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**CHANGE IN LAND OWNERSHIP, BIRADRY SYSTEM AND SOCIAL STATUS IN A
PUNJABI VILLAGE**



By

Abdul Qadar

A dissertation submitted to National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad in partial fulfillment of requirement of the Degree of Masters of Philosophy in Pakistan Studies




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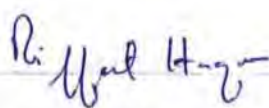


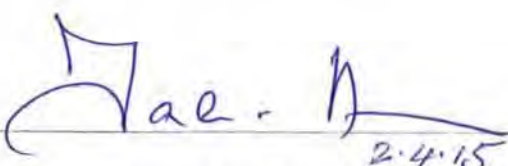
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CERTIFICATE

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Punjabi Village”** is accepted in this present form by National Institute of
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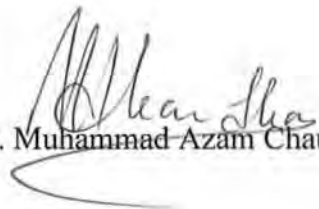
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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that M.Phil scholar *Abdul Qadar* has completed his dissertation on the topic "*Change in Land Ownership, Biradry System and Social Status in a Punjabi Village*" under my supervision. I recommend it for submission in candidacy for the degree of M.Phil in National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS), Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.


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DECLARATION

I, *Abdul Qadar*, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my individual research and has not been submitted concurrently to any other university for any other degree.

Abdul Qadar

Dedication

Dedicated to My Mother, Brother, Ghulam Mustafa Khan, who have always supported me. However, for this specific study, I am equally indebted to Mr. Chaudhery Khalid Nawaz Warraich and his family, my hosts at *Mohla*.

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In the end, my utmost regards and sincere concerns remain for Zekiye Eglar who was pioneer author about both these villages. It may not have been fair to re-invent her original study which is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable anthropological works on a Punjabi village. However, her study as a kind help is duly realized and acknowledged as my primary source to understand the village.



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Change in Land Ownership, *Biradry* System and Social Status in a Punjabi Village.

Introduction

This study is an attempt to understand the changing social patterns and their processes in Punjabi society in general and the rural areas in particular. Punjabi society is undergoing a rapid change with different manifestations across the society. This process of change in society and its culture stimulates to understand the Punjabi society from specific reference to its present forms of land ownership in relation with historical importance of the land. Another important dimension in this regard is the concept of *biradry* and caste, which has its peculiar relevance in the village life. This warrants a comprehensive study to understand these inter-dependent concepts in a mutual relationship within their own context. Thus, understanding of these factors needs a mutually inclusive approach to see the Punjabi society in relation with land and subsequent composition of the society.

Land has remained a cornerstone of the social structure of Punjab with its deep-rooted impact for the society. Digby (1982) has traced the importance of land in determining one's social position in North-West India since eighth to twelfth centuries known as period of 'endemic warfare' in which, "landholding became the chief basis of social and political status" and resultantly it gave birth to a system known as "Indian feudalism" (Digby 1982: 46). This relationship between land and society has remained

important throughout the times of ancient Indian rulers to the contemporary times. Irfan Habib has debated the role of land and the patterns of its division with their attributes like “large holdings of the *khots* or headmen, to the petty plots of the *baldbars*, or village menials” (Habib 1982: 48). These attributes like *khots*, *baldbars* etc. show the importance of land in determining one’s position in the society during pre-mughal times.

Now, we turn to a recent time i.e. the British colonial period where there was a systematic settlement, distribution and allocation of land with deep rooted and long term impact for society. Imran Ali, a Pakistani historian, through his remarkable work by minutely exploring these trends, is directly relevant. He has traced the results of colonial interventions in the fertile lands of Punjab with their ever-lasting impacts on social composition of the area. Before the arrival of British and the enactment of the canal colonies, only small portions of this very fertile land were being used for agriculture. The whole land of Punjab, which was under “canal irrigation” before 1885 increased from “3,000,000 acres to around 14,000,000 acres till 1947” (Ali 2003: 9-10). All details given by Ali (2003) give us a glimpse into the entire change that took place in this part of the subcontinent. However, practical outcome of the relationship of society and state in today’s Punjab is of direct concern. Imran Ali is quite relevant to trace the origin of today’s land ownership patterns in colonial social engineering. He is of the view:

“Those who obtained land strengthened their position in society and were the real beneficiaries of agricultural colonization, while those who were excluded from this new resource suffered a relative weakening of their status” (Ali 2003: 62)

Colonial administration instrumentalized the role of land to change the composition of society for all times to come, according to its own interests. It shows the significance of

land not only as an important source of food and economic self-sufficiency, but also as a determinant of social status. Ali (2003) explores the relationship between state practices and consequent hierarchical division of society for coming times. The writer analyses colonial policies as responsible for allotting land in such a way, which divided people as “agriculturists” and the “non-agriculturists” also known as “*kamins or menials*” (Ali 2003: 64).

Imran Ali’s (2003) book provides us very useful details of a huge project of social engineering in the Punjab with some initial impacts or some projected impacts on the society without elaborating how it looked at ground. However, Eglar (1960) provides us with the most useful picture of how the Punjabi society was practically shaped in the wake of these colonial practices. Eglar (1960) tries to see the village life and the role of land, *biradari*, caste, religion, seasons, land cultivation, honour, prestige and social dependence through the concept of formal practices of *Vartan Bhanji* and the economy of the village. Eglar’s book (2010) can better be understood by seeing the trends of land distribution among certain categories of people and the consequent role of land ownership patterns at the village through ‘reciprocity’ based upon ‘*vangaar*’ and ‘*vartan bhanji*’. Thus, different authors have debated social implications of these trends of land ownership in Punjab (Ahmad 1977, Chaudhary 1999, Mohmand 2011, Javed 2012). Moreover, the living significance of land ownership patterns has also been debated as an arena in state practices since British period (Gilmartin 1988) to contemporary political processes like voting behaviour (Mohmand 2011) and the role of landed elite in politics through patronage (Lyon 2002, Talbot 1998).

Like above mentioned authors, for Eglar (2010) the ownership of land is “dividing line between *zamindars* and *kammis*, the interest of both is centered on the land” (Eglar 2010: 59). The author has also debated the understanding of social capital and economic capital in the village mainly attached with land at her time of study. The author argues that not only ownership, but even the size and quality of land is also important “among the *zamindars* themselves, size of landholding is the basis on which social status is measured” (Eglar 2010: 60). The author further extends the role of land ownership patterns to see the effects of these patterns in the society through regulation and maintenance of relations.

For understanding the social relations in the village, Eglar’s study (2010) is of primary importance through her insightful understanding of the institutional framework of ‘*Vartan Bhanji*’ (mutual exchange of gifts). She defines ‘*vartan bhanji*’ as “An exchange of gifts and also refers to gifts so exchanged; likewise it denotes the relationship between people established through this exchange” (Eglar 2010: 119). This institutional setup of mutual interdependence is reinforced through hierarchies and feelings based upon the consciousness of closeness and distance. Importantly, the book tries to explore the interdependence of a village community as determined by mutual understanding of ‘social capital’ here in the book called as ‘Prestige or *Izzat*’ (Eglar 2010: 61) depending upon different factors like caste, land ownership and duration of relationship which decide about the level of participation in this interdependence.

Both these studies of Ali (2003) and Eglar (2010) show the central importance of land. This shows that division of land, given its scale of operation as described by Imran Ali (2003), resulted in immense forces of transformation in the society. Resultantly,

people started internalizing the role of land in their lives in relation with the practical impacts of land ownership. Since Eglar's fieldwork (1948-53), which was later on published (1960, 2010), no systematic field research has been undertaken to academically understand the changes that have taken place in the Punjab with mainly focusing on landownership and *biradary* system. This study intends to fill the gap for understanding the role of land in the social change which is the central focus of this study. Further this gives birth to the understanding of the social trends and attitudes at present, which were historically defined through land. However, my observation is that land is no more single most important determinant of social prestige.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Society in the village is undergoing a change in the wake of factors like improved mechanization, enhanced use of money¹, role of media, industrialization and population increase resulting in shrinking land holdings². These factors are self-evident on a visit of village. Technological advancement has replaced human means compelling to remain interdependent through '*mang*' or '*vangaar*'. Moreover, as the life in the village is witnessing rapid change in its social setup, this study attempts to answer some of the questions, doubts and confusions about the village. The above given background portrays the earlier vitality of land in the village life, but the modern relationship between land and society in the present context is of direct concern. There are many striking realities and academic studies, which challenge the traditional principal role of land. Moreover, the

¹ Clifford Geertz (1993) has highlighted same aspects of change in Javan traditional society about four decades earlier "Population growth, urbanization, monetization, occupational differentiation and the like, have combined to weaken the traditional ties of peasant social structure" (P, 148).

² Zekiye Eglar had observed " With the 'Green Revolution' introduced by the government, changes were starting to take place in an area that had remained the same for centuries" (Sarwar, Chowdhry 2010: 406)

notions of caste and *biradry* as a permanent feature have also been challenged. This was already observed by Saghir Ahmed:

"quom members forced to adopt some other occupation have in most cases become known by the name of the new occupation. For example, the tobas (well cleaners) , an occupation which disappaeared with the advent of the irrigation canals, became carpenters" (Ahmad 1977: 74).

There are serious challenges to the traditional setup of village-life. This can also be understood from increasing trends of mobility to cities and increasing population, which leaves land ownership with decreasing potential for dependence. As Muhammad A. Qadeer has made it clear:

"Villages have turned into cities and cities have spread out to become megalopolises. These are the physical expressions of urbanization, which is defined as the concentration of a large number of people" (Qadeer 2006: 14).

These trends themselves raise serious questions about possible dependence upon the land. Now this process of change in the society generates a potential debate about the mutual relevance and significance of the actors involved in the process. So, a relational and mutually inclusive study of the actors has been duly realized. This aspect is also corroborated by Ian Craib, who sees "The first property of societies" as relational because "they are comprised of enduring relations of the agents to each other and to the material objects that also make up the social environment" (Craib 1984: 22). Above given references of change and composition of village life endorse the need for reinvestigation of the earlier study with certain questions and doubts to be academically explored.

This study has realised the need to investigate the social change in the village with main focus on study of Eglar (1960), which tried to understand the village life mainly revolving around land. The role of land as a dividing marker and its existing significance for *biradry* system has been debated to show the penetrating forces of social change. Indeed, a Punjabi village is composed of land among individuals and their respective positions in *biradri*, which play important role for placing someone in his or her individual or collective position. So, the study tries to determine the importance of land ownership and the significance of *biradry* system, which determine the extent of social status defined by them.

Central Statement

This study proposes a departure from the inherited understandings about overstated importance of land ownership for its economic and social significance. It is proposed that role of land in the village can not be taken anymore as sole structure, which 'enables' only those who own it or as a 'constraining' one for those who lack its ownership³. Moreover, the social importance of land has also been proposed to alternate with new factors like increased use of money, mechanization of domestic spheres and diversification of means to accumulate economic capital. Thus, the village life is proposed to be understood with main focus on diverse factors, which are redefining the earlier significance of traditional roles of land and *biradry*.

³ This understanding of land as a 'structure' to be 'enabling' or 'constraining' is credited to Giddens (1984, 1979) 'Theory of structuration'.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

At present, the main thrust of social sciences is on certain theoretical models given by sociologists. However, the comparatively recent theoretical frames offered by Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens seem to be more relevant themes of human action. Main argument of the present study seems more relevant with that of Giddens. It is not merely a matter of convenience to operationalize one of the theories and to reject the remaining ones. Pierre Bourdieu's main ideas about the societal dynamics can be analysed through his idea of capital. According to Bourdieu:

“capital, which, in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate and which, as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible” (Bourdieu 1986: 46)

This approach of Bourdieu to see the potential capacity of capital to ‘persist in its being’ seems problematic in the light of contemporary study, which attempts to analyse the processes of change. This is the reason that Bourdieu has been judged to “fall into certain deterministic pitches, thus over-emphasising the role of structures in influencing human behavior” (Pérez 2008-2009).

Bourdieu's understanding of everyday life in terms of economic importance is also difficult to sustain. Bourdieu argues:

“as everyone knows, priceless things have their price, and the extreme difficulty of converting certain practices and certain objects into money is only due to the

fact that this conversion is refused in the every intention that produces them, which is nothing other than the denial (Verneinung) of the economy” (Bourdieu 1986: 46).

This tendency or resistance of the producing mechanisms in the face of challenges also becomes unsustainable, when seen against the increasingly monetized practices in cultural domain of tradition.

This limitation of the Bourdieu’s theory mainly seems to be due to his concept of ‘habitus’⁴ as “a system of generated dispositions integrating past experiences” which for him “functions at every moment in a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions” (Bourdieu 1977: 83). This historical baggage of ‘habitus’ functioning at every moment is further problematised by Bourdieu’s concept of ‘field’ “as a social arena within which people compete for scarce resources” and as a social system “based on structure in power relationships; a network, or configuration of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 92). So, Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ as a permanent baggage in a ‘field of scarce resources’ feels difficult to hold in the light of present study, where the study as it unfolds would bring to fore the conflicting ideas with the arguments of Bourdieu. However, Bourdieu’s ideas would recur as the study demands. For example, Bourdieu’s idea about ‘Habitus’ as defined earlier and his understanding of mutual interplay between economic capital and cultural capital over the time is understandably relevant.

⁴ Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ is an important idea but it leads to or it may be taken as a result of Bourdieu’s pre-supposed mightiness of structures, which leaves very little space for agency.

There is direct need and relevance of Anthony Giddens theory of structuration, which seems more important to theorize the main argument of the study at hand. Anthony Giddens's interest in the systemic formulation of 'Theory of Structuration' traces its origin in his writings from 1976. The author defines agency as "the stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events-in-world" (Giddens, 1976: 75). Author further gives space to the agent who "could have acted otherwise" besides the vision of the "world as constituted by a stream of events-in-process independent of the agent does not hold out a predetermined future" (Giddens, 1976: 75). These trends in his formulation of different theoretical concepts about action and space negotiated between agency and structure, show that for Giddens, structure does not remain so over-emphasised. This understanding of Giddens is crystallized in his leading theorem of the theory of structuration where "every social actor knows a great deal about the conditions of reproduction of the society of which he or she is member" (Giddens, 1979: 5).

Furthermore, another relevant theme of Giddens's theory of structuration is his concept of 'duality of structure' which means for him "the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the practices that constitute them" (Giddens, 1979: 69). This idea of structure as outcome of the practices that constitute them, becomes directly relevant when Giddens conceptualizes mutual dependence of structure and agency. Giddens further argues:

"The identification of structure with constraint is also rejected: structure is both enabling and constraining, and it is one of the specific tasks of social theory to

study the conditions in the organisation of social systems that govern the interconnections between the two" (Giddens, 1979: 69-70).

This is an interesting theme of Giddens's theory of structuration, which seems to be directly relevant with emerging themes of the study. As the notion of academically presumed understanding of structures in Punjabi village seems not to be so rigidly defined as it has been taken, this identification of structure as enabling and constraining seems pertinent. Another interesting aspect about Giddens's duality of structure is significant because the structural properties themselves are seen by Giddens as a manifestation of the constituting forces themselves.

As present study is a case in point, there is need to locate the study in its own milieu of directly relevant studies. The study at hand is about the changing traditional structures as they have been presented in the contemporary literature and the negotiation of agency with these structures. First of all, the above cited studies of Ahmad 1977, Alvi 1972, Chaudhry 1999, Javed 2012, Lyon 2002 and Mohmand 2011, present the *biradry* system as a structure which mainly influences the conduct of individual actors. *Biradry* system is assumed to be super-structure, which dominates the rest of individual, group or collective spheres. Zekiye Eglar's understanding of the *biradry* system of its own time seems challenged in its existing context in relation with traditional image of *biradry*. Moreover, an important theme of such studies has been *zamindar* and *kammi* relations. This relationship inherently gives sense of rigid social settings, which do not give equal space to the *kammi* castes. This inequality between *zamindar* and *kammi* is seen as structural hindrance on the part of *kammi* to employ his/her agency. So, as an outline of the mainstream existing frames, which surround the whole debate about 'agency' and

'structure', patterns of land ownership and *biradry* system as a force in the village, can be seen to operationalize possible theoretical options.

Apparently, all these formulations by Giddens about role of agency and structure in the action feels somewhat irrelevant, but these are themes which make sense by applying them in the context of village. For example, if role of land ownership is seen as an enabling agent for those who own it and constraining for those who lack this ownership, there are some extendable possibilities of 'theory of structuration'. Furthermore, *Biradry* system as a force is not equally strong in the village and its fundamental tenets, which we have inherited, are being redefined against the historical sense. This has been debated by Giddens as he proposed that "the structural properties" are "outcome of the practices that constitute them" (Giddens, 1979: 69). Thus, this understanding of Giddens can be seen in the light of changing significance of *biradry*, which can not be essentialised in its role as a structure. There is no doubt about the fact that *biradry* is still a strong social force in the village, but the intensity and strength of its traditional actors is in the process of renegotiation with the conventional sensibility of 'structures'.

Likewise, land ownership also can not be seen in its assumed earlier worth to shape the broader socio-economic landscape of the village. The earlier economic significance and social imagination about the positions of different involved actors on the basis of land ownership is also no more socially relevant in the current context of the village. Thus, the traditional understanding of 'structures' and 'agency' as a background knowledge seems to give more space to the non-landholding families as it is generally believed. The societal dynamics of the operationalization of 'theory of structuration' is

expected to be presented in the following chapters. So, as the given background seems to be supported more by Giddens's ideas of theory of structuration, yet Bourdieu also remains relevant in some of the aspects, which would be made clear as the study proceeds.

1.3 Village Profile

1.3.1 Mohla in Gujrat: Bigger Picture.

Gujrat is one of the most important districts in Pakistan. It has been enjoying over-riding importance in Pakistan, due to its location and its role at different historical phases. These roles and importance of *Gujrat* has earned it the titles like "The pivot of Pakistan" (Rehman and Wescoat Jr. 1993: 19). *Gujrat* has remained an important city throughout its history. Besides military and political importance of this area, there has remained a trend of industrialization as well. Rehman and Wescoat Jr have debated the historical role of *Gujrat* as "center for making swords, daggers and other warfare tools during Mughal period" (Rehman and Wescoat Jr. 1993: 12). This trend is still visible in the area because it is one of the largest industrialized areas in Pakistan. So, *Gujrat* connected through Grand Trunk road and established mainly by the colonial practices is an important area in terms of its dependence upon industry and local businesses. However, these businesses are being influenced now by the larger ones and being connected with international businesses⁵.

⁵ This fact is vindicated by the location of the village of study, which is surrounded by One flour mill, two rice mills in the North of the village Near Harianwala Chowk, two CNG stations, one pipe factory in the east of the village, Two filling stations and three hotels one at the G. T. road.

Mohla is a village located at the left side of G.T Road while from Lahore to Islamabad. The village lies 8 kilometers in the south west side of *Gujrat* city. *Mohla* village is divided into two villages of *Mohla Kalaan* known as *Mohla wadda* (Big) and *Mohla Khurd* as *Mohla landa* (*Mohla* at the side, where sun sets in). *Mohla Kalaan* is located at the west side of Grand Trunk road. The village has extended to G.T road now⁶. *Mohla khurd* is situated in the north of *Mohla kalaan*. Both these villages are administratively considered single unit, but there is a feeling of difference and distance between people of both these villages. The difference is mainly in terms of social makeup of the village, as there is not such a clear difference of landholding among the families of *zamindars* at *Mohla Khurd* unlike two *Cheema* families owning most of the land of *Mohla kalaan*. Therefore, people of *Mohla Khurd* are considered socially more organized as compared to people of *Mohla kalaan* because the *Zamindar* families of *Mohla Khurd* have set some standards, which have to be met at every cost by the fellow village brethren. However, this is not truly reflected in *Mohla Kalaan* because the *Chaudhry* of *Mohla kalaan* is reportedly less interested in affairs of the village.

Moreover, the village is surrounded by villages of *Kathala* at south east, *Ghazi Chak* at South west, *Shadiwal* at North West and *Dhirkey* at north. With the passage of time *Mohla Kalaan* has become too close to *Samman* to make a geographical distinction. Another important link of the village with outlying villages in North-west side of the village is road leading to *Shadiwal*, which also connects *Samman* with G. T. road to enable supply of sand to the distant places. Furthermore, an important part of these

⁶ This extension is a result of the shift of two barber shops, one tailor shop, one blacksmith shop and two hotels at the main G. T. road. These shops have been constructed in a row, which seems like a small market in cities.

villages is their mutual ownership and use of *bella*, (a long stretch of sand extending to kilometers in length and almost one kilometer in width in the river) for wheat cultivation by some families and the most important use of this land is to keep animals there after end of winter till the September, the time of flood after monsoon rains. Furthermore, there are other social, economic and political boundaries as well, which crisscross these geographical boundaries. For example, people are inter-related through ties of marriages, business and political affiliations with nearby villages or the distant ones. These ties also play their role as catalyst to feelings of affiliations and closeness at some times when it comes to matching life partners and deciding about political support.

1.3.2 Physical and Demographical Makeup of the Village

Mohla is located at the west of G. T. road and this proximity to road provides the village easy access to *Gujrat* city, *Wazirabad* city, and other nearby villages. As one leaves G. T. road, there starts a market and the road leads to centre of the village. This same road crosses *Mohla Kalaan* to cross *Mohla khurd* also. Throughout this road there are no *kacha* (mud) houses except some of the *deendar* houses of *Mohla khurd*. There is no typical difference of having *Zamindar* houses in middle of the village while those of the *kammis* at the outer side of the village⁷. At *Mohla Kalaan*, the most important location is owned by the *Chaudhry Pervez Cheema* himself, for his *Kothi* (bungalow) and *baithak* (the place for guests) the earlier situated right in the middle of the village while *baithak* in

⁷ *Chaudhry*, (1999) states that generally *Zamindar* families live in the centre of the village and landless groups are at the outer-side of the geographical boundary of the village. This is not the case at both villages of the study except one house of the *Chaudhry* of the *Mohla kalaan*, whose *baithak* is at the outer-side of the village.

front of mosque, surrounded by lush green fields owned by the *Chaudhry* himself. Rest of the village is divided almost on equal terms among all other *biradries* and families.

There are *zamindar* and *kammi* houses in every street known as *mohallas* in the village. Almost same pattern of housing is at *Mohla Khurd* except one fact that the houses of *deendars* (those who are considered as recently converted from lowest strata of the society) are *kachay* (mud made). There are also much wider streets of *Mohla khurd* as compared to *Mohla kalaan*. Another important observation has been some of the more beautiful houses of the *kammi* castes than those of *zamindars*. So, the traditional image of a village as it is generally divided among the population of the village is no more relevant for both villages of *Mohla kalaan* and *Mohla Khurd*.

From the demographical point of view, according to the latest prepared lists for local bodies' election there are total almost 1500 registered voters of both villages. *Mohla Kalaan* leads by approximately 100 votes. Mainly, there are *Jatt biradries* which own almost all of the cultivable land. They are *Cheema, Warraich, Bajwa, Chattha, Sandhu, Hanjra, Tarar* and *Janjua* families. Most of the families are from *Warraich biradry* because their ancestors were settled by the Colonial administration from *Chopaala* a village on the *Chenab* River to *Sheedan wali* near *Phaaliala* tehsil of Mandi Baha Uddin district⁸. There is not even a single *Warraich* family, which does not own land in both these villages, though some of the families have been left now with only nominal landholdings. Furthermore, *Warraich biradry* is followed by *Cheema biradry* in terms of their household number, although *Cheema biradry* owns most of the land near the village

⁸ This was shared with researcher by *Chaudhry* of the *Mohla Kalaan* and it is generally agreed understanding among the people that *Warraich biradry* was allotted land in this belt by the colonial administrators.



because the largest tracts of land in terms of ownership per household is owned by *Cheema khandan* at first two numbers. Moreover, there is one family of *Tarar Jatts*, who are on their *nanki dheri* (the land inherited through mother's line). Another family on *nanki dheri* is that of *Chattha* family. Moreover, *Hanjra* and *Janjua* are the families who do not own land but are considered *Jatts* because they are one *Goth* or clan from many of the *Jatt goths*. Likewise, there are two *Jatt* families of *Sandhu* and *Bajwa* at *Mohla Khurd*, who are also on their *nanki dheri*.

It is not easy to tell the number of families of any *biradry* because assigning numerical value as being a complete household carries a different definition of the household by the family itself from the one defined or understood by the researcher. This was known to the researcher while asking a group of four elderly people about their definition of a *tabbar* (household). There was a feeling among the elders that they consider the household as a *tabbar*, who has not divided land and whose members do not engage in *Vartan Bhanji* as independent members. However, for the people it was important at present that the conceptualization of *tabbar* does not remain as rigid as it was earlier. The reason for present understanding about the *tabbar* is that families are themselves divided in people living abroad or having jobs outside the village. Thus, the *tabbars* and individuals are accordingly represented and expected for their *rakh rakhao* (mutual dealing at daily basis) in society. Thus, for the sake of our own convenience, we can rely on definition given by the people of village themselves as having same house and representation of the family in *Vartan Bhanji* as a *tabbar*.

There are three *Butt* families who have mostly their reliance upon income from abroad, transport business and a family relying on government job as clerk in Water and

Power Development authority (WAPDA). Furthermore, there are approximately twenty *Maachhi tabbars* (water-carrier and the one who used to collect wood for the families with whom the family was at *seyp*) in both villages, almost same number of *Julaha tabbars* (weavers), 25-28 *Musalli tabbars* (cleaners), 15 *kumhaar tabbars* (potter and the supplier of grain to households from the field), 13-15 *mochi tabbars* (cobbler), 4 *Nai tabbars* (barber) and 3 *lohaar tabbars* (blacksmith) in both the villages. Another caste, which is neither ranked among the *Zamindar* families nor in *kammi* families, is that of 2 *Lalari* families at *Mohla kalaan*. *Lalari* families have their dyeing business in *Gujrat* city. It is important to note that no family of these *kammi* families is working on *seyp* except a *kumhaar* and *nai* of *Mohla Khurd*. The full picture of this institutional arrangement of *seyp* has been largely transformed due to the varied means and sources of the *kammi* families. The detailed analysis of the professional layout of these *kammi* families and their present professional options has been discussed in the coming chapter of land ownership.

1.3.3 Land Ownership Patterns

Cheema family is main land owning family of the village, which holds approximately 100 acres of land or 4 'murabbay' (1 *murabba*= 25 acres). *Ch. Pervez Irshad Cheema* is owner of this land. He owns this land exclusively because his brother *Ch. Gulrez Irshad* is settled in America as surgeon and does not seem to claim his share. Moreover, *Ch. Pervez* also bought almost all of the land from his relatives who shifted to *Sargodha* and *Sialkot* except one of his cousins, who did not sell the land to him for personal reasons. Another, important land owner is *Ch. Jawwad Cheema*, who is absentee land owner and owns almost 60 acres of land. He has just retired from his post of federal secretary and

has started taking some interest in his property near village though he still lacks practically complete interest as a land owner like other *zamindars*. Almost 4 years back, *Chaudhry Jawad* sold his 18 acres of land to the real estate developer known in the name of 'River Garden Housing Society'. Another, important family in this regard is that of the two sons of *Maulvi Sardar Warraich, Amaan Ullah* and *Ahsan Ullah*. They own almost 50 acres of land, half of which is cultivable and half of rest is in the river.

Moreover, rest of the landholding families mostly belong to *Warraich* families, followed by *Cheema, Tarar, Chattha, Sandhu* and *Bajwa* families. It is interesting to note that except *Warraich* and *Cheema* families, all the families are at their *nanki dheri* (land inherited from mother). *Tarar and Chattha* families are from *Mohla Kalaan* whereas *Sandhu* and *Bajwa* families are from *Mohla Khurd*. All of these families own land but no one has ownership of more than 20 acres. Importantly, this land at present is still owned most of the time as family instead of ownership as individuals. This does not mean that the referred families do not divide land between the individuals. However, it seems to be important part of consciousness of all individuals and families that it is better to be remembered collectively instead of inheriting too little share to remain individually self-sufficient.

The constant division of land within families makes it much dearer among the people. The significance of land for complete village is increasing because on the one hand, those families who already own land are facing the acute shortage of land. On the other hand, those families, which have enough resources to buy land, find it almost impossible to buy from those families who themselves feel that their ownership of land is shrinking. For example, the largest *Butt* family, who have 5 brothers settled in Europe

and two brothers having good transport business at local level, has been asking *Chaudhry Pervez* to sell some land to them for construction of home. However, the *Chaudhry* has never acceded to their request. The people of village believe that selling land to *Butt* family might be harmful to the interests of *Chaudhry* himself. Moreover, it is also believed that *Chaudhry* neither needs money to sell land nor he is willing to see someone else constructing a *baithak* in front of his *baithak*. Thus, selling land is still not liked among the village fellows unless a proper reason warrants the sale of land like leaving the village or shifting somewhere else.

1.3.4 Elements of Change

(a) Mobility, Foreignization and Jobs in the Village.

As the location of the villages suggests, about some possible trends leading to increasing monetization, industrialization and businesses proliferating around the village, this is truly reflected from *Mohla*⁹ and its surroundings. As the study aims to draw a comparative analysis with the study conducted by Zekiye Eglar, there is visible departure of the earlier trends as compared with those of contemporary times. *Gujrat* is one of the areas in Pakistan, which have proportionally larger numbers of emigrants. *Mohla*, in its role as a village of the larger cluster of villages, towns and cities, located in the area with one of the largest emigrant ratio, also follows the larger social trend. The earlier overriding importance of land has become difficult to be sustained due to the limited possible reliance upon land coupled with increasing mobility.

⁹ When the singular word for both the villages as *Mohla* is used, it represents both the villages of *mohla kalaan* and *Mohla khurd*.

People seem to follow their preferences, which are operationalized within broader socio-economic context of the village in terms of trend to go abroad for earning money. Moreover, permanent settlement is also a preferred option if there if one manages to settle. These patterns themselves are neither equally shared nor realized on proportional basis among different households depending upon certain determining elements. Moreover, people decide about their favored destination depending upon the people who are already living there. Preferably, if a brother, cousin, *hamsaya* (neighbour) or friend from the village or from outside the village is already there, then that destination as a place to work is preferred. There is need to understand the village as operating differently for respective actors in their capacities at individual, group or at *Biradry* levels. It is difficult to pinpoint any specific family, which has peculiar reason for its decision to seek employment abroad. Indeed there are reasons, which are shared by the people at individual level, but it also operates within the village as a general requirement to meet the socially prescribed standard. For example, if a person belonging to *kammi* family does not have any work to do, it may be more simple decision for him to go to travel agent instead of a person from *Zamindar* family who does not hold enough land to support himself. So, at present, there is hardly any family except some *Musalli* families, which does not have its male member abroad as source of earning money as remittances¹⁰.

The patterns of mobility to *Gujrat* city as well as going abroad for earning money may be traced from routinized activities of people to the extended form of looking for possible avenues at abroad. There are strong reasons for mobility of people like going to

¹⁰ This trend to go abroad for earning money among the *Musalli* families is also increasing. During the researcher's stay, there were two boys of the *Musalli* families, who were trying to get visa.

schools, colleges and university, jobs either in government sector or in private sector. There is a clear outgoing routine of the village people in the morning. Boys and girls start leaving village for their schools and colleges in the morning. The boys mostly go at their own by using university bus, motorbikes or other public transport, but the girls have been provided pick and drop facility for their schools and colleges. There are a few students who study at *Mohla* primary school. They mainly belong to those households who do not have enough resources to support the education of their children in private English medium schools. Some students who are again comparatively less privileged, go to *Kathala* High School till their matriculation. However, this trend itself of sending children to nearby schools is being replaced by preference of sending children to *Gujrat* city in private institutions like Bloomfield English Medium School, Lahore Grammar School, Punjab Group of Colleges or Superior Group of Colleges etc.

Another important recent addition in this race for the sake of education is establishment of *Gujrat* University. As education has become the possible best guarantor of one's social status in society, the education plays an important role for increase in mobility due to its defined and scheduled patterns, which regulate this movement of people. Furthermore, another important reason for mobility to *Gujrat* city is jobs either in government offices, attending courts as advocate, serving as banker, working at Utility Stores Corporation, or jobs at factories, which are again mostly closer to *Gujrat* city. So, people have enhanced mobility to *Gujrat* city due to the mentioned reasons. This exposure to city life through systemic encounter with city life causes change at home as well. Moreover, these increasing needs and the practice of going abroad is important aspect in the village life of *Mohla*.

(b) Role of Technology and Mechanization in the Village Life

There is an increasing reliance upon technology and the overall layout of village life is rapidly becoming mechanized. From farm cultivation to daily use of appliances at home, there is an ongoing process of increasing use of the tools and devices related with technology. Mohla Kalaan and Mohla Khurd both villages were not connected by road at the time of Zekiye Eglar's stay due to the water from flood or rains most of the time in a year. However, at present the village is connected with Europe, Americas and Middle East at the distance of only *Buttons*. People use internet via internet service providers and mobile service providers to use social media like Facebook, Skype, Viber and Twitter to remain connected at local level as well as with those who are in foreign countries. However, the main reason for this increasing use of internet seems to be a contact with those who are in the foreign countries. This use of technology goes even farther, as it comprises use of television, personal computers now being replaced by laptops, washing machines, refrigerators and use of motorcycles at least one by all households and cars by some people. All or some of the above referred items are part of every household.

When it comes to the use of technology at farm, there is also an equally important focus on the use of technology in cultivation. *Chaudhry Pervez* shared it proudly with researcher that his family was the first to introduce tractor in the village and he is still largest landowner of the village with maximum availability of latest tools of technology. His notion of using the technology before everyone else entailed the sense of *izzat* (honour) and status¹¹. There are two important things related with use of technology, which determines one's social status as a result of the use of technology. Firstly, it is

¹¹ This sense of using technology at first level, in a somewhat different but related way has been argued by Eglar (2010) as a permanent contest of *izzat* among the village fellows.

about using the technology at first number and if not then it must be of better quality in terms of money and name from the one who used it at first number. Secondly, the use of technology helps to improve social status only if use of that is not dependent upon someone else. This may be better understood through every *Zamindar*'s effort to become independent at least for having his own tractor, besides other helping tools like plough, leveler and trolley etc. Another equally important requirement is that of independence from depending upon someone else for watering the crops. Moreover, there is increasing tendency to use more fertilizers and pesticides for the crops against their use at earlier times. This is a daily complaint of farmers about increasing input cost. So, technology and mechanization are increasing in the village and seem to accelerate their speed because their maximum use has been attached with social status.

1.4 Methodological Framework

As it has already been made clear about the existing academic work on the topic, it is needed to reinvestigate the changing cultural patterns in the society but through the society itself, as it exists. An interesting realization on the part of the researcher is the feeling of absence of relevant academic material on the topic. David Thomson put it rightly "only immense ignorance makes the study and writing of history possible" (Thomson 1970: 19). However, from social and cultural point of view, Zekiye Eglar's study of the Punjabi village remains one of the fundamental studies in need of investigation after such a long time. Thus, the intended study may prove of great importance to analyse the modern cultural and social changes in a Punjabi village.

As the study aims to bring to the fore the changed conceptions of status and prestige in a Punjabi village under different forms of means and sources which cause this change, the study is expected to prove of great worth for generating a new debate about the topic. The topic itself depicts the need to view the society closely in order to understand the culture, which is in transition in its own context. This very aspect has been advocated by Theodore H. Von Laue:

“Our grasp of the human condition depends on the distance from which we examine it. On the ground floor of life we proceed from personal observations of concrete detail through our eyes and ears amidst the familiar contexts of daily life” (Laue 1998: 217).

This excerpt from the cited book sheds light on the importance of the source of knowledge as concerned with an understanding of human life, its culture and the modes of changes in it.

The need to minimize this ‘distance’ for comprehensive understanding of the life-world of a village, has been necessarily realized. The major aim of the study has been to get first-hand knowledge of the society through fieldwork. As the topic and statement of problem show significant aspects of changes in culture of village life, major events like marriages, funerals, and other activities which involve social gatherings and subsequent show of symbols of status and prestige were participated as a participant observer. Importantly, the need to stay in contact with the village and the people was also realised to participate as participant observation in the daily life of the people because people themselves are hardly fully expressive or clear at first instance. Sometimes, it may be due to unavoidable feelings of being in contact with an unknown researcher or the

unwillingness of the people themselves due to their personal sensitivities. Chris Gorden has also felt this need:

"Now that fieldwork is seen as negotiation and dialogue, it is also possible to see that local people have considerable ability to control the information coming to the anthropologist and to impress new themes and thoughts on them" (Gorden 1999: 60).

Besides attending some marriages, *Urs* at *Samman*, Cricket Tournament after wheat harvesting at *Mohla* and flood and the responses in its wake were tried to observe as a participant. Moreover, often repeated conversations with people of the village was a regular exercise throughout the stay at the village. The methodology was aimed to understand the cultural notions of status and prestige in relation to the social structure of society. Clifford Geertz elaborates this aspect "Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes" (Geertz 1993: 145). Thus, it shows that culture is a 'complex whole' and social structure is a meaning ascribed to the 'complex whole' as called by Geertz (1993). This construction of different meanings as a result of interdependence between culture and social structure itself shows that the whole complex of culture can be understood with the help of deep understanding of social structure itself which requires on the part of the researcher to go native. This aspect may be realized by the 'Ontological depth' as level of existence beyond what lies on the surface" (Craib 1984: 22). Thus, fieldwork extending on 6 months with repeated visits afterwards was conducted comprising observation, interviews and surveys about demography, educational enrollment, patterns of mobility and employment of the village.

Chapter No 2. Land Ownership in the Village and Its Impact upon Village Life.

2.1 Introducing Village Life

The word village as the name suggests, naturally leads to a feeling of different life-world as compared to city or town. William Raymonds corroborates this difference by seeing “‘country’ and ‘city’” as “very powerful words” (Raymonds 1975: 1)¹². Moreover, the village life in its broader context is mainly understood in relation with land. For example, John B. Cornell views Japanese “Rural society” in its “nexus in the village community which, being rooted at a certain place on the land, tends to reflect the vital economic and ceremonial importance the peasantry attaches to using the land” (Cornell 1964: 449). *Mohla*, the village of the study still bears a distinct culture as a village quite against the general image of today’s changing village. *Mohla* is still surrounded by lush green fields from its northern, eastern and western sides. However, southern side of the village speaks for the present march of the forces, which are dictating change in the traditional image of the village. Grand Trunk Road, which runs from southern side of the village, causes expansion in all the three villages of *Mohla*, *Samman* and *Ghazi Chak* to the side of road. There is an increasing commercialization of nearby land for commercial purposes. For example, recently established housing society known as River Garden, Plasco Pipes

¹² Williams (1975) further argues “the contrast of the country and city is one of the major forms in which we become conscious of a central part of our experience and of the crises of our society” (Raymonds 1975: 78).

factory, two filling stations and two Compressed Natural Gas stations at G.T road near the village, speak for the commercial importance of land.

There is ample evidence provided by anthropological and social studies about Punjabi society, which highlight the importance of land as Eglar (2010) terms it “principle source of livelihood” (Eglar 2010: 58). Moreover, there has been a historical relationship of “Punjabi farmers” as their “profession of tilling land since ages” (Sidhu and Bhullar 2005-2006: 5620). Likewise S. C. Dube has analysed the importance of land in the village life “Land is indeed the most precious and coveted possession of the village people” (Dube 1967: 76). Although this referred study was conducted almost four decades earlier, yet it is truly reflected from the experiences in *Mohla Kalaan* and *Mohla Khurd*.

The above given picture of village and academic references present to some extent contradictory picture. Undoubtedly, Zekiye Eglar’s analysis about the significance of land as “dividing line between *zamindars* and *kammis*” upon which “the interest of both is centred on” (Eglar 2010: 59) is witnessing a shift from such an extent of dependence. Today’s *Mohla Kalaan* and *Mohla khurd* do not view the ownership of land as a guarantor of economic self-reliance for being either *zamindar* or *kammi*. Ch. M. Hussain *Warraich* made same argument that the gradual but continuous division of land has left it neither sufficient for *zamindars* nor significant enough for maintaining *zamindar-kammi* relations. However, an equally important aspect of these changing relations may be the unwillingness of *kammis* to keep on working as *kammis* due to their redefined positions. This aspect will be discussed in detail in the coming chapters.



Land's social role in the village life goes beyond its general role as an entity for agricultural worth or its increasing commercial importance. Possession or ownership of land itself entails besides honour and prestige, some challenges which play an important role in the determination of one's status or position in the society. For example, peaceful and just division among brothers or brother's sons is considered a noble and socially accepted act as proof of that family's *ittehaad aur daanai* (unity and sanity). In *Mohla's* case the family of *Baba Bahadar Warraich* and his brothers¹³ is given credit for their internal unity in this regard because they have been successful enough to divide their landholding and business without even a word being heard by the *shariks*. Thus, it can be said that land's economic significance may have been compromised at present times against the income coming from abroad or jobs in government or private sector but its social and historical importance is still living among the people.

As ownership and possession of land itself enriches one's position or status, it is clearly reflected from the fact that *Chaudhry* of *Mohla kalaan* claims that he exclusively owns the settled territory of village site. On the other hand, this claim is contested by most of the people¹⁴. In this case of *Mohla Kalaan* one female member of *Kumhaar* family has gone to court against this claim of *Chaudhry*¹⁵. Likewise, there are often feelings of ill-will among the people about ownership, boundaries and sales or purchases of the land. M. Azam Chaudhary's analysis about the land's role as a source of conflict is directly relevant "Many different types of conflicts take place over land and property:

¹³ From *Mohla khurd*, Known as *Hassan kay* (in the lineage of Hassan, one of their elders)

¹⁴ People are least willing to accept the claim of *Chaudhry* as sole proprietor of the land. They generally take the sight of the village as collective property known as *shaamlat* in the village.

¹⁵ According to *Chaudhry* the land of the village belongs to him, so he cannot allow anyone to sell the land. However, he said that he has no problem if people want to use the land for residence purposes.

like the division of land, house and other property” (Chaudhary 1999: 42)¹⁶. So, despite recent changes in its worth and significance in the village life, land still remains important for determining one’s social status and its role in dividing people in *biradries*.

2.2 Historical Economic importance of Land

Today’s *Mohla* gives some important insight about its earlier nature of relationship with land. Eglar’s analysis is directly relevant about her analysis of village economy almost six decades back “Land is the central point around which the life of village is organised” (Eglar 2010: 288). At social level, there is still presence of the *kammi* families and *zamindar* families who directly or indirectly depended upon land. Eglar further elaborates economic and social importance of land as a “source of income and the basis on which village society is divided into two distinct groups, owners and non-owners” (Eglar 2010: 288). Importantly, it is not intended to downplay the importance of the *kammi* castes by assigning them the role which used to be influenced by the *zamindars*, but it reflects how the village existed at that time. This is in line with the main aim of the study to determine the worth of ownership or lack of ownership of land as an interplay between ‘structure’ and ‘agency’.

Eglar’s above given analysis in the light of other existing literature makes it clear that ownership of land remains ‘enabling’ for some, while this study also brings to fore that it also leads to ‘constraining’ for those who are deprived of it. For example, as the village life itself was heavily depended upon land, there was a directly proportional dependence of the non-landholding families upon those who owned land. Quddus (1992)

¹⁶ Chaudhry (1999) argues that fundamentally village feuds and conflicts are mainly due to *zan* (woman), *zar* (wealth) and *zamin* (land).

has made same argument “The main division of the people, all of whom are Muslims, is into *zamindar* or landowner and *kammi* or village craftsmen” (Quddus 1992: 41). The relationship between owners and non-owners itself determined the extent and form of social status besides providing assurance of economic salvation. Formally, the exact word used in the village for the system is known as *seyp*¹⁷, and “*jajmani* in South Asia” or “*oluk*” (Mughal 2014: 3) in some parts of southern Punjab.

Presently, people still remember, there was not so pronounced penetration of market forces and monetized economy in the public sphere of the village at earlier times. It makes clear that land was not only important for the monetary benefits but it was also of great importance because daily transactions also used to be less monetized. As above given picture shows, over-riding importance of land was main determinant of one’s economic prosperity or social status. Similarly, people of the village also consider the role of land in its historical relationship with the village as one of the defining features of that time. For example, all the main titles and positions which were important for the people were dependent upon land like, *Chaudhry*, *Numberdar* (mostly people call it *Lambardar*), *Patwari*, *Qanungo* and *Tehsildar* etc. Interestingly, this hierarchy with slight changes is important for the village communities even in Thailand. For example, John E. de Young has deliberated upon the administrative structure of the village where the District revenue officer is known as “*Nai ampur*” and a chief village headman as “*kamman*” (Young 1969: 13-15). Likewise, these all people are directly or indirectly related with land either in their position as *Chaudhry* or from official position of *patwari*. The position of *chaudhry* itself is largely depended upon the landholding because the

¹⁷ The word used in the village is *seyp* to understand or to express the arrangement of this system.

position itself demands some generosity and support from the *biradry*, which again depends upon land ownership as a symbol of brotherly relations '*bhai chara*' among fellow *biradry* men.

Historically, roles and modes of mutual dependence actually arranged social structure of the village in such a way that land itself was given primary importance. At earlier times the multiple options of professions, were not available to the people, now provided by, market economy, increasing industrialization, foreignization of this part of the Punjab¹⁸ and 'commercially motivated education'. Thus, land was the most conveniently found and reliable source at that time. In *Mohla*'s case, it was simple for the people to count their ancestors in government jobs or in private businesses because they were not in large numbers. For example, as the researcher asked a group of four elder persons about their memory of some of the persons who joined government jobs. There was a sudden and calculated reply about the following persons; *Ch. Sajjad Haidar Cheema* an officer at Pakistan radio, a *Nai* male member known as *Baao Qayyum*, in Pakistan railways, some school teachers from *Julaha* families and a female from *Butt* family. So, it can be said that earlier *Mohla* as like other general character of villages was largely dependent upon land due to its internal dynamics of mutual self-dependence to resist the forces which have caused change in its present setup.

2.3 Crops and Activities on the Calendar

At present, calendar of *Mohla* as a village does not depend only on land due to multiplicity of interests and diverse preferences of the people. For example, it is

¹⁸ This term of foreignization has been used in the light of the increasing trend of going abroad peculiarly in this part of Pakistan due to the intensity of the phenomenon.

important to note that land cultivation does not remain any longer the activity so much difficult and time-consuming as it used to be at the time of Zekiye Eglar's study in 1950s. She portrayed the cultivation in relation with "sun and the rain" as "two main factors in connection with agriculture" of that time. Moreover, the writer has also shed light on difficult patterns of cultivation for a farmer "with a plough drawn by a pair of oxen" it takes the farmer "one day to plough one field, and he has to plough each field at four to five times" (Eglar 2010: 66-67).

However, at present, crops and seasonal activities of the farmer of *Mohla* have also changed due to increasing mechanization and technological advancement. No doubt, there is not very much variation in the crop cultivation preferences except very rare variations like one field of Strawberry near river by a *Cheema* family. Interestingly, what has changed is not the options about selecting crops but the real change is about the way the agriculture as a profession is changing. There is an increasing reliance upon tractors, tube wells and electric machine for cutting grass for animals etc. This change is not so linear and without social repercussions. Presently, this change may be realized from its overall penetration in the domestic sphere of the village life.

At *Mohla*, the use of these modern facilities changes the social relationships and the compulsions of dependence upon fellow farmers. *Chaudhry R. Warraich* shared almost same feelings with the researcher that now cultivation has become easy and *zamindars* have more leisure time (*farigh time*) but they do not feel the need to remain socially connected. Similarly, same argument has been advanced by Sidhu and Bhullar (2005) in their analysis of comparative agricultural patterns "farm mechanisation has played a significant role in bringing multiple cropping system and pre-cision and

timeliness in the farming operations in both Punjab” (Sidhu and Bhullar 2005-2006: 5624). From the time pattern for cultivation and harvesting of the crops, *Mohla*, is not much changed village even at present times. An important limitation in this regard was that researcher was able to see the village only in relation with wheat harvesting due to the required extent of stay at the village. However, for this section the book of Eglar may be relied due to her analysis of “Farmer’s calendar, the village in winter, the calendar of religion and Khushi: A Tenant Farmer” (Eglar 2010: 66-88, 318-352).

There are some other social activities in *Mohla*, which are properly organized and celebrated in relation with timing strategies of cultivation patterns and their time suitability. For example, at the end of wheat harvesting there is a competition for pigeon flying and a very warmly played cricket tournament among the teams from different *mohallas*¹⁹ of *Mohla Kalaan*. The tournament is played at the land of Ch. Pervez of *Mohla Kalaan*. He is credited for giving that place near school of the village for this tournament. There is heavy presence of spectators as well, who come to support the teams of their respective *mohallas*. This is an activity, which is waited throughout year by the people, but the youth is specifically interested in this tournament.

Another important activity is the *Urs* at *Darbar of Shahs of Samman*. However, before the start of *Urs* one night of *Qawwali* is organised at the main *chowk* of *Mohla Kalaan* in front of mosque. There are beds only for the *syeds* and their kids but other people sit on ground to pay their respect to the *syeds*. Earlier, the *urs* started at the last Thursday of *haarh*, the fourth month of bikrami calendar, in the village known as *desi maheenay*. However, this time *urs* was started on 5-6-14 due to the *Ramzan* on fourth

¹⁹ Mohalla, is a term used in the village mainly for a street.

Thursday of *haarh*. *Urs* is attended by people from all nearby villages. There are two bazars, which are decorated and remain crowded due to presence of many people. *Dera* and *Havelli* of Syed family are in these streets besides the *Darbar* (mausoleum of a saint). People fetch *Gharolli* after getting accepted their *Mannats*²⁰. The events of *gharollis* are accompanied by fellow village people also at the invitation of the host family. Moreover, there is also reasonable presence of women. Women come mostly from *musalli* and other *kammi* families. Furthermore, there is a *kabaddi* (a game like wrestling) match in the evening of first day.

An important aspect about the timing of these social activities is that crop season plays an important role for these activities. For example, land used for cricket tournament is left free after wheat harvesting and before paddy cultivation for only those days when the tournament is played. Moreover, the timings of *urs* in Punjab are also socially decided for their economic and social importance. S.A a male member from *Muslim sheikh* family told the researcher that the timings of these activities in the village are important because they depend upon the interest of people in terms of time and money. He referred to the timing of *urs* as well that the *urs* time starts after wheat harvesting which is important for the people because they have both time and money to spend at that time.

2.4 Ownership of Land as a Marker of Division

There is no doubt that significance of land ownership as a mean and source of dependence is changing, but possession and ownership of land remains cherished and

²⁰ Gharolli is a pitcher filled with water from the mausoleum and the people come to the mausoleum in the form of procession, with *Dholls* (music drums) and women of the house are also part of the *gharolli*.



aspired due to its social and cultural capital²¹. This sense of relationship with the land as a determining factor among the people as *zamindars* and non-*zamindars* is still prevalent in terms of categorization of the people. No doubt, this categorization of people in its presently prevalent sense, traces its origin to colonial enumeration and framing. However it remains still living and being reinforced in the daily village life. Interestingly, Raza traces colonial practices to enumerate people in different categories like “ *Jatts* are renowned for their peasantry” and *arains* as “ they produce more due to their increasing toil” but “ more accustomed, to serve than to rule” (Raza 1969:29). The mainly *zamindar* families of *Mohla* like *Warraich*, *Bajwa*, *Tarar*, *Cheema*, *Sindhu*, *Hanjra*, *Chattha*, consider themselves racially pure *Jatts*. This was also propagated proudly by Ch. M. Hussain Chattha²² that the people of village are proud to be pure *Jatts* and *barelyvi Sunni*. He also shared his view that land remains important for a *Jatt* because he is to till it as tilling the land needs expertise and hard work, which runs in the blood of us (*jatts*). Moreover, this consciousness is deeper enough that those castes who do not own land in the village, are still considered *zamindars* and they share *jatt Biradry* due to their historical relationships as defined mainly through land. In *Mohla*'s case *janjua* and *hanjra* are considered as *jatt biradry* (brothers) even though they do not own land in the village. However, an important exception is about arain *biradry* who own land but are not considered as *zamindar biradry* because they do not belong to *jatt* families.

Socially, *kammi* castes are still considered as unequal, but practically there is gradual shift of social status of these castes in relation with government or private jobs

²¹ Here again the cultural capital needs to be seen in the light of relationship between economic capital and cultural capital as advocated by Bourdieu (1986). Bourdieu, views the cultural translation of economic capital with the passage of time through the process of ‘acquisition’.

²² Ch. M. Hussain is a resident of *Samman*, but he inherited his mother's land from *Mohla kalaan*.



and through different businesses. For example, members of *Julaha* family in *Mohla Kalaan* are considered educated and socially elevated due to their jobs in government sector as School teachers, police constable or university clerks. Likewise, there are, an advocate from *nai* family, a medical doctor from *Julaha* family and a lecturer from *musalli* family. Some of these cases provide food for thought to understand the changing importance of land as only mean of categorizing people in terms of their caste or as *zamindars* or *kammis*. This feature of traditional sense of caste as either *zamindar* or *kammi* may prove to be insufficient at present times because the earlier understanding of village as advocated by Eglar (1960) only in relationship with land has adopted diversity in terms of its dependence only upon land. Furthermore, the changing castes, which are building block of *Biradry*, their acceptability in the village will be discussed in the coming pages.

2.5 Land as Static Entity and Changing Village Life

As the above given discussion shows the role of land and the subsequent space for different actors in the village either as individuals, families or *biradries*, there is need to see the village according to modern changes in its traditional setup. It is a fact that village life is facing a brunt of forces, which bring change in traditional structures of societies and different actors are using their agencies differently²³. For example, in *Mohla's* case, role of land in the traditional setup has been fundamentally transformed.

From changing castes to diversified options in terms of professions compel us to think beyond the existing references which present the “village communities” understood

²³ The contemporary patterns of change in the traditional structures as sources of economic reliance bring forth the case of structuration theory of Giddens (1984), who sees the interplay between agency and structure as ‘structuring structure’. There is enough space for agency to remain in action with structures.

as “generally economically self-contained” (Nazir 1981: 281). However, at present times, there is hardly any possibility of being self-sustaining for any village in the wake of factors which are not the making of a village itself. For example, there is a structurally perpetuated relationship of *Mohla* village with *Gujrat* city. M. A. Qadeer has put this relationship of cities with villages as:

“Apart from the gradual commercialization of agriculture and changing land system, the gradual spread of urbanism and the stitching together of urban and rural areas have also transformed villages and towns” (Qadeer 2006: 126).

Moreover, the setting of *Mohla* village and its proximity to *Gujrat* city itself increases the prospects for mobility of people to the city. For example, most of the young boys daily go to schools, colleges and University for their education. This is in distinction with the farther villages because if there is more distance from the city, then people prefer to educate their children in nearby schools or colleges. Furthermore, government jobs or private jobs also dictate the regular movement to *Gujrat* city and it makes people think beyond the village as only avenue for their self-expression in the arena of economic or social life.

There is another important factor which may be understood in relation with the concept of agency of *kammi* families as well who have adopted new professions and are least willing to own their traditional professions. For example, W. A, (*nai*) who has become advocate, calls himself *chohan* and a medical doctor from *julaha* family is known as *bhutta*. Besides these two references, there is an almost complete transition in the common village professions like *musallis* and *kumhaar* working as *nai* mostly on

cash and one *mochi* working as tailor. Moreover, *julaha Biradry* has only one *khaddi*²⁴ functional in the village although they have more than twenty houses in both villages of *Mohla*.

The above given picture of *Mohla* is in line with main argument, that village as self-sustaining unit is no more possible to hold anymore. Consequently, there is an increasing realization of diverse needs and an ever-increasing trend, which crystallizes monetization of most of the domestic affairs, which were earlier linked with land. M. A. Qadeer has rightly argued:

"How have village economies changed? The single most pervasive change is the progressive monetization of economic transactions. The traditional seyp (customary and obligatory barter of goods and services among landowners, farmers, tenants, workers, and kammis) system of economic dealings has given way to cash transactions and pricing mechanisms" (Qadeer 2006: 121).

It shows, *Mohla* as an entity does not remain any more self-sufficient depending only on land. Contrarily, the village relies heavily on alternative means and sources for attaining economic prosperity, and social capital. The increasing variation in the professions of village castes and their resultant changing affiliations with *biradry* may be understood as a result of erosion of the mechanisms which provided the village with sources of self-sustenance. This may be due to the fact that land itself is becoming insufficient for the owner families themselves and its vitality to keep intact the relationship with *kammis* comes afterwards. At present needs of the people have gone beyond the village and it challenges the role of land in its earlier significance. So,

²⁴ Khaddi is a local word used for the technical arrangement, a weaver makes to weave.

zamindars find it difficult to maintain their earlier socio-economic position through reliance upon land.

2.6 Land as a Mean of Dependence at Present Times

Today's *Mohla* is a completely changed *Mohla* in terms of its sources of social security and self-subsistence depending upon land. There is clear academic proof of vitality of these two concerns in the village life in relationship with land. This claim on the part of researcher may seem self-contradictory at first glance but this claim is proved by the present socio-economic setup of the village. As a matter of fact, the ownership of land has become too divided among families to remain economically sufficient. For instance, there is only one family of main *chaudhry* of *Mohla kalaan*, who exclusively owns almost 100 acres of the land with two sons. Moreover, the elder son's wife is also believed to have inherited almost 60 acres of land from her parents. Another important factor for the family to own so much land is the fact that most of their relatives migrated to *Sialkot*, *Sargodha* and *Faisalabad* and they sold that land to them due to the socially prescribed rules of preferably selling land within one's family. Another important factor which contributes to the concentration of this land in only one hand is that *chaudhry's* brother, a surgeon in America, is not interested to come back. So, *chaudhry* and his two sons own this land exclusively, and it makes them one of the largest land holding families in *Gujrat*, according to *chaudhry* himself.

Another important landowner is Ch. *Jawad Cheema*, a retired bureaucrat. He is an absentee landowner. He owned almost 60 acres land near village of *Mohla*. Now, he has sold almost 20 acres of his land near *Mohla* to a housing scheme (River Garden) but, he

still owns almost 40 acres of land near *Dhirkey*. An *ansari (julaha)* family member is manager of his property. Another important family in terms of land ownership is that of the sons of *Maulvi Sardar Warraich*, whose sons *Ch. Amaan Ullah* and *Ch. Ehsan Ullah*, own almost 50 acres of land, half of which is submerged in the river *Chenab*. They are both married and have families to feed, educate and to compete socially. Afterwards, there are other many *zamindar* families who own land but the ownership is not so much extended in terms of number that it may be considered economically self-reliable. As a precursor, it may be generalized that not even a single family among the rest of *zamindar* families owns more than 20 acres. Importantly, even among *zamindar* families there are mostly those households, where married brothers are living together to avoid the further division of land.

This above given picture suggests one thing that presently ascribed terms of honour and status in the society cannot be achieved with so little ownership of land. This compels one to think beyond the traditional structures of reliance. At present, there is not even a single family who can afford to feed their animals like buffaloes, cows, goats and horses solely depending upon their landholding. The historical significance of keeping animals is truly depicted from the famous saying in the village that *dudh te puttar Allah di khas nemat ha* (milk and son are two great blessings of Allah). Presently, except *Chaudhry Pervez* there is no family who keeps their animals for whole of the year at their *dera* (the place where animals are kept) depending upon the grass and fodder from land. Contrarily, rest of the *zamindar* families send most of their animals to *bella*, where they are left free and do not depend upon the personally owned land.

So, there is no family among *zamindars*, which is self-sufficient without relying upon the professions, which do not directly fall in the category of dependence upon land. For example, except the family of *chaudhry* of *Mohla*, (who also cannot claim to rely only on land because of his brother's unclaimed half share in the property) every family has some men abroad or they depend upon government or private jobs. Furthermore, those families who have some of their men well-settled in foreign countries, seem to be in better socio-economic position. This is corroborated by the family of Ch. *Azmat Warraich*, who enjoys relatively higher social status due to the fact that he has established a rice mill in the *Mohla Khurd*, with the help of his cousins and nephews in Saudi Arabia and Europe. According to Ch. K. N. *Warraich*, earlier, their family did not own much land but they were known for their unity. However, now they have bought some land near the village and everyone knows they have better economic prospects in future due to established sources of income.

Another directly relevant concern is about the dependence of traditional *kammi* families upon the land in this changing importance of land in the village life. As it has already been made clear about the relationship among *zamindar* families and *kammi* families which depended upon land. At present, this relationship has undergone a transformation. The word transformation itself speaks for the extent of change. This specific aspect of the village life is almost non-existent in the village now. The *zamindar-kammi* relations which are often framed in such terms which show the non-landowners or small landholders as passive are unfit for understanding today's *Mohla*. For example, James C. Scot highlights some references in specific terms of this relationship like "Vertical ties" and "patron-client relationship" (Scott 1972: 5), which do not fulfil the

criteria upon which such relationships in their own historical context have been understood. Mostly, *kammi biradries* work on net payment either it is barber, potter or tailor except only few exceptions. This trend itself breaks the traditional sensibility of this relationship, which was directly related with land either in terms of needs, means or sources. Another reason for the transformation in the *zamindar-kammi* relations may seem to be the increasing inter-connectedness of *Mohla* with *Gujrat*, which leads to a distinct kind of eco-cultural settings. Drahmoune has importantly analysed some certain trends of “urban sprawl and rural change” as “simultaneous processes, and emphasises the interconnectedness of rural–urban dynamics” (Drahmoune 2013).

Kammi biradries have also shown upward mobility in terms of their social status due to the role of education, government or private jobs and above all the trend of going abroad. So, the village community neither solely depends upon land nor it is anymore possible to do that in the given space to compete within village. Undoubtedly, land itself has been shrinking in terms of numbers and so has shrunk the sense of its measurement. Another important aspect is that the needs and aspirations of the people have also multiplied against the decreasing possible reliance upon land. Undoubtedly, land itself produces more in terms of output ratio, but the over-riding needs and the influence of city-life are also important due to physical closeness of the *Mohla* to *Gujrat*²⁵.



2.7 Professional Tradition in Transition

At present times, the decreasing value of land in the village setup is an important reason for the diverse professions which the people of village are opting. However, it does not

²⁵ There is a visible change in the life-style, which is largely making of the contemporary broader socio-cultural context of the village.

seem the complete reason for the overall shift in village life. There is need to understand the village setup in its broader context, which may help us to build the whole theme of these interconnected reasons and needs which mark the departure from traditional setup. The reasons for this change and shift in these processes of professional transition in the village transcend the boundaries of village. Rightly so, one member of the *Musalli* family from *Mohla Kalaan* recalled earlier times when everything of need was available at the village. Unlike earlier times, now these needs cannot be completely met even in *Gujrat* city. This view of the *musalli* member suggests the extent of changing attitudes which naturally look for possible alternative options against the traditional sense of reliance upon land.

Historically, land was equally important for a *zamindar* and *kammi* because either directly or indirectly, both were dependent upon land. As society itself does not operate linearly, so are its institutions. There are some explicable reasons which caused the present rupture in *zamindar-kammi* relations in *Mohla*. Indeed, the decreasing land ownership, itself is the most important reason for the gradual shift of *kammi* families to the commercialization of their professional expertise. There is no exaggeration in using this term of commercialization because present forms of these traditional professions do not give its earlier sense of feelings which worked on trust and reciprocity based upon mutual obligations. Contrarily, nowadays, the concept of '*seyp*' has been replaced by the forces of market economy. For example, *Nai* (barber), *darzi* (tailor) and *lohaar* (blacksmith) have shifted their shops to the side of G.T road where these shops give a sense of market. These changes also have been deliberated upon by different writers.

A. M. Shah has quoted the analysis given by M. N. Srinivas:

"The localised system of production of foodgrains and other necessities based on a caste-wise division of labour, which has endured for over two thousand years, is fast breaking down all over rural India, and is likely to disappear in the near future" (Shah 2007: 109).

Moreover, those who have not shifted to the shops, do not prefer to work at *seyp*. Another, important reason for the payment in cash may be the nature of instant needs of these *Kammi* families. For example, the *Chaudhry* of *Mohla kalaan* told the author about not engaging the *kumhaar* permanently, because the *kumhaar* always asked the *Chaudhry* to pay him in cash due to his daily needs, like need to pay his son's school fee demand instant availability of money. Hassan and Raza rightly feel

"The old-caste system has broken down leading to a greater social and economic mobility. Many of the functions that were performed by the old artisanal castes are no longer easily available in the rural areas as many of them have been replaced by industrially-produced goods" (Hasan and Raza 2011: 43).

Besides this commercialization of traditional professions, the variation within these professions is also an important aspect. As a case in point, two *musallis* and a *kumhaar* are working as *nai* and one *mochi* is working as tailor. As these professions are no more transferred to the coming generations, the need of inter-dependence through formal arrangement itself dies. Thus, land does not remain only determinant of the *zamindar-kammi* relationship rather the reasons and needs which cause this change are more diverse in their nature and beyond the confines of the village itself.

There are interesting twists and variations for a researcher to understand in the contemporary sense prevailing within the changing professional tradition. First of all, agriculture cannot be monopolised by the *Jatt* families only because there is no caste which is ready to accept their profession as traditionally belonging to them as a caste. This feeling is importantly part of the subconscious of all castes from *Zamindar* to *Nai* or *mochi* in the village. For *Zamindar*, the claim as of his ancestors to till the land, does not prove practical when this claim is contradicted by the landless *Zamindars* or those who cannot rely only on land. This gives the *Zamindar* families of *Mohla* the reason and understanding of the needs to seek alternative professional options. For example, at present, some of the *Zamindar* families whose ancestors did not own land, are working as labourers at the river site for loading sand besides some manual work in factories. Moreover, there is hardly any *Jatt* family, who does not have one or more than one male members in outside Pakistan in Europe or Middle East. This fact is vindicated by Hassan and Raza's analysis of the emigration trends "emigrants belong to families of who own small subsistence agricultural farms, and are heavily dependent on non-farm employment for their livelihoods" (Hasan and Raza 2011: 49).

Furthermore, one elderly male member of *Warraich biradry* was of the view that at present, land does not remain anymore significant for *rozi rotti* (bread earning). This is an important point about the 'land's significance as bread earning' because those material or non-material aspects which are considered in this category of *rozi rotti* are themselves of very recent origin against the tradition. For example, today's mushroom growth of private schools like 'Bloomfield school', 'Beaconhouse school', College and university education are becoming part of equally 'essential' category but it causes extra-ordinary

economic pressure. Moreover, existing marriage patterns also increase the *muqabla hazi* (competition) within the *biradry*, or among the village fellows as part of larger 'social field'. This larger social field at this case may be the village community and *biradry* which is within the village or possibly beyond the village. So, all these interconnected reasons and justifications to rely less on land are causing professional shift in the thinking of a common *zamindar* as well as one belonging to the *kammi biradry*.

2.8 Making 'Biradries' and 'Sharikaas'

The role of land in the village life has already been debated with its impact upon historically constructed and subsequently sustained imaginaries of the village people. These social imaginaries further divide people into *kumbas* (households), *biradries*, *gawaandhi or hamsaya* (neighbour), *mohalladar* (people of the same street) and *pind de log* (village men). Interestingly, these divisions are not static or discrete in their forms and manifestations. Contemporary *Mohla* operates at different levels of feelings among the village people about one's closeness and difference from the fellow *kumbay kay log* (members of household), *biradry*, *hamsaye*, *mohalladar or pind wale* (village men). For example, Chaudhary (1999) elaborates the social structure of a village "Structurally, the village community seems to open from inside towards the outside" in different enclosures or units "these layers are based upon two criteria, i.e. of kinship and territorial ties". (Chaudhary 1999: 10). Thus, the sense of feeling about closeness or distance in the village has remained related with land.

Importantly, though land does not remain sole criteria for judging one's position in the society, yet it plays an important part in understanding the broader socio-cultural

context of the village life. Land ownership is a mean, which keeps people inter-dependent and a constant *bhai chara* (brotherhood) is maintained through it, unless and until disturbed by serious conflicts among the people. Furthermore, village community is divided in *biradries*, which is made up of *kumbah or tabbars* as households. The composition of *biradry* is dependent upon the number of *tabbars* or households, which further depend upon the nature of economic and social position of individuals.

Every *tabbar* who owns land has two neighbours, one with whom is shared the wall of house and the other known as *bannay da bhai* (brother through land neighbourhood). These words themselves convey the sense of attachment and the feelings people share with each other in terms of their relationship with land. As a case in point, the one with whom boundary of land is shared is known as *bannay da bhai*, so this word itself entails some responsibilities and prerogatives in terms of mutual needs. At present there are no trends of *vangaar* but those who help their neighbours are respected among the *bannay samandri* (neighbouring farmers). For example, Ch. *Shahid Nawaz Warraich* is still remembered even leaving the village almost three years earlier for Germany, because he was always helpful to his village fellows.

Moreover, one is not supposed to sell or buy the land without taking into confidence his neighbouring *zamindar* because it may cause some permanent unwanted inconvenience for both of them. During my stay at *Mohla khurd* Ch. R. *Warraich* was feeling aggrieved because his father's brother's son was planning to sell his part of *their* holding to the *zamindar* from *Mohla Khurd*, which firstly concerned the members of immediate *tabbar* and then to the *zamindar* members of *Mohla kalaan*. Actually, the land as an entity belongs first to the immediate family and then to respective *biradry* members

preferably of same village or then the area at large. The same line of reasoning has been advanced by Bourdieu, while working in Algeria “preventing land from falling into the hands of strangers is a duty” (Bourdieu 1979: 22).

So, land divides people into different categories, from *apna*, *lagde lagande* to *obra* or *ghair* (not belonging to one), one’s *apni biradry* to *ghair biradry* and from one’s own village to other’s village. Furthermore, land also plays important role in determining distance and closeness depending upon geographical setting in terms of house or landholding. There is complete sense of preferably maintaining friendly relations among the neighbours as being neighbours unless and until otherwise is warranted by circumstances. This is proved by the fact that one who is not at good terms with neighbours, is remembered by the fellow village men as *sheetan* (devil). Ch. A. U. *Warraich* was of the view that one who is constantly quarrelling with his fellow village neighbours must be himself *sheetan* otherwise everyone else cannot be a *bura aadmi* (bad person).

Moreover, the mere ownership of landholding is not a sufficient introduction for a farmer, rather the descent of one is traced purely in terms of patrilineal line. Those families who own land from their maternal descent are still remembered as *nanki dheri wale* (those who own land from motherly inheritance). For example, at *Mohla Khurd*, *bajwa khandan* and *sandhu khandan* are on *nanki dheri* and it shows the village people that originally they were not part of the village. Likewise, in *Mohla kalaan*, *Tarar* and *Chattha* families own a *nanki dheri*. This difference of *nanki dheri* as ‘not being the original ownership’ was reinforced by repeated references made for those who owned *nanki dheri* as not part of original *zamindar* families of the village.

Importantly, village is not divided only on the basis of distance from patrilineal descent, rather these divisions become blurred when more careful attention is paid to the relationships, which are criss-crossed by internal divisions. There goes a famous saying in the village that there is no one *sharik* except one's father's son²⁶. This saying depicts the potentially underlying dormant fissures, which naturally erupt after one generation to another. As a family grows one generation older, there are severe socio-cultural challenges to the function of that family. An elderly male member from *Warraich Biradry* was of the view that the greatest challenge to one's family is twice in every generation, that of *virasat di vand* (division of inheritance) and *aulaad di shadian* (marrying one's sons and daughters). These both challenges are of over-riding concern to the village people because these both factors are the real reasons which keep the *sharika* feelings in check if properly addressed. On the other hand, if any of the brothers or sisters or in extended form cousins, feels that he or she has not been properly treated by the fellow members, it may lead to the feelings of ill-will which crystallize into *sharika*.

2.9 Land, Property of Men

Land is always attributed in terms of its patrilineal inheritance. For instance, people mostly refer to it as a root of their origin to their ancestors, which show at the same time their pride in their ancestors as well as their understanding of themselves as pure *Jatts*. The most referred source of any *Jatt biradry* in the village is always their historical relation with land as *baap, daada ki zameen* (land from one's father or father's father) or *jaddi pushti virasat* (inheritance through ancestors). Therefore, land is always attributed

²⁶ The axiom means father's son as *shareek* because property is to be divided, honour and prestige is shared among the cousins and it may lead to the feelings of mutual competition. So, one is expected to face challenge and competition from father's son.

to only patrilineal line²⁷ and same rule is followed when it comes to transfer it to the coming generation. Till this date, no one is sure about any case when the land was transferred to sister or daughter if male member in the line were there to inherit the land.

The inheritance mostly works according to socially approved manners. For example, all brothers get equally but elder brother is mostly given symbolic ownership. This trend was also interestingly followed in the distant societies like that of England during pre-modern times. Ben-Amos has traced this practice “Parents took care to provide for all their children, privileging the eldest son but providing for younger children – sons and daughters – often in equal shares” (Ben-Amos 2008: 19). Moreover, women are not considered legitimate claimant if they have brothers or sons to become heir to *virasat*.

Legally, this may sound absurd but in its own social context this customary practice makes relevance, which may be helpful to understand the rationale behind this practice. In the permanent character of marriage as an enduring relationship, the house of *peke* (home of father and brothers of the bride), remains an everlasting source of support to the girl for rest of her life. This remains an important concern for the girl that if once she claims her share in the house, the ownership of that land will keep reinforcing the feelings of distance from the *peka ghar*. Thus, this may leave her vulnerable in the hour of need against her in-laws. Accordingly, *Khaala R.* a female member of *Warraich biradry* told the writer that if a girl claims her right in her father or brother’s property, then of course there is no *izzat* (honour) in *peka ghar* at the time of need. Furthermore,

²⁷ The case when land is inherited from matrilineal descent has also been made clear, when people still refer to such people even after two to three generations as *nanki dheri wale* (those who inherit from mother).



the inheritance of girls is also indirectly like giving land or other inherited property to those who are *shariks* as well. It makes really difficult for the village men to see their *shariks* moving as *maalik* (owner) on their *khandani virasat* (patrilineal inheritance).

So, a village setup in its socio-historical context does not prescribe the inheritance of daughters or sisters as a preferable option unless there is no male *varis* to become heir. Moreover, the dowry for girls remain an important concern for whole of the household. The house as a unit has to take care of the dowry of the girl. This practice in Punjab is already well established²⁸. It also traces its origin even in studies about distant cultures. For example, Ben-Amos has felt this trend in medieval London:

“the dependence of daughters on inheritance portions and dowries was marked even in London, where custom dictated that one-third of a deceased man’s estate be divided equally between his children, regardless of gender. The son’s share was ordinarily invested in apprenticeship or served as capital for business and trade, while the daughter’s share was set aside for her dowry” (Ben-Amos 2008: 38).

As it has already been made clear about the land inheritance by the sisters or daughters of the house, there is an equally important need to view the trends of land distribution among the male members. Practically, the division of land itself operates at levels. For instance, an elder brother has some responsibilities besides enjoying some rights, which come virtually with being elder. The rights are mostly in the form of role as representative of the house to be honoured at marriages, *parea* panchayat (village

²⁸ Dowry for a girl is arranged and taken care by whole of the family. The show of dowry by the household on the day of marriage is also properly made to invite the relatives, friends and neighbors.

council), or to adjudicate family matters. Importantly, the entitlement of these rights do not come without duties and responsibilities. The elder of the house may have to face the blame from rest of the family if there is any serious grievance of any of the family members or from the rest of the *Biradry* members about any of the members of the *tabbar*.

2.10 Commercialization, selling land and facing the *Biradry*

Land has remained main determinant of economic self-reliance and provider of social security to the people of village till very recent times. This is clearly reflected from the attachment of people, they still feel for the land. However, at present, a *zamindar* in *Mohla*, is facing pressure from the settings of his immediate surroundings and more importantly of the recent past to keep on thinking about his reliance upon land as sole source. There is an increasing realization among the *zamindar* families that land cannot be held anymore as a sole source of economic dependence due to constant division of it and expanding needs of the people as individuals and families. This is a departure from the traditional sensibility about importance and the role of land in the village as a determinant of one's standing in the society. Therefore, it needs to be seen outside the domain of our over-riding concern with structures mainly decided by land.

Mohla is at a distance of only 8 kilometres from *Gujrat* and geographically located on one of the main arteries of Pakistan, G. T. road. Another road runs with river *Chenab* through *Samman* to Shadiwal which has given birth to one of the most important businesses of the day near *Mohla*, the sand-loading and supply of it to distant places. This trend itself has made the *zamindars* of *Mohla* and *Samman* to think about their

submerged land in terms of its possible role in procurement of the sand. Added to these factors, *Gujrat* is one of those areas in Pakistan, which are witnessing a rapid industrialization. This trend of industrialization is itself-evident through first travel to *Mohla* from *Gujrat* city. *Mohla* itself does not feel lying outside the *Gujrat* city as an independent village, rather it feels all the way to *Mohla* that these villages are just sub-urban units supporting *Gujrat* city's industries. There is a rice mill known as Hassan rice mills at *Mohla landa* and a soap factory near the *Ganda Naala* (sewerage water channel) in the middle of both villages. Therefore, *Mohla* is also under pressure from this trend of increasing commercialization of land for purposes other than agriculture. Thus, the increasing importance of land near G. T. road, which is largely owned by the *zamindars* of *Dhirkey*, gives stimulus to the *zamindars* of *Mohla* to think about the possible options in terms of commercial uses of land.

Indeed the above given picture suggests that land in *Mohla* must have been ready to sell against its decreasing economic relevance, but the case does not seem to be so. Moreover, attachment of the people with land is historically deep rooted and socially reinforced through the everyday encounters with society itself. As the ownership of land is instrumental in determining closeness and distance in terms of physical proximity and non-physical imaginaries like *biradry*, *bannay samandri* or *sharika* etc., there are equally important resistant factors as well to sell land. Before assuming the role of either the buyer or seller of the land, one is expected to comply with certain rules and duties. One cannot sell the land without taking his *tabbar*, *biradry* or *pind wale* into confidence. Interestingly, the sequence itself tells the hierarchy of the actors in terms of their importance for matters related with either buying or more importantly for selling the land.

In *Mohla*'s case, the land sold out by a retired bureaucrat to the nearby housing society is mostly disliked venture in the eyes of *zamindars* of village. Ch. J. T. *Warraich* was of the view that *zameen bechna koi barkat ka kam nae* (selling land itself is not an act of blessing from God)²⁹.

It shows the general arguments put in favour of not selling the land because land itself is not created as an entity to be sold or at least as people generally believe. So, at present, people are facing some contradictory trends, which are at the one hand resisted or not liked by relatives, *biradry* and friends, like selling the land. On the other hand, there are compulsions which are outside the making of village itself but they bring pressure to sell land or to divert from the traditional use of land for agriculture. Despite all the above cited reasons and pressures to sell the land, it is hardly a preferred or recommended *course* to follow in the village where selling *jaddi pushti* land is resisted by the community at large.

2.11 Conclusion

Land was and still continues to remain important in the village life. This importance has changed its forms and expressions but these forms and expressions portrait different relationship with land as compared to traditional structure of the village life. The overriding importance of land for the village with its earlier significance for *zamindars*, *kammis*, trade, economy and inter-dependence has been largely compromised. This word of 'compromised' connotes an ongoing process of change which has revealed the insufficiency of land to accomplish the promised provision of social security and

²⁹ *Chaudhry Junaid Tariq Warraich* shared it with the researcher, while talking about the land sold by *Chaudhry Jawad Cheema* to a real estate developer.

economic self-reliance. This change in primary importance of the land itself marks main argument of the study to see the understanding of structures in Punjabi society with newer forms and understanding of the 'structuration'. So, as Eglar portrayed the dependence of the village upon land at her time of stay at the village in 1950s, is hardly tenable claim right now. This compromised character of structures is helpful to theorise Giddens idea of the 'Theory of structuration' where structures are in the process of 'restructuring structures',³⁰

The changing sensibility about dependence upon land is best conveyed by the saying of Ch. Azmat *Warraich* that *zameen to badhi nae lekin hum taadad main badh gae hain* (Land does not expand but we the owners have multiplied). The population of the village has increased almost twofold against the time of Zekiye Eglar's stay at the village. This increase in population has direct bearing on the people for their dependence upon land. Once the land was realized as a commodity becoming dearer among the people, it caused a rupture in the historical flow of social mechanisms involved in this process. Punjabi society is mostly understood in its traditional setup of *zamindar-kammi* relations. However, today's *Mohla* does not have systemic arrangement of *seyp* because those who were considered socially lower do not depend upon those who were at upper ladder³¹.

So, there is reluctance on the part of *kammis as well* to remain dependent upon the *zamindars*, who themselves are not self-sufficient by relying upon land. The *seyp* was traditionally based upon 'trust' and 'reciprocity'. Nevertheless, this system of *seyp* was

³⁰ Giddens (1984) main idea about duality of structure is important at this point, which is seen by the author as "the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the practices that constitute them" Giddens (1979: 69). Thus, role of land can not be seen as a structural component of the society, which defines the society without getting its own position challenged.

³¹ This is again opposed to the generally conveyed sense of dependence of *Kammis* as a proof of the role of land ownership as a structure, which hinders the action of the agency of those who did not own land.

originally dependent upon land to be fulfilled in its required and expected sense. This mutual arrangement based upon shared needs and interests among both the *zamindars* and *kammis* has slowly but gradually given way to the alternative options available to people. So, there is hardly any formal arrangement of this system of *seyp* anymore between *zamindar* and *kammis* or among *kammis* themselves. Importantly, land cannot be given the role of only determining element which caused this shift in the traditional setup of the village. It is beyond any doubt that land itself turned out insufficient to fulfil the needs and aspirations of people, but this may not be so linear and easy to decipher from the village. There are some other factors also, which cause transcendence from the boundary of village in terms of reliance upon land as maximum self-sustenance.

The village profile sheds light on the factors, which have their peculiar role in determining the extent of dependence upon land. There is clear indication of preferable dependence upon money earned from abroad by families not only of *zamindars* but all other families as well. This trend itself is self-revealing of the changing sensibility, which used to be historically related with land. The same people, whose ancestors did not take pride in dividing the family in individuals for earning, are now more than willing to send their brothers and sons abroad because they know, *zameen ab rozi rotti k liay kafi nae* (land is not sufficient now for bread earning)³². This shift in the village for having many people working abroad as workers and labourers is significant enough to change the earlier sense of status of people as *zamindars* or *kammis*. When researcher asked *Awais Ansari* about the significance of money earned from abroad by the *kammi* families, he replied that it is important for the personal expression of individual as *kammi* because it is

³² Shared with researcher by one of the elder male member from *Warraich Biradry*.

hardly possible for them otherwise depending upon land of *zamindars*. He gave example of an advocate from *Nai* family whose father is working in Kuwait as foreman but he has struggled hard to educate his sons, which is an example of significance of money earned from abroad. Similarly, Europe or Gulf countries are important destination for *zamindar* families as well because they find it hardly possible to meet their both ends with sole dependence upon land. There is hardly any *zamindar* family in *Mohla*, whose male members are not working abroad.

Land has undergone a fundamental change in its importance from economic point of view but it still continues to hold its position as a source of social capital. This translation of economic capital into social capital is acquired over the time as proposed by Bourdieu.³³ The mere ownership of land remains important source to be categorized among the *biradry* of *zamindars*. This category itself gives birth to the subsequent social forces for imagining people as *Jatt biradry* or *zamindar* and *kammis*. These imaginaries though not equally strong as they were some decades back, still make people view themselves as those who own land and those who do not own land. There are certain socially endorsed and recommended courses of action about being *hamsaya*, *bannay da bhai* or *pind wala*, which highlight the deeper attachment with land as a location of home or sharing land boundary with neighbouring farm owners. For example, neighbour through “territorial ties” as suggested by M. Azam Chaudhary “cut across the lines established by the *biradari*, *sharika*, and other kinship ties” (Chaudhary 1999: 17). So,

³³ Bourdieu (1986) is relevant to see the ‘economic capital’ in the light of time it takes for the ‘acquisition’ of the status ‘social capital’. This may be the reason that this attachment of social capital with land still remains important despite its loss of economic significance.

village as a place of home or location of landholding remains socially important besides economic benefits accrued from it.

So, in this increasingly monetized, digitized and mechanized *Mohla*, land is source of pride for those who own land and it still gives an affirmation of the origin as being from *zamindar* family, who have an historical burden of legacy related with land. This legacy lends legitimacy to the patterns of attributing the ownership of land to those who hold it either as father, brother, son, brother's son, or *biradry* in its extended form. Such imagination of one's relationship with land as that of *jaddi pushti virasat* has its own functional resonance within the village. People still do not like to marry outside the *biradry* because one *Jatt* can give birth to pure *Jatts* only if the mother of the children is also from *Jatt* family. This theme would be discussed in detail in the coming chapter of *biradry* but the role of land as promoting imaginaries of difference in relation with land ownership is clearly marked. So, land is losing its economic relevance in terms of agriculture but the social importance, it still holds seems losing its grip as well in the face of changing significance of *biradry* and diversification of sources, which play important role in giving or defining social status.

Chapter No 3. *Biradry* System and its Importance in the Village life

3.1 Earlier Position of *Biradry* in the Village Life

Today's our understanding of *biradry* is not discrete and separated from its understanding conveyed to us through transmission from earlier generations. It is conveyed and given a practical understanding through the practical forms and oral history, which resound within the society. However, the *biradry* is considered one of the fundamentals of rural society as understood by Qadeer:

"Family, kinship, clan, community, and class are the social institutions that form a bridge between individual and national society. They are the building blocks of social organization and anchors of the cultural system" (Qadeer 2006: 189).

Significance of *biradry* was realized by the researcher because *biradry* was one of the frequently recurring themes of discussion whenever a question was asked about the relationship of people with their tradition. This was the theme, which mainly concerned people from its constantly flowing social relevance in their daily life. People tend to take *biradry* beyond the limited frames of either political dimensions of *biradry* or its role in terms of class consciousness as an exploitative arrangement³⁴.

Earlier, significance of *biradry* in village was more pronounced due to the limited penetration of technology and without so much excessive use of money in the lives of

³⁴ This reference has been made to refer to the inherited sense of the word given by the existing literature as it is generally proposed.

people. So, the resultant dependence upon human hands was necessary to meet the demand of time. This whole context requires an interpretation of the daily matters, how marriages were organized, what were the procedures to be followed as a *biradry* for participating in a marriage or to go to pay condolences to any of the members of the *biradry*. One thing which seemed to be common to the perception of all *Jatt* members of the village was that the earlier role of *biradry* has not weakened itself but it is being replaced by the increasing use of money and technology. Their important concern in this debate was that at earlier time money was not so much important and the *biradry* was considered responsible for the conduct of its affairs for its own image. For example, *Chaudhry Sana Ullah Warraich*, narrated that at earlier times when the daughter of a *ghareeb bhiraa* (poor brother) was married, it was understood responsibility for all *tabbars* of *biradry* to help the family of girl because the girl was *Pind di dhee* (daughter of the village). These affairs were taken as a collective responsibility unlike its shrinking domain at present times.

This mutual support and help from the *biradry* was also important for *biradry* about its levels of *sharika*, which worked not only at individual level but also among the villages as well. The representation of village as a unit to represent the *biradry* of that village was also equally important consideration. However, this representation of the village was also dependent upon the nature of relationship established through inter-marriages, blood relations and close friendships among the people in their individual position or as *biradries*. Likewise, the relationship between *Mohla* and *Dhirkey Wadda* (big) is much closer as compared to other villages. Both the villages are considered socially close villages due to the inter-marriages between both villages. Furthermore,

people still remember that when Uncle of *Chaudhry Azmat Warratich* died, the people of a nearby village *Jukali*, came as a group to convey the feelings of whole of the village with the bereaved family (*Mukaan*)³⁵ at first level and then with whole of the village. This group of people from *Jukali* was considered important because it resultantly burdened whole of the *biradry* from *Mohla* to pay back this generous gesture of the people. At further probing of the point about paying back this group condolences and the means through which it was paid back, the researcher was told that it remained a practice for some time but ultimately these feelings themselves did not remain important within the village in terms of the role of *biradry*, so to keep it with the outer villages was indeed depending upon firstly at home.

Moreover, the *kammis* were also represented in their capacities as *kammis* of the village. For example, there were formal arrangements in the village for paying *kammis* in their capacities as *kammis* of the village like '*chullh*' and '*khatt*' which were helpful for the relationship between '*zamindar*' and '*kammis*'. In *chullh*, the family of bridegroom used to give the money to the male member of family of Bride, who divided that money according to his discretion among the *kammis* of the village. However, in '*khatt*' only important *kammi* families were given the '*laag*'. People of the village believe that main reason behind '*chullh*' was that in coming times anyone who intends to get the bride from same village in coming times must pay more than the *chullh* has been offered by the family of Bridegroom.

So, *Biradry* operated within the antagonistic notions of *sharik*, *mukhalif* (opponent) and the attributes of brotherhood and fraternity like *Qaum bhiraa* (brother

³⁵ *Mukaan* is the word used in the village to refer to group condolences.

from the same caste), *Jatt puttār*, and *apni zaat da* etc. So, it can be said that *biradry* was considered important enough factor to be given the role of one of most important actor in the village as well as in its larger socio-cultural setup. The importance of *Biradry* as a social force was also realized by viewing the importance of it from the ideas and historical consciousness of the people about the village. For the people, the historical consciousness about *biradry* was mainly in relation with the practical significance of *biradry*.

3.2 Earlier Sensibility and Present Status of *Biradry*

Biradry in South Asian context has remained important in general but in Punjabi rural society it is given specific importance as an important determinant of social currents within the society. The significance of *biradry* as a moving force behind attitudes, expectations, sense of rights and responsibilities and feelings at individual or collective levels is already well established. There have been many academic efforts to understand the underlying currents of this vibrant social force. For example some of very important debates have been generated by Zekiye Eglar's analysis about village divided only between "*zamindars* and *kammis*" in terms of "caste" (Eglar 2010: 45), M. Azam Chaudhary's understanding of "the first impression of the village" is that "its population is divided into *zamindars* (farmers) *kammis*, (craftsmen) and businessmen (Chaudhary 1999: 5). The above referred two directly relevant sources of Punjabi society and their peculiar focus on *biradry* are of direct concern besides some studies who have focused on the functionality of *biradry* in the village only through lenses of Political significance. For understanding the political debates about *biradry* system the studies conducted by

Javed (Javed 2012: 230-240), Lyon (Lyon 2002: 72 & 125-127) and Mohmand (Mohmand 2011:59-61) are of significance.

However, the above referred studies may be important in their respective contexts about defining *biradry* and its role in that specific context of the area at the time of that study. At present, the analysis of the village as a social setup by Zekiye Eglar (2010) and M. Azam Chaudhry (1999) about the over-riding difference between *zamindars* and *kammis* is difficult to hold at *Mohla* in its present setup about the role of *biradry* as the source of help and the earlier importance of the actors who determined the role of *biradry*. Likewise, there is a marked shift in its importance for one's social status in the village. On the other hand, the studies conducted by Javed (2012) to see the entrenchment of the role of landed elite in political setup with Lyon's focus on the patronage and the role of *biradry* as its main element beside Shandana K. Mohmand's (2011) assessment of *biradry* as an important consideration in the voting behaviour, seem to be somewhat distant ideas in present case. *Biradry* as a concept of living force in the village needs to be understood within the context of village itself. Thus village itself is needed to define the concept of *biradry*.

Biradry as a social force is ascribed by birth but it does not remain too rigid to remain immune from social pressures, which it has to face from the society. One of the important concerns as a researcher in the village was about understanding of the people themselves about *biradry*, and their sense of the *biradry* in their context. It is difficult to understand the village comprehensively only in its categorization of people as either *zamindar* or *kammi*. Similarly, this general categorization of the village becomes untenable because *kammi* if considered one of the two essential categories in the village,

is virtually absent from the village. This understanding requires more diverse approach towards the determining elements of the *biradry*. For example, *tabbars* or *ghar* at individual level are considered essential part within caste and then the caste itself is now becoming diverse and even changing among *tabbars* within the village.

There cannot be any linear understanding of *tabbars* ultimately leading to the make-up of *biradry* because the increasing professional diversity and exceeding options for improving social status within every caste itself poses challenge to the collective approach of the *tabbars*. *Zamindars* in *Mohla's* case almost exclusively belong to *Jatt biradry*, which is then further divided into *goth* or *zaat* of *Warraich*, *Cheema*, *Tarar*, *Chattha*, *Bajwa*, *Sindhu*, *Hanjra* and *Janjua*. There is no specific relationship of closeness or feelings of difference or *sharika* between any of the two of *Jatt* castes, but it may be there in terms of general settings of society. For example, feuds or conflicts based upon land or opposition as political groups may reinforce closeness or distance among some *Biradry* members but these trends crisscross the rest of village as well.

When it comes to *kammis* as a *biradry*, it becomes more difficult to position those *tabbars* or households as belonging to a general category of one professional branch or the other like *mochi* or *nai*. At present, a medical doctor from *ansari* (earlier known as *julaha*) family has changed his caste to *bhutta* (another sub-caste of *jatts*). The above given reference is also significant because it helps to understand the emerging trend within the *kammi* castes to shift their caste, after improving their social and economic position, to those who are socially considered as higher ones. This trend itself does not only challenge the single category of *kammi* but also signals the variation within the respective *kammi* castes. As a case in point, the *ansari biradry* is one of the largest

biradries in the village. However, *Awais Ansari* was of the view that *ansari biradry* is not given due importance in the village affairs because as a *biradry*, they are not organized themselves.

People do not see *kammis* as a *biradry*, but some professional categories take themselves as a *biradry*. So, it is proposed to see the *biradry* at these levels in the village and its rationality working within the village because the change in the building blocks of *biradry* are themselves in transition from their earlier positions. M. A. Qadeer has felt the change in "Family, kinship, or community" which "may appear to be constant, but they do change, sometimes imperceptibly and at other times drastically" (Qadeer 2006: 189). However, given this scenario, it cannot be said that all these changes are without their relation with tradition. This alignment of change with tradition must be taken as mutual. Once again M. A. Qadeer is quite relevant in analysing this changing relationship:

"All these institutions are loosening up, their structures are becoming more malleable, and functions are being realigned and reinterpreted. Crudely, they may be said to be modernizing, but it is a modernization within the grooves of invented traditions" (Qadeer 2006: 189).

So, this shift of earlier sensibility of the social forces, which are generally taken as structures which can not be undone easily, need to be revisited. Therefore, Giddens seems to be more relevant about the 'interplay of agency and structure' as mutually 'structuring'.³⁶

³⁶ Giddens (1984) 'theory of structuration' feels pertinent to see the traditional structures being replaced with different structures, but those structures are not exclusive of the action of agency. This mutual interplay of agency is shown from the fact that if *Biradry* as a structure is really so strongly structured, then how it manages to be redefined among different actors.

3.3 *Biradry*, Its Characters and their Roles

Biradry in its present sense cannot be completely understood without taking into account the significance and space allowed for different actors in the function of *biradry*. *Biradry* does not come into being without certain roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities determine the extent of functional dimension of *biradry* as a force. This functional dimension attached with the operationalization of the *biradry* as a force starts with certain structured positions like family, human resource power and the social status of the *biradry* as a whole and that of its individuals as well. So, *biradry* depends upon *kumba* (clan) who further narrows down this responsibility to depend upon *tabbars* (households) and then the *tabbars* themselves have an individual as a public face to represent them for the mechanisms, which ultimately come under the domain of *biradry*.

This hierarchy is not practically followed from upside-down but it works from bottom-up. This approach is itself reflective of the importance of the actors involved in this arrangement of *biradry* as a force. So, this setup itself is indicative of some resultant changes in the previous domain of *biradry* like decisions of marriage, the sense of collective honour and prestige known in the village as *ghairat* and *izzat* respectively. These marriage patterns will be dealt in detail in the coming paragraphs.

The *biradry* as a social force with its rules of rights and responsibilities does not come itself, rather it depends upon the factors who make it. Likewise, it is important to see the role of *biradry* in its significance for the involved individuals, *tabbars* and *kumba*, *zaat* or possibly *zaats*. There are many roles and expectations in the village which are given importance in the working significance of *biradry*. At present, the role of *biradry*

also needs to be recognized in its relationship with technology and its use of symbols for status and prestige based upon show of money. These symbols and their subsequent show are actually an encroachment upon the domain of *biradry*. The detailed debate about use of technology and its role in the village life would be given in more detail in the coming chapter of Social Status. Moreover, the control and checks of these monetized mechanisms are also a challenge for *biradry*. Importantly, *biradry* as a social force is considered more significant at *Mohla Khurd* because the *Jatt Biradry* in *Mohla Khurd* binds individuals, *tabbars* and *kumba* in certain responsibilities. These responsibilities cannot be broken without facing consequences like being socially disapproved as an individual or *Tabbars* or even excommunication in extreme cases³⁷. *Biradry* also develops some mechanisms and procedures of social conduct for regulating the affairs, which are important to itself or the society at large.

For instance, at *Mohla Khurd*, the *jatt biradry* has decided that no *tabbar* is can serve its guests coming for funeral or paying condolences with meat. Moreover, nothing can be baked or cooked in the bereaved *tabbar* or *ghar* unless the *janaza* (funeral prayer) has been offered. Whosoever, breaks this law would have to face excommunication from the rest of *biradry*. *Chaudhry Nasrullah Warraich*, told the researcher that when *Chaudhry Azmat Warraich*'s mother died in the winter night, he (Ch. Azmat) served the guests with boiled eggs and tea only after consulting elders of his *biradry*. Moreover, when *Chaudhry Azmat*'s grand uncle had died, he again first consulted his *biradry* and then served the guests with meat on Eid-ul-Azha because it was convenient for him at *Eid* to arrange meat, which otherwise could have been difficult.

³⁷ The functional dimension of excommunication is important enough in the village to work as a mechanism of counter-check. *Chaudhry* (1999) has also aptly highlighted the importance of excommunication in a village.

So, *biradry* now operates at the levels of caste among the *kammis*, but all the *Jatt goths* (sub-caste) consider themselves as single *biradry*. Generally, among *kammi* castes, this feeling of *biradry* does not seem to be very much important because these castes are themselves in the process of transition. So, their earlier attributes signifying their traditional profession and their present professional status, which is varying even among the castes as well. For example, the earlier *nai tabbars* cannot make sense of themselves as a *nai biradry* because some of their households have even changed their caste titles and adopted new ones like *Chohan* or *Cheema*. However, it does not mean that there is no feeling of attachment or the subsequent determination of closeness and distance based upon caste. This feeling would be analysed in more detail in the subsection of this chapter about marriage patterns, but its practical form does not present an organized force of *nai biradry* as that of *jatt biradry*. Unlike this, among *Jatt biradry* the realization of *biradry* as a strong support and force seems to be more important because their earlier sources of pride and status with their resultant show of symbols are related with the role of *biradry*. It is important to analyse the earlier sensibility about *biradry* related with its role and relevance in the village life.

3.4 Changing Feelings of Relations at Present

As it has already been made clear about the role of land and its subsequent role in society, there is also a visible change in the sense of relations in the village due to change in the importance and significance of the land in the village life. Today's *Mohla* does not depend only upon land either for only *zamindars* or *kammi* families but there are diverse means and sources, which have alternated with land as sole factor for dependence. Therefore, it is needed to dislodge the earlier notions of class structures and the

subsequent composition of society with so simple understanding. For example, Mosse argues “Economic relations based on property ensure the reproduction of social relations of dominance and dependence” (Mosse 1999: 66). This approach to see the societal flow only in terms of economic patterns seem to be misleading. There are many new trends even in economic paradigm which demand more diverse approach. For example, there is diversification of options for people to opt in the shape of going abroad. The number of people going to Europe or Middle Eastern countries is exponentially high and it plays important role in determining one’s social status at home, in village or in the society at larger level. Moreover, education in its present sense, as primary factor for all considerations of a person, family or *biradry* is another fundamentally important factor.

Education also plays important role in the village life because it gives birth to the different feelings of social status in the village unlike its previous dependence upon land. Role of education in determining social status will be discussed in detail in the chapter of social status in the village. However, the importance of education in the village life to determine feelings of relations is self-evident at the time of looking for marriage partners. Same aspect was highlighted by Ch. K. N. *Warraich* when he told the author about present forms of marriage patterns. He was of the view that now marriage does not remain a sphere only in the hands of parents because if one of the boy or girl is educated then the partner also must be of a reasonable qualification. So, education is making new *biradries* and relationships for the people of the village due to the trends, it generates³⁸. Moreover, education is also important factor in determining the needs and reasons for

³⁸ This does not mean that there is a complete transformation in the marriage partner choices, but the trend itself seems to get started.

new friendships, redefining interests as *biradries*, giving a new sense to traditional professions and its important role in the determining the social status.

These all factors lead to the weakening of those forces which were basis of earlier order of the village setup in terms of sense of the relations either as *hamsaya* or *bannay da bhai*. This is an important dimension of social reality in the village because those forces, which cause the change in earlier sense of relations have to negotiate their space in the society with the forces, which are being transformed. Similarly, in *Mohla's* case, role of money earned from abroad and the importance of education are negotiating their space with decreasing role of land in the village life .There is an important shift in the earlier sense of positions within the village like role of *Chaudhry*, *panchayat* and the practical functioning of *biradry* due to the emergence of new actors. For example, an advocate from *nai* family considers himself socially important and inevitable for the village people that he even quoted some instances when *chaudhery* of the village sought his help. For example, *chaudhery* asked him to access *tehsildar* for saving his lands to inundate in the recent floods. This single event is helpful to understand that the traditional sense of relationships is changing with the passage of time due to diverse actors using different sources for present forms of social status and the resultant changes in traditional structure of the society.

3.5 '*Vartan Bhanji*' and the Present Importance of *Biradry*

Mutual exchange of gift known as *Vartan Bhanji* in the village is one of the most organized and systemic arrangement to show the village life in general and that of *biradry* in specific. For Zekiye Eglar, in her study “‘*Vartan Bhanji*’ is a mechanism of

gift exchange' "it also denotes the relationship between people through this exchange" and in its "extended meaning of dealing in this relationship" (Eglar 2010: 119). Exchange of gifts or reciprocity in the social relations has remained an important aspect of social networking.

This debate about social relevance and importance of 'reciprocity' and 'exchange of gifts' traces its origin to the important academic debate started by Marcel Mauss through his analysis of the significance of 'giving' or 'receiving' gift. Author starts with his understanding of gift exchange something beyond a general understanding of this arrangement "In theory, such gifts are voluntary, but in fact they are given and repaid under obligation" (Mauss 1969: 1). He further proceeds to shed light on the social significance of relationships created through exchange of gift. The author feels that "bond created by things is in fact a bond between persons",and "since the thing itself is a person or pertains to a person. Hence it follows that to give something is to give a part of oneself" (Mauss 1969: 8). This importance of exchange of gift, if tried to understand in the larger socio-cultural context, suggests that it cannot be taken as a disconnected practice from its larger society. Still there is great importance of the *Vartan Bhanji* in the village life but its earlier characters seem to have changed now in terms of significance and their consequent participation in the manifestation of this practice of *Vartan Bhanji*.

First of all, there is also need to view critically the understanding of Zekiye Eglar about the reciprocity or mutual exchange of gift. Zekiye Eglar argues:

"Vartan Bhanji transactions do not take place at random, but on specific ceremonial occasions. The principal occasions on which gift exchanges take

place are birth, the circumcision of a son, marriage and death of an old person"
(Eglar 2010: 121).

This does not seem complete understanding to the researcher because to be invited or the level of participation itself depends upon the ongoing level of interaction and the intensity of relationship. So, the roots of this setup in the village itself lie in the every day affairs, which basically give sense to the feelings of *bhai chara* or *sharika*. Moreover, in today's *Mohla*, there is clear difference in the actors and their positions as related to the one at the time of Zekiye Eglar's study (1960).

Although the actors and their participation in this arrangement is determined through intensity of relationship which in the village is largely dictated by the forces to decide about closeness and distance. These actors have also been debated by Ben-Amos, who argues:

"How and to what extent were social networks mobilized? It has long been presumed that social ties in the pre-modern past formed a hierarchy of obligations, based on a core of co-resident and local lineage, and followed by concentric circles that spanned beyond the locality; the farther the co-resident kin, the weaker became the obligation and inclination to offer support" (Ben-Amos 2008: 45).

As it has already been made clear about the earlier role of *Biradry* at the time of need through shared obligations, this system remained intact due to the feelings of mutual needs and the role of money involved at that time. Moreover, now, the role of women has also been compromised to some extent in the arrangement of *Vartan Bhanji*. Women are

less involved because now there is less transaction in the kind as compared to earlier practices when, rice, sugar, flour and clothes etc. were given or in the spirit of system, returned to the house of marriage. This was shared with the researcher by a male member of *Muslim sheikh (musalli) biradry* that his mother received most of their *len* (the receivables) at his sister's marriage in the cash because close relatives come and pay the money. According to him, it was due to the thinking that girl or boy can use it according to their wish.

So, the former role of women as mother or elder daughter-in-law of the house is resultantly compromised. Almost same line of argument was made by *Chaudhry Pervez Cheema*, three days after marriage of his son. He was of the view that it is easy now for both families involved in *len den* (mutual obligations) to pay in money instead of paying in kind, which even may be not according to the expectation of the receiving family even though it might be too costly. He was of the view that now money decides about the level of the relationship as his son was paid three lac rupees by one of his maternal uncle to show the love of the *nanke* (relatives of mother side) for his children. So, the monetization of these major events has also changed the role of women in the *vartan bhanji*, because earlier when most of the transactions were in the kind, women were entitled to keep the domestic record at home.

Likewise, the role of *biradry* has also been curtailed to a larger extent due to the over-reliance upon money and out-sourcing the arrangements, which were earlier reasons to remain dependent upon *biradry*. For example, now people do not invite their guests for nights before the marriage as they used to do at earlier times. These meetings were also necessary because at that moment it was important to take the *biradry* on board because

different households were given different responsibilities, which were not possible to be managed by the single household. Now, as there are no guests in large numbers to stay for nights as it used to be, it is not needed to ask *biradry* for help. Similarly, another important reason for today's transformation in the role of *biradry* is the trend to arrange the marriage functions at marriage halls, which leaves *biradry* virtually unimportant. One goes to the management of a marriage hall and simply sets the menu for the function and distributes the cards to invite the people formally. This above given paragraph is a summary of the group discussion of three elderly people's gossip at the *dera* of *Haji Allah Ditta Warraich* at *Mohla Khurd*, after the marriage of *Chaudhry Pervez's* son.

However, it is important to note that reciprocity is not only about money or in kind but it also counts even the time spent at function or even in daily life about reciprocating the frequency of one's visit at one's place. This expectation or the measure of one's contribution to the needs and requirements of those who are being paid, is also dependent upon the nature of relationship. For example, first of all, immediate relatives like *taya* (Father's elder brother), *chacha* (Father's brother), *mamu* (Mother's brother), *khala* (mother's sister), *phuphi* (father's sister), *kumbay wale* (kith and kin) followed by *biradry* or *hamsaya* are considered close relations. This given list may be the one upon which there may be fluctuation in terms of importance of one upon the other, but generally reciprocity is expected with more confidence from these actors. The remaining detailed analysis of symbols of status and prestige relating to transactions under the domain of *Vartan Bhanji* will be dealt in detail in the coming chapter of Social Status.

3.6 *Biradry* as a Force and Present Change

Biradry has been enjoying important place in the village setup because villages are not considered as anonymous spaces, where individualization is taken as a complete social being in its individual existence. Villages are important part of collective consciousness of their individuals because individual existence is largely socially determined. People belong to their introduction as a son, member of a household or *Biradry* at the most extended stretch. Indeed, all these references of an individual are part of the village setting, but the strength of this phenomenon itself seems to lose its grip gradually.

People are not living in the time and space where speed of change was slower enough to accommodate social trends. Now, the decisions about marriages of the children do not remain only in the domain of family. This leaves the approval from *biradry* also compromised due to the diminishing role of family itself. . The present trends of marriages in the village highlight the importance of some new considerations for the family and the *biradry*. *Chaudhry Pervez Cheema*, shared with the researcher that when he married his both daughters to the army officers belonging to *Jatt* families, no one had an objection because they were *Jatt* and of his status. The latter part of the reason given for match making is of special significance because the status in terms of money or financial position has become important concern for the people. *Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain Warraich*, was also of the same view to analyse the present trends that now *biradry's izzat* is also related with the newly made relatives through exogamy, because they become part of the *biradry* afterwards.

As the role of *biradry* has already been debated in the changing socio-cultural context of the village, there is need to see the potential mechanisms which replace the earlier significant position of *biradry*. This erratic force of *biradry* presents two inherently contradictory scenarios. On the one hand, there is evidence, which highlights the changing importance of *biradry* in the village life with decreasing worth of primary performers like *tabbars*, *kumbah* or *rishtaydar* (relatives) etc. Contrarily, the replacing mechanisms, which may be helpful for the people of the village do not seem to be unambiguously understandable. For example, if village does not have articulated way to resolve the conflicts, then the alternative mean left for people is their reliance on state legal system, which itself still does not have trust of the people. Another related need of the people is their constant need to have a mechanised setup of conflict resolution at the village level. This situation requires deeper understanding on the part of researcher to untangle the relation of change with the needs of the people as individuals, households and *biradries*.

There are many challenges, which the village has to face in its collective sphere like floods, thefts of animals and other such matters of mutual concern. These matters require more organized response of the community as a whole, but the significance of *biradry* is further crystallized at such moments. For example, *Chaudhry Khalid Nawaz Warraich* remembered the role of his *Jatt biradry* when his six buffaloes were stolen from his *Dera* near the *Chenab* River. It was first of all the *biradry* and then all friends from the village as well as from nearby villages, who came to his help either through physical presence or accompanying him to the Police station. He said though he could not find his animals, he could not forget the important role played by his *biradry* at this

critical moment. This was also witnessed by the researcher at the time of floods in September, 2014. The village has an enduring relationship with the river *Chenab*. The river crosses the village from its western side. River provides village with direct means of economic benefits like selling sand, working there as labourers, cattle grazing at '*bailla*'. People of both *Mohla* villages, *Samman*, *Shadiwal* and some nearby villages send their cows and buffaloes there to feed them without bearing direct financial liability for them. This *bailla* comprises the *shaamlaat*, (collectively owned land among community of an area) so *zamindar* families have this mutual understanding to share these benefits of *bailla* mutually.³⁹

However, this understanding of mutual convenience proved to be unfortunate this year because of heavy losses incurred by the people who had sent their cattle (*maal manni*, *dhoor* and *dangar* are the used terms for cattle when talked in indirect way). On the night of 6th September and 7th September there was massive increase in the flow of the *Chenab* river, which resulted in the loss of all cows, buffaloes and tractors or other such machinery at *bella*. There was a loss of almost 1200 animals. From *Mohla landa* or *Khurd*, there were more losses. Some families even lost more than 50 animals. Family of *Chaudhry Azmat Warraich* lost many cows, buffaloes, 3 horses and 2 tractors because they were cultivating the *shaamlat* owned by other *zamindar* families as well. From *Mohla Khurd Chaudhry Riasat Warraich* and *Chaudhry Khalid Warraich* each lost 4 animals.

³⁹ Some families also cultivate their share of the land at *bella*. There is mutual understanding among some families to take care of not only of their own land but also for that of rest of their relatives or *Biradry* members. For example, the *tabbar* of Hassanke also takes care for the land of family of *Chaudhry Khalid Nawaz Warraich* and his brother.

Some families recovered their animals by constant struggle to find them by visiting different flooded areas and by keeping a team of people at Head *Qadirabad*. However, some families could recover partially and some could not get their animals despite long efforts. These moments also proved that *biradry* is a source of mutual help for the people at such critical times of need as it was evident at the follow up time after floods. Every morning there was a team of almost 30 persons on motor bikes belonging to *Warraich* families, who left the village for whole of the day. Importantly, those families who were fortunate enough to recover their animals timely, did not stop going in search of the rest of animals, because according to *Chaudhry Khalid Warraich*, it is not a noble deed to leave the *biradry* at the time of need. So, *biradry* is still an important source of help for the village people but it's every day representation through interaction and the symbols like participation at important events is not so pronounced and symbolized as it used to be.

3.7 Conclusion

Biradry has remained important factor in the socio-cultural settings of Punjabi rural society. The reasons for today's peculiar rural dimensions of Punjab may be traced to Punjab's relationship with fertile plain land. This ownership of land itself gave birth to a society which was organized on the basis of dependence upon land as owner or as dependent upon the land owner in case if one does not own land. So, a society was born, whose needs and requirements could be only fulfilled in its given mode of dominance of one segment of society (*zamindars*) through incorporation of the landless class known as *kammis* or "specialized worker" (Ahmad 1977: 26). This ownership of land as a prerogative of some people upon the basis of their categorization and the deprivation of

the rest of people served as a 'structure'. This structure is practically reinforced through the role and importance, which was assumed by the *biradries* mainly upon the basis of their ownership of land. This understanding in its earlier importance upon the basis of structurally determined positions becomes difficult now to understand because its primary actors like land, family and *biradry* are themselves in transition.

This mutual interaction also gave birth to a society, where *biradry* as a brotherhood was realized on the basis of family lineage, incorporating mostly patrilineal descent. Though at earlier time's village distribution in terms of caste was more in terms of its general categorization either as *zamindars* or *kammis*, now this understanding seems to lose its relevance. The understanding of those elements like household or families themselves do not remain "relational" as propagated by Mosse through his analysis of untouchable caste because "they are defined and reproduced by relations of dependence and subordination" (Mosse 1999: 69). This construction of caste, so rigid and least prone to social pressures, becomes difficult to hold in the presence of evidence, which highlights the change in its social acceptance and visibility. It shows that as Giddens propagates, there is always a mutual interplay between 'structure and agency' which may produce some newer types of structures, but it can not be exclusively outcome of structures.⁴⁰

Today's *Mohla* cannot be categorized only like Zekiye Eglar's categorization of the village in terms of only *zamindar* and *kammi* presence. There it feels more

⁴⁰ Giddens (1984) position about his understanding of restructuring structure is of particular interest in this changing role of *Biradry*. Giddens takes the interplay between structure and agency in a flow, where if the traditional role of *Biradry* might have been compromised, but the process of restructuring itself gives way to produce new types of structures.

appropriate to employ some alternative possibilities for people to be categorized in terms of their standing in the village. The insufficiency of the existing frames does not mean that the relationship between the people who own land and those who do not own, is antagonistic, but the variation within the positions is visible and self-speaking. As it has already been elaborated about the change in social position of the *Kammi* castes, this also changes the larger socio-cultural scenario. *Julaha* caste now known as *Ansari* is considered one of the most educated castes in the village. They have been teachers, now a doctor and some in other government jobs like clerk or constable in Punjab police, which shows that the traditional sense of word *Julaha* associated with the *khaddi* may be misleading at the moment. The earlier sense of the word *Julaha* associated with *khaddi* also conveys its sense of dependence upon the *zamindar* through *seyp*, which is not the case at present times. Moreover, this may be inappropriate to take for granted the traditional sense of the word *musalli* as the one who used to clean the house and *dera* of the *chaudhry*, because now the people of this caste introduce themselves as *Muslim sheikh*. This word is used by them because the word *musalli* entails a burden of their passive position, which is no more applicable to their changing socio-economic position. For example, one *musalli* member is practicing as medical doctor in the village besides one retired army Major, one lecturer and some members of the *biradry* working abroad.

So, neither is the position of the *kammis* static in the village nor it entails hostile relationship within the *zamindar and kammi* equation. This background of the *kammi* professions and their today's positions reveal some fissures in the contemporary dominant vision of this class as an oppressed and passive one. Another directly relevant account has also been advocated by Harriet Bradley "The power of capital has taken a

more impersonal form, embedded in a set of organizations and institutional practices” (Bradley 1992: 18). This shows that status and position of the actors now at present times is mainly dependent upon the capital which introduces its own institutional practices.

Moreover, there is space now for new as well as existing actors but it does not mean that they may be equally effective in creating the institutions for their representation. Likewise, at *Mohla*, the *kammi* castes do not make their sense as collective force, but they are divided among themselves as *nai biradry*, *musalli biradry* or *ansari biradry* because of their changed sources to accumulate capital. Bourdieu⁴¹ becomes relevant there to see his understanding of economic capital’s translation into social capital as acquisition over the time, which comes slowly and takes long to go as well. This division within the general category of *kammi* also gives sense to the consciousness of each caste as different from rest of the castes due to different relationship with the means to improve social standing.

In the above given scenario it is hardly surprising to propose that traditional understanding of *biradry* as a social force has become to some extent invalid. The village profile sheds light on the demographic composition of both the villages. The *Jatt biradry* with all its sub-castes is known and accepted in its sense through the word used to denote it as a functional force in the society. However, it has already lost some of its symbols to present itself as an inclusive and self-enriching force. It was interesting experience for the researcher to see one of the *Ansari* families as main organizers of the *walima* of

⁴¹ Bourdieu (1986) “Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them” (Bourdieu 1986: 49).

Chaudhry's son. The *Ansari* members were also on the reception gate to receive the guests, which is one of the privileges for much closed ones. This action of the *chaudhry* was also an unwelcome gesture for some of the *Jatt* guests who shared the table with researcher.

Biradry for *Jatts* is facing some challenges as well from the ascendance of some of the actors who have gained enough socio-cultural and economic capital to contest the hegemony of *Jatts* in their capacity as land owners. This shows the possibility of structure as an option to be replaced with the passage of time in the wake of shift in determinants of economic capital. For example, during the last general elections of 2013, *Chaudhry Pervez Cheema* and *Naheed Butt* organized a rally and procession at the village in the favour of *Chaudhry Monis Elahi*, which was hosted by a member from *musalli* family. *Chaudhry Pervez* shared the stage with the representative of *butt* family because the *butt* family also has good political standing in the village besides economic capital. So, there is no more the concentration of social or economic capital as exclusively resting with *Jatt biradry*. Moreover, there may be no linear interpretation of the functionality of *biradry* as well as for analysis of its actors and the space they have gained for themselves now. There is an ongoing negotiation between the actors and their roles to gain maximum space for oneself. The ongoing process of change itself warrants a redefinition of the earlier position of the actors called agents by Giddens and their respective importance in this changing environment. Giddens becomes more relevant through his space of "the knowledgeability incorporated in the practical activities" for agent, "which make up the bulk of daily life is a constitutive feature (together with power) of the social world" (Giddens 1984: 90).

So, there is need to see the role of individuals and families even through the use of diverse professional options as 'knowledgeability' of the agent. This gives more space to the agent in terms of the different practices, which leads to newer forms of significance of actors, earlier known as *bi-radry*. Another important aspect proposed by Giddens is also about the knowledge of actors, which takes the agent beyond his generally presumed limit of experiencing the world. He argues:

"Of course, the fact that all actors move in situated contexts within larger totalities limits the knowledge they have of other contexts which they do not directly experience. All social actors know a great deal more than they ever directly live through" (Giddens 1984: 91).

Chapter No 4. Discussion and Analysis: Locating Social Status.

4.1 *Izzat* (prestige), *ghairat* (honour) and *Chaudhrahat* in the Village.

As the change has already been proposed in the primary 'structures' of our inherited understanding about the village, the 'positioning' of individuals is itself in transition. Giddens has tried to understand the "positioning" as a "social identity that carries with it obligations and prerogatives" (Giddens 1984: 84). However, this domain of obligations and prerogatives can better be understood with the help of Giddens idea about process of 'structuration' where the process itself gives more space to the actors. He advocates "The positioning of agents in circumstances of co-presence is an elemental feature of the structuration of encounters" (Giddens 1984: 84).

It is already an established fact that village is changing rapidly in its relationship with land and the sense of *Biradry* is itself undergoing a rapid transformation in its basic tenets. A village has an enduring relationship with social precepts of its relationship with one's 'position' in the society either as individual or in the collective sphere as *Tabbar*, *kumba* or *Biradry*. These positions themselves carry some 'obligations' and 'prerogatives' with them. These prerogatives can better be understood through different attributes in society like *izzat*, *ghairat*, *rutba* (position) and *chaudhar* or *chaudhrahat*. The word *izzat* can better be understood through its functional definition given by Chaudhary, who is of the view that "*izzat* is actually the way individuals are assessed"

(Chaudhary 1999: 66). The definition of *izzat* itself as given by Chaudhary (1999) is significant in relation with Giddens idea about 'positioning of agents (individuals) in circumstances of co-presence' as a feature of "structuration". So, these attributes themselves cannot be taken without being realized in their interplay within process of structuration.

Chaudhary (1999) further traces the main concerns of the people for their understanding about social status at the village level. He argues "*zan, zar and zamin* are the proverbially known reasons for conflicts in South Asia" (Chaudhary 1999: 42). These words are still used in their earlier significance through the historical understanding of underlying relationship of these words within their socio-cultural context. As the village suggests some of the changing dynamics within its socio-economic milieu, there are some challenges to the traditional understanding of the village about its notion of hierarchical setup. It really feels a bold statement to challenge the so dominant discourse about the Punjabi village by making a departure from historical legacy from the determining elements.

Mohla is no more a traditional village, which can be imagined through historically constructed lenses. As earlier divisions within the village are no more the traditional ones, so are changes in the manifestations of symbols and sensibility related with conception of social status. These differences in terms of their earlier positions are part of everyday affairs of the village. There is no informally agreed mechanism of the *panchayat* as it generally happens or at least is taken to be the case in most of the Punjab. Furthermore, as the earlier divisions of the village have changed, so have changed the positions of the involved actors. For example, *Chaudhry Pervez*, the largest land owner in



the village, whose father and forefathers were *chaudheries* of the village, does not arrange any such meetings in the village. He himself shared this with the researcher that now it is not the time of *panchayats*, because people prefer to go to courts, police stations and *Tehsildars* instead of going to *chaudhry*. He was also of the view that it is more convenient for him to manage his affairs through connecting police officers, judges or lawyers instead of bothering directly to make the people *happy*. This shows that fundamental practices, which were once related with one's position in society have transformed due to changing social status of the involved actors as individuals, families or *biradries*. One important aspect about such affairs is that if there is need for such meeting in the village, most of the time people are never invited or represented as individuals, but as a head of family or elder of the *biradry*.

The concepts of *izzat*, *ghairat* and *chaudhar* are 'relational', which depend upon material and non-material sources. At present, material sources of *izzat* and *chaudhar* are first of all money preferably earned from abroad, land ownership to show the lineage as *khandani* and jobs either in government sector or private sector, but government job is preferred due to access to government offices. For non-material sources, attending the village affairs with *sharafat* (nobleness) like good '*Vartan Bhanji*' or *len den* and the descent or the reference of one's parents is still important part of one's introduction. The above given notions of material and non-material sources must not be taken as self-contradictory because the village is witnessing some changing tendencies, but it never means that there is complete transformation. Therefore, these patterns of change and their relationship with their historical understanding attached with these concepts should be analysed mutually inclusive.



As already shown through profile of the village, *Chaudhry Pervez Cheema* is the largest land owner of the village and elected ex-Nazim of the Union Council *Kathala*⁴². He is the accepted *Chaudhry* of the village, but only in terms of his land ownership otherwise the village is largely without properly maintained and functioning panchayat system. This is not possible for a village to sustain itself as an entity without having a mechanism to operate at the village level for conflict resolution. This mechanism known as *panchayat* is losing its significance in the village due to multiple reasons. These reasons may be traced to the character of the *chaudhry* and other involved factors in their respective capacities like representation of an individual, family, *Biradry* and status based upon money or job. These factors as a whole mark departure from traditional logic and justification for this system to remain actively involved in the village due to underlying change in the position of involved actors. Giddens again becomes relevant due to the space, he has given to changing positions and their accommodative attitude towards social positioning of the individuals through 'social interaction'. He realizes:

"Social interaction refers to encounters in which individuals engage in situations of co-presence, and hence to social integration as a level of the 'building blocks' whereby the institutions of social systems are articulated" (Giddens 1984: 89).

Moreover, there are still some of the recurrent *discursive* aspects related with socio-economic status of an individual or family as a whole in the village, which signify the sense of position at the village level. For example, there is no dependence of the landless castes upon the landholding castes but the *zamindar* castes still categorize themselves differently as a symbol of their higher social status. This theme has already

⁴² This administrative setup of the Union council is expected to be redrawn in the upcoming local bodies' elections.

been discussed in detail in the chapter about land ownership. Importantly, as the village itself does not remain rigid in its earlier sense of actors, there is visible change in the position of the involved actors. Today's *Mohla Kalaan* is an important case to understand the contemporary change in the village. Presently, social status is not only ascribed at birth, but it is also a field which is competed now among the actors on the basis of money, education, jobs or mobility at first level to city and then to abroad. The village does not have properly functioning *panchayat* because the landless castes may not be willing to accede to the composition of the *panchayat* as a body constituted only by the *zamindar* castes without giving them representation due to their newly gained prominent roles.⁴³ So, social status needs to be understood in the changing socio-cultural context of the village.

4.2 Status of Symbols and Markers

There is interesting shift in the symbols of status and prestige in the village due to the changing representations and forms of the symbols and markers, which define social status. These symbols may be physical like houses, vehicles, electricity appliances and technology instruments etc. or non-physical ones like relations, human resources and genealogical lineage etc. These symbols or markers are important manifestations of the positions acquired by the actors through their space and presence in the village. As it has already been elaborated in the village profile, there is no *kacha* house at *Mohla kalaan*, but there are some *katcha* houses of *deendars* at *Mohla Khurd*. These houses have

⁴³ The composition of *panchayat* must be one, which is expected by the actors, who cannot be understood in the traditional sense of the village setup. For example, a lawyer from *Nai Biradry* and a medical doctor from *Julaha Biradry* or use of money earned from abroad for the *Kammi* families has become a source equal to that of the most of the *Zamindar* families.



important symbolic significance for the people because it is also important factor for multiple reasons. For example, house is important consideration to look for marriage partner for children and the physical nature of the house is important factor to determine the economic position of the household.

Another important factor at present time is the change in traditional image of the village. There are many houses of *Jatt* families, which are either partially *pakka*, (brick-made) completely *pakka* or not as good as that of the landless *kammi* households. At *Mohla Khurd* some of the houses of the *warraich* families are not in good condition as compared to the one *julaha* and *musalli* houses at *Mohla Kalaan*. Moreover, construction of a new house is important for every household to show the *hamsaya*, *mohalladar* or the people of village to show one's socio-economic status. This was also reflected by Rizwan *Muslim sheikh* that everyone who starts earning money, tries to construct a new house much better than earlier because it is proof of one's earnings.

Furthermore, cars, motorcycles, tractors, cell phones and appliances of daily use at home are also important factors to show one's social status among the village fellows. The cost and usage of these symbols are important aspects in determining the worth of that car, cell phone or electric appliance. For instance, cars are important determinant in social status because they are not owned by everyone. There are only five to six cars in the *Mohla kalaan* and almost same number at *Mohla Khurd*. These numbers suggest that those who have cars, must have a different standing in terms of profession, job, land ownership or any other source of earning. This was also shared with the researcher while conducting an interview with a British researcher from London School of Economics, by a young man *Nabil Ahmad*. The boy was using one of the costly mobiles available at

market. When he was asked the reason to buy so costly mobile, he responded that as he earns himself from the business of wood, he must be using 'good' and costly things. This use of technology is not only competed at individual level but also among families and neighbourhoods. Those who use their own appliances and machines like washing machine at home or tractor at farm are considered socially elevated because dependence upon others may harm one's social status.

When it comes to non-physical resources, these resources are also equally important in making sense of the concept of social status in the village. There is a complete glossary of attributes which rank, categorize and label people in their capacities as individuals, families and *biradries*. These words, sentences and proverbs place people in hierarchies as well which are not in their own making. The significance of language in terms of its presentation effect has been analysed by Szabo "our knowledge about linguistic expressions is knowledge about types" (Szabo 1999: 145). As some of the attributes related with land and the division in the village on the basis of land is practically becoming lesser influential, these representations are also changing somewhat. For example, now there are some *tabbars*, who have changed their castes after changing their professions and do not face hostile social pressure for changing their caste. There may be some references in this regard that they have changed their caste at the cost of introduction of their forefathers. However, there is no serious threat in terms of embarrassment and unfriendliness from the people if the person or family, which has changed the caste after considerably improved social status. This is also true for the medical doctor and an advocate of the village, changing their castes respectively from *Julaha* to *Bhutta* and from *Nai* to *Chohan*.



Apart from *biradry*, there are also other changing perceptions about the understanding of social status. The numerical strength at *tabbar* or *biradry* level, which used to be bedrock of the rural society, is also changing now in its relationship with social status. There is a famous example of a fight between *butt* family of eight brothers and a *kammi* family of nine brothers. It is generally agreed perception that both families were always at loggerheads because they had considerable numerical strength. However, now this numerical strength has translted into the economic avenues available to the family or *biradry* for managing its affairs. Now, there is hardly any family in the last two decades, except some *musalli* families, who has given birth to more than four children.

This is practically difficult for the people to manage their affairs in the village with less resources to provide presently recognized 'essential' provision to the children. Now, the education itself has become an important factor for the village people to compete in the village. Thus, social status in Today's *Mohla* is mainly dependent upon money, education, nature of job or land ownership. This sequence of the factors which determine the extent of significance by any of the factors as contributing its part in the social status, shows that traditional determinants are no more only factors. This mutual exchange of the space between these actors seems to suggest that village can not be comprehensively understood only in relationship with traditional sensibility of structure as mightier one and agency as being downplayed by the traditional structures.

4.3 Land's Importance and Social Status

The role of land in the village has already been discussed in detail in the chapter about land ownership and its impact upon the village life. Moreover, land must be seen beyond



its only economic significance in the village life. It is important to note that social significance of land is still there in the village. Despite massive economization and monetization of the domestic affairs, land is important marker of one's status and position in the society. This importance can be realized both economically and symbolically. It would be naive to say that economic relevance of land has been completely alternated with non-land based sources. Land still remains important for those who do not own land, because status in the village is related with land from multiple aspects. For example, the *Butt* family, who has good economic and social capital, finds it really difficult to have animals like buffaloes and cows without owning land in the village. The family has a *dera* (a word used for the place to keep animals) in the *Mohla Kalaan*, a servant but they have to take the land at *theka* (an agreement between land owner and the rentee to rent land for a fixed period at a fixed cost) unlike other landowning families. So, land remains important for the people not only for agricultural purposes but also for home and other needs like *baithak*, *dera*⁴⁴ or business related activities.

Indeed, land is an important factor in determining and then even in maintaining the social status in the village, but at present it does not remain as significant as it used to be. Those symbols which were related with land like dealing of things for things mainly secured from land, has shifted mostly to hard money. Conversely, at present the needs and aspirations of the people cross the boundaries of village. This trend leads to gradual shift of the village from lesser use of money to increased paper money. This monetization of the domestic affairs was also deliberated by one of the elders from *Mohla Khurd*. He

⁴⁴ The *Butt* family has been repeatedly asking the *Chaudhry* to sell some of his land to them at the price of his discretion, but *Chaudhry* is not interested in selling land to the *Butt* family due to the social capital also being transferred with the land.

was of the view that there are structural reasons of increased use of money as a source of mutual dealings and interdependence, because people mainly use money now even at their social activities like marriages (*neondra*, *laag* and *vehi* etc.) child birth or death anniversaries. For example, now even a child birth is burden upon the family of child because everything is measured in rupees now. This use of money is transcending all earlier forms of social dealings which involved active participation by all *biradry* members, relatives and village fellows. As now there is increasing trend of arranging these activities at marriage halls and restaurants with the use of money, so sole reliance upon land is naturally weekend.

This above given picture leaves us on the one hand with significance of land, while role of land as only factor to provide basis of social status is contradicted by the village itself. There is increasing pressure upon the village in terms of expanding needs and shrinking importance of land for economic reliance. This is corroborated by the fact that mostly people are concerned about finding alternative sources to generate proportional revenue to meet their expected level of performance in societal dealings. Thus, today's *Mohla* is not relying solely upon land for its dynamics of social status, but alternative sources mainly determine one's social status.

4.4 Education and Social Status

Contemporary setup of the village is mainly defined by the factors, which are not making of the village itself. The role of education has already been debated as a factor to cause mobility in the village at daily level and at permanent basis. The complete role of education must also be viewed in its practical contribution to the overall village economy



and socio-cultural context. There seems to be a close relationship between role of education and the determination of one's social position in. Bourdieu is quite relevant:

"The barriers created by differences in schooling are very sharply defined, especially in the modern sector where advancement in the social hierarchy comes only by large leaps" (Bourdieu 1979: 35).

Moreover, education is also important factor in setting the trends of social mobility as a marker of social capital. This aspect in somewhat different but relevant contextual terms has been debated by Yi, who views the role of education as "Social citizenship which sees social mobility in terms of recognition: the degree to which individuals are recognized by others as being equal partners in the community" (Yi 2008: 9).

Thus, education makes available many avenues for those who are educated to play their part in different capacities. These roles may be individually motivated or collectively cherished for people as individuals, *tabbars* and *biradries*. It has already been made clear that *Ansari Biradry* is given social recognition as a distinct one for its number of educated male members, though now the girls are also being educated. Likewise, those *Jatt* families who have their educated children are given more importance because it gives more opportunities to send the educated children abroad if no good job is found in Pakistan. This leads to more sources for earning money, which is needed more in today's village due to its increasingly penetrating role in the village life. Now, the education is considered important not only for individuals but also for whole of the families and eventually for *biradries* as a whole.

Today's *Mohla* presents many such cases, where the educated people who managed to find good jobs or were lucky enough to go themselves or to send brother or cousins (mainly in patrilineal line) abroad, enjoy more social recognition. For instance, the *chaudhry* of the village, who owns most of the land in all nearby villages, often ask an advocate from *nai* family to help him in his matters related with courts or government offices. The referred advocate once shared with the researcher that *Chaudhry Pervez* came to his chamber and requested him to help him for filling his farms to apply for the local bodies' elections. He also referred to the recent floods when *chaudhry* requested him to intercede to the *tehsildar* on the *chaudhry's* part to save his land from inundation.

Moreover, there are two doctors in the village belonging to *julaha* and *musalli* families. They are also respected among the village fellows due to the everyday encounter with them. A relevant theme of the socio-economic dimension of this change in the village was also propagated by an elderly *warraich bazurg*, who opined that today *zamindars* find it difficult to compete with the *kammis* because they did not focus on education and this has resulted in such a situation when son of carpenter became an expert construction contractor, the *Jatt* became labourer. He gave example of one *Jatt* family who are left with no land and they have to work as labourer at daily wages or as a loader of sand at the river. This feeling is getting crystallized with the every passing day because this trend is itself becoming competition among the village people. This competition is not only about sending children to school, rather it is about who pays how much fees, where does one educate his/her children etc. This trend is now increasing among the girls also because it is important for their future as a matching partner to the preferred partner who is likely to be educated one due to this increasing trend. At present,

education has become important factor to decide about one's social status and it is becoming more and more important with the passage of time. The education is likely to become one of the most defining element for social status in the village.

4.5 Marriage Patterns and Social Status

Marriage is an important institution of human society. Besides regulating sexual conduct and reproduction, there are many social responsibilities and roles which directly come with the institution of marriage. The close analysis of the village itself suggests that marriage is one of the most important decisions not only for the parents but also for the extended kin group and *Biradry*. There is an overall change in the socio-cultural context in the village, which has already caused some changing trends in the marriage patterns. This change may be conceptualised as a manifestation of the much deeper underlying currents in the society. An interesting aspect in this regard must be a sensitivity to see the change not separate from the broader context of the village, but as a phenomenon which is also in continuity with the traditional sense prevailing in the village.

Marriage is one of the most crucial decisions for the family as a whole and specifically for the parents, because it entails the future perspectives for the marriage partners and the family as well. This leads to the sense of *biradry* itself because making new relatives is not only concern for the immediate family but it also extends to those who have already been connected with the family. This was also reflected upon by one of the elder male members of *cheema* family of *Mohla Khurd* that marriage is important for all of the relatives and the concerned family because it means you are sharing your bloodline with the one to whom you are engaging in relationship through marriage.



Another important concern was shared with the researcher by a female member of the *Warraich* family, who was of the view that selecting new relatives to connect through marriage ties is of prime importance because they are those people with whom one has to share even the space of house because “*beta ya beti k susral se parda to nae kia ja skta*” (the in-laws of son or daughter cannot be veiled).

These are some of the concerns which resonated in the village for its socio-cultural sphere and these provide fruit to think about the importance attached to the marriage in the village according to the perception and priorities of the people. It is an agreed perception among the elder people of the village that at earlier times their parents had the authority to decide about their marriage partners. *Haji Siddique Ansari* shared with the researcher that the people who belong to his category of age will hardly be able to accept that any one of them had been talking to his would-be-wife before marriage.. Moreover, most of the marriages were arranged preferably within the close relatives and if not among close relatives then there must be strong enough reason to get married outside the relatives. This practice itself was symbol of mutual status and honour for whole of the family if the family could manage its marriages within family or its extended form of incorporating more close relatives. For example, family of *Baba Bahadar Warraich*, who are known as *Hassan kay*, enjoys good social recognition because they have managed their marriage affairs within their family. The family is given respect because three elder members of the family decide about the marriages of even their grand-children and those decisions have never been turned down by any of the family members.

These earlier practices and their logic in the broader context of village have started changing or at least becoming manifested through contemporary decisive factors about marriages. Those logics and reasons seem to be in transition, which used to be important factor for deciding about the marriage. There are some factors at present, which have become important consideration for the people due to the changing socio-cultural context of the village. For example, *Salman Aabid (Muslim sheikh)* was of the view that he married his sister to his cousin (father's sister's son), because the boy works in Istanbul, Turkey and the family has good house and *maal moveshi* (animals). So, it was a decision of mutual convenience for both families to marry within the family. This case is important to understand the present sense of terms for arranging a marriage because the sense conveyed through the stated case highlights some pre-conditions for the marriage.

These changes are more crystallized when it is seen either in terms of the people who see themselves as *zamindars* or *non-zamindars*. For *zamindars*, the bride for brother or son has to qualify not only in terms of education, but she also must be of *zamindar* descent. A *jatt* always marries in a *jatt* family because according to already quoted saying, only this will ensure a pure *jatt*. Moreover, this sense of caste is so internalized by the people that even those families who have changed their caste in the village, would marry within their own traditional caste. For example, a *nai* who has become advocate and is known as *chohan*, did not marry in his relatives due to his improved social status, but married in a *nai* family of *Kharian*. This trend of endogamy even among the *Kammi* families has been analysed by Usman and Amjad:

"all of the Kammi respondents in the present research stressed that they marry only in their occupational quoms by parentage e.g. barbers within barbers, or

carpenters within carpenters. Rejecting the idea of marrying outside their occupational group” (Usman and Amjad 2013: 345).

Importantly, despite the changes in decisive factors, the trend of endogamy remains preferred in the changing socio-economic milieu of the village. This shows that presently perceived and understood sense of social status is playing important role in the village, but this change is not complete disruption of the earlier traditional set-up of the village.

At present, the socially approved standard as a successful marriage partner has alternated with contemporary means of social status. These means in Mohla's case may be education, source of earning as determining one's social position or nature of job in government sector or private. The earlier position of land as a dominant factor has already been discussed in detail, but today land remains symbolically more important than its economic significance except a couple of families who own larger land holdings. So, now as the sources of social status have been changed, so are its challenges and demands from the parents, family and biradry to decide about the marriage options. These marriage challenges tend to vary with the decision either about son's marriage or for the daughter.

4.6 Analysing Change in Social Status

There is need to see the village in its changing dynamics instead of focussing on rigid interpretation of static nature of structures. So, the earlier understanding of the positioning of individuals as proposed by Giddens can be understood through his idea about social structure, which includes two elements “the patterning of interaction” and “the continuity of interaction in time” (Giddens 1979: 62). Giddens ideas about the

continuity of interaction and the patterning of interaction can lead to better understanding of the 'structures' and the agent's ability 'to have acted otherwise'. The idea of the patterning of interaction through continuity of interaction in time, has proved true in the village, where the above given references present the adaptability in purely traditional and indigenous features of social system like role of land in the village life and the social significance of *biradry*.

It may be oddly narrow and rigid to start everything in the village with the importance of land, but land still remains important for imagining life in the village. However, despite all importance of land in the traditional village set up, its present economic relevance has contracted. Today's conception of *izzat*, *ghairat* and *chaudhrahath* in the village tend to revolve around the gradually evolving determinants. These changing determinants signify change in structural components of society in its changing socio-cultural context. This makes Giddens ideas directly relevant about 'patterning of interaction in the continuity of interaction'. This possibility in changing structures gives more space to the agency because the determined position of structures as propagated by Bourdieu in his concept of 'habitus'⁴⁵ leaves very little space for understanding the changing village life. Therefore, Bourdieu's understanding about the "durable, transposable dispositions" seem difficult to "function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu 1990: 53).. Importantly, Giddens is more relevant to locate the existence of structures in mutual interplay with agency. This change in the village is self-evident.

⁴⁵ "The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (Bourdieu 1990: 53)

For example, the increased mobility results in broader socio-cultural change in the village due to interaction of incoming cultural traits with the people besides the financial changes caused with inflow of the money. Elliot et, al have also analysed the cultural impact:

"In a time of increasing transnational flows of culture, people, and capital, "home" has become a borderland where cultural traditions, values, and ways of life come together, clash, meld, and are transfigured" (Elliott et,al 2007: 2).

These contemporary changes are not disconnected with the traditional sources in the village but their current position and forms are at least new for the village. It is interesting to note that there is a competition mainly in terms of money, its symbols, influence and authority gained and practiced with the help of it. As land does not remain only source of earning money, there is a competition in the alternative sources as well. Who manages to go to which country, how much one manages to earn, which job is important in terms of social capital, whose children are studying in English medium schools with more fees and whose children are studying at Lahore or Islamabad, are mainly nature of the sense which play its role in social status. These questions themselves speak for the nature of competition in the village. These interests themselves suggest that the mainstay of social status has also shifted from traditional sensibility of structures to newer forms of the structures themselves.

As the numerical strength has given way to one's access into corridors of authority and manipulation, this subsequently undermines the worth of *biradry* as a force. The *butt* family represented at village by Aurangzeb *Butt*, is considered important player in political, social and legal affairs of the village despite the fact that they do not have



land in the village or a larger *Butt biradry* like that of *Jatt biradry*. This position of the *butt family* is mainly due to their source of earning from abroad as five brothers are working abroad (Ireland), while those who are at *Mohla*, work as transporter, land cultivation on rent etc. It is interesting to note that despite absence of primary mean of land ownership or having support of *biradry* as an effective force, the *butt* family managed to raise their social status. This is a newer but increasingly growing spectacle about social status with its changing manifestations and determining factors.

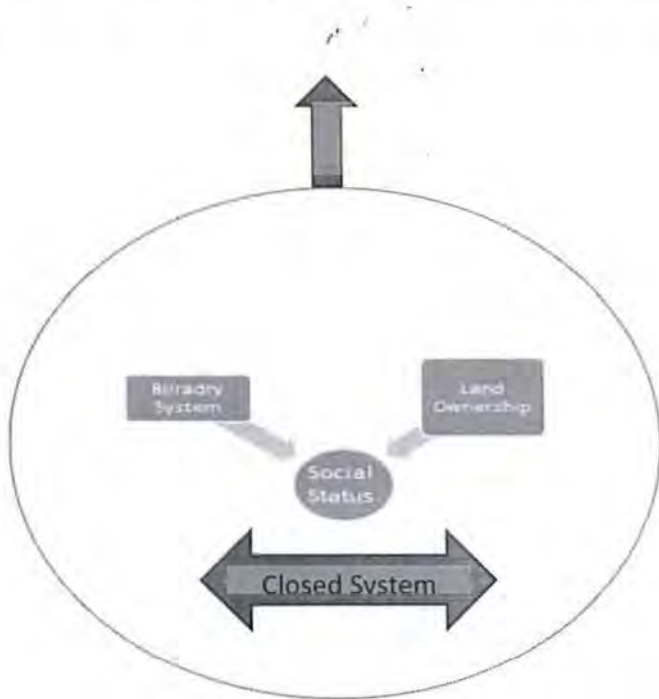
Education is another important factor for causing change in the sense of social status. Those who are educated are more likely get a job or to go abroad and earn more as compared to the uneducated or less educated ones. This source of earning itself is important besides its importance in monetary terms. Government job is first priority of the people because it is permanent and better introduction as compared to private job. Government job also wields more authority and inroads to other government offices. One important dimension to be taken in the context of the village itself is provision of alternative sources available to people except relying on business, remittances or jobs secured on the basis of education.

There are some other significant actors as well, which highlight the importance of other sources like *biradry* or patronage in the form of social capital. There are many people from *Mohla kalaan*, who go to *Chaudhry Afzal Samman's dera* because he is given importance in the regional political set up due to his close association with *Chaudheries of Gujrat* (*Chaudhry Pervez Elahi, Chaudhry Shujaat* and their family members). *Chaudhry Afzal* does not own large landholdings but he relies on his earnings from his business of sand and upon the remittances from his brother and nephews settled

in Saudi Arabia. He also remained once Union Council Nazim and is expected to contest elections again whenever held.

To conclude, the village can be understood through two following diagrams from historical point of view and in its contemporary form.

The following diagram shows the *traditional non-porous social boundary*⁴⁶.



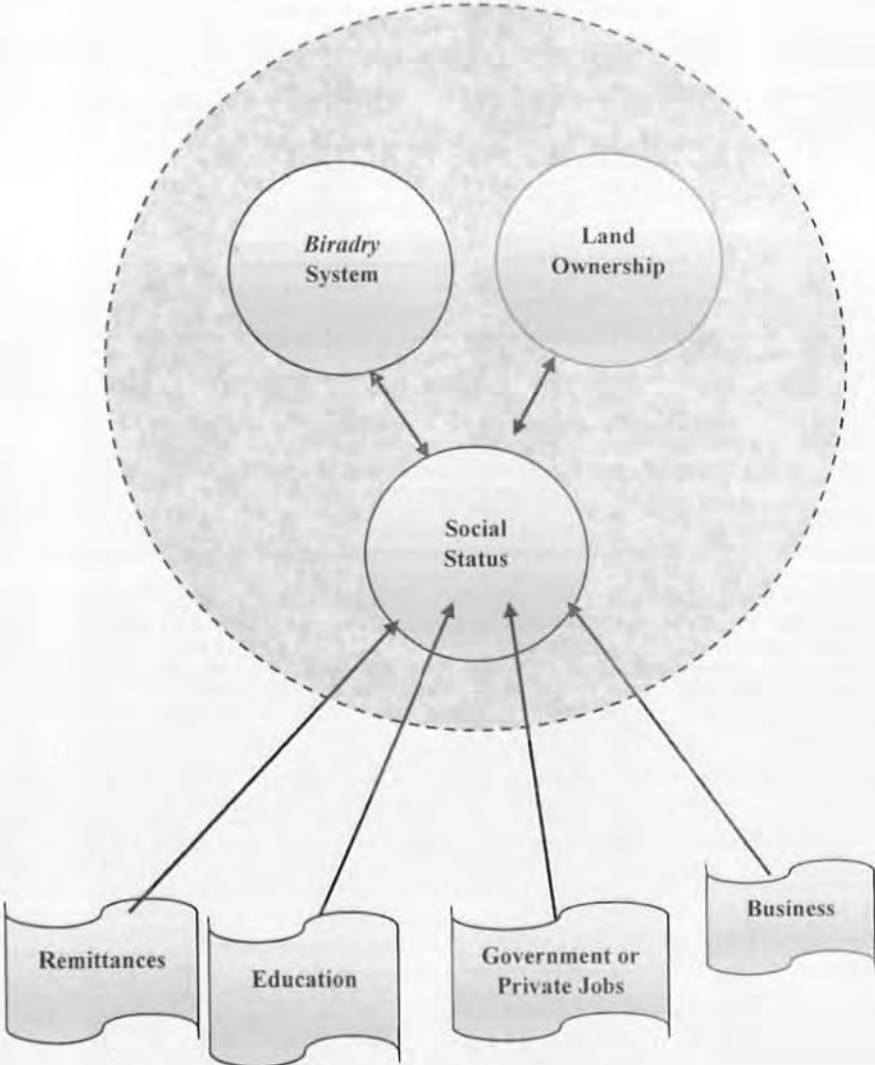
Non-Porous Social Boundary

The above given diagram tries to highlight the interdependence of main three actors with the main focus on land ownership as the diagram itself depicts. The second most important element in this troika seems to be *biradry* system and mainly these both factors defined the social status of *afraad*, *tabbars* or *biradry*. As the diagram has given more

⁴⁶ The main idea for these both diagrams is credited to Dr. Arif Mehmood (National Institute of Pakistan Studies).

space to land ownership, it shows that the *biradry* as a force was also important in itself but it primarily depended upon land for its significance as a social force. The *biradry* itself was mainly given importance on the basis of land ownership. At earlier times, the main social division among the people was on the basis of land ownership, which placed one group as *zamindars* and the other as *kammis*. This setup remained intact for longer span of time because the forces, which cause change now were not so pronounced at that moment. Moreover, the present picture of the village may be diagrammatically presented as follows.

Porous or Open Social Boundary



The above given diagram shows that at present the role and influence of the traditional sources has been largely compromised with the newly emergent factors like remittances, education, jobs or business. Another important feature is the negotiation between the factors which is depicted by the diagram through two way of relationship of *biradry* system and land ownership with social status. This relationship has become two way because now the land ownership and *biradry* system are not the only factors which completely define social status, rather it has become more varied. This variation now mainly depends upon remittances, jobs, education and business because these factors are becoming increasingly dominant instead of traditional sources of influence in the village. Now, the newly defined sense of social status has also deep influence on the patterns of land ownership or upon the *biradry* system as a social force. In Mohla's case, the *butt* family who has good amount of remittances from their brothers working abroad are looking for some land near the village besides some small tract of land they have bought on the other side of the river *Chenab*. This is a marked departure from the earlier practice in the village when the *zamindar* families did not like the transfer of land to the non-*zamindar* families. This hostility is still there but the earlier intensity and strength of these patterns seems to be slowing in the wake of reconstituted sources of social status.

This shows that the conception of *izzat*, *ghairat* and *chaudhar* are not only being renegotiated between those who were earlier at the lower level of society but it is also in transition among the *zamindar* families as well. The conventional sources and their effectiveness in the village has changed and this dependence is further getting diverse in terms of reliance upon constituting factors. Practically, there is no more a single head or

chaudhry in the village who runs, mediates or oversees the affairs of the village as a representative of the whole village, rather this domain of authority has become more diverse and scattered in different hands.

Chapter No 5. Conclusion

The speed of time and penetration of distant modes and sources, which bring change in domestic setup of the village have been significant part of the whole discussion. The above given picture suggests that the village is changing in all its important dynamics either they be land ownership, *biradry* system or the social status. This change itself suggests that the composition of 'structures' itself is being redrawn in interplay with the agent's agency. The earlier village was different in its relationship with land as a source of economic dependence and its significance for the people to be categorized as either *zamindars* or *kammis* acted in the village differently. So, the land ownership was taken as a structure which defined the extent of one's agency. So, the classifications of people were themselves so internalized and reinforced by the people that the hierarchical setup of the village was a result of all these social processes.

At *Mohla*, the main determinants of one's position were mainly ascribed on the basis of land ownership or belonging to the specific caste or *biradry*. It was vital to note in the village that the historical sense of people about their past as individuals or families was mainly shaped by their relationship with land. The over-riding importance of land in the village was a direct result of less reliance of the people upon alternative sources which are available today. There was more homogenous village setup in terms of economic reliance upon land and the consequent configuration of the society as compared with that of today. So, at earlier times, when the competition was not about so much

scattered but scarce resources, is now in different position due to the multi-dimensional reasons, which replace the primary position of land. Bourdieu's understanding of individual efforts and scarcity of resources seems relevant:

"The relationship of (objective and/ or subjective) competition between himself and the other possessors of capital competing for the same goods, in which scarcity-and through it social value-is generated" (Bourdieu 1986: 49).

Present sense of the village may be made more appropriately by taking village society at earlier times as comparatively non-porous or more closed as compared with porous or open village society of today as proposed through diagrams in the last chapter. At earlier times, the speed of change was markedly slower, due to the less inflow of the forces and means which have caused the contemporary change. This is the reason, which leads to the earlier notion about village societies in particular as "a living thing . . . a system", with "a well-defined separate entity and an individual quality (Tinker 1959: 55).

Moreover, there were also some socially devised arrangements like *seyp*, which divided the society on the basis of land. As long as people remained attached with land as only source, those who did not own land, depended upon those who owned it. This gave birth to the specialization of different possible works in the village which could ensure the working capacity of this mutual relationship between *zamindar* and *kammi*. This is clearly reflected through the contemporary *Mohla* as well. Besides *zamindar* families, there is almost complete presence of *kammi* or artisan castes. Though the social arrangement of *seyp* does not practically operate, but the oral history has not still forgotten those days.



At present, society of the village is self-evident about the influence and the penetration of various forces, which have diversified the shapes of change. Those sources and means, which bring change in the village have already caused a transition in the society. This transition is itself in multiple forms as are the agents of change. Those agents of change cannot be categorised in their forms as purely falling in economic, social or cultural sphere. Importantly, there is need to understand these processes as inter-dependent and complementary to each other. With the decrease in the value of land ownership as a source of social status, the diversification in the form of new sources has brought the village community under the influence of multiple actors. These diverse forms of economic, social and symbolic capital, show the inadequacy of existing understanding of 'structures' in the village. So, the earlier village society, which was comparatively closer one has become open and porous under the impact of new actors. These actors can be mainly outlined in relationship with contemporary patterns, which are not making of the village itself but they make a large difference in the village life.

At *biradry* level, *biradry* as a force seems to face challenges from shrinking interest of the *biradry wale*, because *biradry* has lost its practical needs for the people to remain dependent upon it. People always remembered the role of *biradry* as a force due to the needs fulfilled at earlier time by the *biradry* force. However, at present those needs have been lost to modern means and forms to arrange the events, activities and solution of conflicts etc., which used to be under the purview of *biradry*. Furthermore, the trend of inter-marriage also seems to weaken with the passage of time because the choice of bride or bridegroom has already started depending upon the factors which may not be in the control of the *biradry* itself. As the marriages tend to slide away from the domain of

biradry, so it would naturally lead to the erosion of *biradry's* position as a force. Besides marriage, the symbolic power of *biradry* in relation with land as *zamindar* is also likely to face more pressure in given diverse options which are replacing the central position of land. So, like land ownership, *biradry* system also seems to be replaced by newly constituted and negotiating notions of changing caste or diverse professional options.

It can be said that unlike earlier, one side flow of the influence of land and *Biradry*, now the flow is two way and the *Biradry* and land ownership are also influenced by the social status in the village. If one manages to accumulate enough social capital on the basis of remittances, job or a good running business, it is likely that it may lead him/her to own land or even to redefine the caste. This has happened sometimes among the village (*kammi*) castes, when the improved social status has led to shift the caste to that of a higher status caste (*zamindar*). Importantly, one aspect, which merits attention is the fact that despite change of one's caste, there is no complete departure from the practical social attachment or position in respect of the professional caste⁴⁷. So, the boundaries of the village are becoming increasingly blurred and being readjusted according to new patterns of socio-cultural mobility of the people upon the ladder.

Theoretically speaking, structures need to be seen in their lasting or organized form, which can practically hinder or constrain the social, economic or cultural independent play of the agency. As it has already been made clear that structures do not exist as structures there is need to see the social practices in the light of Giddens relevant idea about institutionalized form of structures. Giddens proposes:

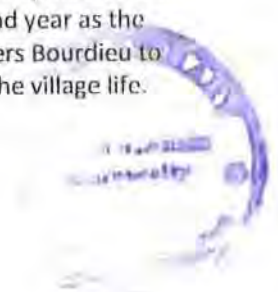
⁴⁷ 'The professional caste' is proposed to be taken as the natural categorization among most of the village people. Moreover, *Kammi* castes still prefer to marry in their own caste the presumed 'natural' one instead of reaffirming the one to which the *tabbar* has shifted.

“We can analyse how ‘deeply layered’ structures are in terms of historical duration of the practices they recursively organise, and the spatial breadth of those practices: how widespread they are across a range of interactions. The most deeply layered practices constitutive of social systems in each of these senses are institutions”⁴⁸ (Giddens 1979: 65).

This must be seen in the light of presented data, which highlights transition in all important social practices in the village to the changing social institutions like *seyy*, marriage patterns and multipolarity of determinants of social status. This transition in most of the important social practices and institutions can not be understood in the light of Bourdieu’s habitus as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (Bourdieu 1990: 53). Furthermore, Bourdieu’s understanding of the ‘social order’ is also problematic in the light of data at hand. Bourdieu proposes “Social order is first of all a rhythm, a tempo. Conforming to the social order is primarily a matter of respecting rhythms”⁴⁹ (Bourdieu 1979: 27-28). So, the village is in the process of transition and needs to be understood in the light of more dynamic and vibrant models as one proposed by Giddens unlike the one advanced by Bourdieu to take social order as a ‘rhythm’ to show ‘respect to rhythm’. An important distinction between Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ and Giddens “leading theorem of structuration” is “every social actor knows a great deal about conditions of reproduction

⁴⁸ Giddens (1986) idea about the structural composition of institutions can be understood in relation with his understanding of “agency” an actor must have. He advances his idea “Power relations are always two-way: that is to say , however subordinate an actor may be in a social relationship, the very fact of involvement in the relationship gives him or her a certain amount of power over the other” (Giddens 1979: 6).

⁴⁹ Bourdieu (1979) extends his understanding of the social order to the group or collective sphere as well “Belonging to the group means behaving in the same way at the same time of the day and year as the other members of the group” (Bourdieu 1979: 28). This is important reason, which renders Bourdieu to some extent irrelevant with the main argument of the study about the social change in the village life.



of the society of which he or she is member" (Giddens 1979: 5). Despite some reservations about undue ascendance of the concept of agency, Giddens remains more relevant to see the social transition in the village.

5.1 Envisioning Future Prospects

It is not an easy task for a researcher to predict the attitude of individuals or to predict the pattern of social change, due to the nature of society itself. This has also been advocated by Anthony Giddens in the introduction of his one of famous books as main problem to define this relationship between society and its possible different interpretations. Giddens argues "Sociology is by its very nature controversial" (Giddens 1984: xiiv, introduction). However, the author feels emboldened due to research experience and first hand information about the village to understand some of the causes which may shape future course of action of different actors and forces in the village.

The changing dynamics and their speed in the given socio-cultural cum economic milieu of the village lends credence to certain trends. The diversity of changing mechanisms and their resultant forms are strong enough to mark a more robust shift in the influence of the primary factors. These primary factors like land ownership and *biradry* system, as studied can not assume central position in the village life in coming times. Land ownership still remains cherished among all the village people as families, but the shrinking size of it does not allow its ownership across the society. Furthermore, the ownership, if renegotiated from *zamindars* to non-*zamindars* would not be anymore related with its traditional symbols of status and prestige in the village life. It is expected and mutually agreed perception among the village people that land does not remain significant for agricultural purposes due to its very size, but it has already started



assuming commercial value. This commercialization, itself does not advance the symbols of village itself like earlier sense of the village. For example, there may be no well-defined relationship among the people merely on the basis of land ownership as *zamidar* and *kammi*. So, commercialization of the land is on the rise and is expected to take its shape more rapidly within coming decade. This commercialization will also sharpen the process of urbanization of the life style in the village, which is already marked and preferred way among the youth of the village.

This increasing reliance upon money and diversification of professional options itself has important role to play in social structure of the village. As the monetized sphere seems to transcend boundaries of *biradry*, there are no prospects of tradition to remain long-lasting. The increased monetization has already divested *biradry* of its many functions and it seems to accelerate in the coming days. These practices would become clearer with the passage of time through the marriage partner's selections and the role education is likely to play for defining social status in the village. Education and remittances are two main elements in determining a family's social status in the village. Over the time, these both contributors are likely to play the defining role, which may crisscross the social, economic and symbolic boundaries of the village.

<i>Jaddi pushti</i>	Belonging to paternal ancestors.
<i>Hamsaya/gawaandhi</i>	Neighbour.
<i>Kammi</i>	The professional caste working in the village as a permanent Feature.
<i>Khatt</i>	The laag paid to kammis, considered as more important.
<i>Laag</i>	The material either in money or in kind paid to kammi as a Payment of services at special events.
<i>Maachhi</i>	A profession in the village, who was supposed to provide the wood and water to the households, with whom they were on <i>seyp</i> .
<i>Mannat</i>	A religious custom when a sacrifice or distribution of food is practiced to thank a saint in return of the fulfilled wish.
<i>Mochi</i>	Cobbler
<i>Nanki dheri</i>	Inherited land share from mother's inheritance
<i>Obadd/ghair</i>	Non-relative
<i>Pind</i>	Village
<i>Peke</i>	House of the father and brothers
<i>Susral</i>	The in-laws

<i>Rishtaydar</i>	Relatives
<i>Rakh rakhao</i>	Mutual dealings in the society based upon reciprocity
<i>Shaamlat</i>	Village common land.
<i>Seyp</i>	Formal practice of exchange of professional services between <i>zamindars</i> and <i>kammis</i> or among <i>kammis</i> .
<i>Qawwali</i>	One type of traditional sufi music.
<i>Tabbar/kumba</i>	Household.
<i>Urs/mela</i>	Annual anniversary of saint.
<i>Vartan bhanji</i>	Exchange of gift and networking of social relations based upon 'Reciprocity'
<i>Vehi</i>	A register to keep an account of money given or received or ceremonial occasions.
<i>Viratsat</i>	Inheritance
<i>Vangaar</i>	Collective labour
<i>Zamindar</i>	One who owns land



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