

# **Marriage, Pundor and Modernity**

**(A case study of a village in Hunza)**



**By**

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*A thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of Master of Science in Anthropology.*

**Department of Anthropology Faculty of social sciences Quaid-i-Azam  
University Islamabad, Pakistan**

**2022**

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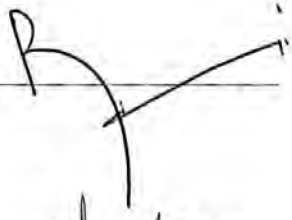
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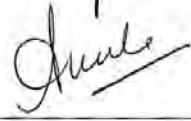
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## **Abstract**

The social exchange system is a common custom observed in South Asian countries. This systematic review aims to a significant contribution to knowledge on social exchange practices of gift-giving on the social organization of marriage among the people of Gulmit Hunza. The current study targets sixteen married women among them eight women were got married before 2000 and eight of them were got married after 2000. The researcher has conducted sixteen in-depth interviews and focus group discussion was held through snow ball technique. The researcher has developed semi questionnaire/interview guide for the collection of qualitative data. The researcher has presented the data in the form of interviews and case studies after taking semi-structured, in- depth interviews, categorize the data under three relevant themes. Data is presented and analyzed through thematic analysis. For the purpose to interpret data the researcher has chosen Social Exchange theory. Findings of the current research showed that women do practice *Pundor* (Vartan Bhanji) at marriages ceremonies and the Majority of the respondents agreed that the early concept of *Pundor* is changed.

# Chapter. 01

## 1. Introduction

Vartan bhanji means dealing in sweets „and extended meaning is dealing in the relationship. In the Punjabi language, the Vartan means „dealing“, Bhanji means „sweets“ and it is also used as a meaning of relationship. Bhanji involves an exchange of sweets, fruits, food, money, extending beyond material things, it includes the exchange of services, like entertainment, and participation in ceremonial events. Vartan bhanji is the famous system of exchange of goods and services in Punjab which helps people to maintain the relationship among friends and family through the exchange. An important factor of Vartan bhanji is the obligation of reciprocity which means the mutual obligation of sharing goods and services between individuals or in-group (eglar, a Punjabivillage in Pakistan, 1060)

The study of Vartan bhanji is related to both cultural and economic anthropology. Vartan bhanji is essentially a reciprocal process based on give and take. This tradition is based on reciprocity. Vartan bhanji is not only a material exchange, but also an emotional one. Vartan bhanji is practiced in different ceremonies, including birth, marriage, and death etc. Vartan bhanji is important in the formation and maintenance of social relationships. Vartan bhanji has social and cultural norms and values.

Certain societies have formalized the rule into ritual. Consider for example the vartan bhanji, an institutionalized custom of gift exchange common to parts of Pakistan and India. It's worth noting that the system goes to long way in preventing completely eliminating outstanding obligations. As a result, departing guests are given sweets as gifts on the occasion of a wedding. The hostess may say "these five are yours" when measuring them out, implying "these are a repayment for what you previously gave me," and then add an extra measure, "These are mine." She will be given them back along with an additional measure that she will be late returning on the next occasion, and so on (gouldner, 1960)

The social exchange system prevails around the world throughout time from indigenous people to modern times. Every culture has its norms, values, and set patterns of reciprocity based on which people reciprocate. The exchange system depends on gift-giving and favors, it deals with strong bounding, expectations and obligations from people. People come together on occasions to give gifts. Reciprocity is a social norm and a rule made by people which is being practiced throughout

time from indigenous peoples to modern time. Vartan bhanji is a local Punjabi exchange phenomenon in Pakistan that means dealing in sweets. Exchange of gifts, sweets, clothes, money, and services will take place at different ceremonies. Mostly reciprocation at high degree held on weddings. Pakistan is a collectivistic society where people depended on each other they made expectations from family and friends. But to made expectations they should first make a relationship of exchange. It is an obvious thing that people always give favors to those from whom they received previously social exchange system feels good because most nursing relationships are based on it (duck, 2012)

Vartan bhanji places a strong emphasis on women. They are the system's protectors. In every society, women play a vital role in preserving their culture. The custom of vartan bhanji, which binds the social fabric of the society together, was carried on by women, with the process predominantly taking place through the daughter. Women were essential not just to the village/social community's relationships or culture, but also to the village economics and the well-being of their families. Vartan bhanji's proper conduct is a source of dignity or prestige (Izzat) for women and their families. The number of qualities of the gift given and received are indicators of family knowledge and ability in dealing with people, as well as an index of its status influence and power within its social circle, all of which means Izzat and all such occasions daughters are extremely important to the exchange and thus acquisition of Izzat (eglar, a punjabi village in pakistan, 1960)

The role of economy in vartan bhanji is also very important, because this system is a symbol of status, respect, and honor, whereas money is more feasible than heavy big gifts to handle, which is why this system is more economical. This is an indigenous economic system basically.

Reciprocity is a process of exchanging gifts & services and it prevails in different parts of Pakistan in different forms Like in Punjab is known as Vartan bhanji in KPK maang and Badal is practiced. Pakistan is a collectivist society so, the group influence over individuals this relationship is more important than anything else in collectivist societies so the group influence over individuals.

The Concept of pundor is more commonly associated with Vartan bhanji but also cultural differences were found between these institutions. Pundor was given to bride

and groom at wedding ceremony people give the invitation to relatives and neighbors all relatives bring different gifts according to their status and level some bring precious gifts and some bring a lower level of gifts.

Pundor is a reciprocal system that prevails among the people of Gulmit Gojal Hunza in Gilgit Baltistan. The word *Pundor* itself defines as a gift for the bride and groom in wedding ceremonies. The concept of Pundor has been having prevailed since the beginning in Hunza wedding society. If we have a glance upon today's situation of *Pundor* and the situation of *Pundor* sixty years ago we will find greater differences about three decades ago, agricultural products were given. one significant thing that is worth mentioning here is that during these times, people use to graze cattle's of the whole community it was like a turn of every family to do this job so when there was a wedding ceremony happening, they would be given favor of not to do the job of grazing as *Pundor*. Moving on our discussion to 50-60 years ago, agricultural products, dairy products including butter, milk, flour, and dry fruits like walnut, almond, walnut oil. More ever halal animals were also given as *Pundor* to people celebrating their wedding in return they were also given the same favor during this era, these products were given as *Pundor*. In today's era society, usually gives different precious gifts in the form of clothes, and the money given to the family of groom and bride, for girls wedding furniture, gold, is given as the name of Pundor as we are living in a privileged and scientific society and technology have overcome many aspects of life, that's why electronic devices, gold, jewelry are also given as *Pundor*. This enhancement is because of interaction with people of multicultural backgrounds and because of many cultural norms.

In literature, there are many researches on social exchange systems they all examine the social exchange system through different angles Reciprocity is a common phenomenon and we find different researches on it such as Eglar (1960), Alavi (1978) ( Saher & Mayrhofer 2014), worked on Vartan Bhanji in Pakistan in different years with unique perspectives. But the current study focuses that how diffusion influence the early concept of *Pundor* (Vartan Bhanji) on marriage ceremony. Researcher has explored the role of diffusion, on a marriage ceremony with special reference to gift-giving on the marriage ceremony.

## **1.1. Statement of the problem**

Reciprocity is a social exchange system prevailing in different cultures. It is a complex system for exchange gifts and giving favors. As Vartan bhanji is a relationship developing out of gifts exchanges (eglar, a punjabi village in pakistan, 1960)

Reciprocity is now a certain burden on people and society move by the sense of competition in gift giving. Given this gap in knowledge, this research aims to study how the earliest concept of

(*Pundor*) Vartan Bhanji is changed due to diffusion, and to explore the local concept of *Pundor* (VB) among the people of Gulmit Gojal with special reference to gift-giving on marriage ceremonies it is very important to investigate this issue to get insight into the underlying category of this socially binding institution.

## **1.2. Objective of the Study**

For the purpose of current study, following has been chosen as objectives

- To find out how the early concept of gift-giving on marriage ceremony is changed due to Diffusion.
- To find out the role participation of biraderi (Sukuin) in marriage ceremonies.
- To identify role of income in cultural change.

## **1.3. Theoretical framework**

It is very important to apply a theory to research. It provides the study with a sound background and acts as a tool, model to handle the research. It also helps the researcher in selecting the research methodology for the study and thus lays the foundation on it. Theory provides a general analytic approach to a wide array of social processes that are central to the sociological inquiry at various levels. In particular, it emphasizes the role of exchange processes at the micro-level and how such processes often form the bedrock of social structure and social change.

Social Exchange theory explains the current research very well. We engage in many exchanges daily with a wide range of actors most often embedded in the groups, networks, organizations, and institutions we inhabit. Thus it is not surprising that

exchange theory has remained one of the major theoretical perspectives on social interaction and social structure since the early writings of George Homans (1961), (Blau, 1964) and Richard Emerson (1962). Different theorists have different stance on it According to Homans, (1961) social exchange theory it describes how resources are transferred between actors. The simplest exchange is a direct exchange between two actors According to the theory, the partner with the most personal resources, such as money, has the most power, in this context, the exchanges are negotiated in that partners agree to a bargaining process to decide on how resources will be exchanged, Social exchange involves the principle that one person does another a favor, and while there is a general expectation of some future return, furthermore he also mentioned nature of reciprocity in three ways: reciprocity as a pattern of interdependent exchanges, reciprocity as a folk belief, and reciprocity as a moral norm. Blau viewed social exchange as a process of central significance in social life and as underlying the relations between groups as well as between individuals. He focused primarily on the reciprocal exchange of extrinsic benefits and the forms of association and emergent social structures that this

Kind of social interaction created. According to Blau “Social exchange refers to voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others.” In contrasting social and economic exchange he emphasizes the fact that it is more likely in social exchange for the nature of the obligations involved to remain unspecified, at least initially. Social exchange, he argues, “involves the principle that one person does another a favor, and while there is a general expectation of some future return, its exact nature is not stipulated in advance (Blau, 1964)



Social Exchange Theory	Model Given by (Homans, 1961).
<p>Social exchange theory is one of the most predominant for studying organizational behavior. Its roots can be tracked back to at Least 1920's (Malinowski, 1922), linking anthropology (Firth, 1967; (Sahlins, 1972) social psychology (Homans, 1960) sociology (Blau, 1964). The theory mostly used in Anthropology The sociology and social psychology and much social scientist work according to their discipline</p>	<p>Homans, (1961) social exchange theory it describes how resources are transferred between actors The simplest exchange is a direct exchange between two actors Social exchange involves the principle that one person does another a favor, and while there is a general expectation of some future return.</p>

Relevant to Current Research	Relevant to Current Research
<p>Social Exchange theory explains the current research very well. We engage in many exchanges daily with a wide range of actors most often embedded in the groups, networks, organizations, and institutions we inhabit.</p>	<p>Model given by Homans, (1961) is best suited for present study because present research is exploring that Pundor is a reciprocal system prevails among the people of Gulmit. The word itself defines as a gift for the bride and groom on marriage ceremony. Present study also exploring that Pundor (Vartan bhanji) is still practice but the nature of gift Giving has changed.</p>

**Figure # 01 Theoretical Mode**

#### **1.4. Application of theory**

This theory is chosen to justify the study by the researcher. It suits the situation, *Pundor* (Vartan Bhanji) social exchange among the people of Gulmit Gojal Hunza through gifts and favors would identify through the social exchange theory. Social exchange theory guides to understand the phenomena of social exchange and the rules through which reciprocity occurs. Reciprocity or *pundor* is a sort of investment for the particular time which later will be received in the shape of cash or in the shape of commodities, and the result of that it will ease the economic burden associated with the marriage. When your behavior gives you a positive reward, the society keep on continue the process of reciprocity and when your behavior don't give you any reward in the future whether economic reward or social reward, we abundant the process of reciprocity. Reciprocity or *pundor* is a sort of investment, you invest a little day by day and receive in a large sum in an appropriate time.

Secondly *pundor* plays a significant role in human relationships, it determine the genuineness and intensity of a relationship with our family members and with other people in our surrounding. Now here the relationship doesn't mean a causal relationship, it's a committed long term relationship that's why our total behavior and relationship with the people are determine by the *pundor*. When people reciprocate they give gifts to different people on different times at different occasions, and receive all those gifts back from the same people at the same time on a specific occasion, this strengthen the relationship as a social capital.

The genuine relationship are with those who reciprocate or participate on different occasions in a practical way, and if the relationship is casual there is no need of reciprocation, and there is no any responsibility and obligation. The relationship between responsibility and obligation is that its ones responsibility to support a family member or friend at the time of need. E.g. giving gift on their marriage ceremony and then there is a certain obligation associated with it that is: you must reciprocate with a person from whom you've received a gift on your marriage, in an appropriate time.

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This section explains the academic as well the practical utility of the research. As the practical significance of the current study explores the local concept of Vartan Bhanji among the people of Gulmit Gojal Hunza, its primary focuses on digging out the

influence of diffusion on the local concept of *Pundor* (VB). Whereas academic significance, the study will notably add to the previous literature of the domain and to creating familiarity with similar institutions in Pakistan and will knowledge creation and contribution for the academic purpose it will therefore contribute to the body of knowledge.

This research will help different NGOs who want to work on such aspects in rural areas, this research will help them to know about their culture very deeply. For locals this research will help in somehow preservation of their culture.

## Chapter. 02

### 2. Literature review

This section deals with the review of previous literature relevant to the present topic it also explains what previous studies have said about your research. Providing Literature review is the backbone of effective research and is also called the mother of research because it guides the researcher to conduct the research. Anthropologists have been debating for many years about what motivates gift-giving around the world. Mauss offered the first theory on various gift-exchange systems in Non-Western cultures that continues to provide inspirations for the study of the gift. He highlighted the paradoxical and ambiguous nature of gifts being simultaneously obligatory and free, material and spiritual, with interest and disinterested.

He started this intellectual journey by asking the fundamental question, „What force is there in the thing given which compels the recipient to make a return“ According to studies of Maori that Mauss had access to, the Hau always wishes to return to its place of origin, but can only do so through the medium of an object given in exchange for an original gift. Failure to return a gift can result in serious trouble since not returning the Hau can cause the death of gift recipients. It is the Hau in the gift, Mauss asserts, that forces the recipient to make a return, and he calls this „the spirit of the gift (mauss, 1967)

According to the Maori, to receive a gift is also to receive a part of the gift giver's spiritual essence. Thus, one must make a return gift to keep the original giver intact. Partners may stop giving. He thus concluded that the principle of reciprocity serves as the foundation of the Melanesian social order (Malinowski, 1962)

Once we place gift exchange in the larger social context, we can see the difference between horizontal and vertical gift exchanges. Horizontal gift exchange occurs among social equals, while

Vertical exchange cuts across the boundaries of social status. Both types of gift-giving activities may coexist on some occasions. Taking Christmas gift-giving as an example, the horizontal exchange of gifts among friends, classmates, or coworkers goes side by side with a vertical exchange of gifts between employers and employees, patrons and clients, hosts and service providers, and to a lesser degree, between senior and junior generations in a family or kin group. Because the obligation to return a gift

places its recipient in the inferior position of being indebted, gift-giving is often used as a way to create political authority and dominance, such as in cases of the Melanesian big-man and the Polynesian chieftainship (Sahlins, 2017)

Zekiye Eglar has conducted a study over the social organization of a Punjabi village and highlighted that Vartan bhanji serves as the informal economy system in the rural area where the formal system is a little weaker or not even exists in some cases. It is a complex mechanism for the exchange of gifts and services which is serving as a principle means of integration in the society (Eglar, a Punjabi village in Pakistan, 1060). The gift exchange is used for a variety of purposes. The give and take relationship brings people together it involves a lot of sharing and helping others in need. A gift creates a huge network of rights and obligations that generates social cohesion. Give and take also entails introduce us to a new relationship and it makes the previous relation more strong (Baal, 1975)

According to the Maori, to receive a gift is also to receive a part of the gift giver's spiritual essence. Thus, one must make a return gift to keep the original giver intact. Partners may stop giving. He thus concluded that the principle of reciprocity serves as the foundation of the Melanesian social order (Malinowski, 1962)

An exchange marriage refers to a controlling mate selection system in which a family gives a daughter/sister to be married with a son/brother to the second family reciprocates their female with

The first family. The process of marriage initiates from the birth of a child or even before in Pakistan. If a family does not have a girl to reciprocate, the family promises a female child to reciprocate, if born in the future this system of exchange shares almost one-third of marriages of rural Parts of Pakistan. In Pakistan, a person is supposed to follow the will of parents, elders to get married mostly based on exchange (Zaman, 2013)

## **2.1. Reciprocity**

Gift exchange is used for a variety of purposes. The give and take relationship brings people together it involves a lot of sharing and helping others in need. A Gift creates a huge network of rights and obligations that generates social cohesion. Give and take also entails introduce us to a new relationship and it makes the previous relation more

strong (Blau, 1964)

The obligatory nature of gift exchange has been discussed by a great number of non-literate cultures, most economic items are transferred through gift exchange. The distribution of goods is the main purpose of gift exchange. But the items which are distributed as a consequence of reciprocal social and ceremonial obligation that the member of the community have towards one another. The main reason for exchanges is the establishment or maintenance of social bonds which are important to those who are involved (Tylor, 1969)

Eglar has conducted the study over the social organization of Punjab village and highlighted that Vartan bhanji serve as the informal economic system in the rural areas of where the formal system is little weaker or not even exist in some cases Vartan Bhanji literally means dealing in sweet with extended meaning of dealing in relationship. Vartan Bhanji is the famous system of exchange of goods and services in Punjab (Pakistan) which helps people to maintain relationship among friends and family through exchange consistently the phenomenon of Vartan bhanji builds up social as well as emotional ties of mutual support and development among people of Punjab. As role of

Women can never be ignored at any occasion, it gets more emphasized during exchange. Women play the more active role in Vartan bhanji. They represent the family at all the ceremonies, for one's presence on those occasion is an important as the giving and receiving of parents. And they are the guardians of Vartan bhanji, they know to whom and when and how much a family is to give as well as from whom and when and how much it should be received (Eglar, a Punjabi village in Pakistan, 1960)

The most close and nourishing relationship are depended on reciprocity so it feels good to receive. We always feel good when we are able to give favors in reciprocal relationships, things should be balanced so there will be equilibrium (Duck, 2012)

Reciprocity is social norm and a rule made by people which is being practiced throughout time from indigenous peoples to modern time Reciprocity is a vital issue in the study of relationships and reciprocity is depending on the type of relationship and goals of those involved. The reciprocity showed that the greater the degree of kinship the more imbalanced the exchange is (Katherine, Mock, & Reinhardt, 2008)

## **2.2. Reciprocal System in Different Cultures**

Traditions of reciprocal gift exchanging have long been practiced in many cultures around the world since long every culture has their own customs and traditions. Thus, exchange practices vary as the area does there is a significant literature on the mechanism of local social network of exchange in various cultures there are different institutions around the world related to Vartan Bhanji. Some of them are Guanxi in China, Blat in Russia and Wasta in the Middle East. Every institution is unique because of particular culture (Noreen & Wolfgang, 2014) Blat more related to trust and fairness among the reciprocal partners over the long term. This exchange system is neither associated to gift and commodity but especially with favors of access. It is more related to public and private resources that's why it's difficult to understand blat as reciprocity.

In blat both partners had equal responsibility to satisfy the other one. There are three regimes in blat to reciprocate: equivalence, affection and status. And these regimes depend on closed social circle and relatives another social exchange system among the Arabs of Middle East sustained by Islamic ethics. It is related to tribal life and conflict resolution. Wasta is considered highly important in marketing and business activities today (Noreen & Wolfgang, 2014)

Bari is the exchange system among the people of Northwest Bangladesh (Dinajpur District) the item of clothes and jewelry is given to the bride and her family as a form of gift at the time of the marriage ceremony this is directly given to groom and bride family but this exchange is in terms of dowry and bride price directly paid to the family of bride and groom (white, 2017).

## **2.3. Gunxi in china**

Guanxi is another social exchange system in china those social institution of exchange works on the principle of reciprocity and empathy it is embedded in Confucian Ethics. Although its literal meaning is relationship, it refers to the exchange of use-value. It involves an exchange of goods and objects, the intimate personal relationships, interdependence, reciprocal, obligation towards each other and indebtedness characterize Guanxi (yang, 1994)

## **2.4. Blat exchange system in Russia**

Ledeneva stated that Blat is more related to trust and fairness among the reciprocal partners over the long term. This exchange system is neither associated to gift and commodity but especially with favors of access. It is more related to public and private resources that's why it's difficult to understand blat as reciprocity. In blat both partners had equal responsibility to satisfy the other one. There are three regimes in blat to reciprocate: equivalence, affection and status. And these regimes depend on closed social circle and relatives (Ledeneva & Alena, 1998)

## **2.5. Wasta Middle East**

Wasta is another social exchange system among the Arabs of Middle East sustained by Islamic ethics. In the tribal context of Middle East. It is like nepotism and is perceived negatively in the society. The system reflects giving of favor in negative sense. It strongly emphasizes on family network as compared to the other institutions mentioned. It is considered immoral and unlawful but it is still deeply rooted in the social fabric. The system reflects giving of is related to tribal life and conflict resolution. Wasta is considered highly important in marketing and business activities today (Noreen & Wolfgang, 2014)

## **2.6. Reciprocal system in Pakistan**

In Punjab province of Pakistan, Vartan literally means „dealing“ and bhanji are „sweets“ thus Vartan bhanji exactly signifies the exchange of sweets. Symbolically, it refers to the exchange of different forms of gifts among members of a *biraderi* various ceremonies, such as marriage, birth and death (Alavi, 1972)

According to Elgar's anthropological study in Punjabi villages, Vartan bhanji takes place in the framework of life cycle rituals among relatives, friends, neighbors and members of same *biraderi*, with members of different *biraderis* belonging to the same village or a few neighboring villages. Given the close relation of these life-cycle rituals with reproduction, marriage and other family matters, Elgar found that the elder woman of the household usually holds a distinctive role, because she has the full knowledge of all the dealings that took place or must take place under the obligation of Vartan bhanji (Elgar, a Punjabi village in Pakistan, 1960)



Vartan bhanji is a broader term which includes regulation of good and services among relatives, neighbors and friends. Reciprocity is a life-cycle exchange system especially at marriage ceremonies, death funeral, birth of new born baby, and circumcisions among biraderi members. Biraderi plays important role in Vartan bhanji in Punjab. According to the Author Vartan bhanji is glue which leads to interdependency and bind people in a reciprocal relationship. In VB the amount of exchange should not be equal between giver and receiver because equality leads to end of reciprocal relationship. So the amount of giving is always more than the previous amount that was received. One of the reciprocal ways in VB at marriage ceremonies is salami also called *neondra* or *neota*. It is an amount of money received by bride and groom from their relatives and friends. This is also called congratulatory money. The bride and groom receive an amount of money in a letter which is noted in a diary for future reciprocations. The name of giver must be noted so in future wedding of those relatives and friends the amount must be returned with their own additions. There is not just exchange of money but many other things like sweets, gifts and also their services (Nasir & Mielke, 2015)

## **2.7. Badal in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

Badal is another reciprocal system in KPK, Pakistan. The word badal means exchange in good or bad form in pukhtunwali. Basically it demands equal action in return. Rewards and gift giving is good form and taking revenge is considered as bad form of badal among Pashtuns. The term badal is used mostly in domestic sphere of Pashtuns as reciprocity, exchange, giving gifts. The negative sense of badal is taking revenge, bad words, and debt (khattar, 1978).

## **2.8. Exchange of favors**

This is a front thing that people always send birthday gift to those who remember their birthdays and send gifts to them. And if a friend shared a meal and pay the bill then we have no problem buying a lunch for that friend this is because the norms of reciprocity which should be followed to maintain the exchange relation through favors. This is a smooth and fair social exchange (Burger, 2009)

There are two main explanations of returning favors. First, individual is bound to return the favor that received previously from friend and family on any occasion, and in violation of the norm considered as ungrateful. Second point is the internal standards of behavior which means the acceptance of the reciprocal norms. When people return the gifts they feel good internally because they do the right thing by returning the favor (Burger, 2009)

In male-dominated Punjabi society, women do not only play a key role in the execution of Vartan bhanji rituals, but also gifts and services and exchanged with reference to the women positions the daughter place in the family and her relationship with others people (eglar, a punjabi village in pakistan, 1960) It is also a practical consequence that brings substantial financial aid to the recipient household. At a time when it is involved in considerable expenditures for ceremonial purposes without at the same time imposing any significant burden on household that gives Neondra for each has a small amount to pay It is usually women who initiate and maintain gift exchange with other household. They keep track of all the items given and received. She must also remember the quality and quantity of items received as gift. Also the gifts to be given like clothes, jewelry, gift in the form of money etc. are bought by women (Alavi, 1972)

Many experts suggest that the need to reciprocate is strongest immediately after the initial exchange. If you can wait, you will probably feel less pressure to return the favor. So we need to evaluate the exchange. Think about whether the favor measures up to the expected return. In many cases, the initial gift or favor is much smaller than the requested return favor (Cherry, 2017).

## **2.9. Gift exchange**

Gift exchange is a social behavior known as ceremonial exchange the gift exchange to give, to receive and to return. It is a cycle of give, receive and return between partners which is obligatory. Through gift exchange social relations were developed. And if gift is refused to accept a gift it means refusal of social relationships and may lead to enmity. The reciprocity of the cycle rests in the obligation to return the gift (Britannica, 1998).

The basic role of the daughter in the exchange of gift, those gifts that are given to a

true daughters are not Vartan bhanji. They are considered to be “the daughter’s rights,” and therefore, looked at in this way, are not to be reciprocated and are not part of the system of exchange. The focus of giving in Vartan bhanji at marriage ceremonies is daughter. She receives different gifts from family (clothes, sweets, money). She explains an important feature of exchange, concern partners perform the ritual of exchange with mutual consent. Another feature is the same partner exchange on particular occasion (Eglar, a Punjabi village in Pakistan, 1960).

As Lyon mentions, the record of gifts is not openly kept and gifts are not openly exchanged at the place of work. Still Vartan Bhanji influences individual and collective collaboration in personal and professional settings. It influences life throughout the country, though its intensity may vary from region to region. The family is still the center of the native social system, and family-like relationships are developed with non-kin for their social integration into the kin group. This phenomenon of network extension is customary in the embedded assumption of Vartan bhanji, and the family roles and reciprocal obligations are transferred to non-kin relations (Noreen & Wolfgang, 2014).

## **Chapter. 03**

### **3. Research methodology**

Social research is a systematic and deliberate method of exploring new facts or verifying old ones. Research methodology means the philosophy of the research process this includes the assumption and value that serve as a rationale for research and the standards or criteria the research uses for interpreting data and reaching a conclusion. Thus research methodology determines different factors such as research writing hypotheses and making decisions, the specific objectives of this chapter are to shed light on various research tools, techniques, procedures being used in the current study (Bryman, 2012)

Research methodology is a systematic and scientific process used to collect data. The methodology includes different ways of researching interviews, surveys, case studies, and other techniques of research. It involves observation, analysis, and interpretation of data. Through research methodology the researcher designs. The topic of research is descriptive so the methodology is purely based on it. The research methodology includes methodology, methods, a tool for data collection, population, sample size, sample technique, unit of analysis, and locale.

#### **3.1. Participant observation**

Participant observation, for many years, has been a hallmark of anthropological studies. Participant observation has been used in a variety of disciplines as a tool for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures in qualitative research. Demunck and Sobo (1998) describe participant observation as the primary method used by anthropologist donning field work. Field work involves active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, and writing detailed field notes.

Male and female researchers have access to different people, setting, and bodies of knowledge. Participant observation is conducted by a biased human who serves as the instrument for data collection the researcher must understand how his/her gender sexually, ethically, class may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation. Participant observation is a major technique for anthropological fieldwork is participation observation. In this technique, the researcher was living

with the people under study for a certain time directly observing their general behavior and culture. The researcher also participated in their activities and ceremonies. Participant observation involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives. Participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routine and their culture (Kawulich, 2005)

The researcher worked in Gulmit village. Every day researchers used to meet different families. A researcher has participated in daily activities of the people to get valid data. For this study researcher lived in Gulmit Hunza from 15 March to 05 July, 2021 to understand the local concept of Pundor. Researcher has participated in their different activities of that community to become able to understand the emic perspective of *Pundor*. During field work researcher participate in different marriage ceremonies and other local events in the selected locale to observe the people with the native point of view. The researcher spend maximum time and interact with their participant for rapport building and data collection.

### **3.2. Rapport building**

In Anthropological researches, rapport building is an important component. It refers to trust and mutual respect-based relationships established with the community or the group where the research was conducted. A research can build a rapport through giving respect to local beliefs, traditions, and practices and be engaged with the local people (Danes, 2011)

Entering into the field the researcher has to make rapport otherwise it's difficult to get the information from people. Rapport building was quite easy for the researcher because there were friends and relatives of the researcher who belong to the selected locale. Many locals already know the researcher that is why she didn't face difficulties in rapport building.

Moreover, the researcher promised not to disclose any personal information and to create trust with them while on the field. To gain their trust, the researcher lived with them in a comfortable environment and developed good relationships with them.

### **3.3. Key informants**

Key informants are people who are members of the community where the researcher works, are knowledgeable about the research topic, and belong to the community where the researcher works. As a researcher, it was difficult to predict responder behavior, therefore key informants were important in helping the researcher overcome problems that arose during the research. During the research, two people were selected as key informants by the researcher. Miss Hajat Begum who is a relative of the researcher who is working in different social organization of the selected locale, like (GESW) Gulmit Educational and Social Welfare Society and (GOLD) Gulmit Organization for Local Development. Apart from these social organization she works in other Ismaili organizations working under the aegis of the Shia Imami Ismaili Council for Gulmit. These social and Ismaili organizations serve the entire Gojal Valley, however their offices are located in Gulmit, which serves as their headquarter. Miss Hajat became a big source of rapport building with the locals of the selected locale.

Another key informant was Miss Faiza who is a close friend of the researcher, she belongs to the selected locale, she introduced the researcher to the locals, and attend different social events with her, Miss Faiza is well educated and she knows who has more knowledge about marriage customs, she introduced the researcher to many notable people of the selected locale, from whom she can get more knowledge about change in reciprocity with the passage of time.

### **3.4. Interview guide**

While a researcher conducts an interview, they need an interview guide. The interview guide helps to direct the discussion toward the issues and the topic that the researcher wants to know about. There are different forms of interview guide, it would be open ended and contain some themes on which there are some relevant questions. The interview guide was just for the guidance for the researcher about what to do next ((Kennedy, 2006)

According to Michael, Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004) an interview guide contains a list of themes about the topic to be covered which is called semi structured

interview. Normally it is created in before conducting interviews. So the researcher construct for their own feasibility.

To meet the study criteria, the researcher developed an interview guide for the respondents that included short and easy questions while keeping in mind the research aims. The questions were open-ended and followed a general to specific pattern, i.e. the researcher inquired about people's perceptions of reciprocity in Wakhi culture's marriage ritual.

Interviews were taken from sixteen married women's from Gulmit Gojal those who experience the Pundor on their own marriage and their children. The interview takes one hour at least, it would be exceed according to the situation and discussion. Interview guide was developed in English Language and is interpret in native language *Wakhi* to respondents by researcher. So they can feel comfortable to discuss.

### **3.5. Case study**

The case study is a detailed account of what happened and how people reacted to that particular incident or scenario, and the researcher analyses the data in a specific context.

During the fieldwork, some cases that were relevant to important issues caught my attention because they showed the concept of change in reciprocity in marriage ceremonies in the selected locale, I conducted in-depth interviews. The primary purpose of these case studies was to present the changing concept of Pundor (Vartan Bhanji) on marriage ceremonies in the selected locale

### **3.6. Focus group discussion**

In social research, a focus group discussion is a very useful and vital research tool for gathering more opinions in a short period of time on the research objectives. Furthermore, everyone has some information that we cannot obtain in interviews; those who are shy and do not convey their knowledge in interviews find it easier to speak in a group discussion. As a result, the researcher may be able to obtain further data.

Focus group discussion technique, was used which helped in reliable data collection because people were more correct in their informal gathering. In the present study the researcher conducted three focus group discussions. One focus group discussion with a family named “bari family” also known as boriktor in chamangul mohalla in a marriage ceremony happening in their family. The researcher started this discussion by asking different questions about their marriage ceremonies. Second group discussion was with a group of young girls who were close friend of the researcher’s friend who was selected as the key informant as well. These group of young girls discuss their experience in give and take of *Pundor* in order to generate discussion of certain topic to collective opinion of shared views of people about marriages and Pundor.

### **3.7. Sample size**

Sampling is a ratio from a larger group known as population. (Fink, 2003)

The total population of Gulmit village is 5000, out of this population my sample size was 16. To cover all the objectives of the present research topic the researcher divided different sample units from this sample size. The researcher selected 16 married women as a sample, whereas eight of them were married before 2000 and eight after 2000. Gulmit is divided into six small villas and two to three respondent were selected from each villas.

### **3.8. Research design**

It is a detailed outline of how an investigation takes place. A research design typically includes the way data is to be collected, the instruments used for collecting the data, and the intended means for analyzing data collection (Marshall & Gretchen, 2006)

Several research designs are used in social science research both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research refers to the data in a match-logical form that is in numerical format. This type of data can be used to gather raw data and further represented in the form of tables and graphs. On the other hand in a qualitative approach the data is gathered in textual form. It is typical in

Descriptive form. After the selection of a topic appropriate methodology is employed in which is finalized for collecting the data and then data is analyzed and finally interpreted. At the end of the research findings are shared and future suggestions are



given about the phenomenon. The research design used by researcher in this study was qualitative.

This research is more descriptive and exploratory. As an anthropologist, the researcher believes in the assumption that reality is out there and should be studied holistically through direct observation. So the fieldwork is an essential and distinguished part of anthropological research. Based on an assumption about the ontology of research, the researcher has chosen a qualitative approach to conduct the research and that helped to take a holistic in-depth view of the issue under study.

### **3.9. In-depth interviews**

It's used to get information from the chosen sample. They are more prepared questions that the researcher or interviewer has created. The interview could be beneficial in obtaining data and responses (McNamara, 1999)

An in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspective on a particular idea, or situation. In-depth interview is another important technique which researcher has used in the field work to collect detailed information. After taking the sample of the community researcher has conducted in-depth interviews from the people taken in sample. Researcher has done to know that what the particular person thinks about the particular objective under the research. Researcher has used this technique and interviewed a married women who belongs to different age groups in order to obtain information about *Pundor*.

During interview researcher listened and picked up the relevant data. Researcher developed unstructured interview guide to collect the required data and took the in-depth interview in a friendly environment In order to enrich the research through helping to gain profound exploration and understanding of the topic gives us the opportunity to acquire deep information from each individual so researcher used the in-depth interviews in order to collect data from respondents.

### **3.10. Recording**

Recording is another sophisticated tool. Sometime it is difficult to remember or note down all the things on the note book so that for researcher personal convenience, the researcher used to record the interviews of the respondents of only those who granted

their consent. To get proper data and secure time the researcher used the method of audio recording.

### **3.11. Field Notes**

Field notes are intended to be ready by the researcher as evidence to produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied. The field notes may constitute the whole data collected for a research study and it is used to enlist all the events and write down the data detail (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) This method helped researcher to arrange, manage and code all data every day. Researcher has used to take notes of everything so that researcher becomes able to save the data of daily activities of the people. Researcher took field notes throughout the field work to note down any event, action or discussion that is relevant with research topic.

### **3.12. Daily diary**

Another significant method used by anthropologists while collecting data for research objectives in an unknown culture is to establish a clear and error-free record.

During fieldwork, the researcher utilized this method to record the behavior of respondents at a certain point in time. It also helped the researcher in recalling all of the events that occurred in the research location during data collection. The researcher kept a daily diary in which she recorded not only her observations and interviews, but also her field experiences.

During data analysis, a daily diary becomes an important professional document, whereas field notes serve to store the information, so we can say that daily diary and field notes are the core tools of research and are useful for researchers.

### **3.13. Reflexivity/areas language**

Language is the most essential medium between the researcher and the respondent, and to find data. The researcher used the native language wakhi in this research approach because she was a wakhi speaker herself. Interviews were conducted in wakhi because it was easier for people to express their thoughts.

### **3.14. Mapping**

By using this technique researcher was able to identify the geographical and historical, architecture and educational landmarks in the locale area and this technique also further helped researcher in identifying the important location of the locale that could be helpful in achieving the goals and objectives of my research.

### **3.15. Probing**

Probing is another research technique used by interviewers during interviews. It's used when researcher feel the discussion was going out of the way so, to get the interview into the topic this method was used. Or in another way respondent feel hesitation in answer giving probing was used. Probing means repeating a question so the interviewee gets back to the track and was frequently used. Interviewer gives suggestion to help the interviewee. The researcher used this method in this research to stay focused and stay in track.

### **3.16. Ethical consideration**

The cornerstone of ethical research is „informed consent“ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) The term consists of two important elements, with each requiring careful consideration, that is, “informed“and „consent“. Participants must be fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, and what (if any) consequences there could be. The participants must provide explicit, active, signed consent to taking part with the research, including understanding their rights to access to their information and the right to withdraw at any point. The informed consent process can be seen as the contract between researcher and the participants. The aspects of „informed“ should include clear explanations.

Ethical slandered requires that researcher does not place participant in a situation where respondent might be at risk or harm because of their participation. Participation harms can be defined as both physical and psychological. Information was given to the participant about the purpose of the research. The researcher did not exhibit the private experience shared by the respondents. Researcher clearly explained target population about the purpose of the researcher. Anthropologists have an obligation to ensure that research participants have freely granted consent.

- Who the researcher are,

- What the intent of the research is,
- What data will be collected from participants,
- How the data will be collected from participants.

## Chapter. 04

### 4. Area profile

Gulmit village of Gojal Valley is selected for the aim of conducting this research. Gojal Valley is geographically the largest Tehsil of Hunza District in Gilgit-Baltistan.

#### 4.1. Hunza

Hunza is a mountainous valley in the autonomous Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan. Hunza is situated in the north part of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, bordering with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the west and Xinjiang region of China to the northeast. Geographically Hunza consists of three regions, Upper Hunza (Gojal), Central Hunza (Hunza Valley), and Lower Hunza (Shinaki).

According to a user from Pakistan, the name Hunza means "Miracle, the unbelievable beautiful, the limit of surprise." According to a user from Australia, the name Hunza means "Paradise/ Heaven on Earth". The local languages spoken include Burushaski, Wakhi, and Shina, the literacy rate of the Hunza valley is more than 95%. The historical area of Hunza and present northern Pakistan has had, over the centuries, mass migrations, conflicts, and resettling of tribes and ethnicities, of which the Dardic Shina race is the most prominent in regional history. People of the region have recounted their historical traditions down the generations. The Hunza Valley is also home to some Wakhi, who migrated there from northeastern Afghanistan beginning in the nineteenth century onwards (Dani, 1991)

#### 4.2. History of Hunza

Hunza was an independent principality for centuries. It was ruled by the Mir of Hunza, who took the title of thum, The Hunzai's were tributaries and allies to China, acknowledging China as suzerain since 1761, Hunza rulers claimed descent from Alexander the Great, and viewed themselves and the Emperor of China as being the most important leaders in the world. When the Kunjudic (people of Hunza) raided mountainous places of Karakorum and Kunlun mountains, including Xaidulla, where some groups of the nomadic Kirghiz were the main inhabitants, they sold some Kirghiz slaves to the Chinese. From 1847 the Mir of Hunza gave nominal allegiance to

China. This resulted from assistance given by Mir Ghazanfur Khan to China in fighting against the Uyghur separatist Afaqi Khoja revolts in Yarkand, following which China granted Hunza a jagir (Land grant) in Yarkand and paid the Mir a subsidy. The last fully independent ruler, Mir Safdar Khan, who ruled from 1886, escaped to China after an invasion by the British.

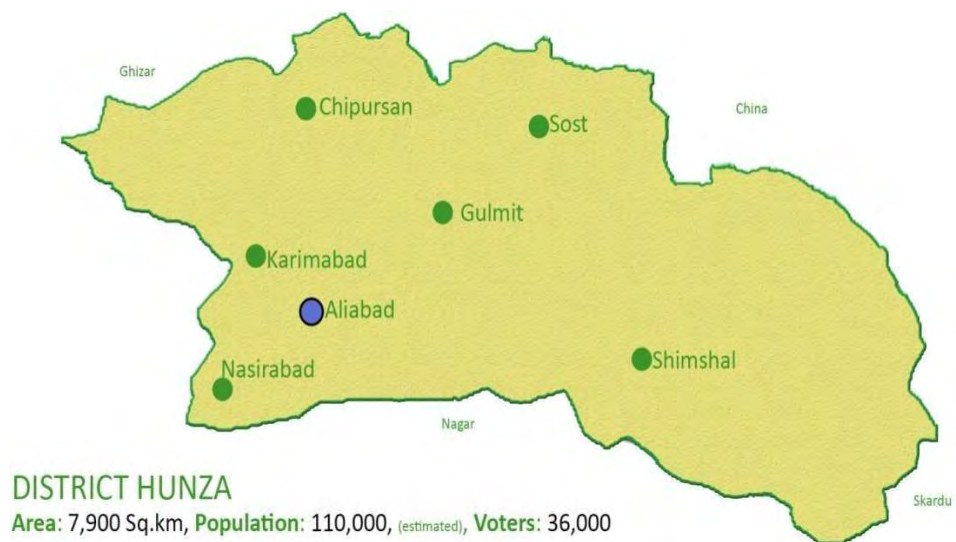
In the late 19th century Hunza became embroiled in the Great Game, the rivalry between Britain and Russia for control of the northern approaches to India. The British suspected Russian involvement "with the Rulers of the petty States on the northern boundary of Kashmir, in 1888 the Russian Captain Bronislav Grombchevsky visited Hunza, and the following year the British Captain Francis Younghusband visited Hunza to express British displeasure at Kunjudi raids in the Roskam. Younghusband formed a low opinion of the ruler, Safdar Ali, describing him as "a cur at heart and unworthy of ruling so fine a race as the people of Hunza". In 1891 the British mounted the Hunza-Nagar Campaign and gained control of Hunza and the neighboring valley of Nagar. The Mir, Safdar Khan, fled to China, and his younger brother Mir Mohammad Nazim

Khan was installed by the British as Mir in September 1892. Hunza became a princely state in a subsidiary alliance with British India, a status it retained until 1947. The Kuomintang Republic of China government engaged in secret negotiations with the Mir of Hunza over restoring the state's previous relations with China, amidst the partitioning of British India, with the Hunza state independent from India and Pakistan. The Kuomintang also plotted to expand its influence into Kashmir, taking advantage of the weakness of the newly independent India. However, due to the war of 1947 that erupted between Pakistan and India over their dispute in Kashmir, the Mir of Hunza changed his mind and acceded to Pakistan, after a coup against India in Gilgit (Dani, 1991)



**Figure 1.** Photo of Baltit fort central Hunza

Sources: History of the Northern Areas of Pakistan by (Dani, 1991)



**Figure 2.** The District Map of Hunza

### **4.3. Gulmit**

Gulmit is also known as Gul-e-Gulmit, which means a valley of flowers, is a town serves as headquarter in a tehsil Gojal (Upper Hunza). Gulmit is a historic village surrounded by mountains, pinnacles, and glacial masses. It is a tourist destination with various hotels, shops, and a gallery. It is located 2,408 meters above ocean level. The little villas called Kamaris, Odver, Dalgiram, Laksh, Kalha, Shawaran, Khor Lakhsh, Chamangul, and Goze comprise Gulmit. Gulmit is hometo roughly 5,000 people, all of whom are Wakhi speakers and Shia Muslims who follow the Ismaili school of thinking.

Gulmit was the state's summer capital before 1974, when Hunza was a state. It became the Tehsil's seat of government once the state was abolished. Gulmit's oldest and most perfect house is almost six centuries old. The historic Mir of Hunza Summer Palace still exists on Gulmit's northern edges. Gulmit is the administrative capital of Gojal Valley.

### **4.4. Gojal valley**

The Gojal Valley is known for its rich natural wealth, landscape, picturesque places, tall mountains, magnificent scenic beauty, wildlife and nature, glaciers, valleys of lush green foliage and fruits, gorgeous meadows and pastures, and shimmering glaciers. There are 25 villages in the valley, including Ghawooshben (Ainabad), Shishkat (Nazimabad-1), Gulmit, Ghulkin, Seesoni (Hussani), Passu, Khyber, Ghalapan, Moorkhon, Jamalabad, Gircha, Sarteez, Nazimabad, Sost (Aminabad), Khudabad, Misgar, Qalandarchi. Gulmit is Gojal's main hamlet and the Tehsil's administrative center. Gojal is the largest Tehsil in the Hunza-Nagar District of Gilgit-Baltistan, covering an area of roughly 8,500 square kilometres. The valley shares boundaries with China's Xinjiang-Uighur area and Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor or Little Pamir.

The people live in Gojal speak Wakhi language. The Wakhi people live in the Pamir knot, which connects four countries: Gojal, Ishkoman, and Chitral in Pakistan, Kohistani Badakhshan an Autonomous Province of Tajikistan Wakhan corridor in Afghanistan, and Yarkand, Srikol, and Tashqurghan regions in China. Despite their dispersion throughout four countries on the Pamir high plateau, the Wakhi people have close linguistic, cultural, and religious ties, referring to



themselves as Xhik or Wakhi. Wakhi people have a distinct culture, way of life, language, and social structure. They have established themselves in Gojal, Ishkoman, and Brughil (Chitral). However, the most of them have settled in Hunza-Nagar District's Gojal Tehsil.



**Figure 3.** Picture of study area

#### **4.5. Climate condition of Gojal valley**

In Gojal, there are four seasons like other places. Each season has its own unique beauty, and people enjoy and benefit from each one. The first season is spring, which is called (bohor) in Wakhi language. It takes place from March to May. The second season is summer, known as (tabiston) in Wakhi. It takes place from June to August. Autumn is the third season, and it is known as (Tirmo) in Wakhi. It lasts from September through November, and the final season is winter, which is known as (zimiston) in Wakhi. It takes place from December through February. People preserve dry fruits and vegetables in the summer so they can eat them in the winter. Peoplesave dry leaves for their domestic animals during the autumn season. The weather is very cold inthe winter and in summer temperature goes to 38 degrees.

#### **4.6. Settlement pattern**

The settlement patterns of any society are depend on the climate, culture, environment and finance. Traditional people continue to live in old traditional houses known as (desi khun), some of which are built of mud and wood, while others are made of cement and wood. Pakka houses and kacha houses are two concepts. People

with strong financial access lives in pakka houses, whereas the poor live in kacha houses. However, the majority of people live in kacha houses.

All of the houses follow the same traditional format that has been in place for decades. It is constructed so that everyone feels at ease and has a space to sit. There is space for musicians and dancers (for marriage ceremonies especially) as soon as you enter the house. Men sit on the right side, while women sit on the left. The stove is in the middle, while the store is on the backside. The family's head and elder sit in the center.

#### **4.7. Food pattern**

Food is an important aspect of national identity and cultural heritage because it helps us connect with people and places. There are several cultural cuisines in Gojal Valley, which represent the culture and tradition of Gojal. The people of Gojal are both carnivorous and vegetarians. People grow many vegetables, by themselves. They consume food according to the season and temperature. In summers people use Chumos (Apricot juice) made up of dry apricot and deegh (lasi) made up of pure yogurt. For breakfast salted tea with (Potok) a thick form of bread and desi butter is popular. There are many local dishes made up of pure organic materials like pure almond and apricot oil are used to make local dishes like *ghelmindi*, *molida*, *gral* and *mul* these are mostly cooked for special occasions like harvesting festivals and marriage ceremonies, and in winters season as well to warm the body temperature beside these dishes in the winters, animals such as the yak, cow, goat etc. are slaughtered, for dried meat and other processed food items prepared with the meat, such as soup, curry etc.



**Figure 4.** Traditional foods of the Gulmit Hunza

#### **4.8. Dress pattern**

People of Gojal wear unique dress in Pakistan in old days they wear (Shushk) means socks which is made from animal's leather. (Kerest) jacket which is made from wool, (Ghaer tumbun) Pajamas which are also made from sheep wool and (Sindal) shoes made up of animal leather. But now a days the old trend of dressing patterns are changed. People wear modern dresses. They like to wear shilwar Qameez. The shalwar kameez can be worn by both men and women, but style differs by gender. However modern generation puts on modern dresses also. Some of the elder males still wear a white hat, (sekidh), while the women wear embodied hats that are hand embroidered. To keep warm in the winter, the males wear a particular long coat called "Chugha."

#### **4.9. Marriage pattern**

In Gojal, there are two types of marriage practices: endogamy and exogamy. Marriages within a family are known as endogamy, while marriages outside of a family or cast are known as exogamy. Exogamy weddings are performed by the majority of people, people prefer marrying outside of their family but there is this condition that they must marry within the Ismaili sect. marrying outside the Ismaili sect is culturally unacceptable.

#### **4.10. Family structure**

Mostly there are joint families in Gojal. More than one generation lives together where the father is the head of the family or the senior male member of the family is in charge. People who live in a nuclear family are quite rare.

#### **4.11. Economic condition**

The majority of individuals in Gojal rely on agriculture although the younger generation has become increasingly interested in business. They are attempting to create income by developing hotels, restaurants, and tourism businesses, some people are moving to cities for their jobs in government and private sectors. People of Gojal are generally from the middle class, as they are neither too rich nor too poor. Mostly people grow vegetables through farming. Because the soil of Gojal is fertile for vegetable production. Gojal produces a lot of good-quality potatoes and apricots for export. People make a good living by selling these things in various parts of the country.

#### **4.12. Language**

Wakhi is the most widely spoken language in the area, but Brushaski is spoken in a few villages such as Shiskat, Kyber, and Misgar. Urdu is the primary language, however English is spoken and understood by the vast majority of the population. People learnt English through tourists and from schooling because the area is a tourism attraction.

#### **4.13. Religion**

Every single person of Gojal belongs to the Ismaili sect of Muslims who believe in one God, prophet hood and the Holy Quran and are living with peace and harmony.

#### **4.14. Agriculture**

Every family has their own house with agricultural land, traditionally villagers were engaged in keeping livestock, and farming for their substances. Almost every household here grows fruits, pears, and some vegetables, like pumpkins, potatoes, onions, and tomatoes. Major crops include wheat, potato. Barley, millet, etc. While

grapes, apricot, apples, walnut, cherry, and almond are major fruits. Crop production relies on irrigation, the system of channels that drives water from springs and streams that curtail the portion of land that can be cultivated.

#### **4.15. Water resources**

The settlements of Gojal are depend on glacial melt streams (Gulmit glacier, Passu glacier) and many others glaciers are their primary source of water. For drinking purposes, there are few water filtrations plants that provide water facilities for the People of Gojal.

#### **4.16. Education**

Any society's socioeconomic progress depends greatly on education. It empowers people with the ability to make good decisions and realize their full potential as positive and productive members of society. Education provides employment options for low-income households. Education can help people move up the social ladder, especially if they don't have other options. Experts believe that a literacy percentage of at least 70% is required for a society's economic growth and development.

The residents of Gojal are friendly and well-educated. Education is a part of everyone's life, regardless of gender or socioeconomic status; everyone is educated up to the secondary level and its literacy rate is almost 95 percent. The Agha Khan Development Network's efforts have generated good results, and people are now seeking higher education both in Pakistan and abroad. In today's world, practically every home has a satellite television and a computer. Every village in Gojal is having a school at primary level, student move to Sost or Gulmit for their secondary education. In 2005, a unique initiative to educate the older generation was started. Even the elderly are being taught to read and write these days.

#### **4.17. Cultural norms and values**

The Wakhi people have a unique style of greeting one another. Regardless of gender, they welcome one another by kissing on the hands. It's a sign of regard, but the trend has somehow changed recently. People in this country are liberal and do not hold radical viewpoints. In Gojal, it is urged that girls be educated and allowed to work. As

a result, seeing women working in the fields, stores, or going to school is fairly common in Gojal.

The local music, Harip or Soz, and its tune are in the blood of the people. People dance to the tunes at every celebration, and it is customary for the family's eldest to lead the dance while the youngest follows them. It's a place for kids to practice what they've learned, and it's how they learn it.

The people of Gojal have a well-organized social structure. Whether it's a happy occasion or a sad one, everyone stands by each other. To strengthen the relationships between families at weddings, a nonfamily member is assigned the role of maternal father of the bride from the groom's side. This allows families to form stronger bonds. When a wedding occurs, the entire tribe shared their resources to ensure that no one person bears the burden of the expense.

## Chapter. 05

### 5. Local's Perception about Pundor

In this chapter researcher presented the case studies of gifts and services. The section aims to deal with the results and analysis of the collected data from the participant observation, in-depth interviews were used to find out the hidden reality of the phenomenon. There are several methods to analyze qualitative data researcher has presented the data which is collected through participant observation, focus group discussion, and in-depth interviews. There are some general questions asked from respondents on *Pundor* and every respondent had their own point of view. The research was carried out in Gulmit village, the reason to select this locale was because it was easily accessible which help the researcher to build reports easily and acquire authentic data. For the current study sixteen-depth interviews were conducted with married women's among them eight respondents were got married before 2000 and eight respondents who were got married onward 2000 to understand the influence of diffusion on Pundor (Vartan Bhanji) on marriage with special reference to gift-giving. Majority of the respondents said that due to migration and acculturation the early concept of Pundor is changed. Researcher has discussed the responses of respondents in the in- depth interview, FGD, and participant observation, and the responses of respondents are discussed under the main theme of researcher.

#### 5.1. Marriage in wakhi culture

Marriage is quite simple in Wakhi culture. Everything takes occur on the same day, from Nikkah to Rukhsati. There is no rishta aunty (aunt who find perfect matches), and no parents come to see their daughters. Families come for RISHTA (proposal) rather than seeing a girl. The engagement, Nikkah, and rukhsati is decided in just a month. The bride is given six to seven days to finish her shopping, and they are happy with it. There is no demands of Dowry in Wakhi culture, no pressure of expensive items, no stress of showing off money, and no anxieties of spending thousands on makeup but these concepts and getting changed with the passage of time.

The ceremony begins with a "Beit-Receed" event, during which traditional and organic foods are made and served. It takes three or four days, during which food is

prepared by the men of the family (Biraderi). The wedding ceremony begins with prayers and well wishes, then NIKAHH and RUKHSATI take place on the third or sometimes fourth day. Weddings of Wakhi people are arranged and celebrated in their own homes, there is no concept of wedding halls. Both the bride and groom sit with all of the guests and locals, and the joy is expressed by playing traditional music and dance is performed by men. There is no stage set up for the bride and groom. They sit with the rest of people

On the wedding day, the groom takes a sword. This is a kingship symbol, indicating that the groom is the king of the day. While leaving the house, an elder member of the family, usually the groom's grandfather or father, hands over the sword to the groom. The bride wears a handmade cultural cap that is decorated with special jewelry made of (chandi) silver, called "silsla."

Dowry is unknown to wakhi culture, and wakhi language does not even have a word for it. No dowry is given to any girl; instead, they are given an education and the freedom to pick their mate and career. Marriages used to be arranged, but now the boy and girl get to choose their own life mate. Because of the simplicity of Wakhi culture's weddings, it is very easy for everyone in society to see their daughters having happy marriage lives with no blame games or forced marriages. The culture's wedding customs are followed by everyone, whether they are wealthy or not. But with the passage of time things have started to change.

## **5.2. Wedding events**

Some elders (mostly men) from the groom's family visit the bride's family and introduce the proposal. The bride's family politely asks for some time to indirectly convey their interest. After a few similar visits, an elder from the bride's family with the consent of the bride sent a word of 'Yes'.

### **5.2.1. Putukh Din (Baat Pakki)**

The bride's family prepares a feast with traditional dishes like Molida, ghilmindi and meat for the groom's side. A white scarf is wrapped around the bride's head as a symbol of acceptance into the new family. This occasion is led by a religious leader from the groom's side who does the ritual under the recitation of Quranic verses.





**Figure 5.** putuk din ceremony  
(source: researche)

### **5.2.2.Perg vindak (Engagement)**

The bride's family again prepares a feast for the groom's family, who along with some men and women from their extended family bring gifts for the bride. The number of gifts as essentials are predefined in the Wakhi culture (every bride gets a set of the same thing with more or less the same number) that is clothes, shoes, a necklace and other essentials.



**Figure 6.** Bride & groom on marriage ceremony

### **5.2.3.Beit Receed**

Beit receed is a ritual starting the marriage celebrations and activities. Families on both sides start the festivities by sending invitations to their dear ones. Cooking traditional dishes (Rukhn tbaq,Chamurki, etc.) and preparing for the wedding day.

#### **5.2.4. Shoni nivizn (Mehendi on groom's side)**

A feast is prepared for the community and family members on the groom's side. Everyone comes with a gift and congratulates the groom while he is prepared for the marriage day by wearing new clothes etc. this usually happens a day before the actual marriage day or in the morning of the marriage day.

#### **5.2.5. Shuperzuvn (Mehndi Brides side)**

The bride wears white dress and a traditional cap decorated with "Silsa". The people invited for the feast greet and give their blessings for the prosperous relationship. A religious leader does the ritual under the recitation of Quranic verses. After that a woman from the family (biraderi) who is mature and is having healthy children who is basically respectable in the family perform a ritual in which she puts some sweets on the hat of the bride and gives blessings to her so she must be like her in the future. This happens a day before the actual marriage day.



**Figure 7.** shuperzuvn ceremony

#### **5.2.6. Wedding day**

Both families along with bride and groom gather at a mosque or community center for Nikkah. After Nikkah all the guests visit the bride house for a feast with traditional music and dance. After Rukhsati guests from the bride's side visit the groom's house for another feast and dance.



**Figure 8.** Wedding day dance by sukuins

### **5.2.7.A few peculiar things**

1. Khun Quw - The families are invited by their relatives for a feast to congratulate the couple and their families.
- 2- Putuk - On the wedding day. Some relatives prepare a feast for the Baraatis (guests from the groom side) as per wakhi traditions.
- 3- Khash suloom - On the next morning of marriage the groom visits his in-laws to say thanks especially to his mother in law.

### **5.3. Concept of reciprocity in marriage ceremonies**

Gift giving is an intriguing, universal behavior that has yet to be interpreted satisfactorily by a social scientist, ever since Marcel Mauss anthropologists have been fascinated by it. As a form of reciprocity or exchange, gift-giving is one of the processes that integrate society because exchange objects have a symbolic dimension, (Mauss, 1954). Reciprocity is a social norm and a rule made by people which is being practiced throughout time from indigenous peoples to modern times (Duck, 2012)

Vartan bhanji (Pundor) at marriage ceremonies is salami also called neondra or neota. It is an amount of money received by the bride and groom from their relatives and friends. This is also called congratulatory money. The bride and groom receive an amount of money in a letter which is noted in a diary for future reciprocations. The name of the giver must be noted so in the future wedding of those relatives and friends the amount must be returned with their additions. There is not just an exchange of money but many other things like sweets, gifts, and also their services (Nasir & Mielke, 2015)

Majority of respondent told researcher that *Pundor* is a traditional give and take system but the concept of *Pundor* is changed over time. It is a social rule maintained through favors and gifts among the group member as explained by Gouldner (1960). This part of the chapter presents the analysis of the field data for interpreting data researcher has chosen Social Exchange Theory. In our society gift is an expression of respect, love it connects the people involved in the collective behavior words collective friendship. One of my respondent stated that

*Pundor redor e yi rasm, kumd e ki cha po tath pup zomonz ken chith, kui tui'esh ki wosta yavar'esh rupya, qecha, rokhpar woz digar mehnga chiz va Pundor randan. Pehla zomon zeng ny tu, balki pehlina zomona yem somon esht b ny tu, pehla vesh qaq, rughn woz tail waghera Pundor zeth.*

As per respondent

*It is a tradition that is passed on to us from our ancestors, on a wedding ceremony Pundor is given in the form of different gifts like clothes, money, crockery, electronic items and other precious gifts. The tradition of reciprocity is changed over time, reciprocity was different in the old days, people used to give agricultural product as a gift.*

The view of the respondent shows that the tradition of *Pundor* is changed over the period of time. People used to give agriculture products like vegetables, fruits and other homemade items like desi ghee, dry fruits etc. now people prefer to give expensive things like, crockery, furniture, clothes, jewelry and electric devices e.g. television, fridge etc. this shows that how reciprocity is changed over the period of time.

### 5.3.1. Case study #1

Miss. Abida is 70 years old. She is a resident of Gulmit, she is living here for 40 years. She is originally from Sost Hunza. She got five children. Abida is a very lovely and hospitable woman. According to her experience of *Pundor* (Vartan bhanji) she said that it's a form of exchange and included exchange of different gifts like clothes, money, agricultural products etc. Abida told me her experience of *Pundor*. On her marriage ceremony according to their culture the give and take on marriage ceremony is called *Pundor* in *Wakhi* language. She told me that you know well the give and take system exists in every culture on marriage ceremony like this we have also this reciprocal system as we called this reciprocal system *Pundor*. We give and take different forms of gifts at the wedding ceremony. She further told me about her experience of give and take on her marriage ceremony she says that at the time of my marriage ceremony there was no such concept of modern gifts like modern clothes, shoes, crockery, money, furniture, and gold, etc. on my marriage I have received gifts from groom family on *perg vindak* ceremony as they gave me one handmade embroidered gown made up of sheep wool, two suits and one pair of shoes as a *gift* from groom family they also bring *khesht* (made of local butter and flour) and *Potok* (form of bread). She further told me by saying that at my marriage ceremony I have also received gifts from neighbors and relatives like they collectively gave me one sack of walnut, some dry apricots, almond, and fresh fruits among them one of our closet neighbors gave me 5kg apricot oil as a *Pundor*. She further explains her experience of gift-giving to groom family she said that me and my sisters make three handmade *desi* caps for groom's mother and grandmothers as a gift.

### 5.3.2. Case study #2

Anila is the next respondent she got married in 2013, she is a resident of Gulmit village, she speaks *Wakhi* language, and she got married in the neighborhood her husband worked as a spokesman for Chinese. She said that *Pundor* (Vartan bhanji) is very necessary because it's a part of our culture we often offer different gifts to other

at their wedding in the same way when there is a wedding at our family relatives, friends and neighbor's brings gifts for us. She told me her story of marriage she told me that when I got married I also received a variety of gifts from the groom side, neighbors & relatives, from groom side I received six pairs of clothes, one gold necklace, one watch, four pairs of shoes and one makeup box for my perg vundak ceremony. And other relatives bought me different gifts like cash, clothes, cushions, dinner set, water set, and teas set as a Pundor. One of my Respondent stated that:

*Zaq qeemti Pundor esh ki wizta khushi esh wosth. Chem wajhanesh spo talooq damvan baf wosth da qom ven kui ki baf rang Pundor zetk, woz yavar'esh besh rang izat randan khalg esht.*

As per respondent

A high-value Pundor leads to a good relationship with close relatives, through reciprocity, we establish a good relationship with our relatives and show our affection towards them.

The findings identified that *Pundor* is an important phenomenon at marriage ceremonies in Gulmit village. It is considered as social support from relatives and help made by them to less burden the host of marriage. Gift leads to establish good relations with relatives gift is considered as much from close relatives because through gift exchange they maintain positive relationship. And people show much affection toward those relatives who are more likely to give a high-value Pundor. Respondent also mentioned that

*Tui esh ki wosta sak esh cha khu qom ven'esh gafch umeed lehren kui esh ki baf job charth, che digar ven tumar nai. Chizerki qom esht nekn azeng ror khalg er yark wezin. De tui'e Pundor redor gafch lazmi, chem'esh spo rishta de qom ven mazbut wosth.*

As per respondent

*On marriage occasions I expect more from close ones who do good jobs and not made much expectation from others because reciprocity plays an important role in maintaining a good relationship with close ones, because they are the only one who can be your backbone in such days.*

As per the respondents response people expects more from close relatives and friends, and less from others. Because close relatives are the one who can be helping hands in such events, especially those who are financially stable. Because they don't expect the same gift in return they gave to the people who are financially weak One of my respondents stated that

*Zun'e yi vuruth army officer, yo'esh ri Karachi haldh, yo da spo family che kukhtan ameer, spo khondon'en yasht'esh khuthan chan gafch umeed lechran, zu zedg tui ri mar yi lac rupya pubdorzetu zu vurut a.*

As per respondent

*One of my brothers is an army officer who lives in Karachi and his status is high among all family members so in our family, everyone expects high-value Pundor from him. I got 1 lac cash from him at my daughter's marriage*

Findings show that higher status in the family got high respect because of their economic influence on *Pundor*. In *Pundor* higher-status relatives never expect of return of the same gift they gave as *Pundor*, because it is an obvious thing that everyone contributes to *Pundor* according to their status and affordability. The one who didn't afford expensive *Pundor* was never forced to do so. They can give whatever they can do but a higher status relative got all attention from everyone which seemed biased.

#### **5.4. Gift exchange**

As (Mauss, (1925-1974)) identified that the gift „is never free“. He stated three main obligations of gift exchange: give, receive and reciprocate. Gift giving is a social behavior known as a ceremonial exchange. People always tend to help those who also help them. Gift exchange is very famous among the people of Gulmit village so it is the indicator of researcher. As it is an easily observable phenomenon that is increased due to the phenomenon of diffusion. This is the reason it is taken as an indicator of this research. One of my respond stated that

*Qom esh ki Pundor randna yosh khalg'er sbab wost de tui, qreebi qom ve'nesh gafch umeed wost ki yasht bafrang Pundor wuzman*

As per respondent



*Pundor is social support from relatives at marriage ceremonies “close relatives are more expected to give different gifts on the marriage ceremony.*

The view of the respondent shows that Pundor is a kind of help in a form of gift from relatives in wakhi culture. Relatives give Pundor like money and other material things, which help the bride and groom family in the expenses of their wedding. A respondent shares her experience of gift exchange

*Zu tui'er mar pachas hazar rupya westu zu pup khun gna, de Pundor esh yew rand woz yew'esh durzd, woz yan er esh yo wozwapis charth yor.*

As per respondent

*On my marriage ceremony I got Pundor of 50,000 rupees from naniyal Furthermore she said Gift exchange is a cycle of giving and take*

The view of the respondent shows that, it is a two-way exchange in which both parties have to reciprocate, one gives and other one receives. People need to exchange gifts on different occasions, the culture of Vartan bhanji prevails in our society for a long and occupies a very significant place in our lives but now Vartan bhanji change its shape in terms of give and take different gift items in marriage ceremonies.

In old time there were no concept of modern gifts like gold, furniture, and clothes but the concept of give and take did exist at that time, gifts were in the form of dry fruits, desi butter, etc. Another respondent stated that

*Perg vinak'e yi rasm, shoni khun'en yasht esh wezin spo khun, shoni'esh ny wisit, digar family lup khalg'esht esh wezin, bidganzresh rokhpar, bud woz har waghera wuzman, shoni gna nesh yi pup bidganz'er har kart, spo naan'va tui time kafi chiz esht mukhtalif tu.*

As per respondent

*In traditional perg vindak ceremonies, my in laws came to our house and my groom was not allowed to participate in that ceremony, they bring gifts like ring and other items like clothes, shoes and jewelry for me. a necklace was worn to me by the most respected male member of the grooms family. Things were really different at the time*



*of my mom's marriage.*

Findings identify that these new trends change the early concept of gift-giving. Perg vindak is an official engagement ceremony in wakhi culture, and a bride receive a lot of gifts from the groom's family. The number of gifts as essentials are predefined in the Wakhi culture (every bride gets a set of the same thing with more or less the same number) that is clothes, shoes, a necklace and other essentials. The early concept of gift giving was different from this, the number of gifts were limited, and the groom and his family were not judged for the number of gifts, and how cheap or expensive the gifts are. Now people are more interested in how expensive are the gifts they bring for the bride.

#### **5.4.1. Case study #3**

Nasima is my respondent she is 56 years old she has six children's and her husband is retired from the park army. She belongs to Gulmit. Miss Nasima told me that I have been living here for 56 years she got married in 1990, According to her *Pundor* (Vartan Bhanji) is important in our community this reciprocal system in our tradition is developed to give and take relationship and this tradition is inherited from our ancestors. My respondent, said that at my perg vindak ceremony I got two suits, one silver ring and one shawl from the groom family beside these gifts they also brought clothes for my mother and father in return when I got married I also took clothes for them. Clothes were not usually given, other thing beside clothes were given like handmade embroidered pillow covers and cushions were usually used to give to them. she further told me that at the time of my mother marriage ceremony the exchange system was different, at that time they only exchange agricultural products and in rare cases people used to give clothes and money as *Pundor* now this trend has changed to great extent and people preferred different form of exchanges like money and other material items e.g. clothes, crockery, and silver, etc.

She further stated that on my marriage ceremony our neighbors and relatives brought different gifts almost all our neighbors brings, *semen yumgh* (sweet flour) *chuwantael* (Apricot oil) *badom* (almond) etc. but one of my relative lives in Karachi gave cash of three thousand rupees likewise gift is returned on the same occasion to

everyone. Another respondent stated that

*Perg vinak shopping esh shoni khun en yasht charan, lakin maz khu perg vinak shopping khat khetu, yav mar paisa stetv, chizer ki mar esh digar kui choice khush ny wizat.*

As per respondent

I received money from the groom and I did my *perg vindak* shopping by myself, which was supposed to be done by the groom's family. I don't wear clothes of other's choice.

Research identified that even the old norms and values have changed with the passage of time, Today's generation of Gulmit village are moving to urban areas for their higher education or job purposes due to which they are having a lot of exposure and are getting influenced by social media and adopting modern way of living. And as they are educated their parents value and appreciate their decisions.

#### **5.4.2. Case study #4**

Salima and her mother are the resident of Gulmit. They live in the extended family, her mother told me that my daughter got married in 2017, on the occasion of my daughter wedding we got many gifts (*Pundor*) from our relatives. Her mother told me that I have two sisters who lives in the United States they both gave me a gold necklace one of my sisters also gave me 25,000 rupees with a gold necklace, our relatives also gave me *Pundor* as some gave me three thousand some gave me two thousand, some relatives brought me different gifts like one of them who was my daughter uncle gave me 30,000 rupees because we also gave him twenty five thousand rupees on his elder son marriage. She told me that the groom paid us for shopping which was supposed to be done by the groom's family for the *Perg vindak* ceremony, we did shopping of our choice, we bought dresses, shoes, one gold ring, and makeup kit. My daughter did her favorite shopping my daughter brought things for herself and I got clothes for our paternal and maternal relatives which we were to receive from groom side on *perg vindak* ceremony. Besides this we also did shopping for the groom family we brought six pairs of clothes for their family members and their close relatives. She further told me that in addition to these clothes, we gave our daughter other items, including, a dinner set, three blankets etc. Respondent stated that

*Da zu time che'kukhtan mehnga Pundor "zugh" tu, zu pup vuruth yo*

*mar Pundor zetu, woz zu naan khui mar da butal bil bil chuwan tail  
Pundor zetu.*

As per respondent

The most valuable gift I receive on marriage was a “yak” from my grandfather’s brother and a bottle full of apricot oil from my khala (mother’s sister).

Findings reveal that Animals like yak, goat etc. and others organic things made at home like apricot oil and desi ghee (butter) used to be the most valuable gifts in old times. They still have the same value but now people can buy these things with money, as people have started earning and their way of living have been changed. This is how income have a huge role in cultural change.

### **5.5. Favor giving**

Favor giving is the basic norm in reciprocity. It is the nature of human beings they expect favors from their close ones. People give favors on marriages so next time they also return them because they need help. This favor giving contributes to a strong relationship. People always tend to help those who also help them. As (Burger, 2009) identifies in their research favor giving is the basic norm in reciprocity. It is the nature of human beings they expect favors from their close ones. Respondent stated that

*Sukuin woz hamsoya esht de tui sakar gafch sbab wochan, woz yav bar esh ki  
tui wost sak esh woz yavar b medad wochan, qechawuzduik, vishuven, pchak  
kulchiz es yasht gon khu ror va. Woz esh ki dam’va khun tui wost sak’resh  
woz yav er zeng medad wochan.*

As per respondent

*Sukuin (Relatives) & hamsoya (neighbors) helps us more on marriages and we also help them at their marriages, they perform a variety of household services like cleaning, cooking, washing dishes’ and providing maintenances during all days of marriages. In return we also give favor whenever there is marriage at their homes.*

Findings reveal that relatives and neighbors are the greatest source of love and support. People give favors on marriages so next time they also return them because they need help. This favor giving contributes to strong relationship building. A respondent shares her experience of favor giving

*Zu kheryan tui ror maz yavar semen shapik, nigan, chelpaik woz gral waghera gokht, yem ev picak'e tumar oson nast, kukht esh khak bas ny wezin, yaver'em gafch sbab vita da tui, yav'en mar rokhpar gokht. Yaver'ep woz de zu zuman'va tui yem yark'ev khak wost.*

As per respondent

At my nephew's marriage I made semen shapik (a local sweet dish) and nigan (a form of bread) chilpek and gral. It is taught work only an expert can make these dishes. They become happy with me so they gave me clothes as a gift. But they also have to return the favor as well at my children marriages”.

Findings show that people need help on their marriages, without favors it’s difficult to manage the ceremony. It is a mutual partnership so next time it should be returned. Favor giving is by one’s own choice, no individual can force other for favor, but one feels really special when they receive service from their friends and family when they need it the most.

#### **5.5.1. Case study #5**

Amina is another respondent she is basically from Gulmit. She is 52 years old. She told me that our neighbors and relatives plays a vital role in our life, during marriage ceremonies they help us in managing everything. When my son was getting married I didn’t have enough plates and spoons for the day of marriage to serve food for everyone at the same time so I borrow from my neighbors. So many guests came two to three days before marriage and I didn’t have enough blankets and mattresses for their stay, I even borrow blankets and mattresses from my neighbors, they share their things with open heart.

She further said that my husband’s cousins and friends slaughter the animals and make their pieces, they cook food for the guests in all four days of marriage. She said I was not really worried about the cooking and serving because the kitchen was in the hold of male members of our family because they have the experience of managing such events, and they manage it very well.

## 5.6. Concept of burden

Reciprocity is an integrating force that binds network members through a complicated web of duties and interdependencies. Reciprocity can be a burden and a source of relational stress in the context of poverty, leading to the breakdown of social ties. Poverty makes it harder for people to sustain relationships with others and participate in social support networks because they lack the resources to contribute and reciprocate. Because reciprocity implies significant expectations and obligations, it can be a huge burden and source of relational stress, particularly for low-income families who have limited access to market-based alternatives and are thus highly dependent on network members to meet basic daily requirements. Low-income individuals are likely to be (or perceived to be) unattractive exchange partners, who are either excluded from social networks or deliberately withdraw from them, because of their diminished ability to share and reciprocate assistance. Thus, whereas reciprocity has traditionally been viewed as a type of 'social glue' that binds members of a community together through a complex web of obligations and interdependencies. Respondent told that

*Pundor vem hisob kert ki bu lac vita zu zrdg tui er, woz digar somon esh'b bafch wezda, rukhpar, kanbal, qecha'esht. Niv wozyav tui'ver yem'va wapis khat wost mazhar.*

As per respondent

*The Pundor in total was 2 lac rupees I received for my daughter's wedding from all my relatives and friends, and also receive a lot of material things like clothes, electric devices, blankets, and crockery etc. I must return all these at their marriage ceremony*

Most of the respondents said that they had all records in written form from whom they received gifts on their daughter and son's marriage ceremony so next time they must return gift of the same value. People who belong to a lower or lower middle class who have a very limited source of income feel burdened by thinking of returning the gift of the same value he had received. He feel burdened and stressed by thinking that if he could not return the gifts he will be perceived an unattractive exchange partner and their relationship will get weaker. Another respondent said

*Qom esht khalgar gha sbab wochan de tui, shapik khumvak, qrcha wuzduik, khun vishuven woz digar yark va, chem nesh spopirshoni gafch kam wost.*

As per respondent

Our relatives help us a lot in arrangements of our marriage ceremony. They help us in serving food, washing dishes and decorations and many more which make us less burden

Research identified that reciprocity does not just increases the burden of the poor people, it also decreases a lot of burden, people help each other at such ceremonies, especially marriage ceremony, women help in washing dishes, sharing crockeries, decorating the house and men help in slaughtering animals, cooking the food, and serving food etc. this less the burden of people.

### **5.7. Competition in reciprocity**

Gift-giving is widely seen as a means of establishing one's social status. Gifts aren't just perceived as acts of kindness or altruism, they're always assessed, and the worth of one's gift is compared to the value of other people's gifts. When people give gifts that are more valuable than the typical gifts given by others, they are more likely to be seen as loyal friends. This results in a situation known as "keeping up with the Joneses" in the Western world. To keep up with the rising prices of gifts provided by neighbors, people must spend more and more on gifts.

Of course, the economy has a significant impact on how much we spend on gifts. However, there are social and psychological variables at play in addition to economic considerations. We can't help but consider how much we spend in comparison to a lot of other factors. We unintentionally get ourselves into spending competitions that don't need to happen and end up costing us more money than we should. One of the respondent stated that

*Spochen ye amro sak khu zedg tui'er quw khetu, wuz'et zu digar amro en rekhtu yo zegd'er chiz durzner, maz yi dinner set derzd, zu dust zast tumar rupya ny tu lakin yo yi lup kambal yor derzd, ya dokondar're khat ki paisa yan tor chubasen randam.*

As per respondent

*Our friend invite us for her daughters marriage, me and my other friend went to buy her some gifts, I buy her a dinner set, she didn't have enough money to buy such expensive gift but she buy an expensive double bed*

*blanket and asked the shopkeeper that she will pay him later.*

Research identified that people always feel guilty about the idea of spending less because they expect disappointment or dissatisfaction from their relatives. On the other hand they want to maintain their status among their social group, they maintain their status for the time being than they live with the burden of debt for long.

These are the concept which have changed over time. People used to be happy with limited resources, and the simple way of exchange. Now people are competing each other, they have become status conscious. If one is paying for the musician as a Pundor another hire a makeup artist for the bride. And this sense of competition is increasing with the passage of time.

## Chapter. 06

### 6. Role of Sukuin (biraderi) in marriage ceremonies

This chapter deals researcher presenting the case study of moral and financial support of Sukuin in marriage ceremonies. In-depth interviews were conducted to find out the role of Sukuin in marriage ceremonies.

There is still no concept to hold marriage functions in marriage halls or hotels. However, all the functions are held at home. This is a plus point for the parents as they can save a huge amount which was to be spent on hall bookings.

Several questions were asked from respondents about holding all the functions at home. One of the respondents said:

*It is our culture that we celebrate every event at home, which helps us to save a huge amount of money and our resources. On the other hand, serving food and hosting all the guests at home becomes difficult sometimes. Especially for those people who have congested homes.*

The view of the respondent shows that the people of Gulmit are still following their cultural norms by celebrating events at home. But for those people who do not have enough space, it is a difficult task to manage all the things.

#### 6.1. Financial support of sukuin

Wedding ceremonies in Gojal are bright, rich in culture and tradition. Family members help out in every matter during the marriage ceremony. It is customary for bride and groom families to get financial assistance “Pundor” from relatives “Sukuin” and neighbors.

Sukuin gets together at grooms or bride homes a week before the marriage ceremony. Traditionally, an envelope with cash is given to the parents, or gifts are presented by



Sukuin. Generally, the gifts are utensils, dresses, jewelry, furniture, electronic devices are given as Pundor.

However, the concept of Pundor has been changed with the passage of time. The early concept of Pundor is quite different from the current concept. In the previous era, people used to give milk, vegetables, flour, grains, meat, butter, or anything that was available at their homes. Because at that time, people of Gojal were not financially stable and they give these things as a gift which helps the families of groom and bride to prepare meals for the quests.

We can see how the concept of gifts is changing with the passage of time. People now prefer to give expensive things as gifts.

Financial support of Sukuin during marriage ceremonies helps parents to entertain the guests as well as give financial rights to their daughters. One of the respondents gave her opinion regarding the financial assistance of Sukuin. He said that;

*Financial support from our relatives helps us to arrange everything during the marriage functions. With the help of our relatives, we can arrange everything without financial stress.*

Helping others is thought to be one of the ways that people create, maintain and strengthen their social connections. Another respondent said;

*Helping each other on such occasions can help us a feel of belonging and helps us to connect with our community.*

People of Gojal volunteer their time, money and energy to help others which makes this place better.

## **6.2. The moral support of Sukuin**

Marriages are supposed to be the responsibility of parents. One of the biggest perks of marriage ceremonies of the Gojal is that the parents are not alone to arrange everything. Relatives help groom and bride parents in everything.

Along with the financial support, Sukuin morally supports the bride and groom's families. The female relatives help out to clean homes, wash dishes, cook food, and provide services in the household along with the emotional support whenever needed. The male relatives help to slaughter the animals, cook food for the guests, make space for the guests, decorate the home, and do other masculine tasks.

One of the respondents was asked about how his relatives helped him out during his daughter's wedding, the respondent replied:

*I was so nervous about my daughter's marriage as I wasn't able to arrange everything by myself. But with the help of my Sukuin, my daughter got married with honor. My relatives not just helped me financially, but they also help me out to arrange everything. From cooking food to doing dishes, they helped me a lot. By helping each other on such occasions, we get more closer to each other and feel like we all are brothers. No matter what, our relatives are always available to help us. I don't know how was I going to do all the things by my own.*

This statement shows that how helping each other on every occasion, keeps them united. They don't have to worry about anything, because they help each other in everything.

### **6.3. Role of income in cultural change**

The fieldwork for this analysis was carried out in Gulmit hunza. Gulmit is home to several biraderis of various sizes and social statuses; those chosen for investigation in this research are the three most populous biraderis, boriktor, rozdorktor, and Bedaly. Researcher conducted several interviews among different families and different age groups and various social statuses to see how Vartan bhanji works amongst different groups.

### **6.4. Reciprocation of congratulatory money and non-equilibrium exchange**

Congratulatory money, known locally as salami, neondra, or neota, is given to the bride and groom at the occasion of their wedding by his or her parents, siblings, relatives, and friends. Some practical examples are offered in the following to

demonstrate how this monetary exchange is done and what function it plays in building or disrupting equilibrium in reciprocation among biraderi members.

#### **6.4.1. Case study #6**

Ahsan, the widow's son, married with the assistance of his maternal uncles (mamus) and maternal grandfather (nana); hence, the 'contribution of maternal side' was stressed extensively. It is required, regardless of one's socioeconomic standing or financial ability to carry it out. The wedding day began with a meal offered to all of the wedding guests. By noon, Ahsan was seated on a stage with a few relatives, and a rite known as hareep was conducted. At this point, all of the members greeted him and presented him with celebratory money. The precise sums were instantly recorded in a register by a literate relative sitting next to the groom.

This sum is important since it is the amount against which the groom must reciprocate, with his own addition, at the future weddings of these relatives/friends. It is vital to note that relatives/friends offer celebratory money to the groom based on what they had previously received from the groom's side during their weddings, thus keeping and maintaining the norm of reciprocity. All of the groom's relatives from his maternal and paternal families, as well as his married sisters and their in-laws, neighbors, and friends, took part in this event. When asked what happens if someone is unable to contribute, the groom's mother stated that the host normally expects all families to participate. It is deemed disrespectful if someone does not participate even if he or she is unable to contribute. She stated that the invited visitor must attend the wedding regardless of whether or not they provide anything. This shows that the emphasis is on the participation of all biraderi members in the wedding, regardless of financial contributions.

However, the groom's mother observes a certain pressure and perceived obligation to contribute: "At times, some rich relatives give congratulatory money out of their own pockets to their poor relatives so that they could have something written under their name in the record book in order to save the awkwardness of not having contributed to the wedding, and also so that nobody could say that a particular person did not contribute anything at all." She also stated that she had received money from her brothers on numerous occasions to give in her name. According to her knowledge,

rural households rely on the institution of congratulations money to cover wedding expenses.

Vartan bhanji practices include, but are not limited to, congratulatory money exchange. The latter is one of many objects shared among families as part of vartan bhanji rituals. Clothes, pastries, dry fruits, and dowry things are examples of other present items.

The actors in such exchanges range from close relatives to friends, and the quantity of objects transferred represents and is defined by the degree of connection with various biraderi members. The majority of the items are given to and taken from married daughters, in-laws, and maternal uncles, who serve as the exchange network's center.

The rule of non-equilibrium is the most essential element of the reciprocation of congratulatory money at weddings. According to respondent

*"It is self-explanatory that if someone provides equal pundor, he is telling us that he does not want to have Vartan bhanji with us in the future."*

Similarly, a respondent from a relatively better off household of the rozdorktor family, who is a businessman, confirmed the peculiar nature of reciprocation in vartan bhanji arrangements and added a further dimension of lavishness when explaining the extraordinary disproportion of reciprocation:

"Two years ago, a friend of my uncle who lives in Saudi Arabia attended my wedding and gave me 10,000 Rupees as Pundor." I did not accept the money at first, but the person insisted so strongly that I couldn't refuse, and this year I attended the wedding of a niece of this uncle's friend and gave 20,000 Rupees as Pundor in return. I would not have reciprocated so generously at his wedding if he had not donated such a large sum to my wedding. But, because he contributed so generously to my wedding, I felt obligated to do the same for his".

This example also shows that vartan bhanji in wealthy households is a way to strengthen ties not only with biraderi relatives but also with their colleagues, who may also be biraderis. As a result, exchange in vartan bhanji agreements might extend beyond the bounds of one biraderi if a family's socioeconomic standing allows them to

afford the expenses. In vartan bhanji, however, if a household is from middle class, the exchange circle decreases to relatively few persons with whom one reciprocates.

### **6.5. Vartan bhanji amongst upper classes**

It can be stated that a specific household's social sphere is defined by its socioeconomic circumstances. Vartan bhanji is an important measure of social mobility in biraderi. The wealthier the home, the more formal and informal contacts it has, and the larger the social sphere becomes over time, and vice versa. This also explains how such informal networks affect society's relatively formal social structure in general. For example, it has been described in the literature that biraderi relationships influence voting behavior (Ahmed 2011, Chaudhary 1999, Wilder 1999). Typically, the rich person of a particular biraderi participates in political matters and uses his biraderi connections to gain votes in the name of biraderi relationships that he maintains with multiple homes through rites such as vartan bhanji, among others. It is here that one may see the seamlessly invisible relationship between society's formal and informal domains of authority.

### **6.6. Gender involvement in vartan bhanji**

Vartan bhanji has a certain gender dimension (eglar, a punjabi village in pakistan, 1960) because while the political aspects of the exchange and how to handle it financially are ultimately left to the males of a household, it is the females who decide with whom such exchanges are to be done and to what extent. In Gulmit, females are usually in charge of family concerns. The decision to engage in vartan bhanji with other biraderi members is made by the oldest female member of the household. Furthermore, guys are never observed or prefer not to be personally involved in such interactions. For example, at the two marriages observed during fieldwork, men gave away congratulations money, however all other goods such as clothes, sweets, and dowry items were provided to the host family by the females of the guest family. Typically, the eldest lady in the family keeps track of what her family donated to the weddings of the families they had previously been welcomed to, how they had reciprocated previously, and which reciprocation would be required at the next invitation. Her precise awareness of the non-monetary amounts obtained and thus must be returned in such exchanges highlights her critical role in creating,

developing, or weakening biraderi ties with other homes. The males of the household normally exchange celebratory money, but the females always engage in non-monetary exchange items such as clothes, sweets, and other things. Again, non-equilibrium is a significant aspect in this reciprocation, as the women keep track not only of the money provided or presents exchanged, but also of the addition made by the visitor family to the original amount paid by the host family previously.

Concerning the gender component, fieldwork found that whenever a neutral issue of marriage, either within-biraderi or outside-biraderi, was raised during the interviews, the respondents instantly began talking about their daughters' marriages. Marriage of a daughter is a responsibility and a big burden, especially for poor families, because the father needs to take care of a daughter's wedding, but a son is supposed to take care of his own marriage. Daughters are very significant given the necessity for biraderi support in financing weddings, particularly for poor homes - a fact that could be viewed as adding to the community aspect of biraderi organizations. Furthermore, this study validates Eglar's observations from more than 50 years ago, that the institution of vartan bhanji appears to revolve on the daughters of the family, whether mother, sister, or bride.

### **6.7. Coping strategies to meet social pressures of vartan bhanji**

The previous section's empirical examples from poor biraderi homes immediately raise the topic of how big financial gaps at weddings can be dealt with or avoided entirely. The major coping mechanisms used by disadvantaged households in Gulmit Gojal Hunza to meet their vartan bhanji duties analytically, three types of strategies can be distinguished. However, one individual or household can meet the required needs simultaneously. In other words, respondents reported that they use a variety of economic, social, and psychological coping techniques at the same time.

The next section discusses many sorts of coping mechanisms for low-income households. The discussion is predicated on the notion that poor households lack many resources and, as a result, the economic capacity required for the exchange of various types of presents. All observations were made during fieldwork and are exclusive to wedding ceremonies rather than other life-cycle rituals.

### 6.7.1. Economic coping

Taking out loans is one of the most popular coping techniques used by Gulmit Gojal middle-class households to deal with the financial difficulties of vartan bhanji. As a result, a relative's wedding is preceded by the taking out of a loan in order to be able to contribute celebratory money or to acquire bride needs that are paid up in kind by the females. Most households obtain informal loans from family or wealthy members of the biraderi. In this regard, many respondents described vartan bhanji as an indebtedness system. Close relatives (sukuins), for example, who are normally in charge of cooking and preparation arrangements during weddings, respondent stated that, "*Vartan bhanji is Qarz-e-Hasna,*" which relates to a debt that must be repaid but has no time limit for doing so.

The practice of 'casting committees,' locally known as 'committee ketak,' is most common in the informal sector. It entails a group of people agreeing to contribute a set amount of money to a specific person on a monthly basis, with the beneficiary rotating. The total amount so gathered from all members is then delivered to one member at a time, and this continues until all members have received their total amounts.

*This strategy is very helpful for me to cope up my extraordinary expenses, i gave pundoor on my sister's son's marriage from committee money.*

For example, if a person participates in this practice and contributes Rs. 3,000 per month to a specific person, and the total number of committee members contributing the same amount to that person is 30, the total amount for one month becomes Rs. 90,000. This sum is subsequently handed to one of the contributing members in order for him or her to address any major needs. In subsequent rounds, the turn is rotated until all members have their sums repaid when they are due. Ordinary people of local society can plan for and cover extraordinary expenses due to this cooperative collecting practice.

### 6.7.2.Social coping

Vartan bhanji is not simply the economic trade that inhabitants of a biraderi performed among themselves; it is also a social exchange, and as such, it was presented as part of the biraderi's community dimension. People gather at various ceremonies to re-strengthen the cohesive link of their relationships with one another through reciprocal trade practices. Furthermore, a well-functioning social support network assists in coping with stress factors, pressure, and stressful events by providing material assistance, counsel, and support. This is based on the notion that individuals belong to networks of mutual caring and that social and emotional support aids those affected by stress in coping with the situation (Feldman 2011). Several techniques of local social coping among poor households in Gulmit Gojal might be identified in order to maintain their position as biraderi members. A poor 70-year-old shopkeeper who was concerned about marrying his daughters because he lacked the financial wherewithal to do so said he would not invite many guests. He stated that

*"What can I do? I am unable to afford to marry my daughter. So I'll simply summon a few relatives from the groom's side, bring them beverages and dinner, and marry my daughter simply. Because my relatives are aware that I cannot afford to marry my daughter, they will understand. I've served on a committee and am now waiting for my time. As soon as I have my committee, I'll marry my daughter."*

This strategy opposes the normal conventions that must be followed in order to continue vartan bhanji; for example, it is regarded as extremely disrespectful if someone is not invited to a relative's wedding. This exceptional measure, however, was justified by a stubborn argument of need. In similar instances, only one member of the other biraderi houses is invited to the wedding, usually the head of the house, rather than the entire family. This dramatically reduces the number of people the host must entertain, lowering the expense of the wedding. Adopting this technique is a good balance for poor families who want to marry their children without spending extra expenses.



### **6.7.3. Psychological coping**

Several instances showed that when a person does not find proper support within a biraderi for his or her own wedding or the wedding of his or her daughters, he seeks cooperation from outside the biraderi. Nonetheless, they cannot leave their biraderi association and continue to be a member of their biraderis by participating in vartan bhanji rites during marriage, funeral, birth, and circumcision ceremonies. Poor biraderi members are affected by the spiral of withdrawal, emotional isolation, and social exclusion in such a way that they and future generations face additional problems, such as lower turnout of relatives at their children's weddings, lower contributions by their biraderi members in vartan bhanji, and so on.

According to the findings, simply participating in social rituals and making a tiny gift, as little as Rs. 200, can save them a lot of difficulty since it keeps them in the loop, despite the fact that they are marginalized and vulnerable. If they do not fail to join in their biraderi members' social functions, their fellow biraderi members still feel obligated to pay to them, even if they have donated very little

## Chapter. 07

### 7. Summary & Conclusion

This ethnographic research is about, marriage, Pundor (vartan bhanji) and modernity. The current study focuses that how diffusion influence the early concept of *Pundor* (Vartan Bhanji) on marriage ceremony and has explored the role of diffusion, on a marriage ceremony with special reference to gift-giving.

The Concept of *Pundor* is more commonly associated with Vartan bhanji but also cultural differences were found between these institutions. *Pundor* was given to bride and groom at wedding ceremony people give the invitation to relatives and neighbors all relatives bring different gifts according to their status and level some bring precious gifts and some bring a lower level of gifts.

Gulmit village of Gojal Valley is selected for the aim of conducting this research. (Gojal Valley is geographically the largest Tehsil of Hunza District in Gilgit-Baltistan) to find out how the early concept of gift-giving on marriage ceremony is changed due to Diffusion and to find out the role participation of biraderi (Sukuin) in marriage ceremonies.

This research was grounded in a qualitative research design. The number of conducted interviews were 18 for purpose of data collection. A sample size was determined through purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Participant observation was used to facilitate the study for collecting information through their routine activities. 7 case studies on specific topics were written to get clear insight view of indigenous knowledge. Other than key informants, rapport building, and ethical considerations were also used in the process of research.

The people live over there belongs to the same ethnicity and they have same religious background, they belong to the Ismaili community, and they speak wakhi languages. This study explored the social impacts that how the concept of Pundor bring people closer. The purpose of this study was to find the role of Pundor in creating harmonious and cooperative relation among the people of a particular society in general.

*Pundor* is an important phenomenon at marriage ceremonies in Gulmit village. It is considered as social support from relatives and help made by them to less burden the host of marriage. Gift leads to establish good relations with relatives gift is considered as much from close relatives because through gift exchange they maintain positive relationship. And people show much affection toward those relatives who are more likely to give a high-value *Pundor*. The tradition of *Pundor* is changed over the period of time. People used to give agriculture products like vegetables, fruits and other homemade items like desi ghee, dry fruits etc. now people prefer to give expensive things like, crockery, furniture, clothes, jewelry and electric devices e.g. television, fridge etc. this shows that how reciprocity is changed over the period of time. People expect more from close relatives and friends, and less from others. Because close relatives are the one who can be helping hands in such events, especially those who are financially stable. Because they don't expect the same gift in return they gave to the people who are financially weak, higher status in the family got high respect because of their economic influence on *Pundor*. In *Pundor* higher-status relatives never expect of return of the same gift they gave as *Pundor*, because it is an obvious thing that everyone contributes to *Pundor* according to their status and affordability. The one who didn't afford expensive *Pundor* was never forced to do so. They can give whatever they can do but a higher status relative got all attention from everyone which seemed biased.

Apart from social aspect, this study also ensured the economic impacts, as people have started to earn due to which they have started giving valuable things, which have now become the reason of competition between them. And those who cannot afford they try hard to maintain their status in society.

Aside from socio-economic impacts, the researcher also explored the role participation of biraderi. Along with the financial support, Sukuin (Biraderi) morally supports the bride and groom's families. The female relatives help out to clean homes, wash dishes, cook food, and provide services in the household along with the emotional support whenever needed. The male relatives help to slaughter the animals, cook food for the guests, make space for the guests, decorate the home, and do other masculine tasks.

## **Conclusion**

Initially, this research was focused on the perception of local people about Pundor, and how the early concept have changed due to diffusion. It also explored the importance of Pundor to maintain a good relationship with friends and family (biraderi).

Research reveal that gifts and services are the main source of a good relationship with concerned people. It connects people, research also reveal that the concept of gift giving have been changed with the passage of time, people used to give simple gifts and agriculture products in Gulmit village of Gojal Valley, now people give expensive gifts, people have started competing each other in Pundor giving. Research also reveal that relatives and friends are a source of support in marriage ceremonies. It also identify the cultural changes brought by education, exposure and income.

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## ANNEXURE

### Glossary

<i>Vartan Bhanji</i>	Exchange system in Punjab which means dealing in sweets
<i>Pundor</i>	Exchange system in Gulmit Gojal Hunza
<i>Blat</i>	Exchange system in Russia
<i>Wasta</i>	Exchange system in Middle East
<i>Wakhi</i>	A primary language spoken in upper Hunza
<i>Brushaski</i>	A primary language spoken in central Hunza
<i>Bath</i>	Local dish specially made on marriages ceremony
<i>Khista &amp; potok</i>	Desi Bread
<i>Sukuien</i>	Relatives from paternal side

## Interview Guide

1. Do you perform give and take with your relatives and neighbors?
2. Do you attend ceremonies in your neighbors?
3. Do you exchange gifts on different occasions?
4. If your neighbors and relatives gave you gifts what you give in return?
5. Do you give gifts and favors to the neighbors?
6. What type of gifts you give to your neighbor's daughter?
7. What kind of gifts you received on your marriage ceremony?
8. What type of gifts you received from groom side on your marriage ceremony?
9. What kind of gifts you give to groom's family in return?
10. Do you know about the early concept of gift giving?
11. How do you think that gift giving concept is changed over the time?
12. What kind of services or favor does your Sukuien (biradari) give on your marriage ceremo



