Pulley. As per the RCB officials, the tax paid households consists of at least 2000 units, including commercial and residential units.

Figure 1. Google Map of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi



(Source: Google map, n.d)

3.10.1.1. History of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi

Dhoke Syedan is an old place of district Rawalpindi, Punjab. Dhoke is a Punjabi language word, which means a village or town while Syedan is originated from the word “Syed”, is one of the castes of Muslim community. It is believed that the Syed Muslims are the direct descendants of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ. Therefore, the meaning of Dhoke Syedan is a town of Sadaat. Because of a larger number of Syed families residing in this area for many years, this area is called as Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi. The natives of Dhoke Syedan believed that the area came into being in the year 1935, i.e. before the independence of the Pakistan. However, according to the officials of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), the area of Dhoke Syedan came under the territory of cantt since 1957 while it is last notified in the year 1981.

3.10.1.2. Religious centres

One of the oldest religious centres in Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi is the religious institution of Shia Muslims named as Qasr-e-Shabbir, where the Shia Muslims perform their religious practices. While, there is only one mosque of Shia Muslims named as Masjid Aal-e-Imran, where they offer prayers, that mosque is not used for performing any rituals or practices. Other than that there are several mosques of Sunni and Deobandi Muslims.

3.10.1.3. Religion and belief system

Majority of the population is Muslim in the area. However, there are few numbers of Hindus and Christians. Though, name of the area itself suggests clearly that the majority of the residents belong to Shia Syed families that is why it is called Dhoke Syedan. However, other than Shia Muslims the area also includes the residents of Sunni, Barelvi, and Deobandi sects.

3.10.1.4. Constituency

The constituency of National Assembly is called NA (National Assembly), while the member of the National Assembly is known as MNA. The constituency of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi is NA-61. However, the MNA of the area is Amir Mehmood Kiyani while the MPA is Raja Basharat. The counsellor of the Dhoke Syedan is Malik Mansoor Afsar who deals all the matters of the natives. According to him, the area of Dhoke Syedan falls under the ward-7. According to the RCB officials, in the last year elections of Pakistan, approximately 33000 voters were registered, under the ward-7.

3.10.1.5. Educational institutes and health facilities

The area contains several private and government institutions. The most known government schools include Govt. Anwar-ul-salam School and F.G School. However, the private schools are more than government schools as it is observed that people have opened schools in nearby Mohallahs. The most renowned private school of Dhoke Syedan is Glorious English School, which is further developed into college as well. There is only one Government College for girls located in the Dhoke Syedan chowk.

Most of the residents of Dhoke Syedan have done Matric and intermediate level of education. However, the number of graduates and Masters are comparatively low. It is observed that there is no government hospital and medical dispensary for the residents of the area.

3.10.1.6. Transportation

The residents of Dhoke Syedan owned less private vehicles, as most of the people prefer to use public transport. Public transport is easily available up to Islamabad. However, taxis, rickshaws, and Uber services are also available for the residents.

3.10.1.7. Occupation

Majority of the people of the Dhoke Syedan belong to middle class, including labourers, shopkeepers, local transport drivers, and clerks. The government and private officers are also residing in the area. Hence, mostly there are low paid workers rather than great business men.

3.10.1.8. Recreational Activities

There is no park to be found in the Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi for its residents. However, on each Thursday majority of the Shia Muslims get together in the *Imambargah* Qasr-e-Shabbir to perform their religious practices. In this way, they also meet and keep in contact with each other. Every so often, the birthdays and mourning days of Shia religious figures are also being celebrated in the *Imambargah*. The residents of Dhoke Syedan, also went to a local graveyard on every Thursday and Friday. There are total two graveyards in the area.

3.10.1.9. Language

Most often, Punjabi is spoken by the residents of the Dhoke Syedan. However, Urdu and English languages are used more in the institutions. The sign boards including the names of schools, colleges, and other offices are written in Urdu as well as English

language. In order to address each other, the natives call *Baji*²³, *Maai Jee*, and *Bi Jee*²⁴, to females while *Bhai Jaan*²⁵, and *Shah Jee*²⁶ to males.

3.10.1.10. Dress patterns

The female residents of the area wore traditional *Shalwar Kameez* having a *Dupatta* to cover themselves. However, most of the females used long *Chadars* and *Abayas* to cover themselves. While, the males wear *Shalwar Kameez* and pant shirt as well.

3.10.1.11. Climate

Being an integral part of Rawalpindi, the climate of Dhoke Syedan is same as of Rawalpindi. It consists of four distinct seasons, with long and hot summers, monsoon, and winters while includes short spring and autumn seasons. According the annual reports of climate, the maximum temperature is 46.6 (°C) while the lowest temperature is recorded -3.9 (°C). However, the monthly heaviest rainfall recorded is 1900.0 mm (Climate Data Processing Centre, n.d).

3.10.2. Profile overview of sites visited in Iraq

The Republic of Iraq (Al Jumhuriyah al Iraqiyah) is a country situated at the northern end of the Gulf that borders Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and Kuwait. The capital and largest city of Iraq is Baghdad, which is in the centre of the country (Team, n.d). Iraq gained independence on October 3, 1932, from the British administration established under a 1920 League of Nations mandate. People who are the citizens of Iraq are known as Iraqi(s). The total area of Iraq is 437,072 square kilometres, including 432,162 square kilometres of land surface. Iraq is dominated by two famous rivers: the Tigris and the Euphrates. Many parts of Iraq are harsh places to live. About 40 percent of the land is covered with rocky deserts, another 30 percent is mountainous. Most of the Iraqi people live along the fertile plains of the Tigris and Euphrates (Country Profile: Iraq, 2006). The flag of Iraq consists of three equal horizontal stripes of red (top), white, and black. The green coloured phrase “Allahu Akbar” (God Is Great) also appears in Arabic script, centered on the white stripe (Flag of Iraq, n.d). Despite of the fact that Iraq's history is full of unsettling changes, however it is a land where several

²³ It is used to call females as it means sisters.

²⁴ *Maai Jee* and *Bi Jee* is used for calling older women, especially who belong to Syed family.

²⁵ This word is used to address the males, which means brother.

²⁶ It is also used for males, particularly belonging to Syed families.

ancient cultures left stamps of greatness on the country, the region, and the world. It was also known as the “cradle of civilization”. Iraq has an estimated population of 39.34 million, which ranks 38th in the world. As a whole, Iraq has a population density of 83 people per square kilometre (184/square mile) (Iraq Population, 2018). The official language of Iraq is Arabic, while 10-15% of the population also speaks Kurdish. The most common religion is Islam consists of 95% of the population. Non-Muslims, mostly Assyrian Christians, make up 5% of the population. In Iraq the Christian community has existed for nearly 2,000 years and most are descended from the pre-Arab Mesopotamians-Assyrians. It is believed that 65% of Muslims are Shia while the remaining 35% are Sunni. Najaf and Karbala are two of the holiest places in Iraq for Shia Muslims.

3.10.2.1. Najaf

Najaf Al-Ashraf is considered the third holiest city of Shiite community and the centre of Shiite political power in Iraq. Najaf, all over the world, is well-known as a site of the tomb of Imam Ali ibne Abu Talib (A.S). Hazrat Ali (A.S), son of Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S), is the second most important figure for Shiite community, after Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Hawza ilmiyya (a theological Shiite learning institute) is one of the most significant teaching schools in the Islamic world. Ayatollah Khomeini lectured there for more than a decade (Boda, 1994, p. 69-71). Najaf was founded by Abbasid Caliph Haroon-ur-Rasheed in 791 [AD]. The city has a desert climate with average annual temperature of 23.6°C.

According to Islamic history, the city of Najaf was first called *Meshhed*-Ali. The reason is that the city actually started with Imam Ali (A.S), who instructed that his burial place should remain hidden. At that time, it was feared that Imam’s body might be subjected to some indignity after burial, as he had many enemies. It is told that the body of Imam Ali (A.S) was taken out of Kufa, on a camel. A few miles west of the city of Kufa, the camel stopped and that is where the body was buried in secret. No tomb was constructed and nobody knew of the burial place except for the family of Prophet ﷺ. More than a century later, Haroon-ur-Rasheed went deer hunting outside Kufa. The deer sought refuge at a place where the hounds would not chase it. On investigation as to why the place was a sanctuary, Haroon was told that it was the committal place of Hazrat Ali

(A.S). Haroon-ur-Rasheed then ordered a tomb to be built on that spot and in due course, the town of Najaf grew around the tomb of Haider²⁷ (Frag, 2007).

In 1928, during the reign of British Empire, the *Ulema* and sheikhs of Najaf rebelled and killed the British governor of the city. In response to that, the British surrounded the city of Najaf and cut off its water supply. Finally, British government was successful in ending the rule of sheikhs in Najaf. A large number of the Shiite *Ulema* were exiled and sent to Persia, where they set the grounds for the rise of the city of Qom as the new center of the Shiite learning. Hence, Najaf lost its religious predominance to Qom, and was not able to regain it until the 21st century, after the formation of a Shiite-majority government in Iraq. Following are the four leading grand ayatollahs of Shiite sect, based in Najaf al-Ashraf: Ali al-Sistani, Bashir al-Najafi, Muhammad Al-Fayadh, and Muhammad Saeed al-Hakim. The famous sights of Najaf include Shrine of Imam Ali and Wadi Al-Salaam cemetery (Mouzahem, 2014).

3.10.2.2. Kufa

On the banks of river Euphrates, the city of Kufa is located about 10 kilometers northeast of Najaf Al-Ashraf. The city was founded by second Caliph of Muslims, Hazrat Umar Bin Khitaab (R.A) during 639 CE. Kufa was always famous as the city of rebels, hence Imam Ali (A.S) decided to govern from Kufa and made it the capital of Islamic world during his Caliphate. According the reports of 2003, the estimated population of Kufa was 120,000. However, Kufa is now joined with Najaf to make single urban area which is known, to the outside world, as “Najaf Al-Ashraf” (Historical Background of Kufa, n.d). Kufa is of great importance to Shiite Muslims because Imam Ali (A.S) spent his last days in this city. The Great Mosque of Kufa is famous because Imam Ali (A.S) offered his last prayer in that mosque before he was wounded by the poison-coated sword of a khawarij named Abdul Rehman Ibn-e-Muljim. After Imam Ali (A.S), his second son Imam Hussain (A.S) was also called for help by the people of Kufa. But Kufans later betrayed Imam Hussain (A.S) and joined Yazid ibne Muwaiyaa in the battle of Karbala. Muslim ibne Aqeel (cousin brother of Imam Hussain) was brutally murdered in Kufa along with his two young sons Aown and Muhammad. Kufa saw a short period of relative calm in the reign of Mukhtar al-Thaqaffi but Mukhtar also

²⁷ The word Haider means the lion of god.

was murdered by Kufans after a few years. The famous sights of Kufa include the great mosque of Kufa, House of Imam Ali (A.S), Tomb of Zayd ibne Ali, Al-Hannanah Mosque, Tomb of Maytham al-Tammar, Tomb of Kumail ibne Ziyad, and Al-Sahlah Mosque. Following famous personalities are related to Kufa: Imam Ali ibne Abu Talib (A.S), Hussain Ibne Ali (A.S), Muslim Ibne Aqeel (A.S), Yaqub Ibne Ishaq Al-Kindi (Theologian), Abu Hanifah, Sufyan Al-Thawri, and Alqama Ibne Qays (Kufa in history, n.d).

3.10.2.3. Baghdad

The name “Baghdad” is pre-Islamic and hence the origin of the name is still disputed. Baghdad has an area of 204.2 km² and the population of 8765000 approximately, which makes it the largest city in Iraq and the second largest city in Western Asia and Arab world. By the 21st century, it was estimated that about 82% population of Baghdad belonged to Shiite community (Marozzi, 2016). This city has a subtropical desert climate; it is extremely hot and dry in summers and has mild, humid winters. The capital of Iraq was founded in the reign of second Abbasid Caliph named Al-Mansur. He decided to build a Castle at the junction of the river Tigris and canal Sarat because of strategic and geographic advantages (Artz, 1980).

Apart from its size, wealth and part at the centre of the caliphate, Baghdad was also the centre of Islamic learning & sciences and it remained so for centuries. The rule of Haroon-ur-Rashid is known as the pinnacle of growth of Baghdad. The scholarly brilliance of Baghdad can be realized from the fact that numerous scholars involved in the sciences were almost all connected to Baghdad, in one form or another (Sarton, 1975, p. 164). It is not possible to list all the scholars who worked in Baghdad over the centuries of Islamic glory in the field of sciences, but these few names are worth mentioning: Al-Farazi Muhammad ibne Ibrahim (Astronomer), three brothers of Banu Musa (Engineering, Astronomy and Math), Ibne Sarayun (Geographer), and Ibn al-Nadeem (Historian). The famous sights of Baghdad include the National Museum of Iraq, Mutanabbi Street, Baghdad Zoo, Grand Festivities Square, Al-Shaheed Monument, Qushla, Masjid of Kazmain, Masjid of Abu Hanifa and Firdous Square (Staff, 2006).

3.10.2.4. Samarra

Samarra is located 125 kilometers north of Baghdad at the east bank of river Tigris. The population of Samarra was estimated to be 348700 in year 2013. In the middle ages, Samarra became the capital of Abbasid Caliphate. It is the only Islamic capital that preserves its original plan, architecture and artistic relics. In 2007, UNESCO termed Samarra as one of its World Heritage Sites. Samarra has a hot desert climate; average annual temperature is 22.7°C and most rain falls in winter season (Samarra Archaeological City, n.d).

The city is an important pilgrimage center for Shiite Muslims mainly because the twelfth and last Shiite Imam, named Imam Al-Mahdi and commonly known as The Hidden Imam, went into occultation from this place. Other than that, the city is home to shrine of Imam Hassan Al-Askari (A.S), father of Imam Al-Mahdi (A.S). City of Samarra faced many events of violence till date, some of them are: Ottoman-Persian War, Al-Askari Mosque Bombings, 2011 and 2013 Bombings, Northern Iraq Offensive, and it was a part of famous ‘Sunni Triangle’ where Sunni rebels were active during the Iraq war. Following famous personalities are related to Samarra: Imam Hassan Al-Askari (A.S), Imam Ali al-Hadi (A.S), Imam al-Mahdi (A.S), Bibi Hakimah (female relative of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), and Bibi Narjis [wife of Imam Hassan Al-Askari (A.S)].

3.10.2.5. Khadimiyan

In the northern neighborhood of Baghdad, is located the city of Kadhimiya (also known as Kazimain) on the west bank of river Tigris. It is known as one of the holy cities of Shiite Islam as it carries the shrines of seventh and ninth Shiite Imams named Imam Musa al-Kadhim (A.S) and his grandson Imam Ali al- Raza (A.S). The name Kazimain means “Two who swallowed their anger”. Kazimain used to be the center of Shiite learning in the earlier times but with the passage of time, it lost its scholarly significance and other cities like Najaf and Qom rose to prominence. The city of Kazimain faced riots quite many times but the most prominent of all the damages was after the Mongol siege of Baghdad in 1258, when the Holy shrine of the two Shiite Imams was burnt

down. Justice Camp is also located in Kazimain. Justice Camp is an American operated facility where Saddam Hussain was executed by Iraqi officials.

3.10.2.6. Karbala

The old name of Karbala was “Karb-o-Bala” which means the “Land of Sorrow, Agony & Affliction”. Karbala had many other names including Nainawa, Al-Ghadiriyya, Kerballa, Al-Nawaweess and Al-Heer. It was after the martyrdom of Hussain ibne Ali (A.S) that the land of Karb-o-Bala started being called “Karbala-e-Mu’alla”. The capital of Karbala Governorate is located in the central Iraq on the way to Kufa, about 100km Southwest of Baghdad. Karbala desert has a semi-arid climate, with extremely dry summers and cold winters. Karbala is known all over the world mainly as the location of the famous Battle of Karbala in 680 CE. It is regarded a holy city for Shiite Muslims in the same way as Mecca and Medina. Tens of millions of Shiite Muslims visit the holy city twice a year to observe Ashura [the tenth day of the month of Muharram; death anniversary of Imam Hussain (A.S)] and Arbaeen (the 40th day after Ashura). Many pilgrims travel on foot from all around Iraq and more than 50 countries. The city of Karbala began as a shrine to grandson of Prophet ﷺ, Imam Hussain (A.S). It started to grow as a city to meet the needs of the pilgrims. Many Muslim leaders contributed in the expansion of city and tombs of Imam Hussain (A.S) and Hazrat Abbas ibne Ali (A.S). However, like any other holy city of Shiite Muslims, Karbala too faced destruction many times from attacking armies. In 850, Abbassid Caliph Al-Mutawakkil destroyed the original shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S). It was rebuilt again in its present form in 979. The famous sights of Karbala include Al-Abbas Mosque, Shrine Hussain ibne Ali (A.S), Shrine Abbas Alamdaar (A.S), Ganj-e-Shahedaan, River Euphrates, Ruins of Mujada, Tilla-e-Zainabiya, and Karbala International Airport. It is estimated that 98% of population of Karbala is Shiite Muslims. Following are the famous universities in Karbala: Hawza Illmiyah-Karbala, University of Karbala, The Ahlulbait International University, and Warith Al-Anbiya University (Seddon, 2013, p. 362).

4. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ARBAEEN WALK

Before discussing the details behind the historical basis of Arbaeen walk and different opinions in this regard, it is firstly important to know the meaning of Arbaeen and the understanding of Arbaeen walk according to native's point of views. Several opinions and perceptions have been seen among respondents. In this regard, most of the respondents stated that Arbaeen is called *Chehlum* which means fortieth day that occurs forty days after the day of Ashura. However, some of the respondents have named Arbaeen in their local language. As one of the respondents who is 50 years old and has visited Iraq twice in her life for the purpose of *Ziyarat*. She experienced the Arbaeen walk for the first time in 2017. She said:

اربعین کو عام زبان میں مشی کہتے ہیں، جس کا مطلب ہے پیدل چلنا۔

In local language, Arbaeen is known as *Mashi*, which means walking on foot.

Some of the respondents have pronounced the word *Mashi* while others stated it as *Mishi* in their local language. According to another participant, who is 28 years old and experienced this religious walk in 2018, stated that:

اربعین دراصل عربی کا لفظ ہے۔ عام زبان میں اگر کہا جائے تو اس کو مارچ بھی کہا جاسکتا ہے۔ کچھ لوگ اس کو ریلی کے طور پر بھی لیتے ہیں۔ سادہ الفاظ میں یہ کہیں گے کہ نجف سے کربلا تک پیدل مارچ کرنا۔

Arbaeen is actually an Arabic word. Locally, it can be called as a march. Some people considered it as a rally. In simple words, it would be called walking from Najaf to Karbala on foot.

An 18 years old pilgrim, who is a pre-medical student and got a chance to participate in Arbaeen walk of 2017. She said:

20 صفر کو جو ہم نجف سے کربلا پیدل سفر کرتے ہیں، اسے اربعین کہتے ہیں۔

On 20th of Safar, we walk from Najaf to Karbala on foot, this is called Arbaeen.

It can be observed in the findings that respondents probably have the same concept of Arbaeen with slight differences in the words used in their local languages. All of them have agreed upon that it is a walk from Najaf to Karbala. Though, findings suggest that it is not only a walk from Najaf towards Karbala. But, people come to participate in this walk from different cities of Iraq such as Basra, Baghdad, and Samarra etc.

Respondents also said that most of the pilgrims not only come from cities of Iraq, but they also travel from different countries around the world. For instance, most of the people walked from Iran towards Karbala. Now the question arises that why do they walk from such faraway places? In this regard, a 32 years old government officer who experienced this walk last year, said:

اربعین پر اگر بات کی جائے تو یہ ایک وسیع موضوع ہے۔ اربعین کو کچھ سادہ الفاظ میں بیان کرنا مشکل ہے۔ اگر لفظی معنوں کے لحاظ سے یا عقیدے کے لحاظ سے دیکھا جائے تو یہ ایک بی بی کی سنت سے ہم اسکو ادا کرتے ہیں۔ جو سب سے پہلا چہلم تھا وہ بی بی زینب (سلام اللہ علیہ) نے خود منایا تھا۔

If we talk about Arbaeen, it is a broad concept. It is difficult to explain Arbaeen in simple words. According to its literal meaning or religious point of view, it is a customary practice of Bibi (pious lady) which we practice. The first *Chehlum* was celebrated by Bibi Zainab (S.A).

With respect to its historical background, he further stated that:

یہ آجکل کا موضوع نہیں ہے۔ بلکہ یہ تو جب سے کر بلا ہے اس وقت سے سلسلہ چلا آ رہا ہے۔ آج سے کچھ عرصہ پہلے اس کو باقاعدہ تحریک کی شکل ملی۔

This is not a today's topic. But, it has been started since the incident of Karbala. Few years before, it has been given a form of proper movement.

According to respondents, this concept is very old. Most of respondents said that it started after the tragedy of Karbala. Imam Hussain (A.S) was murdered by Shimmar on 10th of Muharram and Arbaeen occurred after the forty days of his martyrdom. According to one of the pilgrims of our group, who is 38 years old and belonged to Shia Syed family, talked about the history of Arbaeen walk. He said:

یہ موضوع 61 ہجری کا ہے۔ مولا کی شہادت کے فوراً بعد کا ہے اور یہ جتنے لوگ جا رہے ہیں شاید یہ انہیں علم نہیں کہ یہ دراصل سنت حضرت جابر بن عبد اللہ ادا کر رہے ہیں کہ انھوں نے جس پریشانی میں اس عقیدت کا اظہار کیا تھا اور یہ اسی سال سے شروع ہو گیا تھا۔

This concept is of the year 61 AH. It started after the martyrdom of the Imam and those people who are going might do not know that they are basically carrying out the customary practice of Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah²⁸, who has expressed strong belief in such a worse condition and it has been started since that year.

²⁸ A well-known companion of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah got the news of the martyrdom of the Imam Hussain (A.S). As per the respondent who has the great interest in history, there are two different accounts regarding the Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah and one narrative states that he lost his eyesight in an older age. When he got the news of Imam Hussain (A.S)'s martyrdom, he started walking towards Karbala. Once he reached to Imam Hussain (A.S), coincidentally that was the fortieth day after his martyrdom and it was the day of Arabeen. Another account, which a respondent says that he has read in Sahih Bukhari²⁹ that Hazrat Jabir got the news on tenth Muharram, that Imam Hussain (A.S) has been martyred. At that time Bibi Umm-e-Salma³⁰ was present in Madina and Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ gave her a small amount of soil in his life. She told Hazrat Jabir about the martyrdom of Imam Hussain after she saw blood in that soil. As per these narratives, the respondent articulates that Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah started his walk from Madina towards Karbala. He further said, the reason is that the distance from Madina to Karbala is approximately fifteen hundred kilometres and according to him, Hazrat completed the walk in thirty days. Because if we have completed this eighty kilometres distance in 3 days then he might have completed it in thirty days. He did that walk in the year 61AH. The findings suggest that according to some respondents, Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah was the first who started this walk but few stated that Bibi Zainab (S.A) did this walk first and then it became a customary practice. In this regard, one of the respondents who is 55 years old and belong to Shia Syed family said that:

جب بیبیوں کو قید سے رہائی ملی تو بی بی زینب (سلام اللہ علیہ) نے امام سجاد کو حکم دیا کہ وہ کربلا کی طرف سے ہو کر مدینہ جائیں گی۔ حالانکہ شام سے مدینہ کا فاصلہ کم تھا۔ لیکن کربلا کی طرف سے ہو کر جانے کا مقصد یہ تھا کہ وہ اپنے بھائی کا چہلم منائیں گی۔ کربلا سے کچھ فاصلے پہلے بی بی اپنے مہمل سے اتریں اور امام کی طرف پیدل سفر کیا جو کہ روایات میں ہے۔

When the honoured ladies were freed from the prison, Bibi Zainab (S.A) order Imam Sajjad (A.S) that she will go to Madina via Karbala. Though, the distance from Madina to Karbala was short. But, the purpose of going from Karbala was to celebrate the *Chehlum* of his brother. Few distance before Karbala, she

²⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari is a collection of hadith compiled by Imam Muhammad al-Bukhari (R.A), which is renowned by the majority of the Muslim world to be the most authentic collection of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It contains over seventy-five hundred *hadith* in ninety-seven books (Sahih al-Bukhari, n.d).

³⁰ Umm-e-Salma (R.A) was famous for her knowledge of Islam and her wisdom. She was first married to Abdullah (RA) bin Abdul Assad Makzumi, who was the cousin of Holy Prophet ﷺ. After his death, she was married to Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ in the age of twenty seven and she spent 7 years of her life with the Holy Prophet ﷺ (Syed , 2017)

dropped herself off from *Howdah* (bed carried by a camel) and walked towards Imam, which is mentioned in religious accounts.

On the basis of these narratives it might be infer that whether Hazrat Jabir was the first *Zawar* of Imam Hussain (A.S) or Bibi Zainab (S.A), this walk started in the year 61AH. This indicates the historical basis of the phenomenon, Arbaeen walk.

4.1. Significance of the Arbaeen walk

Human beings have a natural tendency to follow those who inspire them. Hence, the history of Karbala has inspired most of the Muslims in the world, especially the strong characters involved in it. The visitation of Arbaeen which means going for the *Ziyarat* of Imam Hussain (A.S) on 20th Safar in Karbala, has a great importance among Shia Muslims. With regards to its importance, respondents have mentioned various narrations of their infallible Imams. According to one of the participant, who is twenty two years old and have experienced two times the visitation of Imam Hussain (A.S) in Karbala, told the importance of Arbaeen walk. She said:

اربیعین کے بارے میں آئمہ کی بہت سی روایات ہیں۔ آپکا وہاں ہونا ایسا ہے کہ دس محرم کو آپ امام کے ساتھ تھے۔

There are various religious accounts regarding Arbaeen. Your presence (in Karbala) means that you were with your Imam on the tenth Muharram.

With reference to religious accounts, one of the respondents who is 50 years old and did *Ziyarat* of Imam Hussain (A.S) five times and went for Arbaeen walk twice in her life. She said:

امام صادق (علیہ السلام) کا فرمان ہے کہ نمک سے روٹی کھا لو لیکن امام کی زیارت ترک نہ کرو۔

Imam Sadiq (A.S) states that do eat a bread with salt but do not relinquish the visitation of Imam.

She further narrated:

مولا کا فرمان ہے کہ میری زیارت کے لیے جو ایک قدم بھی چلے گا اس کے سارے گناہ صاف ہو جائیں گے۔

According to *Mola* (Imam), whoever walk one step towards my visitation, all of his sins will be rinsed off.

These religious accounts are also mentioned in Islamic books of different scholars which are originally narrated by their Imams. Most of the religious scholars also discuss the importance of Arbaeen walk in their speeches held on various events such as Muharram *Majalis* and also other than Muharram. These scholars mention the

reward of Arbaeen *Ziyarat* as equal to performing the Hajj. If we look at the narrations, it can be infer that the concept of Arbaeen visitation is very old since the lives of infallible Imams. Some of the respondents talked about the importance of Arbaeen walk in a different way without mentioning the references of their Imam's quotes. They said, its importance is different for different people. It is up to a person that how he/she intends to practice this walk. One of them said that for us, who are the believers of Imam, this walk is of great importance but might not for those who do not believe in it. They might see it as a normal walk because they do not know the purpose and its historical significance.

4.2. Arbaeen walk among Pakistani Shias

Millions of people walk towards Karbala, Iraq for several days from all over the world. Pakistan is also one of those countries, whose residents take part in the Arbaeen walk every year. The natives of Dhoke Syedan Rawalpindi, Pakistan were asked about the prevalence of the Arbaeen walk among Pakistani Shias, hence several opinions were seen in this regard. A 38 years old resident of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi who has experienced Arbaeen walk, said:

پاکستان میں اربعین واک شروع سے ہی ہے۔ یہ 61 ہجری سے ہے۔ 1975 میں صدام کی حکومت آئی۔ صدام نے اس پر بین لگادیا تھا۔ 2004 میں آ کے ان تیس سال کے بعد جب صدام کی گورنمنٹ ختم ہوئی تو بنی اسد بڑے جوش اور جذبے سے دوبارہ آئے۔

In Pakistan, Arbaeen walk is prevalent since the beginning. It is from the year 61AH. Saddam's government came into being in 1975. Saddam banned on it. After twenty-nine years in 2004, when Saddam's government finished then Bani Asad came back with great enthusiasm.

According to the respondent, Bani Asad is that tribe, whose ancestors buried Imam Hussain (A.S) after his martyrdom. They are coming towards Karbala from one generation to the next generation. Bani Asad tribe was the one who continuously came to Imam's shrine from the year 61AH till 1975, despite the worst condition in the era of Saddam. There are few respondents who even went to Karbala during the reign of Saddam but they did not experience the Arbaeen walk at that time. As per the respondent, the phenomenon of Arbaeen walk was at its peak in the year 2004. Even though, it has been started since 61AH and did not stop during any regime. It can be said that the number of pilgrims were less during the last few years but did not stop even in the eras of cruel governors. Most of the respondents said that after the collapse

of Saddam's regime a boost has been seen in Pakistan regarding the performance of Arbaeen walk. People walked for number of days towards Karbala, Iraq and on their way the natives of that area started providing the facilities to the pilgrims. Those natives started taking care of their rest, meal and other things. In this way, it came into being in the form of a movement and today millions of people are taking part in the Arbaeen walk. Findings suggest that according to most of the respondents, round about ten to twelve years ago the Arbaeen walk has been started in Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi. However, as per the respondent who is 55 years old and did Arbaeen walk first time in 2017, said:

یہاں سے تو لوگ شروع سے ہی جا رہے ہیں۔ سو یا ڈیڑھ سو سال پہلے لوگ پیدل یا گھوڑوں پر جاتے تھے۔ وہ رات کو لوگوں کے گھر قیام کرتے تھے۔ صبح پھر اپنا سفر کرتے تھے۔ یہ تو چودہ سو سال سے مشن جاری ہے۔ ڈھوک سیدال سے لوگ چالیس یا پچاس سال سے جا رہے ہیں۔

Since the beginning, people are going from here (Pakistan). Before hundred or one hundred and fifty years, people went on horses or by walking. They stayed at night in people's house. Then, started their walk in the morning. This mission has been underway since fourteen hundred years. From Dhoke Syedan, people are going meanwhile 40 or 50 years ago.

Furthermore, his wife who is 50 years old and went for Arbaeen walk two times, she said:

میرے ابو کے ماموں پاکستان سے پیدل کربلا، ایران، شام اور سعودیہ دو سال میں ہو کر آئے تھے۔
My father's uncle did walk from Pakistan towards Karbala, Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. He came back in two years.

It is evident from the findings that Pakistani Shias are also taking part in this walk from the beginning, even when there was not a proper transport system. However, findings suggest that not only Shias take part in this walk but there are some people who belonged to Sunni group also experienced the Arbaeen walk. But they do not have much knowledge about this walk like Shia Muslims do. One of the respondents, who is 31 years old and belongs to Sunni group but converted to Shia religion 10 years ago, he said:

میں نے چہلم اور عاشورہ کا تو سنا ہوا ہے لیکن یہاں سے سفر کیسے ہوتا ہے، کس طریقے سے ہوتا ہے، اس بارے میں معلومات نہیں تھیں۔ مجھے لگا تھا کہ لوگ شاید آتے ہیں اور ڈائریکٹ روزے پر جاتے ہیں۔ مجھے یہاں آکر پتا چلا اس واک کے بارے میں۔

I have heard about *Chehlum* and Ashura but did not have information about the way this walk happens. I thought, people may come and goes directly to the shrine. I got to know here about this walk.

Another 21 years old respondent, who also belongs to Sunni group but converted to Shia religion and has experienced the Arbadeen walk this year. He said:

تقریباً پانچ، چھ سال سے پتا ہے اس واک کے بارے میں۔ اور مجھے شیعہ ہوئے بھی پانچ، چھ سال ہو گئے ہیں۔ پہلے میں سنی تھا۔

I got to know about this walk almost five, six years ago. I have also been converted to Shia since five, six years ago. Though, I was Sunni before.

So, it has been evident that Sunni Muslims also go to Iraq to become a part of the Arbadeen walk. From both responses it can be said that Shia Muslims have more information than Sunni Muslims about the Arbadeen walk. Though, both are living in the same society and interact with each other as well. However, we can say that the reason might be the historical basis of the Arbadeen walk. As the walk is associated with Shia Muslim's Imams so it might be due to this reason that Shias have more information than Sunni Muslims. Now the question rises that how the concept of Arbadeen walk boost up within past few years. Various perceptions of natives were seen regarding the sudden boost up in Pakistan. One of the respondent, who is 22 years old and did Arbadeen walk in 2017. She said:

پاکستان میں پہلے یوں پیدل چل کے جانے کا رواج نہیں تھا۔ پہلے اتنی سہولیات بھی نہیں تھیں۔ لوگ کم جایا کرتے تھے۔ پیسہ بہت زیادہ لگا کر تا تھا۔ اب یہ ہے کہ بائے روڈ سفر بھی شروع ہو گیا ہے۔ بے ٹنک حالات کافی خراب رہے لیکن لوگوں کا اس طرف رجحان کافی حد تک ہے۔

Previously, there was no trend of walking from Pakistan. As the availability of facilities were also not adequate. Less people go. Much money was required. Now, by road travelling has been started. Despite of the worst conditions, people still have given more consideration towards it (Arbadeen walk).

According to the perception of above mentioned respondent, due to lack of facilities the number of pilgrims were low in the past. Now, pilgrims have a facility of road transportation, which is cheaper as compared to air travel. That is why number of people is increasing more day by day. Another respondent, who is 26 years old and participated in the Arbadeen walk first time in 2018. He said:

میرے خیال سے جو اربعین کا لوگوں کو زیادہ شعور آیا ہے جب یہ صدام کے دور میں روک دیا گیا تھا کہ اب ہم لوگ اربعین نہیں کر سکتے۔ اسکے بعد جب دوبارہ شروع ہوا تو اس میں ایک بوسٹ آپ آیا ہے۔ ہم لوگوں کو بھی زیادہ تب ہی پتا چلا ہے۔ کتنے اہل تشیع تھے جنہیں پہلے اربعین کا نہیں پتا تھا۔ جب پابندی لگنے کے بعد شروع ہوا ہے اس میں لوگوں کو زیادہ معلومات حاصل ہوئی۔

In my opinion, people get to know more about Arbaeen when it was stopped in the reign of Saddam that now we (Shia Muslims) cannot celebrate Arbaeen. After that when it started again, a boost came in it. We also got to know more at that time. There were so many Shia Muslims who did not know about Arbaeen before. People got more knowledge when it started after the restrictions.

It is believed by the respondents that another reason is the restrictions on Arbaeen walk in the era of Saddam Hussain. It is a human nature that when they were restricted from what they are doing since many years. The intensity will definitely increase more and they will urge themselves to do those practices with great enthusiasm. Though, the tradition of walking to Karbala was more prevalent among Iraqis and Iranians. But when the oppositions were trying to eradicate it, then the whole Shia community around the world get together. Because the phenomenon is not only associated with the Iraqis or Iranians, but it is also associated with all the Shia Muslims around the world. So, in order to show the unity with Shia brothers the Pakistanis also started participating more in the walk. Hence, we can say, this is how it gained much promotion within few years. However, another respondent who is 46 years old and did five times *Ziyaraat* but went to Arbaeen for the first time in the year 2018. She said:

مشرف کے دور میں میڈیا بہت آزاد ہوا۔ اس وقت بہت پروموٹ ہوا۔ میڈیا آزاد ہوتا گیا تو اس نے ہائی لائٹ کرنا شروع کر دیا۔ یہ جتنے لوگ جارہے ہیں یہ اس ہائی لائٹ کی وجہ سے، جو اس واک کا ماحول دکھایا جاتا ہے۔ میرا ذاتی خیال ہے کہ مشرف کے دور میں میڈیا آزاد ہونے سے یہ چیز ہم تک پہنچی ہے۔ اور بہت زیادہ نوجوان نسل اسکو اپنا رہی ہے۔

In the time period of Musharraf, media became independent. It promoted more at that time. When media was getting freedom, it started highlighting (Arbaeen walk). People are going due to that highlight, which shows the surroundings of the walk. In my personal opinion, due to the freedom of media in the Musharraf's era, this phenomenon came to us. And most of the young generation is adopting it.

Surely, media has always played a role in many spheres of life. It is believed by the above mentioned respondent that after having been liberalised in 2002, media played a

role in promoting the phenomenon of Arbæen walk among Pakistanis. However, on the other side, most of the respondents believed that media is not playing a role in showing the coverage of Arbæen walk (see detailed discussion on page. 98).

4.2.1. Reasons of Pakistani Shias for partaking in Arbæen walk

The road to Arbæen follows the journey of the world's largest annual pilgrimage to Karbala, Iraq. Millions of people walk to Imam Hussain's shrine covering even distance of hundred miles. Why do they walk hundreds of miles? Why do they left their family, business, and friends behind for many days in order to participate in the Arbæen walk? What motivates them to take part in this walk? The respondents answered these questions on the basis of their belief system. Most of the respondents said that they walk to the Imam's shrine because of their love and believe on the Imam. Some of the respondents said that they go for this walk to get rewards from their Imams. According to one of the participants, who is 30 years old and experienced the walk on the year 2017. She said:

ہم امام کی محبت میں چلنا چاہتے ہیں۔ ہم لوگ عام طور پر جب اپنے ملک سفر کرتے ہیں تو وہ ایک عام سا سفر ہوتا ہے لیکن جب اس سفر میں جاتے ہیں تو دماغ میں کوئی نہ کوئی مقصد یا امام سے کوئی حاجت کر کے جارہے ہوتے ہیں۔ اور میں دل میں اولاد کی خواہش لے کر گئی تھی کہ میں وہاں چل کے جاؤں گی، انکی زیارت کے لیے اور خدا مجھے اولاد سے نوازے۔ اور اللہ کا لاکھ لاکھ شکر ہے کہ خدا نے مجھے نوازا ہے۔

We want to walk in love of our Imam. Usually, when we travel in our own country that was a normal travelling. But when we travel for Arbæen then we keep any aim or requests in our mind. And I went with a desire of having a child that I will walk for his *Ziyarat* and Allah will bless me with a baby. I am very thankful to Allah that He has blessed me.

Findings suggest that people also walked in order to fulfil their desires. Some walked by keeping in minds the desires for a success, marriage, money, children, and so on. According to the respondents, their wishes have been answered as well. As per the respondents, not only Shia Muslims have made vows but other Sunni Muslims and even non-Muslims also vowed to fulfil their desires. That is why they also come to take part in the Arbæen walk. However, according to one of the respondents, who is 21 years old and belongs to Sunni group. He said:

سرکار کے پاس آنا ضروری ہے۔ پرسہ دیتے ہیں۔ اگر کسی کا کوئی فوت ہو جائے تو اس کے گھر جا کے پرسہ دیتے ہیں۔ اتنے سال سے منظوری نہیں تھی اس دفعہ ہوئی ہے۔ مالک سے التجا کی کہ مالک بلا لیں اور انھوں نے بلا لیا ہے۔ انکا کرم ہوا ہے۔

It is necessary to come to the Chief. We express sympathetic sorrow. If someone died, we came to his/her house to give condolences. There was no approval since many years, but approved this time. I requested to the King to call upon and he did. This is his blessings.

There are some types of participants, who every year wait eagerly for this walk and they think that they have not satisfied themselves so far. They go again and again to participate in the Arbæen walk. According to one of the respondents, who is 41 years old and have experienced the Arbæen walk more than one time. He said:

پہلی مرتبہ ہم چار سال پہلے آئے تھے۔ 4 سال سے ہم آرہے ہیں اور تشنگی ہوتی ہے دل کی وہ نہیں ہو رہی ابھی تک۔ بار بار آنے سے میرا اچھا خاصا سیٹ اپ ہے پیچھے، سارے معاملات متاثر ہوتے ہیں، فیملی متاثر ہوتی ہے۔ میں ضد سے وہاں جاتا ہوں۔ ایک سال میری حالت ایسی تھی کہ میں نے اپنے دوست سے کہا کہ میں نے جانا ہی جانا ہے اور میں نے 56 ہزار کا ایئر ٹکٹ تھا جو میں نے 1 لاکھ 42 ہزار میں خریدا۔ پتا نہیں کیوں مجھے ایک تڑپ سی ہے کہ بس جانا ہی جانا ہے۔ اور وہ اب تک پوری نہیں ہو سکی۔ ہر دفعہ آتے ہیں اور جب میں وہاں سے واپس آتا ہوں تو دل پھر اداس ہوتا ہے۔

Four years ago, we came for the first time. We are coming since 4 years and there is a heart's thirstiness which is not filling up yet. I came gain and again, even due to which all my matters get disturb. My family disturbs. But I obstinately go there. Once a year, my condition was that I said to my friend that I have to go and I purchased an air ticket of 5600 thousand rupees in 1 lac and 42000 rupees. I do not know why I have this agony that I have to go and which has not yet been filled-up. Every time I go and when I come back, again my heart feels sad.

On the other hand there are few respondents who do not want to go for Arbæen walk. There are only three respondents among all the interviewers who gave reasons that they cannot experience the Arbæen walk. Two of the participants were Shia Syed gave the same reason while one of them gave different reason for not participating in the walk. According to one of those respondents, who have not experienced the Arbæen walk and is 50 years old. He said:

میں اربعین واک پر نہیں جاسکتا۔ کیونکہ میں بہت گنہگار ہوں۔ میں اس قابل ہی نہیں ہوں کہ میں اس پاک جگہ پر جاؤں۔

I cannot go for the Arbæen walk. Because I am very sinful person. I am not able to go to this holy place.

Another respondent who is 64 years old and is a *Noha khawan* (threnodist) since many years in Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi. He said:

میں نے تمام امام کی زیارت کی ہے لیکن میں ار بعین پر نہیں جاتا۔ یہاں پر بہت مجلس ہوتی ہے چہلم پر۔ جبکہ ار بعین پر اتنی مجلس نہیں ہوتی۔ یہاں سے شہدائے کربلا کی مجلس چھوڑ کر جانا اچھا نہیں لگتا۔ پاکستان میں صرف ایک دن امام کا چہلم نہیں منایا جاتا بلکہ مختلف جگہ پر مختلف تاریخ پر منایا جاتا ہے۔ مثلاً پندرہ صفر کو ڈھوک سیداں میں، بیس صفر کو راجہ بازار میں منایا جاتا ہے۔

I have done visitation of all Imam. But, I do not go for Arbæen. Many *Majlis* (mourning congregations) held here on *Chehlum*. However, there are not much mourning congregations held on Arbæen. I do not feel good to go by avoiding *Majlis* of martyrdoms of Karbala. In Pakistan, not only one day Imam's *Chehlum* is being celebrated but it is celebrated in different places on different dates. For instance, it is celebrated on fifteenth Safar in Dhoke Syedan while 20th Safar in Raja Bazar.

Hence, findings suggest that many people go for many reasons but not all the people go to take part in this walk. However, some have different perceptions of not participating in the Arbæen walk. This does not mean that they are against this walk, but they do not take part in the Arbæen walk due to their personal reasons. However, it can be said about the respondent who do not go for Arbæen walk because of the mourning congregations in Pakistan. He is actually a *Noha Khawan* and he earns most of the time by going to different places in different mourning congregations of Imam. If he goes every year on Arbæen then he would not be able to earn in those days during which people pay more to him. It is believed by the respondents that the Islamic literature, such as art and poetry also motivates people to participate in the Arbæen walk. Within few years, *Noha Khawan* has started writing and saying the poems of Imam with reference to Arbæen walk. One of the known *Noha Khawans* of Pakistan, Syed Farhan Ali Waris has first sang a *Noha* (mourning latmiya) regarding Arbæen walk. He sang that *Noha* in the year 2013 after when he experienced the Arbæen first time. That *Noha* became very popular among the Shia Muslims. He started the *Noha* with the quote of Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) that whoever walks towards the shrine of

Imam Hussain (A.S), will be rewarded by Allah with thousands of virtues on each step. Their sins will be removed as well. The few lines of the *Noha* are as follows³¹:

لبیک یا حسین (علیہ السلام)
میں عشق کے سفر پہ چلا
ہر اک قدم پہ کرتا ہوا، شکرِ خدا
میں سفر پہ چلا
نازِ قسمت پہ کرتا ہوا
میں پیدل چلا کر بلا

I am responding to your call, Oh Hussain (A.S)
I started the journey of love
Thanking Allah on each step
I left for the journey
Feeling proud on my fate
I walked on foot to Karbala

Like Farhan Ali, several other Pakistani *Noha Khawans* started delivering the poems on Arbreen walk. Due to such literature, people are much motivated to take part in the Arbreen walk. I personally, when listened the *Noha* first time, I at that time wished to experience this walk. Because the lyrics of *Noha* explain everything which happened in the walk. Though, this time the purpose of walk is to complete a fieldwork for the present study. However, literature can be seen as a commodity. As the *Noha Khawan* sing the *Nohas* and produce the inspirational literature which gets popular among the listeners. Those popular products have high demands in the society especially during the mourning period such as the months of Muharram and Safar.

4.3. Rituals performed during the Arbreen walk

In memory of the battle of Karbala, Shia Muslims commemorate Arbreen through practicing various rituals during the walk. It has been seen that people of all age groups and gender participate in the walk. People, from the age of 80s to infants, participated in the Arbreen walk. Even, a pregnant woman in our group also walked few miles on

³¹ See the lyrics of complete *Noha* (Abidi, 2013)

Arbaeen. All of the pilgrims (males or females) have attired themselves according to their tradition. But most of the women wore *Abayas* (long dresses), mostly in black colour. People have worn different coloured dresses, however most of them were seen in black colour because black is the colour of mourning. They walked for several days towards Karbala. It took us four days and three nights to reach Karbala from Najaf. However, people who came from faraway places walked for days and even a month. During Arbaeen walk people do not only walk on foot but there is another road on which those people who are unable to walk, they go to Karbala via buses. They pay for that travel, but on Arbaeen the drivers take less rent from pilgrims for the Najaf-Karbala route and even sometimes they offer free services. The respondents were asked about the practices which they did during the Arbaeen walk. In this regard, one of the respondents, who is 45 years old and she experience the walk in the year 2017. She said:

سب اپنی مرضی سے اعمال کرتے ہوئے جا رہے تھے۔ ہم راستے میں زیارت عاشورہ پڑھتے ہوئے جا رہے تھے اور کبھی نوحہ۔ راستے میں جگہ جگہ ایسے پوائنٹ بنے ہوئے تھے جہاں نماز کے لیے ہم رکتے تھے۔ سب اپنا چلے جا رہے تھے۔ کوئی روتے ہوئے جا رہا تھا، کوئی امام سے دعائیں کرتا ہوا جا رہا تھا۔ کئی معذور ایسے تھے جو خود کو گھیٹتے ہوئے جا رہے تھے۔ ان کی نہ ٹانگیں تھیں نہ بازو۔ وہ اپنے سینے کے بل سفر کر رہے تھے۔

All were doing practices according to their own choice. We were reading *Ziyarat-e-Ashura* in our way and sometimes *Noha*. On the way, there were such points in different places where we stopped to offer prayers. All were doing their walk. Some were going crying while others were praying to Imam during their walk. There were few disable people who were dragging themselves. They did not have legs nor arms. They were walking on the basis of their chest.

It is evident from the findings that there is no proper terms and condition which pilgrims have to follow. All of the pilgrims do practices according to their own choice and belief system. The Arbaeen walk is for all, even the disabled people also take part in the walk. In our group, there was a disabled boy who is 18 years old and he came with his mother. His mother prayed to God that she will take his son to Karbala by walking from Najaf. So that God, gives him a complete health. He was her first child and she was worried about him, because he is not even able to perform his daily routine tasks. I observed that the young disabled boy was also beating his chest during the walk. As he did few miles walk and then the rest of walk on wheelchair. On the whole way, he said slogans of Hazrat Ali (A.S). Pilgrims were giving him different things and asked him to pray for

them. His mother told me that one of the Iraqi person who was giving tissue papers to everyone during the walk. When he saw a disabled boy he gave him a whole packet of tissue papers and said I know you will need more tissues for this child. It is believed by the respondents that the most common practice which all the pilgrims were doing somewhat was helping each other. As per the respondent, who is 21 years old and belongs to Sunni group. He said:

لوگ اپنے طریقے سے غم مناتے ہیں۔ ماتم کرتے ہوئے جاتے ہیں۔ کچھ لنگر تقسیم کر رہے ہوتے ہیں۔ کوئی کسی کے پاؤں دبا رہا ہوتا ہے، کوئی کسی کے دھورہا ہوتا ہے۔ ہم سچی بات جو ہے کبھی ہنس بھی لیتے ہیں کیونکہ انسان ہیں۔ اور کبھی معافی بھی مانگ لیتے ہیں۔ ماتم بھی کرتے جاتے ہیں، کلام بھی پڑھتے ہوئے جارہے ہوتے ہیں اور روتے بھی ہیں۔ ساتھ قافلے والے جو ہوتے ہیں انکی مدد بھی کر رہے ہوتے ہیں۔ کسی کو پانی پلا دیا کسی کو کھانا کھلا دیا جو ہم سے ہو سکتا ہے۔

People express the grief in their own way. They walked by beating their chest. Some are distributing *Langar* (things to eat). Everyone condolences to Imam in their own style. Someone is massaging anybody's feet while others are washing their (pilgrims) feet. The truth is, sometimes we laughed. Because, we are human beings. And sometimes ask for forgiveness. We walk by beating our chest, by reciting religious poems and also by crying. We also help our caravan members, for example, giving water to someone or offering lunch to anybody. Anything we can do for them.

Further, he believed that on Arbaeen walk we should not pray for ourselves. We should condemn to Imam only on Arbaeen day because he has sacrificed his family just to save the religion. Another participant who is 38 years old and belongs to Shia Syed family, told about the practices which he carry out during the Arbaeen walk. He said:

واک کے دوران مسلسل میری ایک ہی دعا تھی کہ مولا مجھے اپنے قریب کر لے۔ میں ہر اربعین پر بی بی کے نام پہ چادریں تقسیم کرتا ہوں۔ میں مسلسل درود بھیجتا رہتا ہوں۔ سب سے اچھا تحفہ تو درود کا ہی ہے۔ اور دوسرا میں ان سے دعا کی مانگتا رہا ہوں کہ مولا مجھے معرفت دے۔

During the walk, I continuously prayed for one thing that the Master bring me closer to him. On every Arbaeen, I distribute *Chadar* (piece of cloth) on the name of Bibi. I continuously sends salutation, which is the best gift. And secondly, I prayed that may the Master give me an insight in divine matters.

The respondent told that he has started distributing the *Chadars* (piece of cloth) because few years back he saw a dream on Ashura that Bibi Zainab ask him to distribute *Chadar*. From that day, he gave *Chadars* to the female pilgrims on Ashura and Arbaeen day in

Karbala. Another Sunni respondent, who is 31 years old and was asked about the practices which he followed during the Arbaceen walk, he said:

میں کوشش یہی کرتا ہوں کہ کوئی ایسی فالتو باتیں نہ کروں۔ ایسی جگہ پر آیا ہوں ایسی کوئی بات منہ سے نہ نکل جائے
جو اچھی نہ ہو۔ تو اس وجہ سے کوشش یہی کرتا ہوں کہ رسول صلی اللہ علیہ و آلہ وسلم اور انکی آل پر درود پڑھتا
رہوں۔ تو یہ بہت بڑی عبادت ہے۔ اور غم حسین تو ہر بندے کے دل میں ہے، اسکے بغیر تو میرا خیال کہ ایمان
بندے کا مکمل ہے۔

As I came to this holy place so I tried to avoid useless gossips, which is not good. Due to which I tried to send salutation on Prophet ﷺ and his progeny. This is a great worship. And the pain of Imam Hussain (A.S) is present in everybody's heart, without it, I do not think that a person's faith is complete.

It is believed by the respondents that they avoid bad things or useless talks in respect of the holy place. Because they do not want to do anything which is not considered as the characteristics of a true believer of the Imam. According to one of the respondents, who is 32 years old and got the chance to take part in the walk in 2018. She said:

ایسے کوئی رسم و رواج نہیں ہیں کہ لازمی ہی کرنا ہے۔ ہاں یہ کہہ سکتے ہیں کہ لوگ ایک روایت کو قائم رکھنے کے لیے
علم اٹھا لیتے ہیں۔ یا اپنے گروپ کی ایک مخصوص پہچان کے لیے اٹھاتے ہیں۔ یہ ایک چیز ضرور دیکھنے میں آئی ہے۔
باقی جو ہے وہ اپنی مرضی کے مطابق یا خواہش و منشا کے مطابق لوگ اعمال کرتے ہیں۔

As such, there is no custom which must be followed. Yes, it can be said that in order to maintain a tradition people hold flags or to make a specific identification of their group. This is the one thing which is being seen. However, people carry out their practices according to their wish and desires.

It is observed during Arbaceen walk that people hold flags of their countries as well as flags having the name of Imam Hussain (A.S). They hold these flags in love of their Imam and also as a symbol of identification of their group. Several groups have used different symbols for the identity of their group. Some groups have used different coloured scarfs in order to identify their group members while some used brochures and badges. Because in the crowd of millions it is not easy to identify the group members, as most of the people have worn black colour. Our group identification was a red coloured flag with a colourful prayer beads. However, all of us were given ID cards, just in case if someone lost in the crowd. One of the rituals of Iraqi or Shia Muslims in general, it is observed during the Arbaceen walk that they perform a

*Ta'aziyah*³² play. Though, making *Ta'aziyah* is common among Shia Muslims during their mourning processions. However, I got a chance to see live performance of the Iraqis, which they perform on the ground during Arbaeen walk. The play depicted the whole story that happened to the family of Imam Hussain (A.S) after his martyrdom. Shia Muslims have listened such stories during *Majalis* but Iraqis gave proper performance on the incident of Karbala during the mourning period of Ashura and Arbaeen. Those people just covered their face with white cloth but they properly show a play which includes participants of all ages and genders. Most of the pilgrims stopped to watch the play and cry while remembering the tragedy of Karbala. At the end of the play, all of the spectators give money according to their status. Though, those people do not ask for money but pilgrims gave them so this mourning ritual can be said as a source of income for Iraqi people.

4.3.1. The concept of walking barefoot to Karbala

In most religions, walking bare feet is considered as a sign of humility and subjection. In Judaism and some Christian denominations, it is customary to go barefoot while mourning (DeMello, 2009, p. 14-15). Similarly, the exposure of bare feet is observed during the Arbaeen walk. A large number of people walked barefoot towards the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S). Some female and male members of our group also walked barefoot from Najaf to Karbala. Why do they go barefoot? One of the respondents, who is 50 years old and also have experienced the Arbaeen walk more than one time. She said:

زیادہ لوگ ننگے پاؤں ہی چلتے ہیں۔ مولا کا چاہت میں اور شام والی بی بی کی یاد میں ننگے پاؤں چلتے ہیں۔

Most of the people walk barefoot. They walk in love of the Imam and in the remembrance Lady of Syria.

Findings suggest that majority of the people walked barefoot. They walked in this way because of their belief system. Some think that their Bibi walked bare feet so they walked in the remembrance of Bibi Zainab (S.A). Another male respondent of 60 years age said:

لوگ ننگے پاؤں عقیدت میں چلتے ہیں۔ کربلا کے اندر تو میں نے لوگوں کو منہ کے بل چلتے ہوئے دیکھا ہے۔

³² *Ta'aziyah* is a traditional Persian theatrical genre in which the drama is conveyed predominantly through music and dramatic narration.

People walk barefoot due to their belief system. Even, in the Karbala, I have seen people moving their body with the help of their face.

It is observed in the Karbala, especially on the *Maqaam* of Hazrat Ali Akbar (A.S), young male adults went to the *Maqaam* via crawling on the streets of Karbala. Because, when they remember the cruelty happened to their Imam and his family then they do not have control on themselves. They do such practices in honour of their Imam and his progeny. However, it has been seen that some of the respondents opposed the idea of walking barefoot to the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S). A 22 years old respondent, who belongs to Shia Syed family. She said:

کچھ لوگ ننگے پاؤں چلتے ہیں۔ وہ یہاں بھی ایسا کرتے ہیں امام بارگاہوں میں۔ میرا نہیں خیال کہ اسکا کوئی شرعی طور پہ یا کسی بھی حوالے سے کوئی اہمیت نہیں ہے۔ کیونکہ جب آپ چلتے ہو آپکے پاؤں نجس ہوتے ہیں۔ فوری طور پہ اگر آپ کو پانی میسر نہیں ہے تو آپ نماز نہیں پڑھ سکو گے۔ اس طرح کی چھوٹی چھوٹی چیزیں ہیں جو ہم سوچتے نہیں ہیں۔ میں اس چیز کو ضروری نہیں سمجھتی۔ لیکن لوگ کرتے ہیں وہ عقیدت میں چلتے ہیں۔ بس لوگ خود کو امام کے قریب کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو کم علمی، جہالت یا محبت میں اتنے آگے نکل جاتے ہیں۔

Some people walk barefoot, they do here as well in mosques. I do not think that it has any importance with regard to Shariah or anything. Because, your feet get dirty while walking and if in need you do not have the availability of water then you would not be able to offer prayer. There are certain small things, which we do not think about. I do not consider it important. But, people do and they walk due to belief system. These people want themselves closer to their Imam so that's why they cross their limit due to lack of knowledge or in love.

It is believed by the respondent that walking barefoot is not necessary as it is not an obligatory task to do in Islam. But there are few respondents who also did not walk barefoot due to the same reason of cleanliness but they want to go barefoot. They were not opposed to this concept. According to one of the participants, who is 21 years old and belong to Sunni group. He said:

بہت زیادہ لوگ ننگے پاؤں چلتے ہیں۔ بندوں کا عقیدہ ہے اور میرا خود بھی یہی عقیدہ ہے۔ گھر سے میں اسی نیت سے آتا تھا کہ ننگے پاؤں چلنا ہے۔ کیا پتا کس جگہ پاک بی بی کا پاؤں لگا ہو، کس جگہ مولا کا پاؤں لگا ہو۔ باقی یہاں آکے سٹم دیکھا کہ واک بہت لمبی ہے کیونکہ پاکستان میں پانچ منٹ بھی میں نہیں چلتا۔ میرے سے چلا نہیں جاتا۔ تو یہاں مولا سے ہمت مانگی ہے کہ مولا ہمت دیں۔

Many people walk barefoot. This is people's belief system and I also believe on it. From home, I started the journey with the intention of walking barefoot. Who knows which place has been

touched by Bibi's feet or where the Master has placed his feet. However, here I came to know the system that the walk is long because I do not even walk for five minutes in Pakistan. I do not walk. So, I asked the Master for the strength.

Findings suggest that people who do not walk a few minutes in their own country, they have walked during Arbaeen for days. According to them, when they see people walking barefoot around themselves, they get motivation from them. It is believed by the respondents that in the remembrance of the battle of Karbala, they forget their own pain when they remember Imam Hussain's pain. It is observed that people who did not walk barefoot whole journey, they pulled off their shoes ten or twelve kilometres before the shrine of Imam. There is another respondent who is 38 years old and walked barefoot on the Arbaeen when he came for the first time to experience it. Although, he has experienced the walk more than two times but did walk barefoot for only one time. He said:

میں نے ایک بار واک ننگے پیر کی تھی۔ اور شاید صرف ناپاکی کی وجہ سے میں رک گیا۔ مجھے نماز پڑھنی ہے اور میں یہ سمجھتا ہوں کہ صفائی نصف ایمان ہے۔

Once, I walked barefoot. And perhaps, I stopped myself due to uncleanliness. I have to offer prayers and I think that cleanliness is half of faith.

It is believed by the respondents that a pilgrim should have a proper look which is required for the *Zawar* of Imam. Though, it was the time of mourning but the Master himself has said that cleanliness is half of faith. So, pilgrims should dress up properly instead of considering to not changing the clothes for ten days. Imam said to *Zawar* that before coming to the shrine, take bath, wear clean clothes, and use fragrance. Thus, it is believed by the respondents that Imam himself wants to have a proper identity of his pilgrims. Findings suggest that there are two types of people who walk barefoot. One type of people are those who consider the Karbala as a holy land so that is why they do not want to walk on it with shoes. After waiting for many years, they finally get a chance to visit this holy place once in a life and they are also not sure about whether they would be able to come again to this place. Because it is not easy to visit such faraway places again and again, as they need money to see such holy places. So, it is observed that few respondents who came for the first time, they kissed the land of Karbala when they reached and also pulled off their shoes. This is the one reason of walking barefoot because people do such practices due to their love with Imam. However, in many

religions, it is common to remove shoes when entering a place considered holy. Anyone whether a Muslim or no-Muslim including visitors, when enters a mosque, is expected to remove his or her shoes in honour of the holy place (Rodgers, 2019). The second type of people who walk barefoot includes those who takes vow to God for good health, money, business, success, children, marriage, and so on. These people walk barefoot towards Karbala due to their personal materialistic needs. However, it is also observed during the Arbaeen walk that there were few people who started walking barefoot by imitating others though first they have not the intention of walking this way. Even, they bought expensive comfortable shoes for themselves but started doing the same thing by observing others. As, it is human's nature that they tried to imitate each other.

4.4. Experiences of Pakistani Shias participating in the Arbaeen walk

Findings indicate that during the Arbaeen walk pilgrims experienced so many different experiences, which according to them were exceptional. Respondents shared their experiences after being a part of the Arbaeen walk, including some of the experiences related to their strong religious beliefs, bodily experiences and also the hospitality of Iraqis while entertaining the millions of pilgrims for many days. According to one of the respondent who is 30 years old and belongs to Shia Syed family. She said:

میرے دل میں تھا کہ میں پیدل چلوں، انسان کے اندر کافی تبدیلیاں آتی ہیں۔ جب میں گئی تو ایک تو میں نے خود سے کہا کہ کوئی نہ کوئی ایسی برائی چھوڑوں گی مطلب جو مجھے چھوڑنی چاہیے۔ مثلاً میں نے گانوں کے حوالے سے کہا تھا کہ میں اس طرح کی کوئی عادت نہیں رکھوں گی اور وہ اللہ کا شکر ہے کہ میں نے چھوڑ دی ہے۔

I wished for walk, it bring changes in person. When I went, I said to myself that I will leave any bad habit which I should remove. For instance, I said that I will not make any habit of songs and thanks to God that I just left.

It is believed by the respondents that after doing this walk, they feel many changes in their life. Most of the respondents shared what change came in their life after participating in the Arbaeen walk. Some of the respondents said that they started offering prayers five times because during the walk praying five times become their habit. Some started giving more charity to the deserving people. Most of the participants have eradicated their bad habits to which they were addict of before the experience of Arbaeen walk. It is also observed during the informal discussions with participants,

making promises to God for the future and asking forgiveness for their sins. Another respondents who is 32 years old, he said:

واک کے دووان میں نے اپنی ذات کو امام سے بہت قریب محسوس کیا ہے، بہت زیادہ قریب۔ یعنی وہ کیفیت جب ہم مجلس میں جاتے ہیں تو وہ تھوڑی دیر کے لیے ہوتی ہے لیکن اربعین واک میں اور جتنا ناظم نجف اور کربلا میں گزرا تو وہی کیفیت مسلسل محسوس کی۔ کبھی کسی دسترخوان پر بیٹھے تو ایسا محسوس ہوتا تھا کہ امام میزبانی کر رہے ہیں۔ واقعاً ایسا محسوس ہوا۔

During walk, I felt myself very closed to the Imam, very closed! Means, it was that condition which we feel for a while when we go to *Majlis*. But, the whole time which we spent in Arbaeen walk, Najaf, and Karbala the same feeling was constantly felt. Sometimes, while sitting on tablecloth I felt that Imam is hosting. I really felt that.

It is observed that there were few people who do not offer prayers even not in Pakistan, but were seen as offering prayers during the Arbaeen walk. According to one of the respondents, who is 32 years old, she said:

مجھے یہاں آکے اس بات کا احساس ہوا کہ ہم نے اپنی زندگی ضائع کر دی۔

When I came here, I got to realize that we have just wasted our life.

The respondents believed that they are just concerned with worldly affairs even their children are getting far away from the spirituality affairs. One of the respondents said that she will bring her daughter next year to make her realize the real purpose of life. Respondents were surprised of experiencing the hospitality and love they got from the Iraqis and non-Iraqis. There were many people, Iraqis or non-Iraqis, who made facilitated tents or rest places for the pilgrims of Imam Hussain (A.S). All of the facilities provided to the pilgrims were totally free of cost. People, who made such arrangements were not only those who belong to upper class but even belong to the lowest class, who also participate in hosting the pilgrims according to their financial status. In this regard, one of the male respondents of age 26 years said:

میں نے دیکھا کہ ایک عراقی بچہ تھا اسکے کپڑے میلے تھے اور اسکی حالت سے لگ رہا تھا کہ وہ ایک غریب خاندان سے تعلق رکھتا ہے۔ لیکن اس کا جوش و جذبہ اس قدر عظیم تھا کہ وہ اربعین واک کے دوران روڈ پر ہاتھ میں صرف پانی لیے کھڑا تھا اور جو زائرین گزر رہے تھے انکا دامن پکڑ کے کہہ رہا تھا کہ مجھ سے پانی لے لو۔

I saw that there was an Iraqi child, whose clothes were dirty and it showed from his condition that he belonged to a poor family. But, his enthusiasm was too much great that during the Arbaeen

walk he hold only water, standing on the road and requested all the pilgrims to take water from him.

He further said:

اسکے بعد ایک اور جگہ میں نے دیکھا تھا کہ ایک بزرگ جن کی کافی زیادہ عمر تھی وہ بھی غریب خاندان سے تعلق رکھتے تھے۔ انکے پاس ایک کیتلی میں قبوہ تھا اور وہ بڑے ادب و احترام سے سب کو پیش کر رہے تھے۔

After that on another place I saw an elder man who was very old and also belonged to poor family. He has a kettle of green tea and was offering with great respect and honour.

According to the respondents, such personal experiences were most appealing during the Arbaceen walk. It is observed that people were requesting all the pilgrims just to get a chance for hosting them. I noticed that young children, women, and men of all age requested the *Zaireen* to come to their homes. They feel honour to host them. Those people gave food, drinks of all types, bed, free Wi-Fi, and even massage services. All these services by the people were free of cost. Hence, Iraqis have made much effort to entertain the basic needs of all the pilgrims during Arbaceen walk. According to the respondents, they have not seen such a hospitality in the world, which they have seen among Iraqis. It is believed by the respondents that there is nothing which they do not get during the Arbaceen walk. They get whatever they want. One of the respondents who is 21 years old and belongs to Sunni group. He said:

اربیعین واک کے دوران ایک چیز جو مجھے بہت متوجہ کر رہی تھی وہ لوگ تھے جنہوں نے ہاتھوں میں ٹیشو پیپر اٹھائے ہوئے تھے اور لوگوں کو منٹیں کر کے دے رہے تھے۔

During the Arbaceen walk, one thing which was attracting me more, were those people who had tissue papers holding in their hands and were giving it to the people.

Furthermore, it is noted that there were some supernatural occurrences which connected the pilgrims to the religious feel of the environment. One of the female interviewee who is 18 years old mentioned:

اربیعین واک پہ جیسا کہ مولا کا فرمان ہے کہ تم وہاں پر صرف سوچتے ہو اور اگلے ہی لمحے وہ چیز تمہارے سامنے ہوتی ہے۔ اس طرح کا جو میں نے ارادہ کیا وہ میرے سامنے آیا ہے۔

On Arbaceen walk, as according to the Master, all you need to think about something and within few moments, you will find the thing next to you. Likewise, whatever I desired for, it came next to me.

The respondent said that she wished for *Chana Chawal* (chickpeas rice) during her journey to Samarra and when she came back to her hotel, the cook made the same dish which she wanted to eat. Most of the respondents gave account of the various such incidents. I personally experienced the same thing that I was thinking to drink Sprite (soft drink) and within few minutes someone in our group brings Sprite cans for all members. So, it is believed by the respondents that whatever they wish for anything and that wishes have been heard in no time. One of the respondents prayed for rain during the Arbreen walk and it is witnessed that within seconds all pilgrims experienced the rainy weather during their way to Karbala. Other than that one of respondents of 32 years age told a unique experience, he said:

اگر آپکی کوئی بھی چیز کہیں پر رہ جائے اور آپ کو دس یا پندرہ کلومیٹر کے بعد یاد آتی ہے، حالانکہ کروڑوں لوگ ہیں لیکن آپ اس جگہ پر واپس جا کر دیکھیں گے تو آپکو وہ چیز وہیں پر ملے گی۔ ہمارے گروپ کے دو، تین لوگ ایسے تھے جنکا سامان پیچھے رہ گیا تھا لیکن جب واپس گئے تو وہ چیزیں بالکل وہیں پڑی تھیں اور کسی نے کوئی بھی چیز نہیں اٹھائی۔

If you forget your things anywhere and you realized it after ten or fifteen km, though there are millions of people, but when you will go back to the place. You will see that you will find your things there. In our group, there are two, three people, who left their luggage behind, but when they went back they found all the things in same condition and no one has taken anything.

It is evident that wherever you forget anything even you cover miles of distance and go back to that place after hours, you will find your things exactly on the same place. Once, in Kazmain I put my bag on the carpet while I was offering prayers inside the shrine. After two hours, we were about to leave the place and one of my group member made me realized that I do not have my bag which contains my passport, ID card, and money. I rushed back to the same place where I offered prayers and I saw that the bag was on the same place, even thousands of people were present around it. Findings indicate that most of the respondents experienced such supernatural experiences during their journey. It is observed that most of the people have got blisters on their feet due to long walk or other many reasons. In our group, participants were seen having blisters on their feet but they carried on their walk without realizing the pain. Pilgrims were highly motivated for the walk and it is observed that when they reached Karbala, even without using any medicine for blisters, the next morning their feet were fully healed. This is no more than

any miracle for them. One of the respondents, who is 38 years old and told about his bodily experiences. He said:

مجھے اس درد میں خوشی محسوس ہوتی ہے۔

I feel pleasure in this pain.

Despite of walking so long and having blisters on feet, pilgrims still walked with full passion in love of their Imam. However, most of the respondents gave title to this journey as the journey of love, while others named it as the road to paradise. It is believed by the participants that if someone want a good change in his/her life, he/she must come to experience the Arbadeen walk.

4.4.1. Case studies: Lived experiences of Sunni Muslim participants in the Arbadeen walk

Arbadeen walk, which is also called as “An International Walk”. People from all over the world take part in this walk including Muslims, Non-Muslims, and participants of all genders and ages. Findings indicate that most of the Sunni Muslims also take part in the Arbadeen walk. Almost all of the interviewees acknowledged that Sunni Muslims went with them on Ashura as well as Arbadeen. Two of the Sunni Muslims also experienced the Arbadeen walk with us, both of them belong to pure Sunni family. They shared their lived experiences and how they planned to go for the Arbadeen walk. One of the respondents, who is 21 years old, belong to a middle class. There are total 5 family members in his home, including parents and three siblings. He was in ninth class when he started to think about Shia Muslims. There was an *Imambargah* (Shia’s mourning and praying centres) near to his house. Once, he saw from his roof that Shia Muslims are beating their chest and crying in the mourning procession. He thought that there is something due to which these people cry, he believed that a man cannot cry. And we cannot beat our chest because doctors say that if you hit your heart it will not work properly. So, there is something, which he needs to be search out. According to him, he has small number of friends and few of them belongs to Shia Syed families. So, he asked his friends about the history and started going to *Majalis*. According to him, his family created many issues, they beat him with shoes and even extrude him of a house. He said that his all family members are well-educated but when I was in ninth standard, it was my annual board exam admission time. My father asked me to leave Shia Muslim’s beliefs, otherwise he will not send my admission. He said, at that time I was in extreme

conflict that should I listen to my parents or the Master. On that day, I just left everything and preferred to choose this way. After that what change can come in my life, he said, my education, future, hence everything just finished. So, I hold the Master's hand and my life just got completely changed. It has been five or six years, I have converted to Shia Islam. After the conversion of his belief system, he changed his real name to "Atta Ali" which means largesse of Ali. Now, he introduced himself as belonging to Fiqah-e-Jafariya. He said that his parents still not talk to him but he is fulfilling the responsibilities of his family. He is an event manager. He went to his work in the morning and come back home at late night. He did not eat dinners or lunch at home, just went to house for sleep. Even, he eats outside from hotels. According to him, if he was not guarded by the Lord, today he will completely become an addict of intoxicants. The Master has saved his life and he is very thankful to God. He told that I also wished to visit the shrines of Imam, but not able to afford the expenses. Even, when I submitted my passport to the *Salaar*, I have not even a penny to give him. But, the Master arranged all the expenses and I became a *Zawar* of Imam Hussain (A.S). This is all because of the Lord's blessings.

Another Sunni participant, who is 31 years old and done intermediate level of education. He is a property dealer. He has four family members, including parents and two siblings. According to him, his life takes different turns. He was not on right track before, as per him, he might be killed by someone or he may killed anyone. Because, he was very extremist but then some ten years ago he met a spiritual person. He changed his life and guided him to adopt the right path. His case is different from the above mentioned case. His eldest brother is in Pak Airforce and according to him he is also fond of taking part in the Arbreen walk. He told that his family did not became a hurdle while practicing the Shia Muslim rituals. He did not completely adopt all the practices which Shia Muslims do. It is observed that he offered prayers according to the Sunni prayers method. According to him that practicing rituals is one's own choice and I do not think that it must be exhibited to others. He said that the grief and sorrow for Imam Hussain (A.S) is in our hearts. According to him, it is believed by most of the Shia Muslims that Sunni Muslims do not have believe on Imam. But, this is not the fact, certainly they must have less trend of visiting the shrines of Shia Imams. But, this does not mean that they do not have believe on it. He told that since his childhood, on every Ashura his mother used to put dust on their heads and prohibit them to use antimony in their eyes.

She does not let them to comb hairs on Ashura. He said that his mother gave reasons to not doing such things that those days are mourning days. Then he told that, once I bring *Alam* of Hazrat Ghazi Abbas (A.S) in the home and my father critique on it by saying that his son is becoming Shia. The respondent then replied to his father, this *Alam* is of Ghazi Abbas Alamdar (A.S) and its responsibility is none of us. He and his brother gave briefing to their father that Hazrat Abbas is of all Muslims. He convinced his father that they can put *Alam* in their home as well because this is not only specific to some people. He said that Alhumdulillah today I have that *Alam* in my house. The respondent believed that Mola Hussain (A.S) saved my life and I am very thankful to him. He told that there are some personal matters of life which I cannot share with you. I was really not a good person and even I was very far away from religion. Just because of God's blessings I came back to the right path. He told that he wanted to come to the shrines of Imam but he had no knowledge that people walk from different areas towards Karbala. He said that this is honour for him to being a part of the prestigious walk.

5. CHALLENGES DURING THE ARBAEEN WALK

5.1. Gender segregation in Arbaeen walk

In Islamic countries, gender segregation refers to the practices and requirements for the separation of men and boys from women and girls in social and other settings (Buisson, 2013, p. 100). There are diverging opinions among experts in Islamic theology concerning gender segregation. However, Iraq is one of the Islamic countries, where gender segregation is somehow required for individuals in practicing their customs and tradition. Arbaeen walk is one of the biggest gatherings in Iraq, where people of all genders participate in it. However, the question arises whether the terms and conditions are same for all genders while taking part in the walk. Did participants encountered any problem due to gender segregation? Findings indicate diverse opinions of the participants regarding such concepts. Though, it is observed during Arbaeen walk that males and females from different places interacted with each other. But, there were some points where gender segregation was witnessed. During the Arbaeen walk, it is observed that there were separate places to stay for men and women. In one *Mawkib*, there were arrangements for all males *Zaireen* while another *Mawkib* was for females only. Men were dealing all the male *Zaireen* while women were taking care of all the female *Zaireen*. However, mostly males were seen as serving food to all the *Zaireen* on the roads during the Arbaeen walk. Because, women were supposed to giving services to the female pilgrims inside the *Mawkib*. Respondents were asked about the presence of *Mehram* (immediate relatives) with females to participate in the Arbaeen walk. According to most of the respondents, *Mehram*'s presence is compulsory with females during Hajj and Umrah while in Arbaeen walk there is no compulsion of *Mehram* with females. However, diverse perceptions of male and female respondents have been seen in this regard. According to one of the respondent, who is 55 years old and works on a grocery store. He said:

محرم کا ہونا ضروری ہے۔ جب تک محرم نہ ہو آپ کا ویزا ہی نہیں لگتا۔

The presence of immediate relative is necessary. Until there is no immediate relative, you cannot get a visa.

Furthermore, his brother who is 62 years old said:

محرم کا پوچھتے ہیں آجکل، ویسے چلی جاتی ہیں۔ ایران والے نہیں چھوڑتے محرم کے بغیر۔

Now a days, they asked for *Mehram*. Otherwise, they go but Iran does not allow without *Mehram*.

Findings suggest that now a days, *Mehram* is required if any woman wants to participate in Arbreen walk. However, it was not strictly required before. As per the female respondent, who is 48 years old and has not experienced Arbreen walk. But she went to Iraq for visitation of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S). She said:

جب ہم گئے تھے تب محرم کا ہونا ضروری نہیں تھا۔ لیکن اب ضروری ہے کہ خواتین کے ساتھ ہو کیونکہ وہ لوگ کہتے ہیں۔ یہ ضروری نہیں کہ مرد ہی ہو خواتین بھی جاسکتی ہیں جیسا کہ ماں۔

When we went, *Mehram* was not compulsory at that time. But, now it is required along with females because they said so. It is not necessary that only males can go as a *Mehram*, but females can also go like mother.

It is observed that majority of the males were in favour of *Mehram* while most of the females said that it is not compulsory to go with *Mehram*. However, one of the female respondents who is 50 years old and experienced the Arbreen walk three times. She only went once with her husband to Karbala for Arbreen walk while other times she went with her daughter. She said:

کہتے ہیں کہ محرم کا ہونا ضروری ہے لیکن اگر محرم اجازت بھی دے تو ٹھیک ہے۔

It is said that *Mehram* is compulsory but if a *Mehram* gives permission then it is also acceptable.

One of the participants, who works as a man in the middle in bringing caravans to Iraq. He told that this year an affidavit signed by *Mehram* and a copy of ID card was required for the visa purposes of females. This rule was for only those who were going through buses. So, if a husband, father or bother give permission to a woman then she can go without them. Most of the females go alone without their immediate relatives to take part in the Arbreen walk. However, they did not experience any bad incident due to going alone. Though, among them there were few who have diplomatic opinions regarding the phenomenon of the *Mehram*. One of the respondents, who is 32 years old and experienced the Arbreen walk once in her life. During the walk, she said:

میرے خیال کے مطابق ایک حد تک محرم کا ہونا ضروری ہے بھی اور نہیں بھی اس لیے کہ جب میں خود آ رہی ہوں کہ یہاں پر آ کے آپ میل، فی میل والا تضاد نہیں دیکھ سکتے۔ پتا نہیں مولا کا کرم ہے یا کیا وجہ ہے وہ چیز آپکو یہاں محسوس ہی نہیں ہوتی۔ آپ بالکل ایسا محسوس کریں گے کہ جیسے آپ اپنے گھر پر ہیں۔ آپ اگر اکیلے بھی چل رہے ہیں، دن کا ٹائم ہے یا رات کا ٹائم آپ بالکل بھی خود کو غیر محفوظ محسوس نہیں کریں گے۔

According to my point of view, in one sense a *Mehram's* presence is necessary. It is compulsory as well as not required, because I am experiencing it myself. Here, you cannot see any male or female discrimination. I do not know, whether it is the Master's blessings or what reason, you do not feel such vibes. You will exactly feel like you are in your own home. Even, if you are walking alone, whether it is day or night time. You will not feel yourself unsafe.

Findings suggest that some of the female respondents were in favour of *Mehram's* presence before but after experiencing the Arbaeen walk alone they changed their opinion and said that females can go alone as it is not required that this condition is must. However, according to male respondents *Mehram* is necessary and they have different opinion in this regard. One of the respondents, who is 38 years old and he said:

میرے خیال میں محرم کا ہونا ضروری ہے۔ ویسے بھی شریعت کہتی ہے کہ خواتین بغیر محرم کے سفر نہ کریں۔ خیر یہ میرا اپنا نظریہ بھی ہے کہ محرم کا ہونا ضروری ہے۔ یہ ایک لمبا سفر ہے اور ویسے بھی سالار جتنا بھی خیال کیوں نہ رکھے لیکن اگر کوئی مسئلہ ہو جائے تو جو بات آپ کے اپنے بھائی یا والد صاحب کی ہوگی، اس کی جگہ کوئی اور نہیں لے سکتا۔

I think, *Mehram's* presence is required. According to Shariah, females should not travel without a *Mehram*. Well, this is my point of view that *Mehram's* presence is compulsory. As, this is a long traveling and no matter how much a *Salaar* (group leader) take care of the members. But if any problem happened, then the way your father or brother make it for you, no one can takes place of it.

It is believed by some of the respondents that though Iraq is not their residential area and so many problems can happen to people. So, in that case a *Mehram* is required for females. During the stay in Iraq, most of the time women in our group got lost which created problems for *Salaar*. Then, *Salaar* have to find them because it is their responsibility. The same incident happened to me as well. We reached Karbala in day time, after some rest we went to different places to visit at night. It was very late night, we just went to the last *Maqaam* and from there we were supposed to go to hotel. But at that time, within seconds I just left one of my group member's hand and suddenly I saw no one around myself. I got too much worried for a while and then I requested the Iraqi person to call on *Salaar's* phone number. Fortunately, I wore my ID card on which *Salaar's* contact numbers were mentioned, otherwise it would be very difficult for me to find out the hotel. Because within hours, it was not possible to remember the way. However, for some time I feel myself very alone among strangers. Similarly, during the

walk from Najaf to Karbala, many female members sometimes went to other poles instead of the particular pole number which the *Salaar* told everyone to stay and wait for others. Due to which *Salaar* have to face many problems. This is why most of the men think a *Mehram* would be better to take care of females. Among the respondents, only two of the male participants who belong to Sunni group were not in favour of the requirement of *Mehram*. As per the 31 years old respondent:

ہم نے حج میں بھی دیکھا، الحمد للہ وہاں بھی گیا ہوں۔ تو اب یہاں پہ آ کے تو کوئی کمبخت ہی ہو گا کہ جسکے ذہن میں محرم یا نامحرم والی بات آئے گی۔ کیونکہ یہاں پر آ کر تو نہ ماننے والے بھی ان ہستیوں کا ادب کرتے ہیں۔ جو ماننے والے ہیں وہ تو نہایت ہی اس سوچ چلے جاتے ہیں کہ ان سے کوئی غلطی نہ ہو جائے جس کی وجہ سے مولا انہیں پسند نہ کریں اور پھر نہ ہی معافی ہو۔ میرے خیال میں کوئی کمبخت ہو گا جو ایسی سوچ رکھتا ہو گا۔

We have seen in Hajj, *Alhumdulillah*, I went to there. The one who came to this place would be stupid if he will bring a concept of *Mehram* or *Na-Mehram* in his mind. Because, in this place those who are not even believers also respect these mystics. Those who are believers think that they should not do any mistake due to which the Lord do not like them nor forgive. I think a stupid will have such a thought.

Findings indicate that respondents have interpreted Islam according to their point of views. No doubt, regarding *Mehram* Islam presents its own interpretations according to Sunnah and Quran. But, it is observed that respondents belonging to different sects have different point of views on this concept. With reference to female's perspectives, most of them have not considered it compulsory. That is why it is observed that females were more in numbers as compared to males. Respondents were asked about the numbers of male and female participants in their groups. Most of the respondents said that females were more in numbers than males during Arbaceen walk. While, some believed that males were more as compared to females. However, it is observed during the Arbaceen gathering that it was almost equal in numbers. According to one of the male participants, who is 41 years and brings caravan to Iraq. He said:

اس بار قافلے میں عورتیں زیادہ تھیں۔ یہ پہلا قافلہ ہے جس میں عورتیں زیادہ ہیں، پہلے مرد زیادہ ہوتے تھے اور ٹھیک ہوتا تھا۔ عورتوں کی وجہ سے ہمیں تھوڑی پریشانی ہوتی ہے اگر زیادہ ہوں۔ اس میں یہ ہوتا ہے کہ اپنی عبادت خراب ہوتی ہے۔ ان کی وجہ سے جو واک ہم دو دن میں کرتے ہیں وہ ہمیں چار دن میں کرنی پڑتی ہے۔

This time, females were more in caravan. This is the first caravan in which females are more otherwise males were more before, which was better. We get disturb due to females, if they are more in numbers. For the reason that our worship also gets disturb.

Because of them, we have to cover the walking distance of two days in four days.

Findings suggest that males have to face problems due to females because they walk slowly than males. But the reality which I observed is that females along with their children and old age females regardless of their health issues and other problems, were still eager to take part in the walk. However, it is obvious they cannot go fast like males who are young and have not such issues. It is believed by some of the female respondents that a man can bear any situation no matter how hard it is. It is observed that parents who came with their young children faced problems due gender segregation. Because stay areas for males and females were separate due to which mothers faced problems in handling their children alone. Due to such separate setups for *Zaireen*, one of our group member who came with his disabled son faced more problems. Iraqis and Iranian women are very strict regarding *Mehram*. The disabled boy though 18 years old, cannot sleep alone without his mother. Whenever, we stayed at night in any *Mawkib* all of the female pilgrims started shouting on him and covering themselves with shawls. Then, every time we had to make them understand that he is not a normal person and does not have any sense. Due to language barrier they did not easily understood the situation. The same case happened to her when visiting the shrines because women are not allowed in the man's side while men are not in the woman's side. Because of such segregation, she faced many problems then she requested the guards standing outside the shrines to go with her disabled son so that he can touch the grave of the Imams. It is observed that outside the shrine males and females talk to each other and even sit in the same place. But inside the shrine it is strictly prohibited to enter each other's sides. It is also noted that females cannot enter in the shrine without a long shawl and socks. However, the same condition is not for men.

5.2. Travel preferences

Findings suggest diverse perceptions regarding the traveling preferences. Some of the respondents preferred to go by air while others preferred traveling through bus. The respondents mentioned different reasons on their choices. Most of the participants preferred to go by air from Pakistan to Karbala. Why do they prefer to go by air towards Iraq for Arbreen walk? According to one of the respondents who is 18 years and travelled through air plane. She said:

میں بائے ایئر جانا پسند کروں گی۔ اس کی وجہ یہ ہے کہ ایک تو میں مولا کے روزے پر جلدی پہنچ جاؤں گی۔ اور مجھے نہیں لگتا کہ بس کے ذریعے اتنا سفر کر سکتی ہوں۔

I will prefer to go by air, for the reason that I will reach timely to the shrine of Imam. And I do not think so that I can travel through bus.

It is observed that respondents have their own explanations for traveling preferences. Some respondents cannot travel through bus due to their health issues. While there are other reasons as well for preferring to go by air. As per the 38 years old respondent, who experienced the road travelling only for once. He said:

ہم نے پہلی دفعہ بائے روڈ سفر کیا تھا، اس کے بعد ہم نے توبہ استغفار کر لی۔ اب ہم بائے ایئر جاتے ہیں۔ بائے روڈ میں سب سے اہم مسئلہ جو ہے وہ جگہ ہے۔ یہ ہمیں تفتان بارڈر پر ٹھہراتے ہیں۔ وہاں پر ہزاروں بلدے ہیں اور صرف دو واش روم میسر ہیں۔ اب بندہ نماز کیسے رکھ سکے گا۔ وہاں سب سے بڑا مسئلہ یہ تھا۔ میں نے سفر کرنا ہے، مولا کی زری پر جانا ہے۔ میں ایسی حالت میں کیسے چلا جاؤں۔ صرف مجھے یہ مسئلہ تھا۔

First time, we travelled through road. After that we ask forgiveness. Now, we go by air. The main issue in road traveling is the place where we stay in Taftan border. There are thousands of people and only two washrooms are available for them. How a person can now keep his/her prayers. This was the main issue there. I have to travel. I have to go to the shrine of Imam, how can I go in this condition? I have only this issue.

It is believed by the respondents that there is very bad condition of Taftan border where pilgrims have to stay for several days. There is no facilitation over there for the pilgrims. No appropriate place for sleep and no proper system for food. Most of the people faced problems due to no proper washroom system. Due to uncleanliness, people are unable to offer prayers which is an obligatory task for Muslims. As compared to males, females have to face more problems. Female respondents told that washrooms were in such a bad condition that they have to go in open places. The place where people used to stay for many days is known as “Pakistan House”. According to one of the respondents, who is 46 years old and experienced road traveling as well as by air. She said:

اب بائے روڈ کے بہت مسئلے ہیں۔ پہلے اتنے نہیں تھے۔ پاکستان ہاؤس والے بہت تنگ کرتے ہیں۔ اپنے پاکستانی تنگ کرتے ہیں، آگے ایران والے کچھ نہیں کہتے۔ وہ لوگ بلاوجہ لیٹ کر داتے ہیں۔ فی کس پانچ سو روپے لیتے ہیں۔ جتنے دن رکھ گے پانچ سو روپے دو گے۔ انھوں نے اپنا بزنس بنایا ہوا ہے۔ پیسوں کے چکر میں زائرین کو ستاتے ہیں۔ پہلے قافلے والے خود مختار ہوتے تھے۔ اب وہ اپنی مرضی سے جانے کی اجازت دیتے ہیں، چاہے وہ سات دن روکیں یا آٹھ دن۔

There are many problems now by road, as compared to before. The people of Pakistan house troubled more. As our own Pakistanis bothers, Iranians do not say anything. Those people take per person five hundred rupees. They charge you five hundred rupees for the days you will stay there. They have make it as their own business. In voracity of money, they tortured the pilgrims. Earlier, the people of caravans were independent. Now they permit to go by their own choice, whether they stop you for seven or eight days.

Findings suggest that on Taftan border, the Pakistan house creates more problem for the pilgrims. On their order, people have to stay for many days until they will not pay. Because of money, they do not let the pilgrims go. It is believed by the respondents that the organization of Fiqah-e-Jafariya itself is involved. They stopped the pilgrims to give them security and for that stay they take money from pilgrims. Respondents believed that if they are our representatives then they must took a stand for the pilgrims, but it is all about politics. One of the respondent told that when I went for the first time, I just got irritated and took a stand against them. I started protest and I crossed the barrier of Pak Army. There is also thousands of Army forces who gave security to the pilgrims during the sensitive areas in between the borders. I said to them, what you people can do? You can shoot me only, then shoot me. But I will go because I have to go, now I will not stay here. After that rest of the group members came and we did protest. On the next day after this reaction, they let us go. The respondent believed that such steps should be taken by the organization not by the individuals. Findings suggest that a contract is given to Pak Army who are residing there and there is only one canteen. You cannot go outside from the boundary to buy things. People have to buy things from that particular canteen which is very expensive. However, the last year in 2018, a news came in the Nai Baat Newspaper on 9th October, 2018 that three people died who went through Taftan border, while thousands of people were sick. Because, it was cold nights and there was no proper system for people to stay and keep themselves safe from cold weather. The respondents believed that by road people have to face these problems. However, there are some respondents, who still want to go by road and they have their own perceptions. According to one of the respondents who is 55 years old, he said:

زیارت کا مقصد یہ ہے کہ جتنی تکلیف زیادہ ہوگی اتنا زیادہ ثواب ہوگا۔ جو لوگ بائے روڈ جاتے ہیں انکا ثواب زیادہ ہے کیونکہ ان کو زیادہ تکلیفیں ہوتی ہیں۔

The purpose of the visitation is that if more suffering a person get, the more merits will be given. Those people who go by road

they have more intrinsic worth because they suffer more.

It is believed the respondents that if a person face many hurdles in this traveling, he/she will get more virtues. Most of the respondents believed that their Imam and his family suffered more so they will also feel the pain in love of them. Despite of such problems, the respondents having such belief system said that if they get any chance again in their life to visit the shrines of Imam, they will still prefer to go by bus. However, another opinion came from the respondents regarding the preferences. In this regard, one of the respondents, who is 64 years old and went through bus. He said:

غریب لوگ بائے ایئر نہیں جاسکتے۔ غریب لوگ بس کے ذریعے جاتے ہیں۔

Poor people cannot go by air. Unprivileged people go by bus.

Findings indicate that the choice of going through bus or air plane depends on the socio-economic status of the pilgrims. Those who afford the expense of air ticket travel by air while those who are unprivileged cannot afford such expense. Though, people gave explanations that they bear such sufferings during the traveling because of their love with Imam, but the ground realities are different. The preferences for traveling depends on the financial status. Otherwise, it is not an easy task to put up with the problems happened during bus traveling. However, respondents believe that there are those privileged people who can even afford to go by air, but they want to bear all the sufferings by going through bus. Hence, after considering all the factors discussed above, it can be said that the travel preferences of the people depend on three things: health, money, and love with Imam.

5.2.1. Security issues

Findings indicate that people who go by air do not face any security issues as compared to the ones who travel through bus. The respondents shared their experiences of traveling through bus. According to the respondents, during the reign of Saddam pilgrims cannot freely visit the shrines of their Imam. He did not let them to celebrate the mourning days of their Imams. Respondents believed that there was a lot of terrorism in Iraq, especially in the time period of Saddam. People faced terrorist attacks at that time. According to one of the respondents, who is 62 years old and visiting the shrines of the Imam since the reign of Saddam Hussain. He said:

2004 میں ہمارے سامنے کربلا میں دھماکا ہوا تھا لیکن ہم امام بارگاہ میں تھے۔ اس لیے ہم بچ گئے تھے۔

In 2004, a terrorist attack happened in Karbala in front of us. But, we were in *Imambargah* that is why we were safe.

The history shows that Iraq has been the victim of terrorism. Even, in era of Saddam's government pilgrims have to sacrifice their sons in the way of their Imam. Because Saddam ordered the forces to cut off the hands of pilgrims, but people did not stop then they killed their children. After the collapse of Saddam's era, the Daesh appeared in Iraq and killed many innocents. Another one of the female participants of age 46 years said:

2011 کی بات ہے ہماری ٹرین میں بم لگا ہوا تھا۔ پھر گورنمنٹ کو پتا چل گیا تھا۔ کوسئہ کے قریب علاقہ تھا وہاں ٹرین رک گئی۔ سب لوگ ٹرین سے باہر نکل گئے تھے۔ اور جب چیک کیا تو اندر بم لگا ہوا تھا۔ پھر اسے ناکارہ کیا۔ وہ بم زائرین کے لیے لگایا ہوا تھا۔

Since 2011, a bomb was placed in our train. Then, the government got to know and train stopped near the area of Quetta. All the people went out from the train. After tracking, the bomb was found inside the train. Then, it was disposed. The bomb was placed for the pilgrims.

The respondents faced such type of incidents but according to them no harm happened to them whenever they went to Iraq. Most of the respondents told that they have heard such incidents but they were always safe. They told that many times it happened that terrorist attacked on the pilgrim's buses that is why now buses can only move with the convoy of Pak Army. As per 64 years old male respondent:

کوسئہ سے آگے تفتان 4 گھنٹے کا سفر ہے لیکن وہ علاقہ جس کو ہم علاقہ غیر کہتے ہیں وہاں چورڈا کو سے بچنے کے لیے آرمی کی کنوائے ساتھ جاتی ہے۔ آرمی پورے علاقے، روڈ اور گلیوں کو بند کرتی ہے۔ پھر قافلے کو گزارتی ہے۔ وہ چار گھنٹے کا سفر سولہ گھنٹے میں کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ پھر راستے میں کھانے پینے کی بھی دشواری آتی ہے۔

Next to Quetta, there is 4 hours of traveling till Taftan, the area which we called as prohibited area. In order to secure themselves from thieves, a convoy of Army go along with us. Army closed the whole area, roads, and streets then they let the caravan go. We have to cover the four hours of distance in sixteen hours, then we also face the difficulties regarding food and drinks.

Findings suggest that before such security they used to stay on different stops for food and washroom. But now they cannot stop for a while for food or anything. Even, for washrooms they have to wait until the Army give permission. Findings indicate that pilgrims who go through buses were given instructions while traveling from sensitive areas. *Salaar* ordered them that when we will travel to Taftan, on the way do not tell that you are pilgrim. Even during that few hours of traveling pilgrims do not wear black clothes as per the instructions of the *Salaar*. Because if they will show their identity then

they will be killed. The respondents told that still today few areas of Iraq are not secure much. One of respondents who is 22 years old, she:

کچھ علاقے ہیں سامرہ وغیرہ جہاں پہلے بہت ہوا کرتی تھی۔ سامرہ، کاظمین تو داعش کے اڈے ہیں۔ وہاں پر حالات بہت زیادہ خراب ہیں۔ اس لیے وہاں پر زیادہ نہیں ٹھہراتے۔ ایک سے دو گھنٹے میں بس لوگ نماز پڑھتے ہیں اور واپس چلے جاتے ہیں۔ وہاں پر کوئی نہیں رکتا۔

There are few areas like Samara, where the terrorist attacks happened before. Samara and Kazmain are the centres of Daesh. The conditions are very worse there, that is why you cannot stay more there. Within one or two hours people offer prayers and then return back. Nobody stay there with caravan.

The respondent told that when she went to Samara first time in 2014, two terrorist attacks happened but luckily she went into the bus. It is observed while traveling to Samara and Kazmain that armed forces were safeguarding the pilgrims. On the one side of road there were only army vehicles while on the other side pilgrims were traveling through buses and vans. It is observed that buses were moving very fast because of the security reasons. Mostly, night traveling is not allowed in those areas. However, it is believed by the respondents that whenever they see a police or an army soldier they feel themselves secure. It is observed that during the whole Arbaeen walk armed forces fulfilled their duty with great enthusiasm. They kept their lives in trouble just to safeguard the pilgrims. The respondents believed that today if they are able to walk safely that is just because of the armed forces and those people who gave their lives in the love of their Imam. According to the respondents, since ten or fifteen years the security system has been provided to the pilgrims. However, findings suggest that there are various reasons behind such terrorist activities against the pilgrims. Some believed that it has historical basis, like in the past Yazeed and his force did with Imam Hussain (A.S) and his family. Today the descendants of Yazeed is doing the same with Shia Muslims. However, according to one of the respondents who is 32 years old, he said:

دہشتگردی کے پیچھے دو وجوہات ہو سکتی ہیں جو میری سمجھ میں آتی ہے ایک تو مذہبی شدت پسندی اور دوسری ظاہر ہے قرآن کی رو سے دیکھا جائے تو یہود و نصاریٰ جو ہیں وہ ہمارے کھلے دشمن ہیں۔ وہ ہمارے دوست نہیں ہو سکتے یہ قرآن میں لکھا ہے۔ ان ساری باتوں کے پیچھے گو کہ شامل ہونے والے افراد جو ہوتے ہیں وہ مقامی ہوتے ہیں یا مقامی نہ بھی ہوں تو ہم مسلمان ہوتے ہیں۔ مثلاً طالبان یا داعش۔ ظاہراً ان کا لبادہ تو اسلام کا لبادہ ہے لیکن ان کے پس پردہ جو ہے قرآن کی تعریف کے مطابق یہود و نصاریٰ یہی لوگ ہیں۔

There could be two reasons behind the terrorism, which I think the first is religious extremism and secondly it is obvious from

Quran's perspectives Jewish and Christians are our enemies. They could not be our friends, as it is written in Quran. Though, behind all such activities people who are involved, are natives and if not natives then they are Muslims. For instance, Taliban or Daesh. Obviously, they have covered their faces with Islam but behind the scene according to the Quran's definition, Jewish and Christians are these people.

The respondents said that these terrorist people consider such activities as a *Jihad*. In the name of Islam, they kill the Muslims. They are supported by our enemies and then they create violence in Muslim countries. Respondents believed that if we look at current situations, all the Muslim countries are facing such security issues instead of their countries. So, they believe that the things are much conspicuous. According to the respondents, due to such activities Shia Muslims did not stop their processions. The respondents believed that after such activities Shia Muslims have started celebrating mourning days with great zeal. Findings indicate that Shia Muslims of Dhoke Syedan became victim of terrorist activities in 2012. It was the procession on seventh of Muharram and most of people sacrificed their lives. The respondents believed that despite of such activities now more and more people involve in processions and their numbers are increasing day by day. As per the 50 years old male respondent:

یہ واقعات بالکل بھی رکاوٹ نہیں بنتے۔ دہشتگردی نے اس کو اور بھی تقویت دی ہے اور اسکو بڑھایا ہے۔ ڈھوک سید اں کے لوگ دہشتگردی کا شکار ہوئے ہیں اس کے باوجود مائیں اپنے بچوں کو خود تیار کر کے بھیجتی ہیں۔ یہاں پر اگر ہمارے اس علاقے لوگوں میں اتنا جوش و جذبہ ہے تو جب امام کے پاس جا رہے ہیں ان کی باگاہ میں پھر کیسا ڈر یا خوف ہونا۔

These activities do not become hurdle. Terrorist activities have motivated it more and promoted it. The people of Dhoke Syedan became victim of terrorism, despite of it, the mothers prepare their children themselves to let them go. Here, if people of our area have such enthusiasm, so when going to Imam's shrine then what kind of fear or terror.

Respondents believed that terrorists do such activities to make people afraid of going to Karbala. However, the truth is that these strategies have not stopped them. Most of them said that all humans have to die one day so why not dying in the way of God. It is observed during Arbaeen that millions of people are taking part in the walk, though they know the security issues and the condition of Iraq. This shows that no matter how much opponents are trying to eradicate the Shia Muslims, in return Shia Muslims show

unity and harmony among themselves by going to Karbala every year. Such unity and harmony have packed down the terrorists today that they are no less in numbers.

5.3. Environmental issues

As, most of the area of Iraq consists of desert. During the Arbaceen walk the weather was different in different timings, however in the day time it was somehow hot but nights were very cold. On the way to Karbala, it is observed that the roads were full of people because there were millions of people walking towards Karbala. Due to such crowd it was difficult to manage the cleanliness on the roads. Though, Iraqis tried their level best to keep the areas clean. It is observed during the walk that young children were making the way clean for the pilgrims. Even, people stood on the road while holding garbage bags so that pilgrims put the trash and junk in it. But, still it was not much clean because of the huge crowd. Due to desert areas, pilgrims have to face too much dust during the walk. Most of the respondents suffered from flu, bad throat, and temperature. That is why most of the people who have dust allergy used masks to cover their mouth. Furthermore, people who are not used to walking long, they suffered from blisters on their feet. Due to which they faced difficulty in walking, but it is observed that people did not stop the walk due to such problems.

5.3.1. Culture and food

Findings suggest that there is a lot of difference between Pakistani and Iraqi food. Most of the respondents confronted much difficulty while eating their cultural food. I was also not able to easily eat their cultural foods. Though, there were various kinds of foods and drinks but due to cultural differences our tastes have not build accordingly. However, according to one of the respondents who is 32 years old, she said:

ہاں جی کھانے کے حوالے سے بہت مشکلات کا سامنا کرنا پڑا۔ کیونکہ شروع میں جب آتے ہیں تو آتے ہی آپکے سالار پکین کی طرف رخ نہیں کرتے ہیں۔ تو آپ کو اعراتی کھانا استعمال کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ اور آپ کیونکہ فی الحال اس کھانے کے عادی نہیں ہوتے تو آپکو بہت زیادہ تکلیف ہوتی ہے۔

Yes, I have faced much problems with respect to food. Because, in the starting time when we reached, the *Salaar* do not moved promptly to the kitchens. So, you have to use the Iraqi food. Though you are not used to this food so you feel difficulty more.

Respondents believed, though they paid for the food expense as well but in the beginning they have to use the Iraqis food because it took time to sort out the things.

Respondents mentioned the differences between their cultural food systems. According to the 36 years old female respondent, there is much difference. She said:

پاکستانی اور اعراتی کھانوں میں بہت زیادہ فرق ہے۔ وہ لوگ قدرتی چیزیں استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ زیتون کا تیل استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ وہ لوگ زیادہ پکا کر نہیں کھاتے۔ ہم لوگ تو آرٹیفیشل مصالحے زیادہ استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ چینی وہ استعمال نہیں کرتے۔ وہ چاول ابال کر کھاتے ہیں۔ وہ گوشت زیادہ استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ ان کا کھانا کھانے میں بہت مشکل پیش آتی ہے کیونکہ ان کے کھانے کا ذائقہ نہیں ہوتا ہے۔ اور ہم لوگ یہاں پر زیادہ مصالحے پسند کرتے ہیں۔

There is a lot of difference among Pakistani and Iraqi food. They use natural things more, like olive oil. They do not cook food more, as we use artificial spices more. They do not use sugar and eat boiled rice. Meat is used more by them. There is a lot of difficulty encountered while eating their food because their food is tasteless and we liked to use more spices.

Findings suggest that some of the respondents who do not like eating meat, they faced problem due to it. While some of the respondents faced problems due to less usage of spices. However, one of the main problems faced by Pakistanis was the inadequate availability of black tea. Because, Iraqis use green tea more without the use of milk while Pakistanis are fond of black tea with the mixture of milk. It is observed that there were few *Mawkibs* established by Pakistanis and Indians. They provided all the pilgrims black tea, hence the Pakistanis and Indians were seen more on those *Mawkibs*. However, there were few respondents who like more Iraqi food and did not faced any difficulty in eating their food. As per the 45 years old female respondent:

نہیں مجھے ان کا کھانا کھانے میں کوئی مشکل پیش نہیں ہوئی۔ بلکہ مجھے پسند آئے ہیں، ٹیسٹی نوڈ تھا۔ مجھے تو وہاں اپنے پاکستانی کھانوں کی یاد نہیں آئی۔

No, I did not face any difficulty while eating their food. In fact, I liked it. It was tasty food. I did not missed my Pakistani food there.

It is evident that not all the respondents faced difficulty, there were few participants who in fact liked their cultural foods. The reason behind it the respondent was suffering from stomach problem and because of eating spice less food her stomach did not disturb her, so that is why she liked it. While there were some respondents, who also claimed their food good enough because they were not able to afford the expense and they came to Karbala without paying their food expense to the *Salaar*. Those people only paid for the travel expense rather than all the expenses. However, respondents believed that they

had to face more difficulties while traveling through bus via Taftan border rather than during the Arbaeen walk. According to one of the respondents who is 22 years old, she said:

راستے میں کھانے پینے اور واش روم کا بہت مسئلہ تھا۔ بلوچستان والی سائڈ پر پانی نہیں ملتا تھا۔ دو دو دن ہم نے بغیر پانی کے گزارے۔ وہاں پہ چیزیں بہت مہنگی تھیں۔ ملتی ہی اتنے نام بعد تھی تو پھر انھوں نے کافی مہنگے ریٹ لگائے ہوئے تھے۔

On the way, there was an issue of food, drinks, and washrooms. On the Balouchistan side, water was not available. We have spent two days without water. Things were much expensive there. Though, things were available after very long distance so that is why their rates were high.

Findings suggest that the issues of road traveling were more difficult as compared to the problems faced during the Arbaeen walk. Regardless of such issues, participants still want to go again and again to the Iraq. Because, respondents believed that their Imam and his family had faced more difficulties than what they have to face today.

5.4. Managerial issue

In the Arbaeen walk, people who go in the form of group consists of three main participants, such as group member (pilgrim), leader, and man in the middle. All of the three members have specified roles in the group. But, where there is more than one person conflict exists among them. According to the respondents, such issues also happened to them. At some point the *Salaar's* management was not right while on the other side the group members were not cooperating with their group leader. However, findings indicate that the more issues came from the man in the middle. According to one of the respondents who is 58 years old, she said:

پچھلے سال کی بات ہے ہمارا سالار ہمیں تفتان بارڈر پر ہی چھوڑ کے چلا گیا۔ پھر ہم نے پولیس کو اطلاع کی کہ ہمیں یہاں اکیلا چھوڑ گیا۔ پھر وہاں کوئی میانوالی سے قافلہ آیا ہوا تھا اس کے سالار نے ہمیں تسلی دی کہ گھبرانے کی ضرورت نہیں ہے وہ ہمیں لے جائے گا۔

Last year, our group leader left us on the Taftan border. Then, we informed the police that he left us alone here. There was a caravan that came from Miyanwali. Its group leader gave us satisfaction that there is no need to be worried, he will take us.

It is observed during the Arbaeen day, most of the pilgrims requested other *Salaar* to give them shelter because their *Salaar* has left them alone here. I met a young girl,

while we were entering into the shrine. She was alone in Karbala, as her family members came through bus and she reached in the Karbala by walking on foot. She was very worried and kept herself in the boundary of the shrine. Due to mismanagement, pilgrims had to face such issues in Iraq. The respondents believed that the main issue they faced there, was the language barrier. They were not able to communicate with each other. One of the respondents who is 31 years old, he said:

ہم لوگ انگلش کو انٹرنیشنل زبان سمجھتے ہیں لیکن یہاں کے لوگ جو ہیں وہ اپنے سکولوں کے اندر انگلش قاعدہ ہی نہیں پڑھاتے۔ یہاں پہ زبان کی ہم لوگوں کو مشکل ہو رہی ہے، خاص طور پہ چیزیں لیتے دیتے ہوئے۔

We consider English as an international language. But, here people do not teach their children an English book in the schools. Here, we are having language problem, especially during buying things.

It is observed during the fieldwork that Iraqis were not able to understand the English language. It was very hard to understand them the point. Some of the Iraqis make fun of English words while others tried to learn few words from the Pakistanis and Indians. Due to language barrier, some of the shopkeeper told the pilgrims more prices of the things. The respondents believed that due to different currency they are unable to understand how much they have to pay to shopkeeper, in such confusion most of the respondents gave more money to them. It was also difficult to bargain with the shopkeepers due to language barrier. One of the respondents who is 31 years old, he said:

ہمیں ایئر پورٹ پہ تھوڑی سی تکلیف ہوئی ہے۔ جو وہاں پہ انھوں نے مافیا بنایا ہوا ہے کہ وہاں پہ کسی اور کی گاڑی چلنے نہیں دیتے اور اپنی گاڑیاں وہاں پہ چلا کے اپنی مرضی کے کرائے وصول کرتے ہیں۔ زائرین کے اتھ ایسا نہیں کرنا چاہیے۔

On the airport, we faced some problem. There is a mafia who do not let other vehicles to move, and only allowed their own vehicles. They take rent according to their own choice. This should not be done with pilgrims.

During the fieldwork, it is noted that the vans are arranged outside the airport to drop the pilgrims outside the boundary of the airport which was not much more. The drivers took much rent from our *Salaar*. There is a rule that no other van can move within that boundary. Next to the boundary, there was terminal where the buses took the pilgrims to Najaf or other areas of the Iraq. However, some of the respondents believed that

Salaar also faced difficulties in managing the group members. As per the 22 years old female respondent:

سالار کو اتنے لوگوں کو سنبھالنے میں مشکلات بھی پیش آتی تھیں۔ کبھی کبھی ہمیں ہوٹل کے لیے بہت انتظار کرنا پڑتا تھا۔ کبھی سارا سامان لے کے گلی میں بٹھا دیتا تھا۔ کیونکہ کبھی ہوٹل فری نہیں ہوتا تھا۔ کافی جگہ ایسا تھا کہ پہلے سے ہوٹل کا بندوبست نہیں ہوتا تھا۔

Salaar had to face problems while dealing number of people. Sometimes, we had to wait for the hotels. At times, we sat outside in the streets along with the luggage. Because sometimes the hotels were not free. It was happened many times that the hotels were not arranged before.

Findings suggest that some of the respondents had to wait for their hotel while there were few respondents who told that their *Salaar* booked the hotel before they arrived. But, they also faced problems. As per the 32 years old female:

ہمارے سالار نے پہلے ہی ہوٹل بک کر لیا تھا۔ یہاں پہ تھوڑا سا مسئلہ دیکھنے میں آیا ہے۔ ہمارے ذہن میں تھا کہ شاید ہم کتنے اعلیٰ قسم کے ہوٹل میں جائیں گے۔ لیکن شروع میں ہمیں صحیح ہوٹل نہیں ملے۔ واش رومز کا بہت مسئلہ تھا، ٹل کا کام نہ کرنا۔ کیونکہ ہم اپنے ملک کے عادی ہیں لیکن یہاں پہ تنگ تنگ کمرے اور چھوٹے بیڈ ہیں۔ لیکن کیونکہ ہم بہت جذباتی ہوئے ہوتے ہیں کہ کوئی نہیں ان پریشانیوں کو ہم نے برداشت کرنا ہے۔ لیکن پھر ہم نے پیسے بھی دیئے ہوتے ہیں تو یہ چیز بھی ہمارے ذہن میں ہوتی ہے کہ ہمیں ہر قسم کی سہولیات ملنی چاہئیں۔

Our *Salaar* had booked the hotel before. But, here a little problem has been seen. We thought that maybe we will go to luxurious hotels. But, in the beginning, we were not given appropriate hotels. Washrooms were very problematic, as nulls were not working properly. Though, we are used to our own country, but here there are constricted rooms and small beds. However, we became emotional when we came here and we then bear all these problems. But, we have also paid for it so this thing also comes in our mind that we must be given all the facilities.

Though, the respondents believed that whatever the problem they encountered in Karbala is nothing what their Imam had faced. On the other side, they also demand from the *Salaar* for the facilities because they have paid for it. However, the tragedy happened to our *Salaar* in Karbala was due to an Iraqi person, who works as the man in the middle. The day, when we were about to leave Najaf for the Arbaceen walk towards Karbala, an Iraqi man came to the hotel where we were residing and took the passport of our *Salaar* from the reception. We had to wait for many hours because without *Salaar's* passport none of us could go back to Pakistan. Then, the male members of our caravan went to the hotel and saw the video of the man while taking

the passport of our *Salaar*. The *Salaar* knew the person very well and he called him to come back, otherwise he will call the police. He came back with the passport but requested to not inform the police. The reason for picking up the *Salaar*'s passport was that he made a deal with the *Salaar* that he will arrange the hotel for five days. They met for once only and then the *Salaar* called him to confirm that whether he has booked the hotels for five days in Karbala. He replied that it is confirm but you have to stay for seven days rather than for five, but the *Salaar* refused. He said so because he gets per person one dollar commission. When the *Salaar* refused on his deal, he came in the next morning and concealed the passport. Just because of the commission he took the passport. The respondents believed that such incidents also create problems for them. However, findings suggest that some other problems also happened due to mismanagement. Because some of the group members do not listen to their *Salaar*'s instructions. Most of the time pilgrims, especially women lost in crowd which created problem for the *Salaar*. For the solution of this problem, respondents believed that *Salaar* should be given the pilgrims Iraqi Sims so that they can contact the *Salaar* if they get lost. Before coming back to Pakistan, those Sims should be returned back from them so that it can be use in future as well.

5.5. Role of media

Arbaeen walk, despite of being one of the largest gatherings in the world, it remains largely unknown to the people. Most of the respondents spoke over the lack of mainstream media coverage of the event. Though, the respondents believed that the concept of Arbaeen walk came into being through media as well. However, the fact is that media is concerned more with negativity and sensationalized stuffs, which is why at that time media depicted it more. As, it was not peaceful era rather it was the time of terrorism and cruelty. At that time, though media played a role by highlighting what happened to the Shia Muslims. But, now it is believed by most of the respondents that media is not playing a role, regardless of the biggest peaceful gatherings in the world. According to one of the respondents who is 31 years old, he said:

اربعین واک کی میڈیا کوریج اس طرح نہیں کرتا جس طرح کرنی چاہیے۔ آپ پوری دنیا میں دیکھ لیں جہاں پر دس لوگ اکٹھے ہو جائیں تو میڈیا اس کو فل ٹائم کوریج دے گا۔ لیکن یہاں کروڑوں لوگ ہیں اور میڈیا خاموش ہے۔

The media do not show coverage of Arbaeen walk, the way it should be given. The media will show full coverage to an event

if ten people get together, but here there are millions of people and the media is silent.

He further stated regarding the role of Pakistani Media:

پاکستانی میڈیا پہ تو مین 10 محرم تک ہوتی ہے۔ اربعین واک کے حوالے سے بس تھوڑا سا بتا دیتے ہیں۔ لیکن مکمل اعداد و شمار نہیں بتاتے۔ یا جس طرح بتانی چاہیے اس طرح نہیں بتاتے۔

Pakistani media shows until 10th Muharram. On Arbaeen day, just told a little bit about it. But, did not articulate the complete facts and figure. Or the way they should show it, they do not.

The respondents believed that media does not show if something good happened in the society, it is concerned more with the negative things. They create hype if something negative happened. Most of respondents believed that Pakistani media does not show full coverage of the Arbaeen walk. However, only four of the total participants claimed that media show coverage. One of the male Participants of age 32 years old said:

پاکستانی میڈیا ایک دو سال پہلے اربعین کی کوریج دیتا رہا ہے۔ میرے خیال میں سماء چینل نے ایک ڈاکیومنٹری تیار کی تھی۔ عاصمہ شیرازی اینکر خود وہاں پر گئی تھیں۔ اور باقی اسلامی چینلز پر چلتی رہتی ہے۔ لیکن جیو، اے آر وائے وغیرہ پر تو نہیں۔

About one or two years ago, Pakistani media was showing the coverage of Arbaeen. I think, Samaa channel made a documentary. The anchor, Asma Sherazi went to there. Some other Islamic channels also play but not on Geo and Ary channels.

Findings suggest that the Shia TV channels show more coverage of Arbaeen walk and some of the private Pakistani news channels have shown coverage of the walk. But most of the respondents claimed that they have not seen full coverage on Pakistani channels. However, the respondents believed that the print and electronic media do not show the coverage of the Arbaeen walk, they just mentioned few words in the headlines. But, they believed that the social media played much role in giving awareness to the rest of people. According to one of the respondents who is 55 years old, she said:

پرنٹ میڈیا تو اتنا نہیں کرتا لیکن سوشل میڈیا کرتا ہے۔ اس سے لوگوں کو بہت آگاہی ملی ہے۔ اسی وجہ سے ہر طبقے کے لوگ جانتے ہیں۔

Print do not (show) much but social media does, due to which people have gained more awareness. Owing to this reason, people belonging to all divisions go.

Another respondent who is 38 years old, he said:

میڈیا اس کی کوریج شوکر ہی نہیں سکتا! یہ آج کا مسئلہ نہیں ہے۔ امام حسین کو اس ناظم پہ کوریج نہیں دی گئی تھی۔ اس ناظم پہ بھی لوگوں کو یہی تاثر دیا گیا کہ ایک باغی ہے جس نے خلیفہ وقت کے خلاف آواز اٹھائی۔ اس کے بعد بھی یہی رہا۔ ہر دور میں ہر امام کو قید کرنے کا مقصد یہی تھا۔ آج اسے آپ میڈیا کوریج نہ دینے کو کہیں۔ آج کے دور میں اگر میں بات کروں اکیسویں صدی میں میڈیا کوریج نہ دینا اسی طرح ہے جیسے کسی کو نظر بند کرنا۔

Media cannot show the coverage of this walk! This is not today's issue, but it is the problem since 1400 years. Imam Hussain (A.S) was not given coverage at that time. People were made to believe that he is a *Baaghi* (rebel) who stood against the governor of the era. After that, it still continued. In each era, this was the purpose of imprisoning the Imam. Today, you can call it as not giving media coverage. If I talk about today's era then in the 21st century, giving no media coverage is just like confine someone completely.

He further said:

پاکستان تو جب سے بنا ہے آج تک وہ خود مختار ہے ہی نہیں۔ وہ کسی نہ کسی اے انڈر چل رہا ہے۔ وہ کیسے دے سکتا ہے؟ یہ خود مختار ہو تو شاید اس میں کچھ جرأت ہو جائے۔ کبھی یہ امریکہ کے انڈر ہے، کبھی یہ سعودیہ کے انڈر ہے۔ یہ کیسے دے سکتا ہے، اس کے لیے خود مختار ہونا ضروری ہے۔

Since the day, when Pakistan came into being, it is not an independent (country). It is working under someone. How can the (Pakistan) can give coverage? If it gets independent then it might be able to something. Sometimes, it is under the America while other times under the Saudia. How can it shows (coverage)? For that an Independence is needed!

However, the respondents believed that when some of the new channels came into being, they show somehow coverage but after establishment they also stopped themselves. It is believed by most of the respondents that the reason to not showing the coverage of such a peaceful gathering is to not letting people get aware of the walk. Because, the social media has attracted most of the people even Non-Muslims to take part in this walk. That is why, day by day its number is increasing more. However, respondents believed that the Arbreen walk should be given complete coverage so that the world could be able to know that how much the peaceful walk it is.

6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTERACTIONS IN THE ARBAEEN WALK

6.1. Group dynamics in the Arbaeen walk

According to (Forsyth, 2009, p. 2), group dynamics refers to the scientific study of the influential actions, processes, and changes that occur within and between groups over time. Findings suggest that most of the people go for Arbaeen walk in the form of group. All members stay together during the whole trip for several days, however, it depends on the package as well as *Salaar*. It is observed that most of the people were not familiar with each other in the group. But, within time they establish relationships with each other. The question arises that how do they make such connection? What factors give rise to a sense of cohesion? And how do groups and their leaders hold control over members? All these queries will be answered in this section. It is observed that during the Arbaeen walk, people who go in the form of groups first try to become familiar with each other. There is one group leader and sometimes more than one leader however, in our group there was one leader who took us to Iraq. In the beginning, it is noted that communications between group members were tentative and polite. However, the leader was very active because people paid him. He managed all the matters of the group members, for instance, allotted rooms to all members, arranging vans for the members, preparing meals and so on. However, it is observed that day by day participants started criticising over the procedures. Mostly people were not satisfied on the meals provided to them as it was much spicy, due to which they were not able to eat in properly. So, they started antagonism towards the leader in the form of groups. Female participants started going to each other's room and discussing all the matters on dining tables, hence, making groups.

6.1.1. Preference of isolation or group membership?

Findings suggest that respondents have different opinions regarding the group membership or preferring to go alone during the Arbaeen walk. There were few participants who prefer to go alone during the Arbaeen walk. However, it is observed that one way or another they have to be in a group. In fact, it is noted that there were some pilgrims who came alone from other foreign countries but then joined the groups in Iraq. One of the male pilgrims, who came from England alone and then he joined our

group later. Most of the respondents believed that it is good to be with group, as per one of the male respondents of age 38 years old:

ہمیشہ گروپ میں سفر کیا ہے کیونکہ گروپ کے بغیر ویزا نہیں ملتا۔ باہر کے ملک سے اکیلے مل جاتا ہے لیکن پاکستان سے نہیں۔

I always travelled in the form of group. Because you do not get a visa without a group. You can get a single visa from foreign countries but not from Pakistan.

Findings indicate that those people who want to go Iraq for the visitation of the shrines of their Imams, especially from Pakistan can only go in the form of group. Because a Pakistani resident cannot get a single visa. However, the same rule does not apply on other countries. The respondents believed that there are some people who go in the form of group from Pakistan but they get isolated once they reached on their destination. One of the respondents who was not our group member, she told that three of her friends along with her elder sister travelled to Iraq with group but they did not stay with that group. They spent their time separately from that group. They only paid for the travel expense to the group leader and managed their all expenses by themselves. However, according to one of the respondents who is 22 years old, she said:

گروپ کی شکل میں بھی صحیح ہے اور اکیلے بھی صحیح ہے۔ اس کے دو پہلو ہیں اگر آپ اکیلے جاتے ہو تو ایک طرح سے وہ ٹھیک بھی ہے جب بھی آپ زیارت پہ جانا چاہو آپ نکل سکتے ہو۔ گروپ میں پھر آپکو دیکھنا پڑتا ہے کہ کوئی ناراض نہ ہو جائے۔ خرچے کے حوالے سے اکیلے جانا بہتر ہے کیونکہ گروپ میں کبھی آپکو زیادہ دینا پڑ جاتا ہے اور کبھی کم۔

It is okay to go in the form of group or alone as well. It has two features, if you go alone then it is also in some way all right, as whenever you want to go to shrine you can go. In the group, you have to take care that nobody get annoyed. With respect to expense, going alone is better because in the group you have to pay sometimes more while other times less.

However, most of the respondents believed that in the form of group their expenses get low. As, according to one of the respondents who is 32 years old, he said:

گروپ کی صورت میں بہت فائدے ہیں، مثلاً آپ کو گاڑی بک کروانا ہے تو اگر آپ دو بندے ہیں تو تب بھی وہی قیمت ہے اور اگر دس ہیں تو تب بھی وہی ہوگی۔ اسی طرح رہائش کے لیے ہوٹل کا رخ کرنا ہے تو بھی جب آپ زیادہ تعداد میں ہوں گے تو ہوٹل سے آپ کو بہتر آفر کی جائے گی۔ گروپ کی صورت میں ظاہر سی بات ہے جانا بہتر ہے۔

There are more advantages in the form of group. For instance, you have to book a car, if you are two people the cost will be

same as if you are total ten people. Similarly, to stay you need a hotel so whenever you are more in numbers you will get a better offer from hotel. Obviously, it is better to go in the form of group.

It is believed by the respondents that in a group, the expense of the trip will be divided among members. So, it would be more beneficial to go in a group rather than in isolation. They believed that you only pay once a fixed amount to a leader and then you are free, so it is better to go as a group. Some of the respondents believed that a problem might be happened to anybody during the journey so people should go in the form of group. However, respondents also believed that people who get a first chance to visit the Iraq, they should come with a group. After getting an experience, they may come alone. According to one of the respondent who is 31 years old and belong to Sunni sect, he said:

گروپ کے ساتھ آنا بہتر ہے کیونکہ آپ کو اس سے بہت سی چیزوں کی راہنمائی ہو جاتی ہے۔ جن لوگوں کو جیسا کہ میری طرح بہت سی چیزوں کے بارے میں نہیں پتا ہوتا۔ میرا یہ خیال ہے کہ گروپ کے ساتھ آنا چاہیئے۔ آپ کی زیارتیں بھی اچھے طریقے سے ہو جائیں گی۔ اور معلومات بھی مل جاتی ہے۔

It is better to come with a group. Because, through it you get guidance regarding so many things. Those people who do not know much about many things, like me, will get to know about it. So, I think (we) should come in a group. You will do your pilgrimage very well and get information as well.

Finding suggest that according to religious point of view, respondents also prefer to go in the form of group as they will be able to get information regarding the different places and its background, especially those people who do not belong to the Shia group. So, in a group there are more advantages as compared to isolation, believed by the respondents.

6.1.2. Social interactions between Pakistani Shias and the international Shias (Iraqi, Iranians, and Indians)

In the Arbreen walk, people come from different countries of the world to commemorate the day of Arbreen. They belong to different cultures, however, their destination is same. During the walk, by some means people do interact with each other. However, the respondents interacted with mostly Indians, Iranians, and Iraqis. It is believed by the respondents that during the Arbreen walk, the leader of a group does not make any arrangements, however, all the arrangements are done by the natives of that area. It is observed that there were many *Mawkibs* made by different people, mostly

by Iranians and Iraqis. However, other Shia Muslims belonging to foreign countries also establish *Mawkibs* for the pilgrims, which includes India, UK, America, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, and so many. There were many Indian *Mawkibs* seen during the Arbaeen walk. We went to one of the Indian's *Mawkib*, where they cooked *Biryani* (chicken rice) for the *Zaireen* and served all of us with rice and tea. Some of the Indian women gave massage to the respondents, they also brought massage machines from India for the pilgrims. According to one of the respondents who is 45 years old, she said:

جو واک کے انتظامات ہوتے ہیں اس میں کوئی قافلے کے سالار کا ہاتھ نہیں ہوتا۔ وہ جو وہاں کے رہنے والے ہوتے ہیں لوگ وہ انکی طرف سے ہوتا ہے۔ ان لوگوں میں اتنا زیادہ ایک جنون ہوتا ہے کہ اگر سارا سال ایک بندہ جو ہے کھجوریں بیچ رہا ہے تو اسکے پاس اتنی آمدنی نہیں ہے کہ وہ اپنے گھر کا خرچ بھی چلا سکے۔ لیکن وہ سارا اس دن کے لینے جمع کرتا رہتا ہے کہ جب زائرین یہاں سے گزریں گے تو اسکی یہ مدد کروں گا۔ اور ایسا ہی کرتے ہیں۔

There is no role of the *Salaar* in the arrangements of walk. It was all arranged by the natives. There is huge enthusiasm in those people that if the whole year a person is selling dates, he does not have enough income to spend his house. But, he keeps collecting all day for the pilgrims that when they will go from here, he will help them. And he does.

The findings suggest that the huge walk is arranged by the natives of Iraq. The respondents believed that those natives give much love to all pilgrims. They do not see whether a person is Muslim or not. They provide all the facilities to the pilgrims during the walk. The people who make such arrangements do not include only those who belongs to upper class but the lower also take part wholeheartedly to provide the facilities during the walk. According to one of the male respondents who is 31 years old, he said:

غربت اور افلاس کے باوجود لوگوں نے زائرین کی خدمات ک لئے اپنے گھر تک کھول کے رکھے ہوئے تھے۔ جنکے پاس کچھ نہیں ہے وہ اپنا سب کچھ لے کے کھڑا ہو گا، اگر کسی کے پاس کوئی جوتا نہیں تو وہ اپنا دے دے گا۔ وہاں تو ایسے ہے کہ کپڑے دھو کے استری کر کے دیتے ہیں۔

Despite of poverty, people have opened their houses for the pilgrims to provide with a service. Those who have nothing, will stand by holding everything they have, if someone have no shoes then he will give his own. Even, they wash the clothes and give back with ironed clothes.

It is observed during the walk that natives of Iraq have opened their houses for everyone, so that anyone can take some rest or stay to offer prayers. In the beginning

of walk, we stopped for a while to offer prayers and all the houses were open for the pilgrims. Then, we went to one of the Iraqi's house. We were entertained very well by the Iraqi women and men, however, the places to rest for men and women were separate. Iraqi men facilitated the male pilgrims while women dealt all the female pilgrims. It is noted that every time if any respondent asked for anything, the Iraqis provided them at the moment. Once, my *Chadar* was wet and I have to offer prayers. I request one of the Iraqi female teenagers for a *Chadar* and she gave me her *Chadar* with great respect, having a smile on her face. Then, we tried to interact each other but due to language barrier it was not easy to understand each other's conversation. So, we tried to convey it through gestures. In another place, the Iraqi people tried to interact with us by using few English words. Most of the Iraqis do not know English properly while Iranians can speak English. It is noted that the shopkeepers have learnt few English words to understand the visitors. In the Karbala, I went to one of the shops with the respondents and the shopkeeper who was very old man knew much better English as compared to other Iraqis. We had few minutes' conversation and at the time of leaving he gave me a *Khaak-e-Shifa Tasbeeh* as a gift by calling me as her daughter. However, some of the respondents believed that Iranians are better while others believed that Iraqis are more. According to one of the respondents who is 32 years old, he said:

مشی کے دوران تو اگر اراقیوں کی بات کی جائے تو وہ ایک مختلف تصویر ہے جسکو بیان کرنا مشکل ہے۔ واک کے علاوہ اگر بات کی جائے تو ایرانیوں کو نسبتاً مہذب، پڑھے لکھے اور ایک پختہ قوم کے طور پر دیکھا گیا ہے۔ ایک آزاد قوم ہے مثلاً وہ لوگ وقت کی پابندی کرتے ہیں اور صفائی کا زیادہ خیال رکھتے ہیں۔ خیر بہت زیادہ گھل مل نہیں سکے کیونکہ ہماری زبان مختلف ہے۔ لیکن جو دیکھا وہ ایرانی قوم منظم نظر آئی۔

If we talk about Iraqis during the walk, then it depicts totally different picture, which is difficult to explain. Other than walk, if it is said then comparatively Iranians have been seen as more disciplined, educated and mature nation. It is an independent nation, for instance, they are punctual and take care of cleanliness. Well, we were not able to interact much because of language differences, but what I observed is that Iranians seems as well-organized nation.

The respondent believed that Iranians are more disciplined than Iraqis. According to the respondents as during the government of Saddam, Iraqis had to face worst condition. Due to such circumstances and political disability, still Iraqis have many problems, for instance, sewage problems, pollutions, and poverty. However, respondents believed

that during the time of Arbæen walk Iraqis depict another picture. They love and respect the pilgrims of Imam Hussain (A.S). According to one of the respondents who is 38 years old, he said:

اگرانی پاکستانیوں سے پیار بہت کرتے ہیں۔ ایرانی ہم سے نہیں کرتے۔

Iraqi loves more Pakistanis. Iranians do not (love) us.

Findings suggest that Iranians do not like Pakistanis. However, it is observed during the fieldwork that even Iraqis do not love Iranians. Most of the times it happened while shopping that the shopkeeper first considered us as Iranians but when we told that we belong to Pakistan. They said that “love Pakistan” and even made hearts with gestures.

6.1.3. Social interactions among *Zaireen*

As far as the interaction between group members is concerned, it is observed that they live in peace and harmony during the Arbæen walk. Despite of differences in age, gender, and even belief systems, they spent time together and help each other during the walk. It is observed that the young male group members tried to help all the females in holding their luggage during the walk. All of the respondents talked to each other while walking towards the Karbala. During the walk, they shared their religious perspectives with each other. However, it is also noted that during the walk respondents become much closer to each other. According to one of the respondents who is 21 years old and belongs to Sunni group, he said:

گروپ میں میرا دوست بنا ہے، تین دن پہلے ملاقات ہوئی ہے اور میں اسکو کہہ رہا تھا کہ علی ایسا لگتا ہے کہ جیسے ہم صدیوں کے دوست ہیں۔ روٹی بھی اکیلے نہیں کھاتے، رہنا بھی اکیلے نہیں۔ مطلب اتنا کہہ سکتے ہو آپ کہ پرانا ہی رشتہ ہے۔ ابھی دو تین دن ہی ہوئے ہیں ملاقات ہوئے۔ اور امید ہے کہ ان میں سے کچھ دوست ایسے بنیں گی جو لمبا ٹائم چلیں گے۔ میں کوشش کروں گا کہ لمبا ٹائم چلاؤں۔ کیونکہ بندے اچھے ہیں۔ اگر اگلی بار آنے کا موقع ملے، تو کوشش کروں گا کہ انکے ساتھ ہی آؤں۔

I made a friend in a group, three days ago I met him and I was saying to him that Ali it feels like we have been friends since centuries. We do not eat lunch alone, even do not stay alone, it can be said that there is something old relation. It has been 2 or 3 days, we met and I hope that there will be some friends among them who will keep in touch for a long. I will try to be connected with them for long time, because people are good. Next time, if I get a chance to come, then I will try to come with them.

Findings suggest that within a few days, respondents became good friends. It is observed that despite of much crowd on Arbæen walk, all the group members easily

recognized their fellow members which shows their strong affiliation. It does not matter whether they belong to Shia groups or not. Even the two respondents who became much close to each other during the journey, belong to different sects i.e. Shia and Sunni groups. It is observed that even the disabled boy get much closer to the group members, hence started calling all the members as *Baji* (sister) and *Bhai* (brother). Though, he was not able to talk and even express what he feels. A little child of 2 years old also get attached to the group members, he became my good friend during the whole journey. The respondents said that female members also help each other in many ways. According to one of the respondents who is 58 years old, she said:

سفر کے دوران خواتین ایک دوسرے کی مدد کرتی ہیں۔ راستے میں سب نماز اور دوسری عبادات کرتی ہیں۔ ہم سب ڈھوک سیدال والی چائے بناتی ہیں اور پھر ایک دوسرے کو دیتی ہیں۔ ہر کوئی ایک دوسرے کا خیال رکھتے ہیں۔ ہمارا آپس میں کبھی جھگڑا نہیں ہوا۔ یہ ہوتا ہے کہ بس میں کبھی سیٹ پر لڑائی ہو جاتی ہے۔

During journey, women help each other. All offer prayers and other worships. All of us who belong to Dhoke Syedan, make tea and then share with each other. Everyone take care of each other. We did not quarrel with each other. Sometimes, it happens in the bus that people fight on seats.

However, it is common among group members that the conflict also arises in a certain way, no matter they live in harmony and together. Findings suggest that at some point group members showed disagreement and even did not cooperate with the *Salaar*. Some of the group members especially women complaint for the mismanagement. The male respondents believed that naturally it is common that women complains more as compared to men. They believed that *Salaar* tried to manage all the matters appropriately but sometimes pilgrims had to face problems. According to one of the respondents who is 38 years old, he said:

سالاار بہت تعاون کرتے ہیں، کبھی وہ اندھے، گونگے، بہرے بھی ہو جاتے ہیں۔ کیونکہ قافلے کے لوگ یہ سمجھتے ہیں کہ بس اب ہم نے پیسے دے دیئے ہیں تو اب وہ ہر چیز کے ذمہ دار ہیں۔ حلاکتہ انسان ہیں، مشکلات آسکتی ہیں۔ جو آپکا حقیقی پر اہلم ہو سالاار ضرور آپکی مدد کرتے ہیں۔ آپکو ٹیبل پر پانی تک پیش کریں گے آپکو کھانا پینا سب کچھ وہ مہیا کرتے ہیں۔ لیکن یہ بلا وجہ کی ذرا اسی بات پر سالاار کے آگے کھڑے ہو جانا ان باتوں کو وہ نظر انداز کرتے ہیں۔

Salaar is very cooperative. Sometime they become blind, deaf, and dumb. Because the caravan members think that they have paid to him and now he is responsible for everything. However, they are humans, problems may come. *Salaar* must help you in your genuine problem. He serve you water on a table, he provides you food, drinks, hence everything. But they ignore those matters when (people) stand against him on little things.

Findings suggest that according to some of the respondents the group member's interaction with *Salaar* was good while others believed that they do not cooperate with them. There were some incidents happened with the respondents in the past that their *Salaar* deceived them once they reached in the Iraq. So, various people experienced differently in group membership. However, at the end of journey it is observed that all the group members asked forgiveness from each other and some of the members exchanged their contact numbers so that they can keep in touch with each other.

6.2. Consumption and Arbaeen pilgrimage

Within the context of pilgrimage, studying consumption develops an understanding of religious material culture. The holy places of pilgrimages are often important commercial centres bring out vivacious market places, where spiritual goods and services are sold (Scott & Maclaran, 2012, p. 199). However, during Ashura and Arbaeen, it is observed that Karbala plays host to millions of local and international pilgrims. During that time period, there is a huge demand for goods and services (transportation and catering), among which there some items that people brought back to home as gifts. It is believed by most of the respondents that whenever pilgrims go for the visitation of Imam's shrines, before the journey their relatives and friends gave favours (money, clothes and other items) to them. Findings suggest that they offer gifts to pilgrims because of their love with Imam. According to the respondents, people gave them various presents, such as money, dry food items, clothes, and so many other things. According to one of the respondents who is 32 years old, he said:

زیارت سے واپسی پر بھرپور طریقے سے تحفے دینے کا رواج ہے۔ پاکستانی لوگ بھرپور شاپنگ کرتے ہیں۔ مطلب واپسی پر وہ تبرک لاتے ہیں۔ عام طور پر تبرک کے علاوہ جتنی بھی چیزیں میں نے وہاں پہ دیکھی ہیں وہ تقریباً ملتی جلتی ہیں۔ کچھ چیزیں وہاں کی الگ سے شناخت رکھتی ہیں، مثلاً بیڈی کرافٹس، پیئنگز وغیرہ۔

There is a tradition of giving gifts in a variety of ways on returning from pilgrimage, for instance, we bring *Tabarruk* (offerings). Other than *Tabarruk*, common things which I have seen are almost similar. There are some things, which have a distinct recognition, such as their handicrafts, paintings, etc.

It is observed that most of the respondents shopped at the markets surrounding the shrines. They purchased variety of gifts, such as rings, stones, cakes, sweets, supplication prayer sheets, and scarfs to distribute within the shrines to other pilgrims and also to bring back home for their friends and family. In keeping with the findings

of other studies (Delaney, 1990, p. 521; Liao and Huang, 2006), these gifts which pilgrims purchased were usually of little monetary value but have a significant symbolic value. According to one of the participants who is 32 years old, he said:

جو اس سرزمین کے تبرکات یا جو حرم کے تبرکات ہیں وہ لے کے جاتے ہیں، مثلاً خاکِ شفاء، تسبیح وغیرہ۔ کیونکہ اس جگہ سے اپنے بہن بھائیوں اور دوستوں کو نہیں بھولنا چاہیے۔ اور جب آپ یہاں سے جائیں تو کم از کم جو نہیں آ سکے ان کے لیے آپ یہاں کے تحائف لے کے جائیں تاکہ وہ بھی اس جگہ کے مقدس ہونے کو محسوس کر سکیں۔

We bring the offerings of this land and those associated with the shrine, for instance, healing ashes and prayers beads etc. Because sisters, brothers, and friends should not be forgotten from this place. And when you go from here, at least you take gifts for those who cannot come. So that they can feel the holiness of this place.

Findings suggest that gifts purchased by the pilgrims were linked to Islamic and Shia beliefs. These items identify them as Shia Muslims, such as an embroidered headscarf with the name of Imams and the prestigious ladies of Islam. The respondents also purchased different things for decorating houses, especially during the mourning period, such as tapestries embroidered with elegies in Imam Hussain (A.S). The respondents told that they also bought fragrances associated with different Imams, as a gift for their friends and family. It is observed that there was a shop inside the shrine, which is famous for the various kinds of fragrances and the stones. Among the most popular rings, was the ring made up of the stone of Imam Hussain (A.S)'s grave. Those rings were available for both men and women, but were more expensive as compared to other rings. It is observed that there were few women who were fond of shopping, they purchased clothes and some jewellery as well for themselves. However, all the respondents purchased dry fruits to distribute among their family members and friends. The respondents also bought shrouds for themselves as well as for others. According to one of the respondents who is 32 years old, she said:

ہم صرف کفن لیتے ہیں اور نیاز لیتے ہیں۔ کفن لے کر آتے ہیں پھر جسکے نصیب میں ہوا سکودے دیتے ہیں۔

We only purchase shroud and offerings. We bring shroud, then give it to the one whose luck first.

The respondents purchased shrouds, which they touch it with the grave of Imams. Then, they give it to those who die first in their family and friends. This is considered as an honour who get that shroud because it is touched by the grave of Imams. Most of the respondents touched their rings, piece of clothes and shrouds. One of the

respondents told that this year she brought 20 shrouds from Karbala, just to distribute among all friends and family members. She told that if anybody in her neighbourhood dies she gave it to them as well. However, it is observed that most of the time, respondents went for shopping in the form of group because they believe that they will get concession when they are in a group. During the walk from Najaf to Karbala, one of the respondents who is 21 years old, he said:

کربلا کے چیزیں خریدوں گا۔ کیونکہ سارے قافلے والے کہہ رہے ہیں کہ نجف مہنگی چیزیں مل رہی ہیں۔ وہی چیز آپکو کربلا میں سستی مل جائے گی۔ ابھی کچھ دوست ہیں جو راستے میں ہیں وہ بھی آرہے ہیں پھر سب مل کے شاپنگ کریں گے انکے لئے جو پاکستان میں ہیں کہ کس کے لئے کیا لینا ہے۔ زیادہ تر تو چادر ہی لینی ہے۔ اگر کوئی سید ہے تو اسکے لئے سبز چادر اور اگر کوئی امتی ہے تو اس کے لئے کالی چادر۔

I will buy things from Karbala, because caravan members were saying that things are costly in Najaf, as compared to Karbala. Things are cheaper in Karbala. There are some friends who are on the way, they are also coming then will do shopping together for the ones who are in Pakistan that what things to buy for them. Mostly, have to buy *Chadar*. If someone is Syed then green *Chadar* for him and black for those who are Non-Syed.

Findings suggest that green colour is associated with Syed families that is why it is observed that most of the people who belong to Syed families have worn green *Chadars* during the walk as well as in the shrines. Pakistanis also bought those *Chadars* for their significant others. Some of the respondents are very conscious about shopping, they consider it as an obligation to give others anything which they brought from Karbala. According to one of the respondents who is 22 years old, she said:

رشتے داروں کے لئے چیزیں لی تھیں۔ ویسے لینا تو نہیں چاہیے کیونکہ آپ امام کو پرسہ دینے جاتے ہو۔ لیکن وہی فلسفہ ہے کہ لوگ کیا سوچیں گی کہ وہاں گئے اور لے کے نہیں آئے۔ میری امی اس معاملے میں کافی سوچتی ہیں۔ ہمیں ددیھال اور نہال سب کے لئے لینا پڑتا ہے۔ اچھا خاصا خرچہ ہو جاتا ہے۔ لیکن ہماری کوشش یہ ہوتی ہے کہ اس طرح کی چیزیں لیں جو یہاں پہ دستیاب نہیں ہوتی۔

We brought things for relatives. However, this should not be taken because you go to give you condolences to the Imam. But, the philosophy is that what people will think that they went but did not bring it. My mother is very conscious about it. We have to buy for grandparents families and even for everything. It becomes much costly. But, we try to bring those things which are not available here.

It is believed by the respondents that they bought things just because what their relatives will think that they have not brought anything for them. According to another female respondent who is 32 years old, she said:

یہ سب سے بڑا زندگی کا المیہ ہے۔ میں بہت زیادہ شوقین ہوں شاپنگ کی صاف سی بات ہے۔ لیکن یہاں پہ آ کے میرا ایک روپیہ خرچ کرنے کو دل نہیں کر رہا۔ اپنے لئے بھی میرا کوئی چیز لینے کو دل نہیں کر رہا۔ بازاروں کو میں بھرا دیکھ رہی ہوں لیکن میرا کچھ لینے کو دل نہیں کر رہا۔ لیکن کیونکہ عقیدت ہے لوگوں کی کہ آپ ایک مختلف کچھر میں جارہی ہیں، ایک مختلف ملک میں۔ اور مولا کی نگری میں جارہی ہیں۔ وہاں کی سوغات لائیں۔ جسکے لئے یہ چیزیں کرنا پڑتی ہیں۔

This is the life's biggest tragedy. It is clear that I am very fond of shopping. But, here I do not mind spending a single rupee. Even for myself, I do not mind taking anything. I see the markets full but do not thought of taking anything. But, because it is people's belief system that you are going to a different culture, a different country. And going to the Imam's shrine. Bring gifts from there, for that purpose these things have to be done.

The respondents believed that due to mourning days they do not want to do shopping but they have to do for their friends and relatives on their demands. Some of the respondents said that they do not purchased anything from Karbala because they believe that those are the mourning days of Imam Hussain (A.S). So, they do shopping from Iran if they include it in their package. Otherwise, some of them do not buy things. They buy things from Pakistan and then gave it to their friends and family. According to one of the respondents who is 38 years old, he said:

میں نے شاپنگ کبھی نہیں کی۔ پہلی دفعہ شاپنگ کر کے لے گیا تھا۔ اسکے علاوہ میں نے کبھی کسی کے لئے شاپنگ نہیں کی، یہ ساری چیزیں پاکستان میں ملتی ہیں۔ بہت سے لوگ ہیں، کسی نے اگر مجھ سے کوئی خواہش کی بھی ہے کچھ مانگا بھی ہے تو وہ میں پاکستان سے جا کے لے لیتا ہوں۔ میں اس میں ٹائم ضائع نہیں کرتا کہ میں جاؤں اسکے لئے اسٹیشنل اور وہ چیز خریدوں۔ میری کوشش یہ ہوتی ہے کہ جو میں اس سرزمین پہ وقت گزار رہا ہوں وہ میں مولا کے قریب ہو کے گزاروں۔

I have never did shopping. First time, I did shopping. Other than that I have not done shopping for anybody, all of these things are available in the Pakistan. There are a lot of people, if anyone has any desire for me or even asked for anything. I brought that thing from Pakistan. I do not waste my time in going especially to buy that thing for him/her. I try that what time I am spending on this land, I spend it near to Imam.

However, findings suggest that there are few people who do not buy things for themselves as well as for their friends and family. There are different reasons behind not buying things. According to one of the respondents who is 55 years old, he said:

مولا کی زیارت کو جاتے ہیں، ہم کون سا شاپنگ کے لیے جاتے ہیں۔

We go for the visitation of Imam, not for shopping.

However, another respondent who is 48 years old, she said:

میں نے شاپنگ نہیں کی، کیونکہ اتنی توفیق ہی نہیں۔

I did not shop, because I do not have enough money.

Findings suggest that people do shopping according to their financial condition. However there are some respondents to whom people gave money for things which they want from Iraq. As per the 27 years old male respondent:

لوگ پیسے دیتے ہیں تو ان کے لیے وہاں سے چیزیں خرید کے لاتے ہیں، مثلاً انگوٹھیاں یا کفن وغیرہ۔

People give money, then (we) buy things for them, for instance rings or shroud etc.

It is believed by the respondents that things are costly in Iraq as compared to Pakistan, however some of the respondents said that rate are equal almost if we convert their currency into Pakistani rupee. According to one the respondents who is 38 years old, he said:

ٹرپ مہنگا ہم خود بنا دیتے ہیں۔ میں نے دیکھا ایک لڑکے نے چالیس ہزار کی شاپنگ کی۔ میرے خیال میں یہ ایک بوجھ ہے اس لڑکے کے اوپر۔ اور یہ چیز آپ پاکستان میں انتہائی سستی بھی لے سکتے ہیں۔ صرف رشتہ داروں کو خوش کرنے کے لیے انسان اتنا اپنے اوپر بوجھ ڈالتا ہے۔

We make trip expensive ourselves. I have seen that a boy did shopping of forty thousand rupees. I think this is burden upon that boy. And you can buy these things cheaper in Pakistan. Just to make relatives happy, people put much burden on themselves.

Finding suggest that if people go to an event, the things of that culture particularly related to the event will attract the individuals more, so the shopkeepers know the demands of pilgrims during Arbaeen pilgrimage. According to the business point of view, it is common that whenever there is an event, shopkeepers sell things more expensive than the usual day because of high demands in the markets. However, it is observed that the value of Iraqi's currency is very low as compared to Pakistan so sometimes it feels that things are cheaper. However, if we convert it into Pakistani rupees, it is almost same. As the Pakistani one thousand rupees is Iraqis eight thousand

dinar. Findings suggest that Iraqis are not much conscious about international or national brands like Pakistanis. The respondents believed that they have not seen any branded things there, even Iraqis have their own Pepsi brand.

6.3. Economic reasons or religious belief systems?

Findings suggest that the Arbaeen walk is not specific to any age group, gender, or even any socio-economic status. It is observed that people belonging to different financial statuses also take part in the walk. But, the question is how the unprivileged people managed to go for this walk? Does the socio-economic status of people have an effect on the decision of respondents for going to participate in the walk? It is believed by most of the respondents that an individual's financial status does not matter, if he/she wants to go for the Arbaeen walk. They believed that it all depends on the devotional level of the person. According to one of the respondents who is 38 years old, he said:

مالی حالت کبھی بھی آڑے نہیں آسکتی۔ میرا ذاتی یقین ہے، کہ یہ آپکی حُب ہے، آپکی طلب ہے۔ جنہوں نے سفر پہلے کیا ہوا ہے اسکے پاس کونسا مال و زر ہوتا تھا، جس کی بنیاد پر وہ کرتے تھے۔ میں نے کبھی یہ نہیں کہا کہ میرے اکاؤنٹ میں اتنے پیسے پڑے ہوں اور میں کہوں کہ میں زیارتوں پہ جاسکتا ہوں۔ ایسا کبھی بھی نہیں ہوا۔ یہ حُب ہے اور دوسرا ان کا بلاوا ہے۔

It is my personal belief that where there is love, there is a calling. Those people who went before, when did they never had enough money, on the basis of which they performed the walk. I have never claimed that I can only go for the walk if I have a certain amount of money in my account. There is just love, and the call from God.

Bulawa (called upon), according to the respondent, is basically an eagerness and yearning to take part in the Arbaeen walk. The respondent believed that one percent could be your luck but 99% works when you just think of going to participate in the walk. Another male respondent of age 31 years old, who belongs to Sunni group. He said:

میں یہ سمجھتا ہوں کہ جب بلاوا آتا ہے تو اللہ اپنے فضل سے سبب خود بنا دیتا ہے۔ میں یہ نہیں سمجھتا کہ اس میں مالی حیثیت کی کوئی ایسی بات ہے۔ بہت سارے ایسے لوگ بھی ہیں جو پیسہ رکھنے کے باوجود یہاں پر نہیں آسکتے۔

In my understanding, when the call comes, then Allah, through his blessings, creates means himself. I don't think this has anything to do with financial status. There are many people who have money, but still do not go to perform the walk.

In order to prove the above argument, the respondent gave the example of his caravan member that he was not able to afford the expense of the whole journey. So, one of his friends sponsored him to participate in the walk. Another female respondent who is 48 years old and done middle education. She got married 28 years ago, having two sons and one daughter. She has been separated from his husband, because he did second marriage. She told that on ninth of Safar, she won a prize in a lucky draw occurred in the local *Imambargah*. Though, she did not have her own ID card to participate in it. Then, one of her friends gave an ID card so that she can participate in it. She said that her name was called first and then she made her own ID card to complete the other requirements for the *Ziyarat*. Three years ago, she went for the *Ziyarat* via bus. There are other respondents who also told that before going for journey, their relatives and friends help them financially for this expedition. Each family member, according to their economic status helped them for the journey. According to another 21 years old respondent who belongs to middle class, he said:

ادھر نیت دیکھی جاتی ہے حیثیت نہیں دیکھی جاتی۔ مولا کا فرمان میں نے پڑھا ہے، مولا فرماتے ہیں کہ تم نیت کرو تو میں بلا لوں گا۔ تو صرف نیت کی ہے مولا جانتے ہیں۔ میرا یہ ماننا ہے کہ جو حیثیت کی بات کرے نہ اسکی سوچ چھوٹی ہے۔ اس نے مولا کو مانا ہی نہیں۔ اس در پر آکر حیثیت کیا کہتی ہے۔ گھر سے نکلا ہوں تو ایک پیسہ بھی نہیں تھا جیب میں۔ صرف 1500 روپے تھے جو میں نے ساتھ لے کے جانے تھے۔ لیکن میں نے سوچا کہ جس در پر جا رہے ہیں انکے پاس بہت ہے، وہ دے دیں گے۔ اور وہ دے رہے ہیں۔ دو بیگ بھر لیے ہیں اور ابھی دو اور لینے کی تیاری میں ہوں۔

Over there, intentions are considered, not status. I have read *Mola's* quotes, *Mola* says that you just have to make the intention, and then I will call. So *Mola* knows that I have made the intention. I believe that those people who talk about status are very small minded. He did not believe in *Mola*. In such pain, what does status matter? When I left home, I had no money in my pocket. I only had 1500 rupees, which I was going to take with me. But then I thought that towards whom I am going, he has a lot, he will give me. And he is giving me. I have already filled two bags, and am preparing to get two more.

The respondent did not clearly mention that from where he got money to bear all the expenditure of the journey. Despite of having only 1500 rupees in his pocket, he spent 40,000 rupees for shopping. It is believed by the respondents that the God arranged everything for them. However, findings suggest that there are some respondents who collect money whole year so that they can take part in the walk. Though, they are unable

to bear their household expenses but they save money for the Arbaeen pilgrimage as well. According to one of the respondents who is 58 years old, she said:

لوگوں کی مالی حیثیت نہ بھی ہو تو لوگ اپنا پیٹ کاٹ کے اور پیسے جوڑ کے کر بلا جاتے ہیں۔ غریب لوگ بہت مشکل سے کرتے ہیں۔ حالانکہ جن کے پاس پیسہ ہو بھی وہ نہیں کر سکتے۔ زیادہ غریب لوگ جاتے ہیں کیونکہ ان میں جذبہ زیادہ ہوتا ہے۔

Even if people do not have financial capability, they deprive themselves and gather money up, and then go to Karbala. It is hard for poor people to perform. Even rich people cannot perform it. In fact, mostly poor people go, as they have more passion for it.

On the other hand, findings indicate that among all the respondents only three of them articulated that the person's socio-economic status do effect on the decision of anyone participating in the Arbaeen walk. According to respondents, the reality is that the economic status of a person effects on going to take part in the walk. However, they also believe that if someone does not have power to participate in the walk, God helps him/her if he has strong belief on Him. However, in the above discussion, it has been noted that people gave religious reasons for the basis of their participation in the walk. They believe that if there is strong devotion, God will make a way for them. However, it is observed that on the surface level there could be the religious reasons but it is based on the economic reasons as well. As per the respondents, it is noted that privileged people sponsor those who are not able to afford the expenses of the journey. Though, they believe that God manages everything for them but in reality, it could be possible through economic source.

6.3.1. Leadership (bringing caravans), a business?

Generally, if individuals go to an unknown place they require guidance and the individual who coordinates and motivates the group is called the leader. Similarly, people who go for the Arbaeen walk in the form of group, they need a leader who manages everything for the group members. Findings indicate there are many leaders who bring caravans to Iraq and Iran. So, how people contact them? How people select one among so many caravan leaders? What is the criteria for the selection of caravan leader? According to the respondents, the caravan leaders give the advertisements before the journey. Some of the leaders advertise online while others let people know through brochures, pamphlets, and wall ads. They mention different packages in their

advertisements, regarding the trip. In this regard, one of the respondents who is 32 years old and went to Iraq with a group for the Arbaeen walk. She said;

ہم نے دو تین قافلے والوں سے رابطہ کیا، جو ہمیں بہترین پیکج لگا اسی کے ساتھ بات طے کی۔ ہم نے اپنے پاسپورٹ، شناختی کارڈ اور تصویریں جمع کروائیں۔ سالار نے رقم آدھی پہلے لی اور آدھی بعد میں۔ مختلف پیکجز میں مختلف ریٹس تھے، کچھ قافلے والے صرف عراق تک آپ سے ایک لاکھ پندرہ ہزار مانگ رہے تھے۔ پہلے تو ایک سالار نے اتنا بھی بولا کہ ہم ایک لاکھ میں لے کر جائینگے پھر بعد میں بولا کہ دس ہزار مزید لگیں گے۔ لیکن جس قافلے کے ساتھ ہم آئے ہیں انہوں نے ہمیں رعایت دی ہے۔

We talked to two, three group leaders, and which package we saw fit, we went with that. We submitted in our passports, identity cards and photographs. The *Salaar* took half the amount first, and half the amount afterwards. Different packages had different rates, some *Salaars* took 1 lakh 1500 rupees just to go up to Iraq. First one *Salaar* said to us that he will take us to Iraq in only 1 lakh rupees, but later on said that he will need them to pay up 10,000 rupees more. But which group we have travelled with, they have provided us with discount.

It is believed by the respondents that all the leaders told the individuals fixed rates for the travel. However it is believed by the respondents that sometimes leader gives concession to unprivileged people. According to one of the female respondents who is 50 years old, she said:

سالار کی ایک بات بہت اچھی ہے کہ بتاتے فنس ریٹ ہیں لیکن لوگوں کی مالی حیثیت دیکھتے ہیں کہ اگر کوئی واقعی مستحق بندہ ہے اور وہ جانے کی بہت خواہش بھی رکھتا ہے، تو انکی ضرورت مدد کرتے ہیں۔ اور دیکھتے ہیں کہ جو صاحب استطاعت ہیں ان سے پوری رقم لیتے ہیں۔

One good thing about the leaders is that they tell you fixed rates, but they look at financial capability, and if they can see that someone is actually deserving, and he also has a great wish to go, they always help him, and they also see that those who are capable financially, they take the full amount from them.

There are two conditions set by the leader for the concession to the people, regarding the travel expenses. In one condition, they give concession to those who are not able to afford the travel expense. However, according to the 32 years old male respondent, another condition is:

گروپ میں سالار کسی نہ کسی کے ساتھ ہمدردی کرتے ہیں۔ اگر ایک گھر سے دو تین لوگ جاتے ہیں تو ظاہر ہے وہ رعایت کرتے ہیں۔

Within the group, the leaders are empathetic with the people. If two, three people from the same house are going for the walk, it means that they are financially capable.

Another participant who is 50 years old, she said:

جن سالار کے ساتھ ہم گئے تھے انہوں نے ہم سے زیادہ پیسے لیے لیکن قافلے میں کچھ لوگ تھے جن سے انہوں نے کم پیسے لیے۔

The *Salaar* we went with took more money from us, but there were some people in the group from whom he took less money.

The respondents believed that the total expenditure of an individual who go by bus is almost 35000 rupees, however the *Salaar* will take 50,000 from one person and 55,000 from another. He will take different amount from different people on the basis of their financial status. They believe that if someone is not able to afford that much cost, in that case the *Salaar* will take 25,000 rupees or might take only the expenditure of Visa and Passport only. According to one of the respondents who is 64 years old, he said:

سالار اس طرح اپنا حساب لگاتا ہے کہ جن لوگوں نے اسے اگر 15 یا 20 ہزار دیئے، وہ کسی اور سے 55،50 ہزار لے گا اور اس طرح وہ بیلنس کرتا ہے۔ چار، پانچ آدمی وہ لازمی فری لے کر جاتا ہے جو مستحق ہوتے ہیں۔

The *Salaar* plans his expenses in this way that if he takes just 20 or 15 thousand from some people, he will take 50, 55 thousand from others. And in this way, he is able to balance the matters. He necessarily takes 4, 5 people for free whom he sees are deserving.

Most of the respondents believed that bringing caravans is sort of business for *Salaar*. However, some of the respondents believed that there are some leaders who bring caravans for good deed in accordance with the divine law. According to one of the male respondents who is 62 years old, he said:

یہ ثواب کی نیت سے نہیں کرتے، یہ ان کا بزنس ہے۔ منافع ہوتا ہے تب ہی تو قافلے لے کے جاتے ہیں۔ ثواب کے لیے پھر بس جب فیملی جائے۔ سالاروں کا تو یہ کام ہے۔

They do not do it with the intention of reward, it is their business. The reason why they take the group, is because they gain a profit. They do it for reward when family goes. This is the work of the leaders.

Furthermore, another respondent who is 32 years old. He said:

ایمانداری سے اگر دیکھا جائے تو دس یا بیس فیصد سالار ایسے ہیں جو صرف زیارت کی نیت سے لے کر جاتے ہیں، ورنہ عام طور پر یہ ایک بزنس ہے۔

If looked at honestly, then there are only 10 to 20 percent leaders who take groups for the reward of the pilgrimage, otherwise this is a business for them.

However, some of the respondents believed that there are some leaders who take it as a business and also for the reward of virtue. One of the respondents told that his uncle took caravans to Iraq as business but now he take it just for the virtue. He just takes genuinely the real expenditure from the members, for the travel. He told that his uncles does not keep his profit from the leadership. In fact, sometimes the leader has to face certain situations where his budget gets in the way and then he has to manage everything himself. According to one of the respondents who is 18 years old, she said:

کبھی ایسا ہو جاتا ہے کہ سالار بھی پریشان ہو جاتے ہیں کیونکہ ان کا خرچہ زیادہ ہو جاتا ہے لیکن انھوں نے پیسے کم لیے ہوتے ہیں۔ کیونکہ کبھی کوئٹہ کچھ دن رکن پڑ جاتا ہے، کبھی تفتان بارڈر پہ تو انھوں نے تو روز کھانا بھی دینا ہوتا ہے تو ان کا خرچہ ہوتا ہے۔

Sometimes it happens that the leaders become worried as they may have too many expenses, but they usually have taken less money. Sometimes it happens that they need to stop over in Quetta, or sometimes at the Taftan border, and they need to provide food for everyone daily as well. So their expenses increase.

Findings suggest that not all the leaders mention lunch offers in their packages, but in some cases the package also include lunch expenditure. So, if the caravan have stay on borders for many days then it creates problem for the group leader. One of the respondents who is 21 years old, he said:

میرے خیال کے مطابق اگر اسے اچھی طرح سے سرانجام دیا جائے تو اس سے اچھا بزنس بھی کوئی نہیں اور اس سے اچھی عبادت بھی کوئی نہیں۔ اچھی طرح سے مراد یہ ہے کہ اگر میں نے ایک ہندے سے ڈیڑھ لاکھ روپے لیے ہیں اور اگر مجھے اس میں 20، 25 ہزار بچ بھی رہا ہے تو کوئی مسئلہ نہیں۔ اس لیے کہ سالار کی ذمہ داری ہے ویزے لگوانا، ایف آئی اے کو کلیئر کرنا، جہاز لینڈ کرے سامان اٹھوانا، گاڑیاں کرنا، ایئر پورٹ پہنچانا، تین وقت کا کھانا دینا، ساری زیارات کروانا اور زیارات کے بارے میں معرفت دینا۔

In my opinion, if this is carried out properly, then there is no better business than this, neither is there any better worship. By properly, I mean that I have taken one and a half lakh rupees from a person already, and there is still 15, 20 thousand rupees to be paid, then there should be no problem in this. This is because

the main job of a *Salaar* is to obtain visas, to clear FIAs, sort out luggage from landed planes, arrange cars, take people to the airport, providing food three times a day, making people perform the pilgrimage, and providing information about the pilgrimage.

It is believed by the respondents that if a leader deals all the matter in a better way then there is no better business than this type of “leadership”. The respondent told that visa rules have been changed, now there is paper visa in which the responsibility of all group members would be on the group leader. Other than that *Salaar* is responsible for everything, for instance food, hotels, water, and transport. He has to take care of each group member’s responsibilities. However, it is observed as well as believed by the respondents that when *Salaar* give concession to any unprivileged individual, then individuals take advantages from that. Those individuals assured the *Salaar* that they will cooperate with him in all situations. But, once they reached, they forget all the commitments and started complaining along with other group members. According to one of the respondents who is 41 years old and a group leader of our caravan, he said:

سالاار سے کبھی بھی لوگ خوش نہیں ہوتے۔ اس کی وجہ یہ ہے کہ لوگ ایسے کر کے دیکھ رہے ہوتے ہیں۔ وہ جس جگہ کھڑا ہوا ہے وہ مسائل آپ کو نہیں پتا اور نہ ہی سالاار آپ کو بتاتا ہے۔
People are never happy with the leader. This is because people are doing so. However, where he stands, you do not know those issues nor the leader tells you.

It is believed by the leaders of the group that some of the *Salaar* take leadership as a business. There is also a man in middle while dealing the matters in this business. One of the respondents told that his friend take caravan to such holy places and he takes 3 lacs from each persons. He done his deal with one of the Iraqi man that he will give him 2 lacs and 70 thousands for each person’s arrangements regarding the stay. In this case, he will get 30 thousand profit from each person. It is believed by most of respondents that many of the leaders do not follow religious practices themselves, so how the members will get to know what to do in such holy places. If a *Salaar* will not offer prayers then how could he say it to others. One of respondents who is 47 years old, he said:

میرے خیال سے سالاار ایسا ہو جو ہر قدم پہ قافلے کے لوگوں کو یہ محسوس نہ ہونے دے کہ وہ اکیلے ہیں۔ اور بندے کو محسوس ہو کہ جیسے فیملی جا رہی ہے، نہ کہ اسے آپ بزنس کریں۔ سالاار کا ایسا عمل ہونا چاہیئے کہ لوگ اس کی عزت

کریں۔ اور یہ تب ہی ممکن ہو گا جب ان کی نیت بزنس سے ہٹ کے ہوگی۔ ہر کوئی آجکل سالار بنتا پھرتا ہے۔ یقین
میں کہ چیزوں کا کوئی پتا ہی نہیں۔۔۔ بس انھیں کیا ہے لانا لے جانا۔

I think, a leader should be the one who, on each step do not let caravan members feel that they are alone. And the person feels as if the family is going on, not to make it a business. The actions of group leader should be like that people respect them. And it would be possible only when their intentions will be removed from business. Everyone is becoming a leader nowadays. Believe me that they do not have any know how about the things. They are just concerned with to take and bring them.

According to the respondents, now a days everyone is becoming a leader and started taking caravans to the holy sites. These *Salaars* do not take caravans during Ashura and Arbaeen only but they do bring whole year. Most of the *Salaars* have now only started this business instead of doing anything else. However, there are most of the leaders who get full amount but put people in trouble and do not manage things properly. It is believed by the respondents that there should be a registered *Salaar* for this purpose. At the end of the pilgrimage, Zaireen should give feedback to their leaders. Hence, a license should be given to them on the basis of the pilgrim's feedback.

7. A THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

One of the Anthropologists, Victor Turner made a huge contribution to anthropology by reintroducing the concept of liminality, which draws from the Van-Gennep's triadic model of rites of passage. According to Turner, liminality is an intermediate state of being in-between, in which the participant is not in that state where he/she was previously present and also yet not re-incorporated to that state. However, as per the Turner, liminality brings about a state, which he calls "communitas". Communitas, according to him, is an acute point of community. It takes community to the next level, where whole of the community share a common experience, usually through a rite of passage. At this level, everyone comes to an equal level, even though people are higher in positions (Turner, 1969, p. 95). In this chapter, I will exemplify this theoretical debate through the findings of the present study. It has been seen that in the beginning when participants planned their journey to take part in the Arbaeen walk, they wear black clothes and prepare themselves to start separating from their daily activities. They seek to prepare themselves spiritually and materially for the Arbaeen walk. During the walk, participants get into liminal phase, as in that time they were not in their previous status and also so far not fully achieved the status, which pilgrims get after the completion of the pilgrimage. Despite of their different socio-economic backgrounds, gender differences and cultural differences, pilgrims participate together in the walk. Hence, this reflects the unity of participants and cohesion within a Shia community. They perform different rituals together during the walk. It is noted that all of the participants offered prayers together, they eat at one place and even sleep under one roof. It is observed that the respondents were saying mourning poems during the walk towards Karbala, helping each other while walking. The unity among Shia community, during the Arbaeen walk shows their power in the world.

However, Turner has distinguished three levels of communitas so conclusive that it can be seen in the phenomenon of Arbaeen walk. The three levels of communitas are existential or spontaneous, normative, and ideological communitas. In the first level, a direct confrontation of Shia groups occur, where they feel equal and try to represent themselves as one unit. They show solidarity in different ways, as it is observed during the Arbaeen walk that pilgrims carried different coloured flags (mostly black, green, and red), raised slogans during the walk, helping each other in holding luggage, and

wearing mostly same coloured dresses i.e. black colour. These colours have symbolic interpretations among Shia Muslims. According to the respondents, there are few months in which the war is not allowed as per the culture of Arab. At that time, if the war is continuously happening then to stop the war, the group leader placed a red colour flag on his camp. Placing red coloured flag on the camp means that the war will be continued but due to the month of sanctity, the war is stopped for a while. However, findings suggest that the black colour is the expression of grief and sorrow. Whenever, there will be mourning time period, a black flag would be placed. The green colour is the identity of Hashmi family. In the Arab culture, the recognition of *Syed* families is the colour of green. During the walk, holding flags and wearing printed shirts and capes having the names of Shia Imams, expressed their identity as being Shia Muslim as well as their destination i.e. the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S), Karbala. During the Arbaeen walk, the pilgrims feel homogenous and try to represent themselves as one unit, for instance the Iraqi natives, regardless of being a victim of war for several years and poverty, they host millions of people all around the world. They give them all kinds of services for free of cost. It is observed that they provide them three times food, drinks, shelter, hence everything which a person needs in his daily life. They give massage to the pilgrims, washing clothes, polishing shoes, offer free international and national calls, and free Wi-Fi. There was no one who can say that there is any deficiency in their services. It is observed that these service providers have not seen that whether a person is Shia or not, they helped and hosted everyone wholeheartedly. Though, people from all over the world go to participate in the Arbaeen walk, even people of other sects and Non-Muslims. But, all of them feel themselves homogenous due to the phenomenon, i.e. Arbaeen walk. As, most of the respondents believe that they are Shia before their nationality. All of the participant's status is same, as everyone is *Zair* (pilgrim) and similar to each other.

Services provided by the *Mawkib* owners play a significant role during the Arbaeen walk as a kind of normative communitas, when trying to mobilize and organize selves and resources in order to maintain the social construct. These *Mawkibs*, arranged either by the natives of Iraq or other international groups, all of them attempt to achieve a kind of social control. They try to establish social links with the visitors. However, it is observed that due to language barrier respondents were not able to communicate well with them. One of the Indian *Mawkib*, where Shia Indians came from their country to

serve the pilgrims of Imam Hussain (A.S). They told that they come to Iraq few days before the Arbbaeen and form *Mawkib* for the visitors. Those service providers include both men and women belonging to different areas of Iraq and other countries. During the walk, it is observed that on the sides of road *Ulemas* and other religious scholars were present to guide the visitors regarding any Islamic knowledge. Most of the visitors seek guidance from them regarding Islamic Shariah. These religious scholars also gave the visitors brochures and pamphlets, on which Islamic teachings have explained and they also mentioned their contact details on it. So that the visitors can contact them after the walk as well. However, other than the *Ulemas*, it is observed that there were number of people who distributed booklets comprising of Islamic teachings regarding the issues related to the Arbbaeen walk and what pilgrims should read during the Arbbaeen walk. I also get one of those booklets which is comprised of practices that is supposed to be perform during the Arbbaeen walk. There is another booklet, describing the details of Arbbaeen walk. These groups, that perform rigorous activity during the Arbbaeen walk, is considered as ideological communitas.

According to the perception of participants, they perform certain rituals during the Arbbaeen walk on the basis of their religious belief systems. However, they are not only about spirituality, but they are also economic enterprises. As per the theory of Karl Marx, economics is the driving force that determines all the aspects of a civilization such as political, social, cultural, intellectual, and technological. He believed that material conditions shaped the history (Ellwood, 1998; Lorimer, 1999). In this regard, if we see the tragedy of Karbala i.e. the conflict between Yazeed and Imam Hussain (A.S) on the matters of State. Imam Hussain (A.S) refused to pledge allegiance of Yazeed. Though, apparently it seems that Yazeed's ideology was different from that of Imam Hussain (A.S) regarding the state affairs. But, the ground reality is quite different. As, Yazeed did not want to let others to rule on the state, which his father did before. Ultimately, in the voracity of power, Yazeed started war with the Imam Husain (A.S so that he could rule over the Ummayyad dynasty. So, in this case Marx's point of view regarding history can be understand well i.e. history is shaped by the material conditions. Over the years, still the same history is yet continued. As, it is believed by the respondents that what happened to Iraq few years ago, during the reign of Saddam is all the results of what happened hundreds of years ago. During the Saddam's era, Shia Muslims had to face cruelty as, he was opposed to the practices of Shia Muslims

commemorating the mourning days of Imam Hussain (A.S). During his era, it was banned, hence after his demise it started again with great enthusiasm. Millions of people from all over the world go to participate in the Arbaeen walk. Considering this phenomenon, it can be said that it does not just possess spiritual or religious significance rather it holds economic premises as well.

At the end of the Arbaeen walk, most of the participants surely buy gifts for their families and friends, particularly including those that signifies the sacredness and spirituality of the event as well as the place. It is evident that most of the pilgrims prefer to purchase things from the shops nearby the shrines. In fact, there is a shop inside the shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S), where the rings, scents, and other sacred things are available. It is very difficult to enter in that shop because of much crowd. It is observed that the shop was comparatively expensive than other shops which are outside the shrine. But, the main characteristic of this shop was that it sells rings for both males and females, whose stone is originally from the grave of Imam Hussain (A.S). So, regardless of expensiveness, people still desire to purchase those rings because of its closed affiliation with their Imam. This also applies to the hotels especially those nearest to the shrine, which are full of people who desire to stay near to the shrines. Even, some of the Iraqis whose homes are near to the shrine also rent their places to the pilgrims who come from out of the country. For all the owners, it is the season to get additional revenues from the visitors. That is why, the rates of hotels reached at its peak. However, it is also evident that most of the Iraqis in Karbala, offer their houses to stay for free of cost because of their love with the Imam.

Due to having millions of people on the Arbaeen occasion, the trading season in Karbala reaches its peak. We can find many examples regarding the economic benefits, which people or organizations related to this phenomenon are taking, whether intentionally or unintentionally. One of the most important example is the leadership, i.e. taking caravans to Karbala. Most of the people have taken it as a business, not particularly for Arbaeen walk, but they bring caravans all around the year. On the Arbaeen walk, the leaders get more advantages because they receive full amount from the people more than the actual expense. However, on the occasion of Arbaeen the expenditure is less as compared to other days because most of the time food, drinks and everything is freely available on the roads. So, they do not have to cook food in huge amount and in fact

they do not make it during the Arbadeen walk. During the walk, it is not possible to take everything along themselves and nonetheless a lot of food is available for the pilgrims on the road towards Karbala. Other than leaders, other organizations also get benefits economically due to the event of Arbadeen. As, on the Taftan border the people of Pakistan house take money from the pilgrims before entering to the next border. The benefits also goes to the economy of Iraq because millions of people visit the country every year. The money which people put in the shrine is so high that the Iraqi government borrow it from the treasure of Imam Hussain (A.S) to meet their affairs.

So, it can be said that the phenomenon of the Arbadeen walk possesses economic significance as well rather than only religious and spiritual importance. Though, on the basis of participant's belief system, it only encompasses religious reasons. Even though, they believed that they took part in the walk because of their strong religious belief system, however as per the Marx the driving force behind all aspects of life is economics. Even, the participants (belonging to lower class) believed that their Imam called him so that is why they participated in the walk otherwise they were not able to afford the expenditure. But the question is that how can one fly to other country without money. Because, in order to meet the expenses of hotels, transport, and food, a person needs money. Even so, those unprivileged people have not spent their money but someone has must sponsor them or the leader might helped them financially to make it for them. Other than that, findings indicate that the participants who go to such sacred places, not only for religious reasons but for material purposes as well. It is evident that most of the participants walked barefoot to fulfil their worldly desires. They also brought sacred things from the holy cities of Iraq because they believe that due to their sacredness, they are capable of increasing their income and material resources, healing their diseases, extending their lives, and protecting them from various perils.

From the above discussed discourse, it is concluded that the phenomenon of Arbadeen walk is determined by the economics as per the theory of Karl Marx. Regardless of the strong religious belief system of the participants, the phenomenon of the Arbadeen walk possesses the combination of both social and economic factors. However, in view of the work of Turner, the phenomenon of Arbadeen walk is the occasion, which reveals the strength of collective harmony and cohesion among Shia community. Hence,

considering the above discourse analysis, findings of the present study agreed with the notions of both theoretical debates.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will provide a summary of the purpose, methodology, and results of this study. Then, conclusions will be discussed based on the researcher's insights, gained regarding the findings of the study. In addition, recommendations are presented for the professionals, interested in pursuing additional research to exceed the scope and findings of this study.

8.1. Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the historical basis of the Arbaeen walk through the native's insights, regarding the prevalence of this phenomenon among Pakistani Shias. It further investigated the socio-economic expressions seen among the pilgrims interacting each other during the walk. For this ethnographic study, an in-depth interviews were conducted from the participants of the study. Findings indicate that the phenomenon of the Arbaeen walk is very old since the tragedy of Karbala. There are two perceptions regarding its historical basis, one is that Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah started this walk for the first time after he got to know about the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A.S) while the second opinion is that it was first started by the Lady Zainab (S.A) when she came for the first time to commemorate the *Chehlum* of his brother. From that time, the Arbaeen pilgrimage has been started and practiced by the followers of Imam. The natives of the Dhoke Syedan believed that Pakistani Shias are also participating in the walk since the concept came first. But, due to the lack of technological advancement it was not commonly known to everyone. The respondents believed that after the demise of Saddam Hussain's era, the media started highlighting it. After that the number of pilgrims going to Karbala increased more than before. Now, every year millions of people walk towards Karbala to commemorate the Arbaeen day on 20th Safar. Day by day, the number of pilgrims are increasing more. Regardless of the insecure condition of Iraq, still people walk from all over the world.

The findings suggest that the pilgrims walking to Karbala, do not only include Muslims, however Non-Muslims also take part in the walk. All of the participants perform different rituals in their own way, to give condolences to the Imam. Most of the pilgrims were observed walking barefoot towards the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S). Males and females, both were seen in equal numbers while participating in the Arbaeen walk. The preferences of pilgrims regarding the traveling, based on both their financial status

and religious reasons. Most of the unprivileged people travel through bus, for that preference they give religious reasons. However, their economic status does not allow them to afford much expenses. On the other hand, there are some of the privileged people who prefer to go by bus, because of their belief system that the more they get pain, the more it would bring them close to their Imam.

It is believed by the respondents that several problems were faced by them during their journey, including environmental issues, security issues, food differences, and language barrier. It is observed that in the advanced era of 21st century, the mainstream media ignore such a significant event which is world's biggest gathering in the world. Most parts of the world are unaware of this huge gathering in the Karbala, where millions of people are served free of cost by the Natives of Iraq. Every year, Iraqis host all of them wholeheartedly. They save money whole year for this event, so that they can provide services to the guest of their Imam. The caravan members were observed helping each other in the group. However, the conflicts were also seen among them during the walk. Most of the time, the caravan members show disagreement with the *Salaar* on certain things. Oftentimes, they complaint *Salaar* for not providing adequate services. However, individuals ignore such issues because of their devoted intentions. Findings suggest that this kind of leadership has been converted into a sort of business by the *Salaar*. Regardless of having spiritual significance, Karbala has become a vibrant market place. It is evident that visitors from all over the world buy gifts for their friends and family before returning back to home. They prefer to buy those things which have more sacred characteristics. The event of Arbreen generates the economy of Iraq as well as other countries from whom people come to take part in it. So, the Arbreen walk does not only possess mystical feature rather it does have economic significance. As per the concept of Marx, each aspect of life is determined by the economic structures. However, the Arbreen walk also show the peace and harmony among the participant and represents a Shia community as peaceful nation in the world. Based on the research findings, socio-economic expressions have been observed more vividly during the Arbreen walk.

8.2. Recommendations for future research

Since, the present study has been conducted particularly on the Shia Muslims of Pakistan. However, in the future it could be done on the other sects. As, people

belonging to all sects and religion take part in the walk. So, in the future the study can be conducted further to find out the perceptions of Non-Muslims and those Muslims who belong to other sects. The future research could address these questions: Why do Non-Muslims take part in the Arbæen walk? What motivates Sunnis, Deobandis, and other sects to participate in the walk? Other than that, it can be studied further on macro-level. Though, due to language barrier it was not possible to interact Iraqis and other international visitors. So, international visitors can be studied with reference to the phenomenon of the Arbæen walk.

8.3. Conclusion

The shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S) has become known as a hub for practicing religious rituals during the Arbæen walk. It gradually then developed into a city that has enjoyed spiritual, political, and economic power not only in Iraq but also for all Shia Muslims worldwide. While participating in the Arbæen walk from all over the world, the event contribute to bringing Shia Muslims together with a common feeling of belonging. Moreover, this occasion gives participants the opportunity to experience new places and people that helps them to attain new skills and thoughts. The occasion of Arbæen walk stimulate economic cycle and assist in providing seasonal sources of income for many people. However, to organize the event, it requires most of the things used for the survival, which creates strong supply and demand actions in the Iraqi markets during the Arbæen walk. International markets can be found in large numbers, during the event of Arbæen. Due to the high demand of *Ulemas* and reciters during the Arbæen walk, the event also represent the annual high point of earning most likely for them.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE-I

Interview guide for *Salaar*

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR *SALAAR*

Demographic Information

Name.....

Age.....

Gender.....

Residential Area.....

Education.....

Occupation.....

Marital Status.....

Religion.....

Sect.....

1. To document the historical basis of Arbaeen walk

1.1. What do you know about Arbaeen?

1.2. What are your understanding regarding Arbaeen walk?

1.2.1. In your language what do you call the term Arbaeen walk?

1.3. Do you bring caravans for Arbaeen walk?

1.3.1. If yes, how you thought of doing this?

1.4. How many times have you gone for Arbaeen walk individually?

1.5. How many caravans have you taken in your life for this walk?

1.6. What do you think how old this concept is?

1.7. Do you know its historical background?

1.7.1. If yes, would you please elaborate how the concept of Arbaeen walk started?

1.7.2. Is there any religious justifications or any political reasons due to which this concept came into being?

1.8. What is the significance of Arbaeen walk?

2. To provide the natives' perspectives regarding the prevalence of Arbaeen walk among Pakistani Shias.

2.1. Do you think this trend of Arbaeen walk is prevalent in Pakistan?

- 2.2. How much is this phenomenon prevalent among Pakistani Shias?
- 2.3. Is this a recent phenomenon or older?
- 2.4. When this trend of Arbaeen walk started among Pakistani Shias?
- 2.5. How this concept of walking towards Karbala emerged in Pakistan?
- 2.6. What do you think why Pakistani Shias have started to go for this walk?
- 2.7. Do you know any other people who belong to another sect, also go for this walk?
- 2.8. Is this phenomenon more prevailing among females or males?
- 2.9. Are there any particular terms and conditions to participate in this walk?
 - 2.9.1. If yes, please elaborate those conditions?
 - 2.9.2. Is there any difference in conditions to participate in Arbaeen walk for females and males?
- 2.10. Does a woman need a *Mehram* to go along with her to participate in this walk?
- 2.11. During the walk what practices do you follow?
- 2.12. Is there any specific ritual which you carry out during the Arbaeen walk?
- 2.13. Do people walk barefoot?
 - 2.13.1. What do you think why they do so?
- 2.14. Is there any specific dress code to participate in this walk?
- 2.15. How much time is required to complete the Arbaeen walk?
 - 2.15.1. How many hours do you keep walking?
- 2.16. From which city of Iraq you start your walk?
- 2.17. Is there any particular route for pilgrims who participate in this walk?
- 2.18. During the walk where do you stay?
- 2.19. How do you manage to fulfil the caravan's basic needs especially food?
 - 2.19.1. Do *Zaireen* have their own arrangements to prepare meal or you provide them during the walk?

3. To investigate the challenges faced by the pilgrims during Arbaeen walk.

- 3.1. How do you plan your whole journey for this walk?
 - 3.1.1. What is that process through which people can access you to go for this walk?
- 3.2. Is there any proper channel through which you plan your whole journey?
- 3.3. Do you bring caravans by bus or by air?
 - 3.3.1. What would you prefer and why?

- 3.4. In one caravan how many people you allowed to go along with you?
- 3.5. Have you ever experienced any challenge during this journey?
 - 3.5.1. If yes, would you please elaborate the problems encountered during Arbaceen walk?
 - 3.5.2. How do you then manage those problems?
- 3.6. Have you felt any difficulty in eating other's cultural food?
 - 3.6.1. What is the difference between Pakistani food and Iraqi food?
- 3.7. How do you manage all the matters during whole trip?
- 3.8. Do you easily manage all the group members or you face any difficulty?
- 3.9. Do you arrange hotels for *Zaireen's* stay from Pakistan or when you reach there?
- 3.10. Have you ever experienced any issues related to terrorist activities?
 - 3.10.1. What kind of issues were they?
 - 3.10.2. What do you think what is the reason behind these activities?
- 3.11. Does the fear of terrorist activities act as an obstacle for people to visit Imam's Shrine?
 - 3.11.1. Has this ever happened in the history? If yes, please elaborate any relevant incident.
- 3.12. Does media shows coverage related to this walk?
 - 3.12.1. How much do you think media is playing role for this purpose?
- 3.13. Do you think that modern culture challenges the religion's traditional beliefs?
 - 3.13.1. If yes or not, please elaborate your answer.

4. To determine the socio-economic manifestations in the interactions between the *Zaireen* participating in the Arbaceen walk.

- 4.1. When you start your journey what things do you require to take along with yourself?
- 4.2. Do you buy things on your own expense or people give you before travelling?
 - 4.2.1. If yes, then what things you get from those people?
 - 4.2.2. What is your relationship with those people who help you this way?
- 4.3. If you get things from people at the time of leaving then in return what you do for them?
- 4.4. Do you go for shopping while visiting Imam's Shrine?
- 4.5. What things do you buy from there?

- 4.6. Do you buy gifts for your significant others?
 - 4.6.1. If yes, please elaborate what kind of gifts do you buy?
- 4.7. What do you think that things are costly in Iraq or not?
- 4.8. How much do you ask money to an individual person for this whole trip?
 - 4.8.1. Do you take whole money before the trip or people can pay you during/after traveling as well?
- 4.9. Do you ask money according to *Zaireen*'s economic status or the rate is same for everyone?
- 4.10. What do you think is the whole trip is most costly by going as a group or it cost more by going individually?
- 4.11. What do you think have peoples' socio-economic status influenced their decision to perform the Arbreen walk in any way?
 - 4.11.1. If yes, please elaborate how it has influenced?
- 4.12. Do you give concession to those who are not financially strong enough to bear all the expense for this walk?
 - 4.12.1. How much concession do you give to them?
- 4.13. Have you experienced any differences in all your trips or was it same?
- 4.14. At the end of the journey what remarks do you receive from your caravan members?

ANNEXURE-II

Interview guide for *Zaireen*

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR *ZAIREEN*

Demographic Information

Name.....

Age.....

Gender.....

Residential Area.....

Education.....

Occupation.....

Marital Status.....

Religion.....

Sect.....

5. To document the historical basis of Arbadeen walk

5.1. What do you know about Arbadeen?

5.2. What are your understanding regarding Arbadeen walk?

5.2.1. In your language what do you call the term Arbadeen walk?

5.3. Do you go for Arbadeen walk?

5.3.1. If not, have you ever thought of going for this walk?

5.3.2. How much are you enthused to go and participate in this walk?

5.4. How many times have you gone for Arbadeen walk?

5.5. What do you think how old this concept is?

5.6. Do you know its historical background?

5.6.1. If yes, would you please elaborate how the concept of Arbadeen walk started?

5.6.2. Is there any religious justifications or any political reasons due to which this concept came into being?

5.7. What is the significance of Arbadeen walk?

6. To provide the natives' perspectives regarding the prevalence of Arbadeen walk among Pakistani Shias.

6.1. Do you think this trend of Arbadeen walk is prevalent in Pakistan?

- 6.2. How much is this phenomenon prevalent among Pakistani Shias?
- 6.3. Is this a recent phenomenon or older?
- 6.4. When this trend of Arbaeen walk started among Pakistani Shias?
- 6.5. How this concept of walking towards Karbala emerged in Pakistan?
- 6.6. What do you think why Pakistani Shias have started to go for this walk?
- 6.7. Do you know any other people who belong to another sect, also go for this walk?
- 6.8. Is this phenomenon more prevailing among females or males?
- 6.9. Are there any particular terms and conditions to participate in this walk?
 - 6.9.1. If yes, please elaborate those conditions?
 - 6.9.2. Is there any difference in conditions to participate in Arbaeen walk for females and males?
- 6.10. During the walk what practices you follow?
- 6.11. Is there any specific ritual which you carry out during the Arbaeen walk?
- 6.12. How much time is required to complete the Arbaeen walk?
 - 6.12.1. How many hours do you keep walking?
- 6.13. From which city of Iraq you start your walk?
- 6.14. Is there any particular route for pilgrims who participate in this walk?
- 6.15. During the walk where do you stay?
- 6.16. How do you manage to fulfil your basic needs especially food?
 - 6.16.1. Do you have your own arrangements to prepare meal or someone else provide you during the walk?

7. To investigate the challenges faced by the pilgrims during Arbaeen walk.

- 7.1. How do you plan your journey to participate in this walk?
 - 7.1.1. What is that process through which one can plan to go for this walk?
- 7.2. Is there any proper channel through which you plan your whole journey?
- 7.3. Do you go by bus or by air?
 - 7.3.1. What would you prefer and why?
- 7.4. Do you go alone or in the form of groups?
 - 7.4.1. Is there any head who deals with all your matters?
- 7.5. Have you ever experienced any challenge during this journey?
 - 7.5.1. If yes, would you please elaborate the problems encountered during Arbaeen walk?
 - 7.5.2. How do you then manage those problems?

7.6. Have you felt any difficulty in eating their food?

7.6.1. What is the difference between Pakistani food and Iraqi food?

7.7. Have you ever experienced any issues related to terrorist activities?

7.7.1. What kind of issues were they?

7.7.2. What do you think what is the reason behind these activities?

7.8. Does the fear of terrorist activities act as an obstacle for people to visit Imam's Shrine?

7.8.1. Has this ever happened in history? If yes, please elaborate any relevant incident.

7.9. Does media shows coverage related to this walk?

7.9.1. How much do you think media is playing role for this purpose?

8. To determine the socio-economic manifestations in the interactions between the za'aireen participating in the Arbaeen walk.

8.1. When you start your journey what things do you require to take along with yourself?

8.2. Do you buy things on your own expense or someone help you financially?

8.2.1. If yes, then what things you get from those people?

8.2.2. What is your relationship with those people who help you this way?

8.3. If you get things from people at the time of leaving then in return what you do for them?

8.4. Do you go for shopping while visiting Imam's Shrine?

8.5. What things do you buy from there?

8.6. Do you buy gifts for your significant others?

8.6.1. If yes, please elaborate what kind of gifts do you buy?

8.7. What do you think that things are costly in Iraq or not?

8.8. How much you pay for your whole trip?

8.8.1. Do you pay whole money before the trip or you have to pay during traveling as well?

8.9. What do you think is the whole trip is most costly by going as a group or it cost more by going individually?

8.10. Has your socio-economic status influenced your decision to perform the Arbaeen walk in any way?

8.10.1. If yes, please elaborate how it has influenced?

- 8.11. Does your *Salaar* give concession to those who are not financially strong enough to bear all the expense for this walk?
- 8.12. How much concession does he offer to them?
- 8.13. How much eagerly do you wait for this day?
- 8.14. Do you collect money whole year just to perform the Arbaceen walk?
- 8.15. What do you feel when you get your visa to Iraq?
- 8.16. Have you experienced any differences in all your trips or was it same?
- 8.17. At the end of the journey what do you feel?
- 8.18. Apart from its religious features does the phenomenon of Arbaceen walk playing an economic role?

ANNEXURE-III

Respondent profile sheet

ANNEXURE-IV

Ziyarat-e-Arbaeen

**(All of the pilgrims, who participate in the walk must recite this
Ziyarat)**

ANNEXURE-V

Translation of Ziyarat-e-Arbaeen

ANNEXURE-VI

**Map of Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi, generated by Rawalpindi
Cantonment Board**

ANNEXURE-VII

Affidavit

[A permission letter required for females who go to Arbaeen walk alone without their *Mehram* (immediate relatives). This is only required for those who travel through bus]

Y348916



ATTESTED



01 SEP 2016

بیان حنفی

مجاہد مسی، غلام اظہر عباس ولد شاہ حسین سکند مکان نمبر 141/A، محلہ ڈھوک سیداں، تحصیل راولپنڈی، حامل شناختی کارڈ نمبر 9-37405-3623984 مندرجہ ذیل حلفیہ اقرار کرتا ہوں کہ:-

یہ کہ من مظہر کی بیوی مسماۃ، شبنم بیگم زوجہ غلام اظہر عباس حامل شناختی کارڈ نمبر 0-37405-6642483، زیارت مقامات مقدمہ ایران، عراق جانا چاہتی ہے۔

یہ کہ ہمارا کاروان..... ہے جس کے ساتھ من مظہر کی بیوی زوجہ شبنم بیگم جانا چاہتی ہے۔

یہ کہ من مظہر کی جانب سے ہر طرح کی اجازت ہے کہ من مظہر کی بیوی شبنم بیگم مقامات مقدمہ ایران، عراق کاروان

کے ساتھ جاسکتی ہے جس پر مجھے کسی قسم کا کوئی عذر و اعتراض ہرگز نہ ہے

بخوشی اجازت دیتا ہوں اور ایسی سے من مظہر کی درخواست ہے کہ من مظہر کی بیوی مسماۃ، شبنم بیگم کو ویزہ جاری کیا جائے۔

بخوشی اجازت دیتا ہوں کہ من مظہر کی بیوی مسماۃ، شبنم بیگم کو ویزہ جاری کیا جائے۔

العید

غلام اظہر عباس ولد شاہ حسین

37405-3623984-9

ANNEXURE-VIII

**Information about the holy shrine of the lion of Bibi Fiza (S.A) in
Karbala**

The Holy Shrine of Sheer Fidha

This Holy Shrine:

This Holy Shrine is called Sheer Fidha which is the location of this honorable lady who had dedicated her life to serve Fatima "AS" and Ahlul Bait thereafter. Fidha was the one who followed the orders of Zainab "AS" to call upon the help of the Lion to protect and stop the opposing army from treading on Imam Hussain's body when he was left lying on the desert sand for three days.

The Lion Story:

After Imam Ali "AS" returned from the battle of Seffen he passed through Kerbala'a on his way back to Kufa, when he was confronted by a Lion. The Lion greeted the Imam when the Imam said to the Lion "are you in charge of this land"? The Lion replied yes. Then the Imam said "when the battle of Kerbala takes place I wish you to come and protect the body of my son Hussain to stop the horses from treading upon his body".

The Horses crushed the Holy body of Hussain "AS":

After Imam Hussain "AS" was killed during the battle of Ashoora Umar Bin Saad followed the order of Aubaid Allah Bin Ziad and ordered his men to tread the Holy body of the Imam with their horses. The women then cried and Zainab "AS" ordered lady Fidha to go to the place where the Lion was supposed to be "in this location" and request him in the name of the Prophet Mohammed "SAWA" to come to their aid and stop the enemies horses from treading on the holy Imam's body. Then the Lion rush crying in anger and knelt on the Holy Imam's body protecting him for three days until Imam Sajad "AS" arrived to bury the bodies.

The Honourably Lady Fidha:

Lady Fidha was born in India where she is a descendent of a royal family. She was given as a gift to the Prophet Mohammed S.A.W.W. from the King of Habasha having been captured by his army. The Prophet wished her to serve Fatima "AS" following her acceptance of Islam. She only spoke the Holy Quran language having memorised it. Following the martyrdom of Fatima "AS" Lady Fidha continued to serve loyally the family of the Prophet as well as escorting Zainab "AS" to Karbala and standing by her throughout the tragedy's of Karbala until her death in Sham, where her Shrine is near the daughter of Imam Hussein, Sukaina "AS". It is true that Imam Ali "AS" said "May Allah Bless our Fidha."

الاستاذة السيدة علياء بنت ابي طالب
التي كانت في كربلاء

Reference:

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AL-Hussaini Encyclopaedia, Author Sheikh M.S. Kurbassi

ANNEXURE- IX

**A cover page of booklet, distributed by the Iraqi natives during the
Arbaeen walk**

ANNEXURE-X

Photo gallery



Figure 1: A woman lighting candles, under the *Alam* of Hazrat Abbas (A.S).



Figure 2: Women offering prayers inside the *Imambargah*.



Figure 3: A women distributing sweets among children.



Figure 4: A girl reciting *Dua* near the *Alam* of Hazrat Abbas (A.S).



Figure 5: Iraqi's tea, distributed by the Mawkib owners.



Figure 6: View of Wadi Al Salaam cemetery, Najaf.



Figure 7: An underground room in Wadi Al Salaam, where a number of people are buried.



Figure 8: Visitors collecting Dur-e-Najaf (name of a stone) from a stall.



Figure 9: Al-Hannanah Mosque, located in Najaf.



Figure 10: Water-Well situated in Kufa mosque, Iraq.



Figure11: Massage services on the road for pilgrims by the natives.



Figure12: Bags repairing facility during the walk



Figure13: Pakistani *Mawkib* in the Iraq during the Arbaeen walk.



Figure14: Indian *Mawkib* for pilgrims.



Figure 15: *Mawkib* organised by the Iraqis.



Figure16: An international pilgrim giving gifts to the Iraqi service providers.



Figure 17: A man collecting garbage from the visitors.



Figure18: Children, cleaning the roads in Iraq.



Figure19: *Ta'aziyah* performance during the Arbaeen walk.



Figure 20: An old woman reciting prayers during the walk.

PROFILE SHEET OF THE RESPONDENTS

	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Sect	Ethnicity	Experienced the Arbaceen walk
Respondent 1	38	Male	MBA	University Lecturer	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 2	36	Male	Middle	Unemployed	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 3	24	Female	BS.(Hons)	Insurance officer	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 4	60	Male	Middle	Retired officer	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 5	30	Female	Masters	Government officer	Married	Shia	Urdu-speaking	Yes

	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Sect	Ethnicity	Experienced the Arbreen walk
Respondent 6	26	Male	B.Com	Media executive	Unmarried	Shia	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 7	32	Female	Masters	Student/ Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 8	17	Male	F.A	Student	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 9	33	Female	Matric	Housewife	Married	Shia	Punjabi	No
Respondent 10	36	Female	Matric	Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 11	46	Female	F.A	Housewife	Married	Shia	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 12	28	Male	MBA	Assistant manager	Unmarried	Syed	Urdu-speaking	Yes

Name	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Sect	Ethnicity	Experienced Arbaeen Walk
Respondent 13	45	Female	Primary	Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 14	50	Male	F.A	Inspector	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 15	22	Female	BS.(Hons)	Student	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 16	31	Male	ACCA	Selfemployed	Married	Shia	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 17	32	Male	BS.(Hons)	Government officer	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 18	41	Male	Middle	Businessman	Married	Shia	Punjabi	Yes

	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Sect	Ethnicity	Experienced the Arbaeen walk
Respondent 19	31	Male	F.A	Property dealer	Unmarried	Sunni	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 20	58	Female	Primary	Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 21	64	Male	Illiterate	Labourer	Married	Sunni	Punjabi	No
Respondent 22	18	Female	F.Sc	Student	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 23	80	Female	Illiterate	Housewife	Widowed	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 24	27	Male	B.A	Unemployed	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes

Name	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Sect	Ethnicity	Experienced Arbaeen Walk
Respondent 25	55	Female	Illiterate	Housewife	Married	Shia	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 26		Female		Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 27	37	Female	F.A	Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Urdu-speaking	Yes
Respondent 28	48	Female	Middle	Housewife	Divorced	Shia	Punjabi	No
Respondent 29	50	Female	Primary	Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 30	55	Male	Middle	Shopkeeper	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes

	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Sect	Ethnicity	Experienced the Arbaeen walk
Respondent 31	38	Female	Matric	<i>Imambargah</i> management	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 32	21	Male	Middle	Event management	Unmarried	Sunni	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 33	50	Female	Illiterate	Housewife	Widowed	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No
Respondent 34	22	Female	F.A	Housewife	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 35	55	Female	Illiterate	Housewife	Widowed	Shia	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 36	50	Male	Primary	Unemployed	Unmarried	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No

Name	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Sect	Ethnicity	Experienced Arbaeen Walk
Respondent 37	56	Female	Matric	Housewife	Widowed	Shia Syed	Pathan	Yes
Respondent 38	47	Male	F.A	Businessman	Married	Shia Syed	Pathan	No
Respondent 39	62	Male	B.A	Retired Government Officer	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 40	51	Male	Matric	Businessman	Married	Shia Syed	Punjabi	Yes
Respondent 41	53	Female	Primary	Housewife	Widowed	Shia Syed	Punjabi	No