

# **Continuity and Change in Pashtun Culture after 9/11: A Case Study of South Waziristan**



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**Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations (TIAC)  
Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad  
2024**

# **Continuity and Change in Pashtun Culture after 9/11: A Case Study of South Waziristan**



A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of.  
Doctor of Philosophy in Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization (TIAC).

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**Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations (TIAC)**  
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**2024**

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It is hereby declared that this thesis titled " Continuity and Change in Pashtun Culture after 9/11: A Case Study of South Waziristan" submitted for the PhD degree to Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations (TIAC) is my own research work and has concurrently not been submitted to any other university for any other degree.

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This is to certify that this thesis entitled "Continuity and Change in Pashtun Culture after 9/11: A Case Study of South Waziristan" is accepted by Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations in its current form as fulfilling all the requirements for the award of PhD degree.


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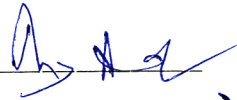
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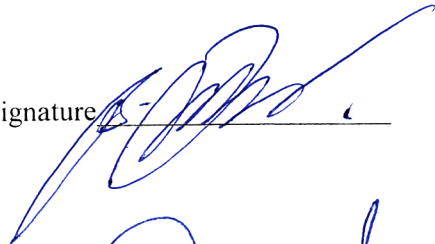
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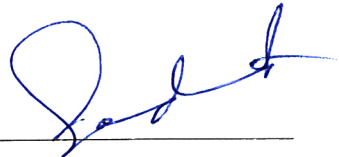
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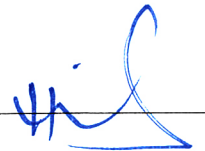
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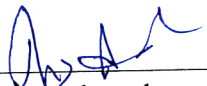
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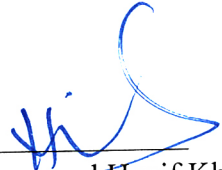
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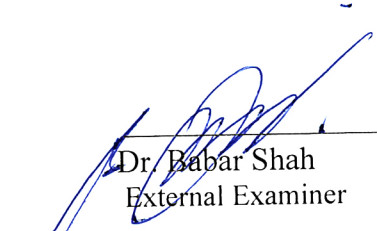
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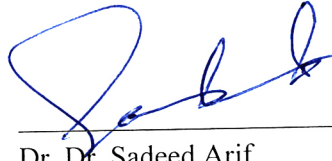
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## **Abbreviations**

ANP: Awami National Party  
D. I. Khan: Dera Ismail Khan  
ECP: Election Commission of Pakistan  
ETIM: Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement  
FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas  
FCR: Frontier Crimes regulation  
FC: Frontier Constabulary  
FGD: Focus Group Discussion  
ICG: International Crisis Group  
IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons  
IMU: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan  
JUI-F: Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam-Fazl  
LIFG: Libyan Islamic Fighters Group  
KP: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa  
MTM: Mahsud Tahafuz Movement  
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations  
PPP: Pakistan People's Party  
PTM: Pashtun Tahafuz Movement  
US: United States  
WoT: War on Terror

## **Dedication**

*Dedicated to the Mahsud tribe which suffered a lot due to the militancy and the subsequent military operations*

## Abstract

Mahsud tribe residing in South Waziristan is one of major tribes of Pashtuns. Like any other Pashtun tribe living in a specific geography and having limited interaction with the outside world, Mahsud tribe too adheres to the broader tenants of Pashtunwali though its socio-cultural system also possess some norms peculiar to it. Being in a specific territory and with very limited intersection with the outside world, the tribe successfully resisted the entry of foreign influences into its culture values. The 9/11 incident, however proved a major catalyst as far as transformation of its socio-cultural system is concerned. The emergence of militancy and the subsequent military operations forced almost the whole tribe to migrate to other parts of the country. Thus, members of this tribe settled in the four provinces of Pakistan though heir major centers were Tank, D. I Khan, and Karachi. This migration led to extensive and intensive interaction with other cultures. This prolong interaction naturally creates the impression that Mahsud culture will have been influenced by other cultures and vice versa. It was in this context that this researcher conducted her research to empirically investigate whether the Mahsud culture underwent any changes. Therefore, the most important question which this researcher tried to answer was as what are the impacts of the 9/11 incident and the subsequent developments on the Pashtun culture with focus on the Mahsud tribe of South Waziristan.

The researcher used qualitative method for collecting data and the main tools for data collection were interviews, focus group discussions, and informal interactions with members of the tribe during her long fieldwork. Historical Particularism and Diffusionism were employed as theoretical framework for the study. The data revealed that Mahsud culture has undergone many changes during the last more than ten years. Mahsud dress, food, marriage and death rituals, architecture, economy, language, gender roles, politics, role of religion all have witnessed changes. Thus, though the Mahsud tribe is follows and retains its culture but at the same time it is also going through rapid transformation.

# Table of contents

Student Declaration .....	I
Supervisor Certificate .....	II
Certificate of Approval .....	III
Plagiarism Undertaking .....	V
Acknowledgments .....	VI
Abbreviations .....	VII
Dedication .....	VIII
Abstract .....	IX
Table of contents .....	X
Chapter 1 .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Introduction and Rationale of the Study .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	4
Objectives of the study .....	5
Research questions .....	5
Significance of the Study .....	6
Limitations of the study and functional definition of words .....	6
Hypothesis .....	8
Review of the literature and gaps in the existing literature .....	9
Research methodology .....	13
Organization of the study .....	17
Chapter 2 .....	19
Theoretical Framework .....	19
Introduction .....	19
Historical Particularism .....	26
Diffusionism .....	29
Transition in Culture .....	33
Chapter 3 .....	35
Pashtuns' Origin, History, land, and Culture .....	35
Introduction .....	35
Dialects of Pashtu language .....	47
Same people different names .....	47
Pashtun/Pashtanah and Pakhtun/Pakhtanah .....	48

Rohilla .....	49
Pathan .....	49
Geography of Pashtuns .....	51
Tribal division among Pashtuns/ Division of Pashtuns into tribes .....	53
Pashtun Society .....	56
Pashtunwali: The unwritten code of conduct for Pashtuns .....	58
Melmastia .....	60
Badal .....	61
Nanawatay/ Nanawati .....	63
Nang .....	64
Namus .....	65
Tura (Bravery) .....	65
Jirga .....	66
Chapter 4 .....	69
Research Setting: The Mahsud tribe of South Waziristan .....	69
Introduction .....	69
Religion of the Mahsud tribe .....	74
Economy .....	75
Politics .....	79
Mahsud Culture and Customs .....	83
Chapter 5 .....	84
Mahsud culture in transition: An analysis of the Tangible heritage .....	84
Introduction .....	84
Dress .....	86
Food .....	93
Marriage and wedding ceremonies and rituals .....	100
Death and burial rituals .....	106
Economy .....	111
Architecture .....	114
Sports and games .....	116
Chapter 6 .....	121
Mahsud culture in transition: An inquiry into the intangible cultural heritage .....	121
Introduction .....	121
Language and dialect .....	121
Gender/Social roles .....	124
Hospitality .....	129

Folk dance, (dance), Poetry, and Music .....	132
Attanrh-اتن .....132	132
Music .....	138
Poetry .....	141
Religion .....	145
Politics .....	149
Attitude toward Education .....	152
Chapter 7 .....	154
"Erosion of precious social values" .....	154
Introduction .....	154
Elders lost respect .....	154
Indifference towards others' sorrow and grief .....	155
Decreasing importance of community .....	157
Changing family structure .....	159
Declining identity consciousness .....	160
Exposure of womenfolk to the outside world .....	162
Conclusion .....	167
References .....	171

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **Introduction and Rationale of the Study**

Stability and change are two inherent features of any socio-cultural system. No culture can always remain the same. In other words, stability and change co-exist. Sources of change in culture are several and are not always restricted to the internal dialects of a culture (Portes, 2008). It is culture's this dual nature due to which it helps human beings to adjust to changing environments.

Now there arises a question as what are the factors that make a culture to undergo changes. According to O'Neil, there are three broader sources that are responsible for both the change in culture as well as resistance to it. They are the forces at play in a given society, inter-societies' interaction, and alterations in the natural environment (Hassan, 2014).

Migration is one of the most important causes of cultural changes (Portes, 2008). Migration may be defined as the process in which people go from one country, region, or place of residence to another (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Thus it can be international, national, or local and the number of people migrating can range from a small group to the entire population's mass displacement (Shimkin, 1983). Like the number of people involved, the length of their new settlement also varies from case to case. Migration is classified as immigration or sojourn when the migrants voluntarily change their location but when they involuntarily change their location then they are

termed as refugees<sup>1</sup>. Immigrants intentionally choose to change their location for possible educational or economic uplift and thus be in regular and increased contact with the majority culture. On the other hand, refugees are forced to leave their abode to escape persecution and thus come in contact with the majority culture involuntarily (Bhugra & Becker, 2005).

Migration sometimes leaves minor effects on a culture but in some cases it goes deeper into the structure of a culture with long lasting impacts. There are mainly three factors that determine whether the impact of migration will be superficial or it will go deep inside the culture. These factors are (a) the number of people who migrate (b) the length of time of their migration (c) migration's class composition (Portes, 2008).

Pashtuns, with exonyms like Afghans, Pushtoon, Pathan, Pashtoon, Pukhtoon also used for them, are an ethnic group living in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa<sup>2</sup> are the two provinces where they are mostly concentrated. Pashtuns make up about 15% of Pakistan's population (Yousaf, 2019). In Afghanistan, they are the largest ethnic group comprising some 40 percent of its total population. According to anthropologists, Pashtuns' social structure is a segmentary lineage system. This is a social system in which there is a hierarchy of social groupings from the local level, moving upwards through different levels finally reaching an entire ethnic group. Kinship and common culture provides the basis to these types of relationships (Tainter and MacGregor, 2011).

Among the Pashtuns, behaviour is guided by specific cultural norms and values called

*Pashtunwali*- the way of the Pashtuns or Pashtunness. Pashtunwali can be construed

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<sup>1</sup> Though the Mahsud tribe was forced to migrate from its traditional abode which put it in the category of refugees or displaced persons, in this dissertation they are also referred to as migrants with their displacement as migration.

<sup>2</sup> Including the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas.



as Pashtuns' ethnic self-portrayal. It comprises traditions through which Pashtuns differentiate themselves from other socio-cultural groups. These traditions include a refined code of honor, tribal spirit and demand for martial bravery, consultations, ethical and moral norms of behaviour, and a system of customary legal rules (Rzehak, 2011a). Thus, the main cultural codes of Pashtuns are Jirga (tribal councils consisting of elders), Nang (honor), Hujrah (common sitting place), Badal (revenge and reciprocity), Melmastya (hospitality), Nanawatay (law of refuge/forgiveness), Badragga (safe conduct), Lashkar (militias), and Tiga (truce) (Yousaf, 2019). Pashtunwali is actually an ethno-centric notion as it is based on the principle that Pashtuns are different from all other ethnic groups. The fundamental tenets of Pashtunwali have been transmitted verbally for centuries (Rzehak, 2011a).

While writing about the tribes of deserts of Arabia and Africa, Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun observes that such tribes remain non-susceptible to any change because of their geographic location. He writes that such tribes happen to be too far away to come under the influence of outside values. Such societies happen to be egalitarian and acephalous and maintain internal order by consensus. He adds that maintaining order in such border societies was very problematic because they were a political no-man's land between two states beyond the control of either. Being at the ecological frontier zones, such societies were least affected by political changes because state's authority hardly infiltrated their structure (Barfield, 1991).

The Pashtun society under Pashtunwali, according to Glatzer, is an example of such an ethnocentric society living in its own sociological system and tribal customary law (Glatzer, 2000). Because of their geography, Pashtuns particularly those living in the hilly parts of the Pashtun belt for centuries remained free from outside control. They

not only resisted foreign powers' invasions and control of their land but also protected their distinct socio-cultural values from outside influence. The 9/11 incident, however, seems to have brought drastic changes to socio-cultural norms of the Pashtun society especially in the borderland between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The new material concept associated with westernization, modernization, and globalization did not penetrate the tribal society as deeply as other societies. However, the 9/11 incident brought drastic changes to the tribal culture and way of life. The events that followed 9/11 and were closely associated with it led to the arrival of a large number of militants from different regions of the world, displacement of the natives to leave in other areas and the introduction of new socio-cultural norms into the tribal code of conduct (Dani, 1969). These developments then left a deep impact on socio-cultural institutions of the tribal society. These changes in the tribal culture by factors other than the ecological ones lead us to the argument of Diffusionism theory which argues that cultures undergo changes as a result of interaction with each other.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Pashtuns in general and those living in the borderlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan have shown much resistance to outside cultural influences. Even the impacts of modernization, globalization, westernization, and technological developments could not penetrate deeply into the socio-cultural values of the tribal society. However, the developments linked with the 9/11 incident with deeper consequences for this region brought drastic changes to the cultural norms and practices of this society. The militancy and the subsequent military operations which resulted in massive

displacements of the tribal people brought them face to face with new cultures and social systems. It is in this context that this researcher conducted her research to gauge the magnitude of change in socio-cultural norms and practices of Pashtuns in general and the Mahsud tribe of South Waziristan in particular. In other words, this research focuses on the transition of Pashtun culture as a result of the 9/11 incident.

## **Objectives of the study**

1. To ascertain the level of influence of the 9/11 incident and the subsequent militancy and military operations leading to massive displacements on the culture of the Mahsud tribe.
2. To ascertain how has the Pashtun culture been adapting itself to the changing environment.
3. To study the relevancy of different theories of cultural transition with the cultural transition of Pashtuns.
4. To highlight common people's views about the changes in their culture.

## **Research questions**

1. What are the impacts of the 9/11 incident and the subsequent developments on the Pashtun culture with focus on the Mahsud tribe of South Waziristan?

This is a multi-dimensional question which has social, economic, religious, and gender aspects. Similarly, it will focus on both tangible and intangible aspects of the culture in question.

2. How has the Pashtun culture been adjusting itself to the changing environment around it?

3. Which theory of culture better explains the changes in Pashtun culture?
4. What the common people think about the rapid changes taking place in their culture.

## **Significance of the Study**

During the last two decades, the Pashtun land in general and the tribal belt along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in particular witnessed unprecedented levels of militancy, violence, displacement, and changes in the socio-cultural life of its people. These developments left a permanent impact on Pashtuns' socio-cultural values. Several people have tried to highlight these changes. However, most of the studies so far conducted have been general or superficial in their nature. This study focuses on a specific tribe (Mahsud) residing in South Waziristan. Instead of providing a general account of the changes taking place in Pashtun culture, this study's main focus is on minute changes brought by the militancy and subsequent displacement in the subculture of Mahsud tribe. An important aspect of this study is that the findings are based on data collected from the field through extensive fieldwork. Unlike most of the other studies on changes in Pashtun culture in recent times, this study mostly uses primary data generated through informal interactions, focus group discussions, and formal interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured).

## **Limitations of the study and functional definition of words**

This study is only focusing on one of the major tribes among Pashtuns. As the sub-cultures of all major Pashtun tribes and areas slightly vary from each other, this study's domain is mainly restricted to the Mahsud sub-culture only. Therefore, equal generalization of this study's findings to Pashtuns of all regions will not be possible.

Following the military operations in their native area, members of Mahsud tribe migrated to different cities like Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, Karachi, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Lahore etc. Therefore, it was not possible to do fieldwork in all these cities. Thus, the fieldwork was undertaken in places like Tank and Dera Ismail Khan while face to face interviews were also conducted in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Peshawar.

As the target population was spread in different cities even provinces of the country, it was not possible for the researcher to personally visit all the cities. Similarly, due to security concerns among the people, some interviewees felt hesitation in talking to strangers. In order to overcome these and some other issues, the researcher conducted some of the interviews through her acquaintances (research assistants).

Keeping in view time and resources' limitations and safety concerns while moving across the country especially for a female, the researcher had no other choice but to record some of the interviews through modern technologies like WhatsApp and Skype. In some cases, she even sent recorded voice messages to prospective interviewees to which most of them responded in a similar way.

In this research, the terms IDPs migrants have been used almost interchangeably. For understanding the logic behind this, the following explanation is being presented to the readers;

According to OHCHR, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are;

[P]ersons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed

conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border. (OHCHR, para. 1, 2023).

### **Definition of Migrants;**

Shamsuddoha et al define migrants in these words;

Migrants refer to individuals who have changed their place of residence either by crossing an international border (international migration) or by moving within their country of origin to another region, district or municipality (internal migration). People are normally considered 'migrants' if they remain outside their original place of residence for a period of at least three months. (Shamsuddoha et al., p. 18, 2012).

Keeping the above definitions of internal displacement and migration, it can be said that displacement is a specific form of migration in which people are forced to leave their habitual residences against their will. Thus, the forced displacement of Mahsud tribe within country can be termed as internal migration. Therefore, in this research both words (displacement and migration) will be used for them.

### **Hypothesis**

The arrival of militants from diverse backgrounds and nationalities after the US invasion of Afghanistan and the massive displacements of the tribal people as a result of military operations due to which they were ultimately forced to continuously interact with different culture(s) brought very fundamental modifications in their

culture. Tangible and intangible culture components both seem to have been deeply affected by a long and continuous interaction with other cultures.

## **Review of the literature and gaps in the existing literature**

Pashtuns, their origin, history, culture, and way of life are topics that have attracted a large number of scholars including both from among themselves as well as from outside. British officers who served in the Indian subcontinent like Edwardes, Robertson, Warburton, King, Merk, Howell, and Caroe are some of the noted figures who have written on different aspects of Pashtuns. The 9/11 incident and the subsequent war on terror invited a fresh interest in this topic and thus many people have been writing on it. In the following paragraphs, I would very briefly review some of the well-known literature sources related to this topic.

Sir Olaf Caroe's book "*The Pathans, 550 B.C.--A.D. 1957*" (1958), is a thorough study of Pashtun society including its history and culture. Written some six decades ago, the book is still among the most important literature sources on Pashtun society. This book even provides an overview of the different invaders like Greeks, Kushans, White Huns, and Mughals who passed through the land now inhabited by the Pashtuns. It also presents a detailed account of the British's interaction with the Pashtun tribes. James W. Spain's scholarly work "*The Pathan Borderland*" (1963) presents a comprehensive study of Pashtuns' social organization and culture. The book also discusses Pashtuns' uprisings against British rule, British India's various strategies to suppress Pashtuns' resistance, the Anglo-Afghan wars, and the rivalry between Russia and British. It also covers some years of the post-partition period. The writer contends that the techniques and strategies which the British utilized under Frontier Crimes

Regulation (FCR) to oppress the tribes were a continuation of the policies of the Mughal rulers, which included blockade, subsidies, military undertakings, and sustained armies.

Akbar. S. Ahmad's study (1980) deals with the egalitarian and segmentary tribal system of Mohmand tribe. He has focused on both Mohmand people living in the tribal areas (Tribal Area Mohmand-TAM) and Mohmands living in settled districts (Settled Area Mohmand-SAM). The study is a comparative one comparing socio-cultural structures of two sub-groups of the Mohmand tribe. He argues that as compared to the SAM, the TAM more vigorously follows Pashtunwali-the code of conduct for Pakhtuns. Ahmad argues that till the mid-1970s, the tribal society was not much receptive to changes in the value system. However, the migration to the Gulf States and the increased level of contact of the tribal people with the rest of the country started bringing changes in the traditional tribal value system.

Charles Lindholm in his essays "*Frontier Perspectives: Essays in Comparative Anthropology*" (1996) has discussed the tribal structure of frontier societies which he terms as egalitarian in nature. He has shed light on Pashtuns' history, social structure, politics in a tribal society, and the segmentary lineage system of Pashtuns in general and people of Swat in particular. Christine Fair, Nicholas Howenstein, and J. Alexander Their in their report entitled *Troubles on the Pakistan- Afghanistan Border* (2006) have provided a general overview of the Pashtun belt since 2001. The section "Changes in FATA" identifies several important socio-political changes and alterations to traditional power structures. Bernt Glatzer in his essay "*Being Pashtun, Being Muslim: Concepts of Person and War in Afghanistan*" (1998) has discussed the relevance of the Afghan value system for ending the conflict in Afghanistan.



Khalid Aziz in "*Causes of Rebellion in Waziristan*" (2007) has examined the long and short-term causes leading to the unrest in Waziristan. The author argues that a combination of demographic issues, tribal customs and the rise of political Islam in Waziristan are the principal causes of instability in the region. "*Pushtuns, Tribalism, Leadership, Islam and Taliban: A Short View*" by Vern Liebl (2008) discusses Pashtun tribalism, Pashtuns' historical background, their geography, and tribal dynamics. It also discusses the dispute resolution mechanism in the Pashtun society and the impact of Islamic fundamentalism on tribalism. It also examines the interface between Islam and the Pashtunwali. Abu-Bakr Siddique's "*The Pashtun Question: Unresolved Key to the Future of Pakistan and Afghanistan*" (2014) is another good work about the Pashtun society. He has also discussed the war on terror and the importance of peace in the Pashtun land for ensuring peace in the region.

"*Mullah and Maliks: Understanding the Roots of Conflicts in Pakistan's Administered Tribal Area*" by Sammon, Robert Lane presents a multifaceted view of the current conflict in the Pashtun land. It tries to locate the origin and the main actors of this conflict. Lane has also discussed the changing face of the social organization of Pashtun society and ties between Pashtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan from a historical perspective. A very interesting aspect of this work is its analysis of how the British Raj tried and convinced people of the tribal belt to accept its system of indirect rule in the name of their cultural values.

Irfan Habib (2001) has tried to trace the evolution of the Afghan (Pashtun) society and their original place of residence. He has tried to trace the history of use of the word Afghans for these people. Syed Minhaj ul Hassan (2014) in his article "*The Changing Pattern of Pakhtun Culture under the Influence of Diaspora*" has discussed the

influence of Middle Eastern countries on Pashtun culture. He argues that after the 1970s, a large number of Pashtuns went to the Arab countries in search of employment and this interaction with the Arabs in return brought changes in tangible and intangible aspects of the Pashtun culture. Khan Faqir, Bilal Haider, and Sumbal Jameel's (2017) paper entitled "*Geneses, Causes, and Ramification of Militancy in FATA in the Post 9/11 Scenario*" discusses war on terror, role of Pashtunwali in the conflict, causes of militancy, military operations, and militancy's impacts on the tribal belt. However, this paper provides a very superficial analysis of a complex phenomenon.

Akbar Malik (2013) in his paper has discussed the role of the Maliki system in the tribal areas and the impact of militancy on this system. He has presented a good analysis but there is a great deal of generalization and exaggeration as far as the role of tribal elders in Pashtun society is concerned. Farooq Yousaf, in his chapter "*Jirga, Its Role and Evolution in Pakistan's Pashtun "Tribal" Society*"(2021) argues that introduction of FCR reduced the importance of both the tribal elders and the Jirga system. The chapter also discusses the shortcomings in the Jirga system. The author further argues that the merger of the erstwhile FATA with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province poses a challenge to the Jirga system to survive as a conflict resolution mechanism.

In addition to the literature cited above, there are many other very important works covering different aspects of Pashtuns' life. The above mentioned sources have made very insightful contributions to the literature on Pashtuns. On the one hand, there are people like Caroe, Akbar S. Ahmad, and Lindholm, Spain who have tried to present historical aspects of Pashtun society. On the other hand, there are those who have

tried to highlight the changes that have been taking place in the social and cultural values of Pashtuns. Despite the fact that each source has made enough contribution to the literature on the topic, still we find enough gaps for conducting more research. Most of the works about changes in the Pashtun culture in recent times are general in nature without diving deep into minute details of the phenomenon. In these works, we find very few examples of concrete evidence about socio-cultural changes in the Pashtun society.

As far as this work is concerned, it is a case study focusing on a specific tribe-Mahsud. Almost the entire tribe was made Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as a result of military operations and majority of the members of which still live in places other than their original abode. This study is mainly based on extensive fieldwork and primary data and thus looks at the phenomenon from a very close range. It actually reflects the opinions of the people of the tribe under study and how they perceive the changes in their culture. Being a case study, it pays great attention to minute details of the sub-culture of a specific tribe.

## **Research methodology**

In social sciences or soft sciences, there are subjects that, principally, use either quantitative or qualitative methods of research. For instance, subjects like anthropology, sociology, and history mainly rely on qualitative method while disciplines such as education, epidemiology, marketing, psychology, economics, and public health largely rely on quantitative method. This, however, does not mean that subjects identified with one research method never apply the other research method

(Kumar, 2011). As the study at hand is an anthropological one, so it is the qualitative method which was used for this inquiry.

A qualitative research is a social sciences research which collects and works with non-numerical data and tries to interpret the data to make a social phenomenon understandable by studying a targeted population (Crossman, 2020). In other words, a study is categorized as qualitative if its primary aim is to describe a problem, phenomenon, situation or event, if the data for the study is collected through the use of qualitative measurement scales (variables measured on ordinal or nominal scales) and if the analysis for establishing the variation in the problem, phenomenon, situation or event is done without quantifying it. The account of an observed situation, an account of the diverse opinions people hold about an issue, the historical enumeration of events, and the description of the everyday life conditions of a given community are some of the examples of qualitative research (Kumar, 2011).

One of the most important merits of qualitative research is its capacity to describe the patterns and process of human behaviour that happens to be difficult to quantify (Tenny et al., 2021). Qualitative research actually focuses on words rather than numbers, depth rather than breadth. As respondents in a qualitative research are able to freely express themselves without much constraints, it provides a unique depth of understanding of a phenomenon which cannot easily be gained from data collected through a survey with close ended questions. In this method, a researcher has the opportunity to follow up on the answers provided by the earlier respondents and thus generate a debate around a topic. This is not possible in quantitative methods (Tiley, 2017).

The most common data collection techniques in qualitative research are document study, semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and focus group discussions (Busetto et al., 2020), in-depth interviews, analysis of texts and documents such as government reports, media articles, websites or diaries (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Qualitative research generates descriptive data which is then to be interpreted and explained by the researcher by employing systematic and rigorous methods of transcribing, coding, and analysis of trends and themes (Crossman, 2020).

As this study falls under the domain of anthropology, this researcher used the qualitative method for conducting this research. She first conducted extensive literature reviews to broaden her understanding of the subject matter. For this purpose, she studied historical books, monographs, articles published in various research journals and media reports. Though one can find many articles highlighting socio-cultural changes taking place in the Pashtun land in general, but these articles have not properly covered all the changes. In other words, they provide a very superficial account of the changes through which the Pashtun culture has passed during the last two decades. To fill this gap, this researcher conducted proper fieldwork to get primary data for this research project. Having enough time and easy access to the target population, she conducted informal interviews, in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions, and observed cultural events as a non-participant observer. This fieldwork proved an asset for this research as it provided enough space for a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of the culture under study. As the researcher collected data from people through interviews, it can also be said that the study also has a component of oral history to record people's living experiences and the changes they witnessed.

As stated in the 'Limitations of the study and functional definition of words' section, following the military operations in their native area, members of Mahsud tribe migrated to different cities like Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, Karachi, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Lahore etc. Therefore, it was not possible to do fieldwork in all these cities. Thus, the fieldwork was undertaken in places like Tank and Dera Ismail Khan while face to face interviews were also conducted in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Peshawar.

As the target population was spread in different cities even provinces of the country, it was not possible for the researcher to personally visit all the cities. Similarly, due to security concerns among the people, some interviewees felt hesitation in talking to strangers. In order to overcome these and some other issues, the researcher conducted some of the interviews through her acquaintances (research assistants).

Keeping in view time and resources' limitations and safety concerns while moving across the country especially for a female, the researcher had no other choice but to record some of the interviews through modern technologies like WhatsApp and Sky. In some cases, she even sent recorded voice messages to prospective interviewees to most of them responded in a similar way.

This limitation had its impacts on the quality of the study. For example, there were interruptions in online interview due to network problems. Similarly, the researcher in online interviews was not able to note and observe the body gestures of the interviewees.

In case of interviews through research assistants, the data revealed that the interviewers could not always put up follow up questions as required by the responses. Similarly, facial and bodily expressions could not be noted by the researcher herself. It was also felt that the interviewers did not bother to ask interviewees for give some solid examples in support of their statements/claims.

In short, the fact that some interviews were conducted online or through research assistants must have affected the quality of data and ultimately of this research. As the researchers were not properly trained professionals, so they could not collect data as desired by the researcher. But there was no other better solution to it. Furthermore, as the researcher herself conducted extensive fieldwork interviewing people from different walks of life, it can be expected that she neutralized the negative impacts of interviews conducted online or through research assistants.

## **Organization of the study**

This study is divided into seven chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter one is introductory in nature. It provides general introduction of the topic, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, research questions, limitations of this research, review of the existing literature, and research methodology.

Chapter two sets a comprehensive theoretical framework for this research. It employs two theories of culture evolution to account for the changes in the culture of the target population.

The third chapter is historical in nature. It presents a detailed account of Pashtuns, their history, geography, and major socio-cultural values.

Chapter four is about the research setting: the Mahsud tribe of South Waziristan. It provides detailed background, history, geography, and cultural values of the Mahsud tribe.

The fifth and sixth chapters discuss the major changes that took place in the tangible (Ch. 5) and intangible (Ch. 6) components of Mahsud culture.

The seventh chapter is mainly about people's perceptions about the changes in their culture. The last three chapters can be termed as the findings of this study.

The last part is the conclusion of the whole thesis.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Introduction**

If we ask dozens of anthropologists and sociologists to give a definition of culture, we will most probably get as many definitions as the number of scholars asked for it. This difficulty in defining culture was well expressed by M. Apte who in his chapter published in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Apte, 1994, 2001) by noting that "[d]espite a century of efforts to define culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature." It was this diversity of definitions of culture that led two American anthropologists Kluckhohn and Kroeber to compile a list of more than 150 various definitions of culture. (Lebrón, 2013). Though there is no universal definition of culture, still the majority of scholars would agree that culture is something which is shared by the whole community, is transmitted from generation to generation, and which influences beliefs and behaviour of members of the community.

Some of the definitions of culture presented by well-known scholars are reproduced here.

According to famous English anthropologist and the founder of cultural anthropology Edward Burnett Tylor, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1871). To American sociologist Robert Bierstedt,

"Culture is the complex whole that consists of all the ways we think and do and everything we have as members of society." (Bierstedt, 1970, p. 123). For Hunt and Horton, "Culture is everything which is socially shared and learned by the members of a society." Ralph Linton defined culture as 'the way of life of its members: the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation.' (Pathania, 2020, p. 80).

According to H.T. Mazumdar, "Culture is the sum total of human achievements material as well as non-material, capable of transmission, sociologically i.e. by tradition-and communication, vertically as well as horizontally." Malinowski defines it by saying that "culture is the handwork of man and the medium through which he achieves his ends." (Kaur & Sangeeta, 2017). For S. Koenig, "Culture is the sum total of man's efforts to adjust himself to his environment and to improve his modes of living." (Pathania, 2020, p. 81).

Wall and Mathieson define culture as 'behaviors as observed, through social relations and material artifacts and in a deeper anthropological sense, includes patterns, norms, rules and standards which find expression in behavior, social relations and artifacts' while Jordan-Bychkov, Domosh, Neumann and Price define it as 'a communication system of acquired beliefs, memories, perceptions, traditions, and attitudes that serves to shape behavior' (Coşkun, 2021, p. 359).

Kessing considers a culture as a system of socially communicated patterns of behaviour that helps to relate human communities to their ecological settings. These ways of life of societies include modes of social, economic and political organization, settlement patterns, technologies, religious philosophies and rituals and so on (Kessing, 1974).

According to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, culture

encompasses, *inter alia*, ways of life, language, oral and written literature, music and song, non-verbal communication, religion or belief systems, rites and ceremonies, sport and games, methods of production and technology, natural and man-made environments, food, clothing and shelter and the arts, customs and traditions through which individuals, groups of individuals and communities express their humanity and the meaning they give to their existence, and build their view representing their encounters with the external forces affecting their lives. Culture shapes and mirrors the values of well-being and the economic, social and political life of individuals, groups of individuals and communities. (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2009, para 13).

In addition to the above mentioned definitions, there are many other well-known and well-documented definitions of culture. Most of the scholars agree that it is based on values, social institutions, religion, customs, languages, manners, attitudes, status, policies, economy, education and material items (Lebrón, 2013).

By putting the above mentioned definitions of culture together, we can say that culture is the way of life of a particular community. It includes, customs, values, laws, norms, rituals, ethics, social standards, modes of social groupings, patterns, beliefs, knowledge, technologies, symbols, art, music, songs, morals, habits, shared identity, material and non-material human achievements, human efforts for adjustment to the environment, political and economic organization and all other capabilities that humans acquire and practice as members of a society. It is something which is learned

and shared by all the members of a given society and which is transmitted from generation to generation. It is something which gives the sense of identity and belongingness. It is spiritual, intellectual, and moral discipline for advancement in accordance with societal values and norms. Thus, culture has both material and non-material aspects. The material aspects of culture include tangible or concrete things like food, dress, and shelter etc. while non-material components of culture are intangible or immaterial creations of human society like beliefs, norms, customs, and values etc.

The term culture draws on notions like race, ethnicity, shared identity, and is based on elements of distinction like language, nationality, religion, and caste etc. The shared world view provided by culture to a community is flexible and dynamic and subject to transformation through cultural interaction (Gopalkrishnan, 2019). Culture can also be termed as the software of the mind as it plays a crucial role in shaping the decision making process of individuals (Aggarwal & Zhan, 2017).

As far as this study is concerned, it will be Historical Particularism and Diffusionism which will provide conceptual and theoretical explanation for it. Before giving detailed account of these two theories, the researcher will briefly discuss the theory of cultural evolutionism to provide background to Historical Particularism.

The very first theory outlining development of culture was evolutionism. In the earlier phase of anthropology, anthropologists believed that all cultures developed or evolved in a uniform manner. This approach was called unilineal evolution. This approach was based on the idea that there is an established order of stages through which all people (cultures) would pass at some point of time though the speed of their progress may vary greatly (Long & Chakov, 2009). Tylor presented the idea that every society

passes through three different phases which he called as savagery, barbarism and civilization (Diah et al., 2014). Morgan also presented these three stages but he subdivided savagery and barbarism each into three further sub-stages of lower, middle, and upper (Kottak, 2011).

According to Morgan, in the lower savagery, people's subsistence was on nuts and fruits while they discovered fire and started fishing in the middle savagery. The upper savagery was marked by the invention of the arrow. Similarly, invention of pottery marked lower barbarism, domestication of plants and animals and cultivated agriculture the middle barbarism while iron smelting and iron tools' use ushered in the upper barbarism. The final stage, civilization, arrived with the invention of writing. Morgan argued that all societies evolved through these phases and that various societies of his time could be placed somewhere in these stages. Like Morgan, Tylor adopted an evolutionary approach with regard to anthropology of religion. He projected a unilineal trajectory from animism to polytheism, monotheism, and ultimately science. He argued that religion will be given less importance when science provides better explanations (Kottak, 2011).

This school of anthropologists, which was mainly dominated by the British scholars, argued that man progressed from a state of simple and amoral savagery to a civilized condition with the ultimate achievement being the Victorian Englishman of the industrial society and political democracy with belief in the Empire and the Church of England (Steward, 1956).

According to this school of thought, cultures, just like species that were believed to develop into complex forms from simpler ones, too evolved from simple to complex states (Long & Chakov, 2009). They assumed that cultural evolution in all societies

across the world followed the same line and was governed by the same principles. Furthermore, they argued that all human societies were supposed to march toward a Europe-like civilization (Steward, 1956, Smith, 1961, Wagoner, 2014). The Unilineal theory of cultural evolution basically placed the European and American civilization as the ultimate destination of humanity (Hitchens, 1994).

The unilineal evolution theory had two main assumptions: psychic unity and superiority of western societies to the rest of the world. Psychic unity implies that human minds have similar characteristics throughout the world which means that all people and their cultures will pass through the same phases of development (Jaiswal, 2018). Because of this similarity in their mental framework, people of different communities even acting independently approach their problems in the same manner (Wagoner, 2014, Long & Chakov, 2009). The second assumption of western superiority was based on the facts of the time: economic and military dominance of the West over the rest of the countries of the world which were technologically underdeveloped (Jaiswal, 2018).

The data used by unilineal evolutionists for their analysis was collected from missionaries, explorers, traders, businessmen, travelers and government officials who visited various parts of the world. As Western societies at that time had the most advanced technology, they were put at the highest level of civilization (Jaiswal, 2018, Diah et al, 2014, Wagoner, 2014).

Among the prominent proponents of unilineal evolution theory were scholars like British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor, American lawyer and banker Lewis H. Morgan, Finnish scholar Edward Westermarck, Scottish lawyer John Ferguson

McLennan, and Scottish anthropologist James Frazer (Steward, 1956, Long & Chakov, 2009, Diah et al, 2014).

When the theory of unilineal evolution was criticized by another theoretical framework known as Historical Particularism, its proponents modified it and presented the concept of multilinear evolutionism. The collapse of the unilineal evolution theory started with the anthropological inquiries of Historical Particularism led by Franz Boas and Robert H. Lowie (Steward, 1956). Historical Particularism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century rejected the 19<sup>th</sup> century theory of evolutionism (unilineal evolution) as unscientific. Therefore, anthropologists would avoid this theory until the theory of Neo-evolutionism (multilinear evolution) emerged in the 1930s. Thus, it were the Neo-evolutionists who brought this theory back to debate and reformed it to make it acceptable for the contemporary anthropologists (Jaiswal, 2018). For example, American anthropologist and one of the leading Neo-evolutionist Julian Steward wrote:

The facts now accumulated indicate that human culture evolved along a number of different lines; we must think of cultural evolution not as unilineal but as multilinear. This is the new basis upon which evolutionists today are seeking to build an understanding of the development of human cultures. It is an ecological approach-an attempt to learn how the factors in each given type of situation shaped the development of a particular type of society. (Steward, 1956, pp. 73-74).

Steward further observed that no doubt all humans have a biological basis to find rational solutions and certain features of culture may emerge from the use of reason,

but the solutions may take different forms due to differences in the prevailing circumstances. He further argues that much culture develops slowly and indiscernibly without much thought. Furthermore, the development of human institutions have also been affected by specific circumstances and times in which they were adapted in different societies (Steward, 1956).

Similarly, Leslie Alvin White, another prominent Neo-evolutionist, argued that it is beyond any doubt that culture has evolved. However, he argued, all cultures might not have followed the same trajectory during their evolutionary process (Kottak, 2011).

## **Historical Particularism**

After evolutionism, another important school of thought in the development of anthropological theories is Historical Particularism. The founder of this theory was Franz Boas, a German-American anthropologist also considered as the father of American anthropology (Diah et al, 2014).

Historical Particularism is the idea that every culture has its own unique and particular history and that there are no universal laws that govern all cultures. It was developed as a reaction to evolutionism (Parker, 2010). Before the emergence of Historical Particularism, many anthropologists were of the view that there was one universal order through which all cultures evolve and develop (Chakraborty, 2018). Contrary to the evolutionary school of thought which used universal themes and generalities to claim that all cultures develop in a similar manner, historical particularism argued that cultural behaviors must be explained in terms of particular cultural contexts rather than broad reference to a general evolutionary process. Historical particularism's proponents argued that as every culture has a distinctive and individual history, so they can neither be compared nor subjected to generalities. They further argued that if



some traits are similar between cultures they might have diffused as a result of interaction among different cultures. That even these same traits will lead to the development of unique and different histories while moving through different societies (Parker, 2010).

Boas rejected evolutionists' division of societies into three main stages and showed this classification to be based on insufficient research data. He added that researchers' value judgement cannot be used for the ranking of different societies (Jaiswal, 2018) and stressed the importance of fieldwork in ethnographic research (Diah et al, 2014). He argued that there is no evidence to support evolutionists' claim about universal stages for cultural evolution in all societies and that once this assumption is removed, the entire unilineal theory collapses like a house of cards (Moore, 2009).

He termed the proponents of evolutionism as armchair anthropologists who used second-hand data provided by colonial officers, missionaries, and traders in an unscientific way to serve their own preconceived ideas (Chakraborty, 2018). Being a strong advocate of fieldwork, Boas introduced participant observation in the fieldwork of anthropology and suggested that anthropological theories be derived from concrete anthropological data collected through fieldwork. It was through his fieldwork that Boas collected huge primary data about the Native Americans in the US. On the basis of his ethnographic data he claimed that societies can be understood while keeping in view their own precise cultural and environmental contexts as well as their historical process (Jaiswal, 2018).

According to Historical Particularism, every society's culture has its own individuality and unique historical development. It was in this context that Boas presented the idea of cultural relativism and urged anthropologists to ignore the predominant

ethnocentric conception of culture (Diah et al, 2014). Thus, Historical Particularism explained specific cultures rather than establishing general cultural theories applicable to every society (Jaiswal, 2018).

While highlighting the diversity among cultures across the world, Boas noted;

The study of the types of cultures found the world over gives the impression of an enormous diversity of forms. The differences are so great that we may be inclined to think that every one of these cultures developed quite independently and that the peculiar genius of the people has found expression in the forms under which they live. (Boas, 1937, p. 286).

Historical Particularism rejected the idea of psychic unity proposed by evolutionism. It presented many examples to show that seemingly alike solutions to problems faced by different people were arrived at through diverse historical courses instead of following the same path (Hitchens, 1994). It insisted that every cultural element like culture trait or trait complex had their own typical history and that social forms like totemism in various societies might seem alike but they were far from identical as they had different histories. Historical particularism argued that totemism in different societies did not develop through a uniform process. Instead, it argued, totemism's histories and causes in different societies were different due to which they could not be compared (Kottak, 2011).

Similarly, the practice of giving offerings to ancestors may have different purposes in different societies. The motives may include honoring the ancestors, bribing them not to hurt the living, seeking their intercession with higher powers on the behalf of the

living, or honoring the social group of the living. Boas argued that cultural practices appearing similar may be the result of very different causes and therefore, their real causes can be known only through extensive ethnographic fieldwork (Moore, 2009). Historical Particularism also rejected evolutionism's notion of categorization of societies into savage, barbaric and civilized on the ground that this approach involves sort of belittling. This school of thought suggested anthropologists follow idiographic rather than nomothetic approach<sup>3</sup> (Diah et al, 2014).

The Boasian school of thought rejected evolutionism's claims of white supremacy and more civility of the developed world. Through his empirical data, he showed that language, race, and culture were not coextensive entities and that there was no innate racial inheritance guaranteeing the white man's natural right to rule. (Hitchens, 1994). Boas, after traveling to Baffinland and meeting its people observed that;

The more I see their customs, the more I realize that we have no right to look down on them. Where amongst our people would you find such true hospitality? ..... We "highly educated people" are much worse, relatively speaking." (Diah et al, 2014, Page 159).

## **Diffusionism**

After Historical Particularism, the second blow to evolutionary theory was the emergence of a new theoretical framework in anthropology which claimed that cultures diffused or spread from one group of people to another through the process of diffusion (Steward, 1956). This new theory, Diffusionism, started developing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Diah et al, 2014).

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<sup>3</sup> In nomothetic approach, we find laws and generalizations applicable to all people while idiographic approach involves dealing with specific or particular cases.

Diffusionism in anthropology or cultural diffusion is defined as the spread of elements of culture from one society to another due to interaction of members of diverse societies (Coşkun, 2021). Since the beginning of human history, cultures developed and evolved through two main channels: innovation and borrowing from other cultures (Salzman, 2017). Boas has explained the phenomena of culture diffusion in these words:

A review of all the data which have been summarized here altogether too briefly shows that the assumption that any culture is autonomous, uninfluenced from outside sources, or that each type of man produces a culture which is an expression of the biological make-up of the race to which he belongs, is quite untenable. We see everywhere types of culture which develop historically under the impact of multifarious influences that come from neighboring people or those living far away. (Boas, 1937, p. 295).

He further states:

The objective study of cultures and of types of man shows that notwithstanding all these apparently fundamental differences cultural strains have passed from one people to the other, that no culture can be assumed to be self-developed and no type to be pure, unmixed with foreign strains. (Boas, 1937, pp. 286-87).

Boas goes to the extent to claim that no community in the world has developed its culture independently. He writes, "[t]hus a detailed study of cultural traits

proves beyond cavil that there is not a single people in the primitive world that has developed its culture independently" (Boas, 1937, p. 289).

According to Reisinger (2009), cultural diffusion is the spread of elements of culture like food, religions, styles, technologies, and ideas between groups and individuals within the same culture or between cultures. Thus, in simple words Diffusionism is the spread of cultural values like language, customs, art, religion, knowledge, poetry, food, dress, architecture, social ceremonies, ideas etc. from one culture to another through interaction of people with different cultures.

For example, similarities have been discovered within architecture performances between Europe and China on the one hand and India and Greece on the other. European drama left its impact on Japanese drama as a result of colonization. Similarly, porcelain diffused from China to Europe which is an example of handicrafts' diffusion (Coşkun, 2021). The Arabic language originated in the Arabian Peninsula but after Arab conquest it spread to areas like North Africa and Egypt (Salzman, 2017).

Culture contact or cultural diffusion is a major catalyst through which new cultural elements are introduced into a socio-cultural community from other cultures (Wagoner, 2014). It influences the indigenous community from various aspects. Its language, traditions, customs, art, religion, knowledge, ideas, beliefs, poetry, dressing style, food and other cultural components are influenced to varying degrees. Cultural diffusion also creates new services, products, and employment opportunities in the local community. It also leads to improvement in life standard. Migration of people has always been one of the major reasons of the spread of culture or cultural diffusion. It is through migration that components of culture like language, art, religion,

knowledge, poetry have been exchanged through the process of diffusion (Coşkun, 2021).

According to Frederic Bartlett, there are three different types of contact that lead to cultural diffusion. They are: Contact, Borrowing, and Intercommunication. Contact involves long distance migration of the entire group. Thus, the migrants carry with them their cultural elements that have significant influence on the indigenous culture. In Borrowing, individuals go to other societies where they become familiar with the culture of the host communities. When they return to their home communities, they carry elements of the new cultures along with them and introduce them in their home community. The last contact occurs when as a result of constant interaction between two neighboring communities there happens flow of cultural elements between them (Wagoner, 2014).

The rate of diffusion of cultural elements does not always remain the same. The diffusion rate happens to be high when the innovations are consistent or compatible with the core norms of the society. On the contrary, diffusion rate happens to be slow when the innovations are inconsistent or incompatible with the core value system of the group. In simple words, the rate of diffusion of innovations in a society depends upon the nature of relationship which exists between the core values system of the given society and the perceived traits of the innovations (Dubois, 1972).

It may also be noted that not all members of a given society adhere to the innovations to the same level (Dubois, 1972). It is also noteworthy that the material or tangible culture is more receptive to innovations than the ideational culture (Wagoner, 2014). During the diffusion process, the host culture may not accept the borrowed attributes in their original form as such attributes are generally modified so they may fit in the

host cultural patterns, environments and belief systems (Moore, 2009). Some research studies also showed that the chances of host culture to borrow from other cultures increases if those who first introduce the innovations are men, older members of the community, well off people, and longstanding leaders (Coşkun, 2021).

Notwithstanding the readiness with which foreign cultural traits are adopted, a strong resistance to the innovations has also been observed. This happens as the innovations do not fit into the group's general cultural habits (Boas, 1937).

## **Transition in Culture**

Although cultures happen to be somewhat stable they are not totally stagnant. They undergo constant but slow changes as growth and change are inherent in them making them dynamic. They do respond to the changing conditions in the physical environment in which they exist. (Kalsekar, 2015).

As people navigate and negotiate the values, beliefs, ideas, norms, ideals, symbols and meaning systems that form the cultural environment, so cultures constantly undergo changes. (Wesch, 2018). In other words, cultures flow in all directions and thus they are constantly in the process of development and change (Salzman, 2017).

In the modern globalized world, movements of people and ideas have become much faster due to which there is an increased level of cultural interconnectedness. The rate of people's movement at international level has so increased that in 2015, 243 million people migrated internationally. In 1995, the number was 160 million. As compared to the internal migration, this figure is far lower. According to the UN statistics of 2013, internal migration across the world could be more than 750 million people. The

main reasons for this large scale migration are education, tourism and business. However, the movement of dozens of millions people falls under forced movement as they move due to conflicts and disasters. Whether the movement is voluntary or forced one, the fact is that it results in large scale intercultural interactions which ultimately leads to changes in cultures around the world. (Gopalkrishnan, 2019).

It may be noted that some cultures are more open to innovations and change as compared to others. For example, the Americans are said to be people who are attracted by innovations while societies like France look at cultural changes less positively (Dubois, 1972).



Maps taken from Internet.

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/16/Pakistan\\_KPK\\_FATA\\_South\\_Waziristan\\_Mehsud\\_Area.svg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/16/Pakistan_KPK_FATA_South_Waziristan_Mehsud_Area.svg)



## **Chapter 3**

### **Pashtuns' Origin, History, land, and Culture**

#### **Introduction**

As far as the origin of Pashtuns is concerned, there is strong disagreement among historians. The only point about Pashtuns' origin on which historians agree is that Pashtuns have a long history stretching to ancient times. Olaf Caro in his book "The Pathans, 550 B.C.--A.D. 1957" has discussed the existence of Pashtuns before as well as after the arrival of Islam. He has discussed different theories about the origin of Pashtuns. Some historians consider Pashtuns to be of Semitic origin, others believe that Pashtuns are Aryans, some even claim that Pashtuns are of Greek origin while some claim them to be from the lineage of Qatora, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim. (Caroe, 1958).

The first and oldest theory about the origin of Pashtuns is the one which claims them to be Bani Israel. The very first mention of this theory is found in Niamat Ullah Harvi's book *Makhzan-e-Afghani* written in 1612 AD (Hanif & Iqbal, 2011). This book traces Pashtuns' origin to Prophet Abraham and Saul. According to this book, King Saul's son Jeremiah had a son named Afghana. After the death of King Saul, Afghana was raised by David. Afghana later also rose to the position of chief commander of King Solomon's army (García & Munir, 2016).

Famous orientalist Henry Walter Bellew<sup>4</sup> has recounted this story in these words:

Barakiah had a son named Asaf and Iramiah one named Afghanah. These inherited the offices of their respective fathers under the government of Suleman (Solomon), the successor of David. At the time of death of Suleman, the families of Afghanah and Asaf were among the chiefest of Bani Israel, and they multiplied exceedingly after the death of Asaf, who had eighteen sons, and Afghanah, who had forty. At the time when Baitul Mucaddas, "The Holy Temple" (Jerusalem) was taken and destroyed by Bukht-an-NASIR (Nebuchadnezzar), and the Bani Israel were oppressed and slaughtered by the reason of their steadfast adherence to the religion of their forefathers, the tribes of Afghanah, owing to the obstinacy with which they resisted the idolatry of their conquerors, were banished from Sha'm (Syria of Palestine) and after a time took refuge in the Kohistani Ghor-"Highlands of Ghor" and the Kohi Firozah-"Mountain of Firozah" (Turquoise Mountain). In these localities, they were called Afghan, Aoghan, Aghva'n or Alwa'n and Bani Israil by their neighbors.

In the mountain of Ghor and Firozah, (the ancient Paropamisus) and modern Hazarah Dahistan), the Bani Israil multiplied exceedingly and after a protracted warfare with the original heathen inhabitants of the country, finally subdued them. Some centuries later, their number having so greatly increased that the Ghor country became too small for them, the Afghans extended their borders by force of arms to the

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Walter Bellew, an Indian-born Brit who was sent to Kandahar on a mission and who also served a British political officer in Kabul. He conducted extensive ethnographic research on Pashtuns and published several works.

Kohistani Kabul Kandhar, and Ghazni. During all this period of more than fifteen hundred years from the time of Suleman, this people, the Bani Israil of Ghor, were Taura't-Khawn or Readers of the Pentateuch, and were guided in all their actions and observations by ordinances of the Mosaic Law; until, in the ninth year of Muhammad's mission as the Apostle of God, the Afghans first heard of the advent of the "Last Prophet of the Ages," through Khalid bin Waleed, a fellow Israelite of Medina, though by some called as Koresh, owing to his having entered that famous Arab tribe. (Bellew, 1891, p. 21).

With regard to the link between Afghans and Khalid Bin Waleed and their acceptance of religion Islam, Bellew writes:

I may here note that the Afghan Genealogies classify the whole of their existing tribes under three main great domination; viz., Sarabanr, Batan and Ghurghusht, which the Afghans say, are the names of three sons of Kais, Kish, or Kesh, a contemporary of the Prophet Muhammad, and the original ancestor of existing Afghan peoples. The Afghan story is briefly this. On the announcement of Mohammad of his mission as Rasulullah- "Apostle of God" – Kais, who was the leading chieftain of the Afghans ,at that time inhabiting the mountain of Ghor, received a letter from Khalid bin Walid ,an Israelite ,whose ancestor after the destruction of the Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, had settled in Arabia about Makka and Madina, informing him of the advent of the "Last Prophet of the Times," and inviting him to accept his doctrine; for the Afghan being Bani Israel, "Children of Israel," maintained

correspondence and communication with their Israelite kindred settled in Arabia. Kais, thereupon set out from his home in Ghor at the head of party of seventy-six of his tribesmen representing the principal chiefs of the Afghan Bani Israel, for Makka (Mecca), where, on arrival, they embraced Islam at the exposition of Khalid bin Walid, and fought valiantly in the cause of Muhammad. In reward for their devoted services, the Prophet on dismissing them to their homes, gave them his blessing, and as a mark of his favour changed their Hebrew names for Arabic ones. To Kais, the leader of the party, he gave the name of Abdur Rashid, "Servant of the Guide," and at the same time bestowed on him the title of Pihtan, said to mean the "rudder" of a ship in the Syrian language, because he was to be henceforth the director of his people in the way they should go. Further the Prophet promised these Afghans that the title of Malik-"King," which they had inherited from their great progenitor, Sarul Malik Talut (Saul, king of Israel, "Prince of great stature"), should never depart from their nation, but should be the title of their chiefs and princes to the end of time. With regard to their descent from the Sarul. The Afghan have the following story. Sarul, the son of Kais or Kish, of the tribe of Ibnyamin (Benjamin), had two sons, named Barakiah (Barachiah) and Iramiah (Jeremiah), who were both born in the same hour of different mothers, both of whom were of the tribe of Lavi (Levi). These sons were born after the death of Sarul, who, together with ten other sons, was slain in battle against the filistin or Palistin (Philistines), and grew up under the protection of Daud (David), Sarul's successor on the throne ,who

raised them to important offices in his government; Barakiah being his Prime Minister, and Iramiah his Generalissimo. (Bellew, 1891, p. 20).

Another orientalist Joseph Pierre Ferrier has narrated this story in this manner.

The Afghan authors who admit the Jewish origin of their nation thus account for the removal of their ancestors to Central Asia: some declare that Afghans, who gave his name to the Afghans, was lineally descended from Abraham and Hagar by Ishmael; others affirm that he was the grandson of Saul; and all think that Bakht ul Nasser<sup>5</sup> must have sent some Jewish prisoners into the mountains of Gour. These prisoners would soon have considerably increased; and though far from their mother-country, without doubt they would have preserved their faith, which was kept alive by the periodical reception of letters from their countrymen who, more fortunate than themselves, had returned to the Holy Land. Matters remained in this state until Mahomet announced himself as the messenger of God. A Jew, by name Khaled, whom he converted, wrote at this time to his brethren in Gour to give notice of this happy event, and induce them to embrace the new faith..... (Ferrier, 1858, pp. 3-4).

Well-known historian and researcher Sayyed Bahadur Shah Zaffar Kakakhel, though he disagrees with this theory, has explained it in this way:

All the Pashtoons got entered into Islam. The Holy prophet Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) prayed for them and changed the name of their

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<sup>5</sup> The king of Babel.

leader Qais into Abdur Rasheed. Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) gave him the title of Bathan. It means the leader of the boat of his - 49 - nation. Hazrat Khalid bin Walid married his daughter Sara Bibi with Abdur-Rasheed than Qais came back to his own area and in his area he started to preach Islam. He died in 41 Hijri at the age of 77 during a war. He had three sons, the eldest Saraban, the second Beetan, and the third Ghurghasht. These three being the ancestors of the various branches of the Pashtoons. (Kakakhail: 1981, pp. 32-33).

Claims have been made that traces of the ten missing tribes of Israel have been found in places like present day Central Asia, Burma, China, Ethiopia, Nigeria and the West. However, some of the well-known Israeli anthropologists believe that among all the people around the world claiming to be from among the ten tribes of Israel, Pashtuns have the strongest case for connection with the Jews. It is assumed that it was the present day Afghanistan and Iraq where the Israelite tribes dispersed. For example, Shalva Weil, an anthropologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem observed, that "[o]f all the groups, there is more convincing evidence about the Pathans than anybody else, but the Pathans are the ones who would reject Israel most ferociously. That is the sweet irony" (McCarthy, 2010, para. 6). Other Israeli scholars who supported this theory include Joshua Benjamin in *Mystery of the Lost Tribes*, Yitzchak Ben-Zvi (former president of Israel) in *The Exiled and the Redeemed*, and Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail in *The Tribes of Israel* (Maistrovov, 2012).

According to Navras Aafreedi, an academic at Lucknow University;

Pathans, or Pashtuns, are the only people in the world whose probable descent from the lost tribes of Israel finds mention in a number of texts

from the 10th century to the present day, written by Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars alike, both religious as well as secularists. (McCarthy, 2010, para. 12).

Emir Abdul Rahman, former ruler of Afghanistan, also claimed in his book that Afghans were of Israelite origin. Afzal Khan Khattak, a renowned scholar on Pashtu language and Pashtuns in his book *Taareekh-e-Murrassa* and Hafiz Rahmat Khan in *Khulaasat-ul-Ansaab* among others accepted this theory without much evaluation of its merits and demerits. Among foreign scholars who accepted this theory, we find names like Major Roverty (Hanif & Iqbal, 2011), Scottish explorer and diplomat Alexander Burnes, French soldier and the author of the monograph titled "History of the Afghans" Joseph Pierre Ferrier, British philologist Sir William Jones, and British-Israelite physician George Moore. Some historians, due to the presence of some Semitic words, names, and expressions in Pashtu language accepted it as Semitic language. Khan Roshan Khan, a 20<sup>th</sup> century historian regarded Pashtu as Semitic language and also wrote in support of this theory (García & Munir, 2016).

This theory of Israelite origin of Pashtuns, once put forward, was accepted by scholars without much scrutiny and thus gained common acceptance. However, later there emerged another strong theory claiming Pashtuns to be Aryans. This theory emerged as a result of research conducted by the European linguists and philologists following India's take over by the Britishers. Renowned scholars like Professor Klaproth, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Johannes Albrecht Bernhard Dorn, Dr. Earnest Trumpp, and George Abraham Grierson etc. on the basis of their thorough research rejected the theory linking Pashto with Semitic languages and instead termed it either as an Indo-Iranian or Indo-Aryan language (Munir, 2018).

Many scholars rejected the theory that Pashtuns are from the missing tribe of Israel on the ground that Pashtuns are a much older race (García & Munir, 2016) as scholars have traced back their existence to the Rigveda. According to many linguists and historians, the words Pakht and Bakht, from which ultimately evolved words Pakhtu/Pakhtun, can be traced back to Rigveda and Osta, respectively. Similarly, Greek historian Herodotus wrote about Pakht nation living in the coastal areas of Indus River in 520 BC (Munir, 2018).

Former US diplomat James. W. Spain also disagrees with the theory. He writes;

The idea that the Pathans were descended from the nation of Israel was encouraged by their tight tribal structure, their stark code of behaviour, their strikingly Semitic features, their bearded patriarchal appearances, and their predilection for biblical names (acquired from the Holy Quran): Adam, Ibrahim, Musa, Daud, Suleiman, Yaqub, Yousaf, Esa, and the rest. (Spain, 1972, p. 28).

Following in the footsteps of European linguists and philologists, several indigenous scholars too started questioning the authenticity of the theory. Sayyed Bahadur Shah Zaffar Kakakhel while rejecting this theory noted, "[t]here is no solid proof to accept this theory, even in Arabian history or in Islamic history" (Kakakhail, 1981, p, 35). Similarly, Abdur-Raheem observed that the Israelite origin theory of Pashtuns does not sustain a deeper analysis. Resemblances in people's features cannot be taken as scientific principles for determining people's race. Aryans and Sumerian resemble each other but they are not considered as a single race (Abdur-Raheem, 1969).



Professor Abdul Hai Habibi, a renowned researcher of Pashto language and literature, concluded that Pashtuns descended from Aryans who spoke Arik language. Sanskrit is another language of the Aryan race, but comparatively Pashto is much closer to it and up to now the original Aryan expressions are survived in Pashto language (Habibi, 1946). (Munir, 2018).

Kakakhel claims that thousands years ago, Aryans were living in the Middle East and used to speak Arik language. Later, they dispersed around the world and thus started speaking different languages having significant similarities with their original language (Munir, 2018).

Bellew argues that many of the tribes and subtribes of Pashtuns can be traced to their origins among the Rajputs- a well-known caste in India subcontinent. He writes;

As we have seen in the preceding stages of this inquiry, the majority of the Baloch tribes, though they speak Persian and not Pukhto language and know nothing of the Pukhtunwali, are nevertheless of the very same Rajput stock as several of the formerly most important and numerous of the tribes included in the Afghan genealogies. (Bellew, 1858, p. 198).

Dr. Mujawer Ahmad Zyar, Qiam-ud-Din Khadim, and Kausar Ghoriakhel are also of the view that Pashtuns are Aryans. They argue that Pashtuns descended from the Saka branch of Aryans (Khan, 1998).

There are also historians who argue that Pashtuns are Greeks. They argue that Afghans descended from Alexander the Great's soldiers and other Greek colonists who came to these lands during the rule of Alexander's successors. Others believe

them to be the descendants of Copts of Egypt, the Chaldaeans, and even the Armenians (Ferrier, 1858).

According to Monsieur Ruffin, a French scholar, Afghans descended from the Albanians of Asia. He observed;

The Afghans had their origin from the Albanians of Asia, who, in consequence of their numerous revolts, were transported from one extremity of Persia to the other, and driven into Khorassan; they were a very warlike people known under the name of Aghvan or Avghan, and made themselves famous in the history of Persia. Their Albanian origin is evident by the name itself, for agvan is the Greek word HA'AB. (Ferrier, 1858, pp. 1-2).

Sir Olaf Cairo and Ghani Khan claim that the Pashtun race is a cross-breed of all the people who invaded this part of the world. For example, Ghani Khan writes;

Racially- he is clearly Greek, crossed with something. What that something was I do not know. Nor would I worry about it any further. What he was five thousand years ago does not matter." It is also obvious that he was a Buddhist before he became a Muslim, and that he was a Hindu before he became a Buddhist. I do not know what sort of a Buddhist he was in spite of the thousands of images of Buddha that he made. For he is a good shot, and a bad soldier. He is too independent to make the ideal follower of any prophet, so probably he was a good sculptor and a poor Buddhist. Whatever he might be, he is not a Jew, for where will you find a Jew who will tell his child about war and courage, death and glory! He is perhaps a

mixture of every race that came to India from the heart of Asia the Persian, the Greek, the Mongol and the Turk. (Khan, 1947; p. 5).

Ghani Khan adds;

Each race has contributed something to his virtues and vices, looks and beliefs, religion and love-songs. His temperament, like his clothes, is picturesque and degant. He loves fighting but hates to be a soldier. He loves music but has a great contempt for the musician. He is kind and gentle but hates to show it. He has strange principles and peculiar notions. He is hot-blooded and hot-headed and poor and proud. If that is what you call a Jew, then he is certainly a Jew, nose and all. (Khan, 1947; p. 5).

Similarly, Bellew traces the roots of the word Afghan to Armenian word Aghvan meaning mountaineer having nothing to do with any distinct race or nationality at all. He claims that it is just an appellation of the dwellers of a specific mountainous area irrespective of racial and national affiliations. He adds; [i]t is in this last sense that the name is applied to the inhabitants of Afghanistan, for the Afghans, as we know them, certainly comprise several distinct race nationalities. (Bellew, 1858, p. 206).

Joseph Pierre Ferrier too supports the mix theory approach. He writes;

[E]verything leads to the conclusion that, although they all speak a common language, the Pushtoo, the tribes are not all of the same origin,--they are distinguished by marked characteristics, moral as well as physical. The Afghans of Kabul consider themselves as Indian Afghans, whereas those of Herat say they are Khorassani Afghans; one

tribe repudiates another, and denies its Afghan origin, and there is not the least sympathy between them. We may believe that, being enemies in bygone ages, their union, such as it was, progressed only by degrees, with a view of delivering themselves from slavery, and repulsing the common enemy. The names of Patan, Rohilla, Afghan, which serve at the present time to designate the Afghan nation, are really those of so many distinct races now confounded in one. If we could admit, as they do, their Jewish origin, we must also suppose that they would, on the spot to which they were transferred, have developed all the characteristics of an enslaved people, humble and degenerate; but such is not the case, for we find the Afghans from the very first, that is to say from the reign of Sebek-Taghee, courageous, and animated by a love of independence---always warlike and energetic, retiring to their mountain fastnesses to escape from tyranny, and leaving them whenever the smallest hope presented itself of seizing lands which they considered they had any right to---it is only a primitive race who could have remained so strongly attached to the soil. (Ferrier, 1858, pp. 4-5).

Ferrier further argues that while debating the origin of Afghans, we must not forget about the possibility that the race of the aboriginal people--Arians, Arrachosians, and others---descended to the present through intermarriages with Greeks, Persian and Tartar invaders (Ferrier, 1858).

## **Dialects of Pashtu language**

There are two main dialects of Pashtu language. The one is called Kandahari or Southern dialect while the other is Yousafzai dialect also known as Peshawari dialect.

Kandahari or Southern dialect (soft dialect) is spoken in southern and western Afghanistan (including Kandahar), southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Bannu, Tank, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Waziristan) and Pashtun dominated northern Balochistan (including Quetta). Yousafzai dialect or the Northern dialect is also called Peshawari (hard dialect). It is spoken in eastern and northeastern Afghanistan (including Kabul Nangarhar, Jalalabad), and central, northern and eastern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including Peshawar, Mardan, Swat, Charsadda, Swabi, Dir etc.). The Kandahari and Peshawari dialects can be phonetically differentiated through the sounds of "Sh" and "Kh" and differences in the use of vowels (García & Munir, 2016).

Every Pashtun tribe speaks one of the two dialects while Khattak is the only tribe which is split in half between the two dialects. The Main group of this tribe lives south of Kohat District and uses the soft dialect. Their brethren who live in Mardan and Akora Khattak got assimilated with the Yousafzai tribe and now speak the hard dialect. (Caroe, XVI).

## **Same people different names**

Just like their land has been known with different names, the people of this area too have been known with different names. Pakhtun/Pashtun, Pathan, Afghan, and Rohilla are the most common ones.

## **Pashtun/Pashtanah and Pakhtun/Pakhtanah**

Pashtun (Pashtanah is plural form) and Pakhtun (Pakhtanah as its plural) are the most widely used terms used by Pashtuns for themselves. The first is used by those speaking the soft or Kandahari dialect while the other one by those who speak the hard dialect or Peshawari dialect. In some areas like South and North Waziristan, the word Pashtun is further molded and spoken as Pashteen with Pashtunah as its plural form.

As far as the origin of the words Pashtun and Pakhtun is concerned, there are different opinions. One point of view is that these words have been derived from Bakht and Pakht nations as mentioned in Rigveda and Osta, respectively. According to Greek historian Herodotus, a nation called Pakht used to live on the coast of River Indus in 520 BC. Many historians claim that this nation mentioned by Herodotus later transformed into Bakht, Pakht, or Pasht and finally became Pashtun or Pakhtun (García & Munir, 2016). According to Dr. Hassan Dani, the word "Pakhthu" can be found in the Rigveda which was written in Sanskrit. He observes, "[a]nd when we find a tribal name Pakhthu in the Rigveda, we do not see any reason why they should not be identified with Pakht (or Pasht)." He adds that this form also comes closest to Herodotus' term "Paktue" (Dani, 1969, p. 61).

According to Mohammad Masoom Hotak, the word Pakht mentioned in Rigveda is very close in pronunciation to the Paktue people mentioned by Herodotus and at present they are known as Pashtun and Pakhtun (Hotak, 2000).

## **Rohilla**

The word Rohilla is used for the people who came from the land of 'Roh.' It is a geographical term referring to the territory stretching from Swat and Bajour in the north to Sibi in the south, to Attock in the east and to Kabul and Kandahar in the west. In short, Roh was the land of Pashtuns who were living in the foothills of Hindukush. Historically, the regions of Roh were also called as "Pakhtunkwa" or Afghanistan and Rohillas as Pashtun or Pakhtun and Afghan. They were basically of Afghan and Pashtun heritage but known for their martial capabilities and thus were hired by Mughals for their empire. The Rohilla soldiers belonged to different tribes of Pashtun such as, Ghilzai, Yousafzai, Ghoris, Marwat, Khattak, Barech, Durrani, Kakar, Afridi, Tareen, Naghar and Bangash. Under the command of Daud Khan Barech they defeated Rajput uprisings that were troubling the region. Acknowledging Daud Khan's services for the Mughal Empire, the then Mughal ruler Aurangzeb awarded him land in the northern region of the Mughal Empire at Kahter. Therefore, all Rohilla soldiers settled in Kehtar which came to be known as Rohilkhand with Bareilly (In present day Uttar Pradesh state of India) as its capital. (Nichols, 2008).

In 19th century British rule in the subcontinent, Rohilla word started disappearing from colonial correspondence, it was replaced with the word of Pathan. Rohillas who were once considered as a martial race of Pashtun who fought against Rajput and Marhata during war of Panipat were labelled by the British as "Bandit" and "Mercenary" (Nichols, R. (2008).

## **Pathan**

Pathan is the Indian variant of Pakhtana/Pashtana. Mohammad Qasim Farishtah, in his book "Twareekh-e-Farishta" writes that when the Afghan people for the first time

moved to India they settled in Patna city of India and thus they became known as Pathan. (Farishtah, 1611). He writes that the Indians call them Pathan though they are generally known as Afghans. There are also historians who claim that Pashtuns first established their rule over Patna and thus they became known as Pathan (Khan, 1998). According to European historian Morgenstierne,

A distinction is sometimes made between Afghan and Pathan, the former name being applied to the Durrani and allied tribes. But the difference is probably only one of nomenclature, the Persian designation Afghan (of unknown etymology) being naturally applied chiefly to the Western tribes, while the Indianized form of the native name is used about the eastern ones. (Danni, 1969, p. 60).

Some writers argue that the word Pathan has been derived from Parthians dynasty who resembled Pashtuns in their physique and features. Others trace the origin of the word Pathan to the name to 'Batan' the character of their ancestors in fairy tale. According to one account, the word Pathan was basically bestowed upon Qais Abdur Rashid by Prophet Mohammad when he embraced Islam. As a reward for his services, Prophet Mohammad awarded Abdur Rashid the title of "Pihtan" which in Syrian language means the rudder of a ship because he was to guide his people from now onwards (Bellew, 2017).

Though there are several different explanations for the term Pathan, Danni argues that there is general agreement that the word Pathan is actually a corrupt version of the word Pakhtun or Pashtun which are common among the native people (Danni, 1969).



Though Pashtun/Pakhtun, Pathan, Pashtoon, Pakhtoon, Pashteen and Rohila are different terms used for the same people, Pashtun and Pakhtun are the terms most widely used in English, Urdu, and Pashto literature. These two terms basically represent two dialects of Pashto language. The soft or Kandahari dialect and the hard or Peshawari/Yousafzai dialect. The Kandahari dialect is spoken in southern parts of Afghanistan, Pashtun dominated areas of Balochistan, and Southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On the other hand, the soft dialect is spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's areas like Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Swat, Swabi etc. and some parts of Afghanistan. As the researcher and the Mahsud tribe both speak the soft dialect, so this researcher will use word Pashtun (soft dialect) throughout this dissertation.

## **Geography of Pashtuns**

Pashtuns live in Pakistan from south to north on its western border. In Afghanistan, they live on the eastern border. Their territory mainly consists of high mountain ranges, narrow gorges, plain deserts, and rocky barren lands. Most of the region in the south receives little rainfall and here the tropical ground of the border area begins from the subcontinent and stretches onward to the towering Central Asian mountain ranges of the Himalaya, Pamir, and Hindukush. The northern portion of border covers the area extending from Pamir mountain range at the Mintaka in the Wakhan Corridor to the Gomal Pass which covers all the seven agencies of erstwhile FATA and a portion of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa area and the Badakhshan, Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktia and Paktika provinces of Afghanistan. So, it covers the 1025 kilometers border section of the Pakistan Afghanistan Border (Johnson & Mason, 2008). All the population of the Pakistani side of the border is Pashtun.

It may be noted that Mountstuart Elphinstone<sup>6</sup> called the Northern section of Pakistan along the Afghanistan border as Berdooraunes. He wrote; "[t]he Berdooraunes possess the hills and valleys under Hindoo Koosh, and those connect with the range of Suleiman, together with range of Bajour and Peshawar" (Elphinstone, 1842, p. 5). The south section of Pakistan borders with Afghanistan which extends from the Gomal River to Baluchistan---Pakistan-Iran border to Robat. On the opposite side from east to west lies the Afghan provinces of Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand and Nimruz. Here the length of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is some 1,200 Kilometers. Previously this region was called Registan (Land of Sand). As this region of Pakistan is located on the outskirts of the monsoon belt, so it has low mountains, arid hills, and mostly consists of desert basins (Johnson & Mason, 2008).

Though people belonging to other ethnic groups like Baloch, Baruhi (Brahvi/Brohi), Nuristanis, Kethrans, Chitrali, Wakki and Shinas also live on the long border from South to North on the Western border of Pakistan but Pashtun are in majority. On the Northern side, the majority of the people are of the Hanfi school of thought. Only some portions of tribes like Turi, Bangash, Chamkani and Orakzai adhere to the Shia sect. There is also an indigenous community (Kalash people in Northern Chitral) on the Northern border (Johnson & Mason, 2008).

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<sup>6</sup> Mountstuart Elphinstone was an officer of British Army who also commanded the British troops stationed in Afghanistan during the first Anglo-Afghan war. He authored a famous book entitled "An account of the kingdom of Caubul, and its dependencies, in Persia, Tartary, and India."

## **Tribal division among Pashtuns/ Division of Pashtuns into tribes**

According to Olaf Caroe, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan are from Durrani (Previously known as Abdali) and Ghaljis (Ghalzoy/zies) tribes while those on the eastern side are the Yousufzai and other associated tribes in Peshawar and the surrounding valleys. Caroe claims that the inhabitants of the highlands have many things in common including dialect and they all belong to the Karlarni branch of Pashtuns and there is no authentic record which shows they came under the affective control of any imperial authority and now they are the ones who form the backbone of the so-called tribal belt. (Caroe, 1958, p. xv)

Pashtuns are divided into tribes and subtribes. The whole Pashtun nation is divided into four main branches with each further divided into dozens and dozens as it descends from the top to bottom. While describing the phenomena of tribalism among Afghanistan Pashtuns, Bernt Glatzer writes;

The tribal system does or did not only reside in remote and backward areas but permeated and still permeates all levels of the society from the nomad camp up to the royal palace, from the remote mountain village up to the university and to the headquarters of the armed forces. (Glatzer, 2002, p. 2).

This division starts from very small units like a village community and goes up till the top. In the words of Glatzer;

Local folklore has it that all Pashtuns are (mainly) patrilineal descendants of one founding father, even if there is no agreement about the apical ancestor's name. Some call him Qays Abdurrashid, others say his name was Daru Nika, or Baba Khaled (Khalid bin Walid---the legendary general of the army of Prophet Muhammad). The name of the common ancestor is less important than the Pashtuns' belief of belonging to one huge kinship group or family. The common ancestor had many sons, grandsons, great grandsons and so forth, each being the ancestor of one of the innumerable branches and sub-branches or tribes and sub-tribes, clans and sub-clans down to the local lineages and families. The ordering principle of each tribal subgroup is similar to that of the larger group, yet the segments do not have a fixed or repetitive number of subdivisions such as many Turkish tribes who have a binary system of segmentation. (Glatzer, 2002, p. 2).

The common ancestor of Pashtuns is reported to have had four sons with one of them his adopted son. Their names were Bitan (alias Batni or Sheykh Beyt), Ghurghusht, and Sarban. The name of his adopted son was Karran. From these four people sprang all the present Pashtun tribes (Glatzer, 2002).

At present, the total number of Pashtun tribes, subtribes, and clans runs into thousands. The works of Niamat Ullah Harvi (*Tarîkh-e Khân Jahânî wa makhzan-e Afghânî*) and Hayat Khan (*Hayat-i Afghan*) are important sources of details about Pashtun tribes. Harvi's work mentions thousands of Pashtun tribes and their origin. The major tribes that sprang from the four sons of Qais include:

From Sarban; Abdali/Durrani (including Alizai, Sadozai, Popalzai, Barakzai, Achakzai, Ishaqzai, Alokzai, and Nurzai), Tarin, Sherani, Miana, Ormur, Yousafzai, Tarklanri, Mohmand, Gigiani, Khalil, Daudzai, Kasi, Chamkani, and Shinwari.

From Ghurghusht; Babee, Mandokhel, Kakar, Naghar, Dawi, Furmali, Panni (including Baruzai, Dehpal, Khajjak, Marghazani, and Zarkun), Musa Khel, Isot, Jadoon, Safi, and Naghar.

From Bitan; Betani, Niazi, Sur, Dotani, Sarwani, Luhani, Khaisor, Prangi, Marwat, and Siarni.

From Karlanri; Orakzai, Dilazak, Uthman Khel, Khattak, Mangal, Zadran, Khugiani, Wazir, Mahsud, Dawar, Bangash, Tani, and Turi.

The Karran/Karlanri is the most important branch of Pashtuns to this study. They are called hill tribes and are the third largest branch of the Pashtuns. The areas they populate in Afghanistan are Khost, Paktia and Paktika while in Pakistan they live in areas like Kurram, Waziristan, Mohmand, Khyber etc. Bangash, Khattak, Mangal, Mahsud, Afridi, and Waziri tribes belong to this branch. It is mainly this tribal society which kept alive the Pakhtun ethos (Global Security, n. d).

In Afghanistan, people, a tribe, or an ethnic group is referred to as quam in Pashtu as well as other languages which shows that a tribe is structured on the basis of genealogical links like an ethnic group. A sub tribe or a clan is called khel in Pashtu but at the same time it may also be referred to as quam because any tribal unit can be simultaneously looked at both as a tribe and subtribe keeping in view the position

from which it is viewed. Thus a subtribe or sub-clan of a khel is also a khel down to the village level (Glatzer, 2002).

## **Pashtun Society**

Pashtun culture's distinctiveness is because Pashtun represent the form of segmentary society (Groh, 2006). According to Charles Lindholm, segmentary societies are a subtype of societies that are called as "acephalous" or headless societies. He claims that segmentary societies function without internal hierarchies. Many such societies were easily occupied by colonial powers but others organized themselves and resisted foreign occupation though they seemingly lacked political structure. He writes;

Anthropological research has revealed that some acephalous peoples did have an internal principle of organization, but this did not involve stratification and rank. Organization was based on an ideology of kinship which stated that near relatives should unite in disputes with more distant relatives. Brothers should aid brothers against cousins, while brothers and first-degree cousins should act together in disagreements with cousins of the second degree. Since it looks back to the mythical founding father of the group, thus allowing the congeries of ideological relatives to unite in opposition to outside forces, unilineal descent is a prerequisite for this system. Tracing ancestors through only one line (generally the male) keeps the patterns of relationship unambiguous. Each individual in the system knows or can discover his exact genealogical distance from every other individual. By knowing genealogical distance, he also knows his

political obligations. This is the ideological model of segmentary society; in real life the model is manipulated, and kinship may be forgotten or remembered according to needs of the moment. A close relative, for instance, who has moved to a distant territory would eventually be forgotten, while a non-relative living nearby might eventually be accepted as a long-lost kinsman. Furthermore, a relative who is a troublemaker might be repudiated, but a kin relationship might be manufactured with an individual who is economically well off. Nonetheless, manipulations always remain within the frame of the ideological model. (Lindholm, 1977, p. 42).

But Pashtuns are slightly different from totally acephalous societies as they have some kind of internal organization with the leadership mostly being hereditary. However, the men leading their respective tribes/clans have to ensure that they act in the best interest of the people they represent otherwise there is no guarantee that they will enjoy the support of their communities (Grow, 2006).

The subsets of segmentary societies are Nomadic and Sedentary societies. The Pashtun tribal system has both of them.

Nomadic: This kind of tribes mainly consists of shepherds. To preserve their lineage, tribal union and social-cultural values, they prefer cousin marriages.

Sedentary: This network of segmentary setup consisted of peasants. They are more territorial based as they don't move from place to place in response to any threat. They believe in the collective defense of their territory and work for its development. But in Sedentary subset there is a group which lives in between the nomadic and

agrarian sedentary setup. It is called "Hill Tribes." They like to live in their defined geography, have very strong dedications to their customary laws of Pashtunwali and resist more strongly to outsider's attacks than their plain settled tribes. This study is more about one such hill tribe of South Waziristan---Mahsud Tribe. Though lots of changes have taken place and are being taking place in their value system, still these people adhere to their cultural values and Pashtun code of conduct called Pashtunwali.

### **Pashtunwali: The unwritten code of conduct for Pashtuns**

The main factor which makes the Pashtun culture different from any other culture is because of its tribal organization and practice of 'Pashtunwali'---a code of conduct followed by all Pashtuns. This code includes practices of Tura (Courage), Nang (Honor), Melmastia (Hospitality), Panah (Refuge), Nanwati/Nanawatay (confession of guilt/request for protection), Jirga (Council), and Badal (Revenge) (Zulfacar, 1999). Pashtunwali as a code of conduct has passed from generation to generation. It guides people not in individual affairs but in communal conduct too. This code is practiced by the majority of Pashtuns either centred in urban centres or rural areas.

Pashtunwali is an unwritten ethical code followed by all the Pashtuns tribes. It has been in practice since pre-historic times and is still followed by Pashtuns both in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Satterfield, 2017). According to German thinker Willi Steul, Pashtunwali is a set of all the social norms and values that determine the way of life of Pashtuns (Marcoux, 2010). Pashtunwali can be translated as Pashtunness or the way of the Pashtuns and applies to all Pashtuns. It consists of a set of rules, tenets, and concepts constituting the customary law of the Pashtuns. It is sometimes defined as a legal system, sometimes as a code of honor, and on occasions as an entire tradition



(Karrer, 2012). Although it is considered to be a code, it is more a code of honor or behaviour rather than a legal code (Ginsburg, 2011).

One of the most comprehensive definitions of Pashtunwali has been given by James W. Spain who explains Pashtunwali as "The Way of the Pathans." Frederic Barth defines it as "Practical code of life" and "Doing Pashto" while Akbar S. Ahmad explains Pashtunwali as an essential code of honor (Kakar, 2012). Abdul Hai Habibi argues that Pashtun in their surroundings had collective principles to spend their life to which they called "Da Pashtun Liar" (path/way of the Pashtuns) and it includes, Jirga, Nanwati, Baspan and many other traits. Habibi also establishes a link between Pashtuns' geography and the components of Pashtunwali. For example, he says that Pashtuns living at the crossroads faced many mighty rulers who would pass through them. This interaction with and resistance to the armies of these rulers cultivated among Pashtuns the characteristics of bravery and toughness. Similarly, he argues that Pashtuns being dwellers of mountainous areas would travel long distances in connection with different necessities of life. As there were no hotels and commercial guesthouses in those areas for travelers, there developed the custom of building guest rooms in houses or village communities to accommodate these travelers. This practice passed from generation to generation and thus became an integral part of Pashtunwali (Habibi, 1962).

The concept of Pashtunwali is ethno-centric in nature as it is based on the premise that Pashtuns are distinct from other nations not only in their language and culture but also have a distinct code of behaviour which every Pashtun is supposed to follow. For example, Abdullah Bakhtani, a Pashtun writer, argues that a Pashtun who just speaks

Pashtu without doing Pashtu is not a Pashtun because people from other communities can also learn speaking Pashtu (Rzehak, 2011).

Though the exact substantive norms of Pashtunwali may differ from place to place as regions and villages have different versions of the tribal code, it bears enough unity to be considered a single object (Ginsburg, 2011). Thus, the major components of Pashtunwali are Melmastia (hospitality), Badal (revenge), Nanawatey (submission or request for forgiveness/request for protection), Tura (bravery), Jirga (council for settling disputes), Ghairat (self-honor) and Namus (honor of women) (Karrer, 2012).

## **Melmastia**

Melma in Pashtu means a guest and Melmastia means hospitality. Melmastia is a key component of Pashtunwali. However, hospitality is not to be interpreted in the manner a Westerner would interpret it. In Pashtun culture, it means offering hospitality to a guest irrespective of his race, religion, and economic status (Khan et al., 2019). While writing about Melmastia, Elphinstone in 1815 observed that "[t]he most remarkable characteristic of the Afghans is their hospitality. The practice of this virtue is so much a point of national honour, that their reproach to an inhospitable man is that he has no Pashtunwali" (Elphinstone 1969, p. 226).

Melmastia is a special form of showing generosity to one's guests. Anyone who enters someone's house is provided with some food and tea. Melmastia is so well practiced by Pashtuns that guests will develop the wrong impression of the actual economic standing of a poor person hosting him as the host is supposed to offer him the best possible food to the guest. Pashtuns look at a guest as a gift from the God and serving him is considered as a noble deed. Under the concept of Melmastia, a guest is given

special treatment for three days. After the expiry of three days, the guest is served with the routine food consumed by other members of the family. The concept not only binds the hosts to act in a specific manner but also defines a particular behaviour for the guest to observe. For example, the guest has to leave his host's home with his permission. Similarly, as long as a guest enjoys his host's hospitality and protection, he must refrain from raising his hand against someone (Rzehak, 2011).

Providing shelter and protection to those who ask for it is also included in the scope of Melmastia even if the one asking for it is a criminal. Among Pashtuns, there are even anecdotal stories of families providing protection to people who had just killed someone from the very family providing him protection. In such cases, the killer or protection seeker is not to be killed unless he leaves the home of the protection provider. On the other hand, if someone kills, injures, or dishonors someone's guest, he will have to pay compensation to the host for doing harm to his guest and thus damaging his honor and reputation (Ginsburg, 2011). In case someone is persecuted by someone and he asks for protection in someone's home, he will be provided protection. In such a situation, the host will do his best to protect his guest from the attackers because defending his guest is actually defending his own honor (Rzehak, 2011). The fundamental aspect is that once provided hospitality the guest is assumed to be under the protection of the host and great loss of honour will result should the guest be harmed (Hawkins, 2009). The host can also try to become arbitrator between his guest and his persecutors (Rzehak, 2011).

## **Badal**

Another component of Pashtunwali is Badal which can be translated as revenge or reciprocity. Badal means that Pashtuns never ever forget the wrong done to them or

injuries/harm inflicted upon them. As far as taking revenge is concerned, there is no fixed time frame for it. The aggrieved party waits for an opportune time to respond and take revenge (Khan et al., 2019). The concept of Badal demands that the aggrieved party responds to any wrongdoing in proportion to the harm/injury inflicted upon it. Thus, the revenge for mere beating or verbal abuse should be beating or verbal abuse rather than killing of the opponent irrespective of whether he is weak or strong (N. H. K. Mahsud, personal communication, March 18, 2022). Though the revenge is to be in proportion to the wrong done to the victim, still there is evidence suggesting that retribution should be greater than the wrong/harm done to the victim. This thinking may better be explained with a Pashtu proverb saying that one is not a Pashtun who does not respond to a pinch with a blow (Ginsburg, 2011). According to Barth quoted by Beattie (1997), "the only successful defence of honour is revenge, equal to or beyond the extent of the original insult, so as to re-establish parity or gain an advantage vis-a-vis one's rivals" (p. 19).

When the researcher put the question of utility of Badal before a D. I. Khan based trader M. Siddique, his response was that though the practice of Badal sometimes results in perpetual violence and bloodshed but usually the rivals settle their disputes after the aggrieved party takes revenge. According to him, if someone takes revenge for the murder of his relative, the most probable scenario which emerges most often happens to be settlement and thus an end to the enmity (Personal communication, March 17, 2022). As Pashtuns know well that a Pashtun will feel dishonored in case he does not seek revenge for the wrong done to him or injuries inflicted upon him, so they happen to be reluctant to engage in aggressive actions against others because in such case they will face retribution from the victim (Ginsburg, 2011).

The concept and practice of revenge or Badal has become an inseparable part of Pashtuns' lives. Even if an aggrieved party wants to pardon the wrongdoer, it would not do so because it will be taunted (Paighour) as weak or cowardly. For example, in the 1990s there suddenly erupted a fight between two groups in the Pyazha area of South Waziristan as a result of which one man was killed. The family of the deceased later settled the matter with its rival family and accepted blood money. It was after some 15-20 years that the son of the deceased killed the killer of his father. Later on, it emerged that someone had taunted him for his inability to take revenge of his father which infuriated him and thus he killed the killer of his father even after accepting blood money (N. H. K. Mahsud, personal communication, March 18, 2022). Many people consider the practice of revenge as a check on criminal activities as everyone knows that his crime will not go unpunished. In some cases, people take revenge for the wrongs done even to their grandparents (Saleem Ullah, personal communication, January 25, 2022).

### **Nanawatay/ Nanawati**

Nanawatay is an element of Pashtunwali in which a person/family/party takes sheep/goats to the house of their rival as confession of his guilt or crime and an appeals for forgiveness. This is usually done after a Jirga declares its verdict in which it convicts a party. The Jirga directs the aggressor to take a specific number of sheep/goats to the aggrieved party. In some cases, if the aggrieved party has taken revenge then the Jirga while settling the dispute directs both sides to do Nanawatay to each other determining the number of goats/sheep as per the scale of wrongdoing from each side. When someone mistakenly hurts or kills someone, he also takes Nanawatay to the house of the victim to seek pardon. This is usually done without

involving any Jirga etc. and in such cases the aggrieved party usually forgives the wrongdoer after paying fine/blood money or without it. The third form of Nanawatay is when a weaker party takes Nanawatay to some influential people or complete tribe/sub-tribe or clan etc. with a request to provide him justice against another party (usually stronger one). In such a case, the one taking Nanawatay slaughters those sheep/goats at the door of the influential persons or combined Hujra without letting the receiver of Nanawatay know about it in advance. (J. Mahsud, personal communication, April 3, 2022). For performing the ritual of Nanawatay, a religious figure is sometimes sent in advance to inform the family to which Nanawatay will be taken. In other cases, some religious figures or tribal elders accompany the offender during the practice of Nanawatay (Rzehak, 2011).

## **Nang**

Nang or Honor can be interpreted as a positive reputation. It is a social capital which is earned over time and which can also be lost. There are specific actions that are considered to be helpful in building honor while others are considered as damaging it (Ginsburg, 2011). In case a generally accepted norm is violated, the threatened group feel compelled to take measures against the violators in order to re-establish the balance which was disturbed or to retrieve their honor (Rzehak, 2011). Individual honor demands that a Pashtun and his immediate family members follow Pashtunwali as certain bad deeds by family members may damage one's honor and reputation (Gibbon, 2021).

The concept of Nang arises from Pashtuns' tribal spirit. It means defending one's own and tribe's rights in an honorable manner. Thus, the concept means that individuals have to defend their personal or family honor as well as of their tribe because living

outside of tribal structure is simply unimaginable for the Pashtuns. This is also because honor of individuals and of their lineage of tribe are dependent on each other. An individual who fulfills this criteria is held in high esteem and is referred to as Nangyalay (Rzehak, 2011).

## **Namus**

Namus has similar rationale behind it as honor but its focus is on the honor and integrity of all the women of a household. The word can be translated as 'honour', 'reputation', 'esteem', 'conscience', and 'chasteness.' Among the Pashtuns, defending women's honor means providing shelter and taking care of them and doing this actually means defending one's own honor. For defending women's integrity, reputation, and honor, the best way is gender seclusion (Rzehak, 2011).

Honor and integrity of womenfolk in Pashtun society is so important that any action which dishonors someone's wife, daughter, sister, and mother etc. is a certain cause of conflict (Ginsburg, 2011). The issue of women's honor is so serious that in case of any physical harm to women there are almost no chances of settlement without revenge of same nature. The prevailing thinking under Pashtunwali is that any physical harm to women leading to dishonoring of the family can be rectified through revenge. That is the reason that there is no compromise on honor killings in traditional Pashtun society (A. Qadir, personal communication, November 13, 2021).

## **Tura (Bravery)**

The word Tura (bravery) literally means 'sword.' This is the quality of boldness-a quality expected to be possessed by every young Pashtun (Marcoux, 2010). Tura is

central to the concept of Pashtunwali. It is reinforced in young Pashtun males that bravery is the major quality of a man on the battlefield (Hawkins, 2009).

The purpose of this concept is raising Pashtuns' fighting spirit. One can easily find many proverbs, verses, and sayings in Pashtu folklore appreciating and demanding the quality of bravery.<sup>7</sup> The one who bravely and fearlessly fights in the battlefield is honorably called as Turyalay. This title can also be given to a clan, tribe, or lineage. Fighting spirit of Pashtuns has many times been acknowledged in their struggle against Safavids, Mughal, and the British Empire (Rzehak, 2011).

Though Tura demands physical bravery, it requires calculated and rational actions based on considerateness and prudence. The display of bravery is needed when all other options to solve an issue fail and violence remains the last resort. There is a famous Pashtu proverb saying "tura de takay ma basa, ka de wa istala bya ye sra wa takay ta achawa (Don't unsheathe the sword, but when you have unsheathed the sword sheathe it red" (with blood) (Rzehak, 2011, p.11).

## **Jirga**

Jirga is an important institution of Pashtun culture functioning for centuries. Its main task is disputes' resolution in the society. The word Jirga has been derived from 'Jirg<sup>8</sup>,' which is a Turkish language word meaning 'circle.' Members of a Jirga sit in a circle with none of them considered to be powerful or privileged than the others. All Jirga members are considered as equal (Marcoux, 2010). Jirga members are neither appointed nor elected as they happen to be local notables having the required wisdom

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<sup>7</sup> Pa thoor topak wishtalay rashay: Da bay nangi awaz de ma rasha mayeena (Return from battlefield wounded with bullets but not someone who has fled from the battleground).

<sup>8</sup> According to some sources, the word Jirga is a Mongolian loan-word which means circle.



and vision to resolve disputes in the society (Ginsburg, 2011). While emphasizing their points, these elders use proverbs and quote past precedents (Rzehak, 2011).

A traditional Jirga involves people lined with both of the parties to a dispute. As all are equal, so everyone is allowed to speak his mind. There is no fix timeframe for Jirga deliberations as some cases may take several weeks to be resolved (Ginsburg, 2011). All the decisions are made with consensus. Jirga discussions continue unless all the members agree on a single verdict. Decisions of a Jirga are binding on all parties. Refusal to accept Jirga verdict may lead to a penalty (Rzehak, 2011). In some cases, the Jirga members before starting deliberations collect a bond from both sides and places it with a third party for safekeeping. The bond can be cash money, some property, or guns etc. The bond of the party which will refuse to accept the Jirga verdict is then confiscated. There is no formal mechanism of appeal against the decision of a Jirga. However, any of the party can ask (though with some consequences) for another Jirga to look into the matter (Ginsburg, 2011).



A Mahsud Jirga deliberating over a matter of collective concern

Source: The News International on November 4, 2020.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/738810-mahsud-tribes-boycott-survey-send-team-back-in-south-waziristan>

## Chapter 4

### Research Setting: The Mahsud tribe of South

### Waziristan

#### Introduction

Mahsud tribe, which is also known/written as Mehsud, Mehsood, Mahsood, and Maseed<sup>9</sup>, is a major tribe living in South Waziristan (Mahsud, 2018). South Waziristan District is mostly hilly and is bordered by District Tank and North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zhob District of Balochistan, and Afghanistan (M. Ayaz, personal communication, January 12, 2020). South Waziristan is the south most and the largest district among the districts of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with a total area of 6620 square kilometers. For administrative purposes, it is divided into three sub-divisions: Lada, Sarawaki, and Wana (Ahmad, 2004; Mehsud, 2016). Wazir and Mahsud are the major tribes inhabiting South Waziristan. In addition to Wazir and Mahsud, other small tribes like Burki, Slaiman Khel, Dotanis, and Syeds also live in the district though their sizes are very small as compared to the two major tribes (Mehsud, 2016; Mahsud, 2018).

The climate of the district is not uniform. In the lower parts, the weather happens to be very hot during summers. It is due to excessive heat in summer that one of the valleys is called "Dozakh Tangi" which can be translated as the gorge of the hell (Ahmad, 2004, p. 16). There is a marked difference in weather when one moves to the central and upper parts of the district. The weather in these areas remain extremely

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<sup>9</sup> The word Maseed is used by members of Mahsud tribe itself as well as other local tribes like Wazir, Burki (Urmarh) and Dawar while the other ones have been in use among outsiders including the Britishers.

pleasant during summer with many people living without any electricity and the area receives heavy snowfall during the winter with temperature going below freezing point (H. Shah, personal communication, January 12, 2020). It is due to this variation in weather conditions that the district has two headquarters for summer and winter. During winter, Tank district serves as its headquarter while in summer the headquarter is shifted to Wana (Mahsud, 2018).

The central and south parts of Waziristan are occupied by the Mahsud tribe. The tribe is surrounded by the Wazir tribe from three sides while the Bhattani tribe from one side. The territory inhabited by the Mashuds neither touches the border line with Afghanistan nor the settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Historically, the majority of the Mahsud tribe has been living in South Waziristan and in the Landidak area of Bannu district in Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan (Baha, 1968; Beattie, 1997; Mahsud, 2018; Naval Postgraduate School, 2016). Of late, members of this tribe can be found in all parts of Pakistan where they have permanently settled.

Mahsud tribe is divided into three main subtribes. They are: Behloolzai, Alizai, and Shaman Khel. Each of these three sub-tribes is further divided into smaller clans and khels. Due to its division into three major subtribes, the tribe is also sometimes referred to as Dray Maseed---three Mahsuds (Beattie, 1997; Sammon, 2008). A very important feature of Mahsud society has been its egalitarian character with absence of any hereditary and institutionalized leadership (Beattie, 1997). Every member of the tribe thinks of himself as an equal to any other member of the tribe (Naval Postgraduate School, 2016). Matthew W. Williams has portrayed the situation in these words;

Other tribes along the frontier often designated chiefs and lower level leaders but individual leaders within the Mahsuds only obtained the status of malik, which "...gave men some influence but not much power. Authority was fluid and had to be continually created and recreated by negotiation and power-broking." This fact ensured years of conflict between the British and the Mahsuds because the British found it difficult to negotiate and maintain an agreement with a tribe where maliks could not enforce a decision on the entire tribe, branch, or section. (Williams, n. d, p. 12)

Similarly, British army officer and historian H. C. Wylly has described the Mahsud tribe in these words;

They are also more democratic, and any man who distinguishes himself in bravery or wisdom may rise to the position of malik. Their physique and stamina are good, and judged from the limited extent to which they have hitherto enlisted with us, some rate their soldierly qualities even higher than those of the Afridis. (Wylly, 1912, p. 428).

According to Akbar S. Ahmad, the family tree of Mahsud tribe is like this: Qais Abdur Rashid (the progenitor of Pashtuns) had a son named Karlanri, whose son was Kakey. Kakey had a son named Suleman whose son's name was Wazir. Wazir had a son Khizr whose two sons were Musa and Mahmud. Musa had two sons Ahmad from whom descended Ahmadzai Wazir (Wazir living in South Waziristan also referred to as Darwesh Khel-holy man's descendants) and Usman from whom descended Uthmanzai Wazir (Wazir living in North Waziristan). Mahmud's son was Mahsud whose three sons were Ali, Bahlol, and Shaman (from whom descended the three

subtribes of Mahsud tribe. The Mahsud tribe's identity was closely linked with the Wazir tribe and it was during 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century that they separated from Wazir and now they have their own separate and distinct identity (Ahmed, 2004). According to Wylly (1912), the two tribes greatly differ in their characteristics and habits and thus for all practical purposes they are separate tribes.

Hugh Beattie has discussed the relationship between the two tribes in these words;

When British travellers and officials first encountered the Mahsuds, they often referred to them as Mahsud Wazirs, or just Wazirs, because their genealogies linked them closely with other Wazir groups. However, during the nineteenth century the Mahsuds established a distinct identity of their own. Their three main branches, the Alizais, Bahlolzais and Shaman Khels, claimed descent from Ali, Bahlol and Shaman respectively, the three sons of Mahsud (the son of Mahmud, the brother of Musa Darwesh from whom the Darwesh Khels were supposedly descended) (Beattie · 1997, pp. 13-14).

The exact number of Mahsud tribe's population has always been a problem. Its total strength has been estimated differently by different people. For example, Ahmad Shah Abdali, the founding father of modern Afghanistan, conducted a census of the tribes in Waziristan. According to this census conducted in 1760, the total numerical strength of the Mahsud tribe was put at 18,000. Wazir tribe's size was reported to be 60,000 while that of Dawar and Bhattani tribes 12,000 each (Alikuzai, 2013).

According to Gazetteer of Central Asia published in the 1870s by Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, an officer of the British Indian army who was also an explorer and

geographer, the total population of Mahsud tribe was estimated to be 66,800. This figure was calculated on the basis of this tribe's fighting men with a ratio of three women and children to one fighting man. In 1930, South Waziristan's DC H.H. Johnson estimated the Mahsud tribe's population to be 68,095. Another British estimate at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century put this tribe's fighting men at 8000 which, while using the three women children to one fighting man formula translates into 32,000 population. According to the census of 1972, Mahsud tribe's population was 247, 040. It suggests that it rapidly increased during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as it was 88,046 in 1946 (Beattie, 1997; Ahmad, 2004). It may be noted that Ahmad personally served as Political Agent of South Waziristan in the late 1970s. According to the census of 2017, total population of South Waziristan was reported to be 68, 0000 with 366, 287 of Mahsud tribe<sup>10</sup> (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

These figures seem to be underestimated. If the tribe's population was 247, 040 in 1972, it should have been much higher in 2017 than the figures reported by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. From 1972 to 2017, Pakistan's population grew from 65309000 to 207774000. It means that Pakistan's population during these 45 years more than tripled. If we suppose that the population of the Mahsud tribe also increased at this speed, then its population in 2017 should have been more than one million. The fact that there is culture of early marriages in Mahsud tribe, fertility rate is high, there are very few recreational opportunities in their area, literacy rate especially among women is much low as compared to the rest of the country, deep influence of religion and religious clerks, less awareness about the use of contraceptives, and preference of more male children makes one feel that the population growth of the tribe must be

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<sup>10</sup> The claim that 366, 287 out of 68, 0000 population is Mahsud is based on the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics census report. According to the Tehsil-wise breakup of the population, the total population of the five tehsils (Saraqgha, Makin, Ladha, Serwekai, and Tiarza) inhabited by Mahsud tribe is 366, 287.

very high as compared to the rest of the country. During this researcher's informal conversations with members of the tribe, many complained that their population was under reported during the 2017 census. They complained that the census was conducted at a time when the majority of the people were living in other parts of the country as they had been displaced by the militancy and the subsequent military operations. One interviewee said that his national identity card carries the address of his village in Sararogha Tehsil of South Waziristan but there is zero population in the village as per statistics of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics uploaded on its website. Thus, we can say that though the exact number of people of Mahsud tribe is not known still it is safe to assume that its population is much more than reported in the 2017 census or generally believed.

## **Religion of the Mahsud tribe**

Though it is widely accepted and believed that the Mahsud tribe belongs to Hanafi Sunni School of thought (Ali & Zhibin, 2021), there are also reports that in recent times some people from the tribe have converted to the Barailvi school of thought. During this researcher's interactions with various people from the tribe, it emerged that some members from Ishangi (Behlolzai), Shabi Khel (Alizai), and Chayar Khel (Shaman Khel) sub-tribes of Mahsud have adopted the Brailvi belief system.

A major feature of Mahsud tribe is the dominant role of holy men. There are different holy figures revered by segments of Mahsud tribe. Hugh Beattie has explained this phenomenon in these words;

The Mahsuds were all Sunni Muslims, and, as elsewhere along the frontier, in Waziristan there appear to have been various kinds of 'holy



men' who exerted some sort of religious influence. Some wrote charms, read incantations and enjoined alms, sacrifices and pilgrimages to shrines for the cure of disease. Others also played a more obviously political role. Five families of Sayyids who lived at Kaniguram were especially influential. Two were Gailanis, two Ansaris, and the fifth from Bukhara, according to one British report. They were wealthy, having important trading links with the Tank district, where they had been given grants of land in the earlier nineteenth century, and with Afghanistan. They were the Mahsuds' "spiritual advisers or pirs", and traditionally had links with a specific Mahsud section, so in the 1870s for example Nabat Shah had special influence with the Aimal Khel Bahlolzais. His father, one contemporary British official reported, "was much revered in his old age, and the vulgar believed he was cutting a new set of teeth, and that his white locks and beard were growing black again". There were also many ziarats or shrines in Mahsud territory, for example that of Borak Nikka in Tiarza (Beattie, 1997, p. 20).

## **Economy**

Historically, the main occupations of the Mahsud tribe used to be trade, pastoralism, agriculture, mining, and raiding. The major places with which the Mahsud tribe traded were Bannu, Kulachi, and Tank. The annual trade with these areas was estimated to be some 20,000 rupees per annum in the first half of 1860s. This suggests that there was fairly large scale trade. Iron manufactures, matting made of dwarf palm, rope, and timber for bedsteads and roofing were among the top exports of the Mahsud tribe.

Grain, cloth, and sugar were their major imports. There also seems to have existed trade with Afghanistan (Beattie, 1997).

The land of the Mahsud is generally inhospitable for farming and thus cultivable land is in scarcity. Where possible, people carefully terraced their fields with stonewalls and constructed irrigation channels for watering these fields. Wheat, barley, jowar, and rice are the major crops of the area. As cultivable land is in scarcity, people own small landholdings. Trees are an important source for firewood and construction purposes. Unlike the Mahsud tribe, the land of the Wazir tribe is fertile and produces high quality fruits and vegetables (Ahmed, 2004; Beattie, 1997).

The Mahsud tribe enjoys a reputation as one of the most warrior and united tribes living on the frontier (Sammon, 2008). The tribe is considered as the most formidable fighting tribe in the frontier region for their raiding, fighting and fiercely independent skills. It has a long history of uprising against outside forces including the Britishers. The independent nature of Mahsuds always stopped them from trading their freedom and liberty. It was their love for freedom that they strongly resisted British moves like construction of cantonments in their area. (Ali & Zhibin, 2021). Mahsud's challenge to the British authority on the frontier has been described by Matthew W. Williams in the following words;

After 1849, Waziristan represented the greatest challenge to the British along the northwestern frontier and the Mahsuds caused them the most trouble. Despite the challenges of managing such a lawless frontier in forbidden terrain, the British government in India believed that maintaining peace and stability along the border with Afghanistan was a strategic necessity. (Williams, n. d, p. 14).

Following the annexation of Punjab in 1849, the British did not consider it judicious to keep direct relations with the Mahsuds or interfere in their internal matters. British India tried to deal with the Mahsud tribe indirectly through the Nawab of Tank. However, this policy did not produce desired results for the Britishers and attacks on British interests from the Mahsud tribe continued. In order to deal with this situation, the British tried different policies. One strategy adopted by the British India Government was to allocate lands to members of Mahsud tribe in Tank district and thus make them responsible for the defense of the border with Mahsud territory. This strategy could not ensure the safety of the British territories from Mahsud tribe's attacks. Another policy devised by British officials at the frontier was to control Mahsuds through their own tribal leaders. Robert Sandeman had successfully tried the policy of controlling tribes through their tribal leaders in Balochistan. This policy was repeated in Waziristan by Robert Bruce, the Deputy Commissioner of Dera-Ismail Khan by introducing the maliki system. Under this scheme, Bruce selected leading Mahsud elders and graded them as per their supposed influence over their tribes and paid allowances to them. This policy too failed to produce desired results because the Baluch tribal elders were more powerful as compared to those of Mahsud tribe. Similarly, Mahsud society used to be more democratic as compared to Baluch society and thus the maliki system could not produce enough impact (Baha, 1968).

The Mahsud tribe's resistance to British India continued throughout the British rule over India. The British India Government launched several military expeditions to crush Mahsud resistance (Bettie, 1997). Even British forces utilized airpower against the Mahsud tribe but still it could not subdue it. It

was only at the time of partition that Mahsud tribe's resistance to the outside forces came to an end.

Following the partition of India in 1947 when the British relinquished Indian colonies and there emerged two independent states in the form of India and Pakistan, the Mahsud tribe remained peaceful till the beginning of the new millennium when the US attacked and ousted the Taliban government in Afghanistan. After their ouster from power in Afghanistan, many Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants crossed into Pakistan and took refuge in the erstwhile FATA. As the area was adjacent to Afghanistan, still governed under the old colonial system called FCR and mostly consisted of mountains and hills, it provided an ideal environment for the militants to regroup, train, and carry out attacks against the NATO forces in Afghanistan. As the Taliban regime claimed to be based on Sharia, so many locals joined the ranks of Taliban. When the Pakistan Army under pressure from the US launched military operations against militants, the militants started targeting Pakistan security forces and other state installations. Thus a long series of bloodshed started in the area including South Waziristan. Thousands of people including tribal elders, common people, security personnel, members of civil administration, and police force have so far lost their lives in this so-called War on Terror and hundreds are missing. It may be noted that many locals have been blaming the Pakistan Army for supporting these militants. They argued that the army would host and train them in the erstwhile FATA to use them as strategic assets for its Strategic Depth Policy.

As a long series of military operations was started by Pakistan, hundreds of thousands of residents of the tribal areas were displaced as a result of these operations and fighting between militants and security forces. Some of the displaced people have been repatriated while others are still living in other parts of the country due to uncertainty in their native villages. In 2009, the army launched such large-scale operations that almost the whole Mahsud tribe was displaced. Members of this tribe spread throughout the country though Tank and Dera Ismail Khan were their major destinations. Though the government several times proclaimed that all the displaced people of the Mahsud tribe have been repatriated, many people have still not returned to their native villages. Others go to their native villages only during the summer to avoid scorching heat in the plain districts and then return back before the start of winter. This long interaction of the tribe with other and diverse people have deeply affected their cultural values and practices. A detailed discussion on these cultural changes is being given in the chapters that follow.

## **Politics**

The main concern of the British Raj was protection against any Russian aggression. For this purpose, it turned the tribal belt into a buffer zone between Afghanistan and India. The tribal territory was thus the second buffer zone between Russia and British India with Afghanistan being the first one. As security of its mainland India was the major concern of British India, its policy toward the tribal belt was one of minimum engagement. Direct control of the area being impossible, the Britishers tried to control it indirectly by introducing special legal code, maliki system and Khasadar force. It

formulated Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) through which it tried to exploit Pashtun socio-cultural values by giving the impression that the code was based on Pashtunwali. British India actually coated a bitter pill in the form of FCR under the sugar cover of Pashtunwali.

As security of mainland India was the major concern of the British India government, there was little or no political activity in the tribal belt. After the partition of India in 1947, the new state of Pakistan too retained the FCR till 2018. Being a special legal and administrative code, there was little scope for political activities in former FATA under FCR. There was not much difference in the attitudes of Pakistan and British India toward the tribal belt. Pakistan kept the tribal territory outside of the mainstream political system and continued to govern it through the political agents who wielded vast financial, judicial, and administrative powers. Unlike British India, Pakistan gave representation to the tribal people in the parliament.

Though the constitution of Pakistan provided for FATA's representation in the parliament, the members were to be elected by a small number of pro-government maliks rather than the general public through adult franchise. It was in 1997 that adult franchise was given to the people of FATA for the first time and they used their right to vote in the 1997 elections (Government of Pakistan, 2016; Wazir, 2013).

Similarly, political parties were not allowed to operate in the tribal territory. It was in 2011 that the then PPP government amended Political Parties Act 2002 to allow political parties to carry out political activities in the area. Thus, the first ever party-based elections in the former FATA were held in 2013 (Sajjad,

2013). Before 2018, article 247 of the Constitution barred the application of parliamentary statutes to the tribal areas. The constitution vested executive and legislative authority over FATA in the office of president of the country. Similarly, the constitution also barred higher judiciary from exercising judicial jurisdiction over the area (Khan, 2015).

In May 2018, the 31<sup>st</sup> constitutional amendment was signed by the president of Pakistan which merged the tribal areas of Pakistan with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and abolished FCR. The amendment also introduced other changes like representation of the tribal areas in the provincial assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Callen et al., 2019). Though FCR has formally been abolished, many people from the tribal territory told this researcher during her fieldwork that the merger of FATA with KP was in name only. The residents complained that no real change has occurred even after the abolition of the colonial era legal code.

The above account about politics applies to all the former FATA agencies. Among the Mahsud tribe, religious figures have been the most dominant electoral actors ever since the people were given adult franchise in 1996. In the 1997 general elections, there was only one National Assembly constituency in South Waziristan and it was won by Maulana Noor Muhammad (ECP, 1997) who belonged to the Wazir tribe. In the 2002 elections, there were two National Assembly seats from South Waziristan and the one exclusively covering the Mahsud tribe was won by Maulana Muhammad Miraj-ud-Din (ECP, 2002). He won the seat as an independent

candidate as at that time the Political Parties Act was not extended to the tribal areas. Later, he joined JUI-F.

In the 2008 elections, there were no elections in the Mahsud area due to the law and order situation. As the Political Parties Act was extended to the tribal areas before the 2013 elections, so political parties were legally allowed to award tickets to candidates. Though legally all parties could field candidates on the seat but in practice it was only JUI-F which ran an effective election campaign in the constituency. Other parties especially Awami National Party (ANP) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) for their secular tendencies have been the target of militants. The 2013 and 2018 seats were thus won by JUI-F. As the ex-FATA was given representation in the KP provincial assembly, so elections on these seats were held in 2019. The provincial assembly seat from the same constituency was also won by JUI-F. Though JUI-F has been a dominant party in the Mahsud area, in recent times it has faced tough competition from independent candidates, especially those who have been affiliated with Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) which has been very vocal in criticizing army for supporting militants. Many people from the area believe that the provincial assembly seat was actually won by Abdul Wahid Mahsud who is a close aide of PTM head Manzoor Pashteen. They believe that Wahid was deprived of his seat by the army in the recounting process. In the recently held local bodies' elections, there were two sub-division level seats. One was won by JUI-F and the other by a pro-PTM independent candidate. Even the seat won by the JUI-F candidate was mainly due to his personal and family influence rather than purely party support. This shows that there have emerged strong political forces against the JUI-F.



## **Mahsud Culture and Customs**

Pashtunwali, which has often been referred to as the way of the Pashtuns, serves as customary law of the Pashtun tribes including those living in Waziristan. The broad tenets of Pashtunwali are the same with minor differences at different localities. However, it may be noted that cultures do not happen to be homogenous. Subcultures can be identified within each culture. These subcultures are developed by groups having distinct sets of behaviors and practices that distinguish them from the larger culture as well as other subcultures.

Mahsud tribe of South Waziristan strictly adhere to the principles of Pashtunwali. All the components of Pashtunwali are practiced here. However, there are minor variations in the way they are practiced among the Mahsud and other Pashtun tribes.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Mahsud culture in transition: An analysis of the Tangible heritage**

#### **Introduction**

As discussed in the preceding chapters, culture comprises customs, rituals, religious beliefs and practices, symbols, ethics, habits, music, art, social standards, modes of social groupings, settlement patterns, values, norms, knowledge, religion, economic and political organization, and architecture etc. In simple words, it is the way of life of a particular community.

Although cultures happen to be somewhat stable they are not totally stagnant. They undergo constant but slow changes as growth and change are inherent in them making them dynamic. They do respond to the changing conditions in the physical environment in which they exist. (Kalsekar, 2015). As people navigate and negotiate the values, beliefs, ideas, norms, ideals, symbols and meaning systems that form the cultural environment, so cultures constantly undergo changes. (Wesch, 2018). In other words, cultures flow in all directions and thus they are constantly in the process of development and change (Salzman, 2017).

The factors that bring about changes in a culture are manifold and are not only limited to the internal dialects of a given social system (Portes, 2008). According to O'Neil, the three broader factors that affect change in cultures are the forces at play in a given society, inter-societies' interaction, and alterations in the natural environment (Hassan, 2014). The major factor which has brought about drastic and rapid changes in the Mahsud culture is (forced) migration of the whole tribe.

The scope of cultural changes brought about by migration varies from case to case. In some cases, the effects of migration just reach the surface of the society with minor impact on economic organizations, norms or role expectations. In others, these effects go deeper into the culture bringing about transformation in the social structure or value system. The impact of migration is usually determined by factors like the number of migrants, duration of their stay in their new abodes, and its class composition (Portes, 2008).

Segments of the Mahsud tribe have been migrating to other parts of the country for more than half a century. This migration has been seasonal with people settling in other cities for better life standards and then going back to their native towns in the summer to escape the scorching heat in the plain areas. The cultural impacts of this migration have been nominal and very slow. On the other hand, the changes brought about by the recent forced and large scale migration have been very deep and rapid. This forced migration involved almost the whole tribe due to which it affected the whole social fabric of the tribe.

As stated earlier, a culture is made up of tangible (material) and intangible (non-material or ideational) elements. Tangible and intangible components both are inseparable parts of a culture of a given society. Both are so vital for a culture that we cannot imagine a culture without possessing both types of elements. Though they are considered as separate spheres, still they cannot be totally separated from each other. There are components that have both aspects: material and ideational. For example, death and marriage related rituals have both material and non-material aspects. Still an effort has been made to separate them and put them in two broader categories for easy understanding of the readers. In this chapter there will be a discussion on the

tangible components of the Mahsud culture. Thus, the focus of this chapter will remain on elements like dress, food, marriage and death practices, economy, architecture and games and sports etc.

## **Dress**

Great importance is attached to dress in all societies and the way we dress is an important indicator of who we are (Burton. 1998). Dress helps people to express their social and cultural identities. In other words, dress plays an important role in societal differentiation. It becomes a marker of cultural identity which is used for the expression of cultural identity in cultural festivals and national ceremonies (Disele et al., 2011).

Though traditional dresses are thought to be going unchanged, many researchers argue that traditional dresses have undergone modifications. They argue that traditional dresses may lose purity as a result of economic and technological advancement of different communities experiencing globalization. Thus, the physical features of traditional dresses are modified in the process and they may take new forms while keeping with the traditional culture of social identity and gendered roles (Disele et al., 2011).

The traditional male dress of Mahsud tribe has been caps usually known as Chitrali Cap, turban<sup>11</sup>, locally known as Pagrhay (پاگڑے), Dastoor (دستور), and Langay (لنگے) and a chadar on shoulder. They would wear simple dresses with short shirts and loose leg-openings. Some people would wrap simple chadar around their heads like a turban and it was kind of a casual turban.

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<sup>11</sup> Turban is a headwear used in different cultures. In Pashtun culture, it is tightly wrapped around head with a tail hanging on the shoulder. It is available in different colors. Turban can be colorful or plain. Plain turbans are usually worn by elderly people while the colorful ones by people in their thirties and forties.

Wearing a cap or turban for adults was a compulsory component of dress. Walking bare headed was almost impossible for adult male as there was a well-established tradition of wearing a cap. Even people who would go to Waziristan from other parts of the country would take caps with them so they may enter Waziristan with caps on their heads. They were so conscious about their dress that those who would return to Waziristan from Tank or D. I. Khan as seasonal migrants would take special care of their dress to avoid criticism back in their native villages. (Sultan, personal communication, January 27, 2022).

After the displacement and interaction with other cultures where covering the head is not mandatory, the majority of the young male roam in Waziristan bare-headed. Even there are people who are above 20 or 30 years of age but still don't wear caps in Waziristan. This is a big change as it was simply unimaginable some fifteen years ago. The ratio of elderly people wearing turbans has also dropped. Many people who would earlier wear turbans now switched to caps or they make turban of simple chadar. (M. Akram, personal communication, March, 16, 2022).

According to a senior journalist from the tribe who has also worked with foreign media, many people after displacement to Karachi and other cities now wear dresses that were not part of the indigenous culture. For example, many people interacted with Baloch people in Karachi and thus they brought a new shalwar (trouser) design to the Mahsud culture from the Baloch culture. Unlike traditional Mahsud shalwar, this new type of shalwar is made of several meter cloth. (Personal communication, May 9, 2022). Similarly, one interviewee, when asked about changes in dress of Mahsud tribe, responded that he has been observing male from the Mahsud tribe wearing colors that were once considered to be too bright for male and thus their use

was totally unimaginable (Ijaz friends). Similarly, many people now wear clothes with designs on their collars instead of the traditional collar style.

During extensive discussions during the fieldwork, it emerged that hair style has also undergone some changes. For example, a government employee said that before the displacement, keeping long hair was a popular practice. After the displacement, keeping long hair does not have as much popularity and acceptability as it once enjoyed. Similarly, many people from the young generation can be observed having beards with different designs as in the urban areas. Beard with design was something totally alien to the Mahsud culture (Personal communication, May 7, 2022).

A very interesting aspect of this change process is that those who did not migrate during the military operations adhere to the typical Mahsud values. For example, the dress of people living in Shawal area<sup>12</sup> of South Waziristan witnessed no changes. Similarly, they still regularly wear caps. (Ijaz, personal communication, May 7, 2022).

In female dress, Ganrh Khat is the most important item worn by married women. It is a frock shaped dress which is prepared from 30-36 meters cloth called Ladeena or Bändeena. It is made from red cloth with motifs on it. The dress is made of different parts like Cholay, Peesay, Lastinhri, Grewon etc. All of these parts are embellished with ornaments in different styles (N. Bibi, personal communication, March 18, 2022). Ganrh Khat was a common dress for women while going outside of home in Waziristan (K. Z. Mahsud, personal communication, April 9, 2022). The unmarried girls would wear simple qameez and shalwar and a dopata. Traditionally, there was no burqa for women. Those traveling to the settled districts would wear burqa. (N. Muhammad, personal communication, June 7, 2022)).

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<sup>12</sup> Some people belonging to the Mahsud tribe and living on the periphery of the Mahsud tribe did not migrate during the military operations.

After detachment from their native areas and culture for a long time, women now wear burqas when they go out of their homes. According to an elderly woman in a focus group discussion, Ganrh Khat has now almost been abandoned by half of the womenfolk of Mahsud tribe. She said that in Jannata (a town with about a dozen big villages around it) only women of one village (Mirwach Khail) still wear Ganrh Khat like earlier while majority of women from the rest of the villages now use burqa while going outside their home.

Similarly, Rehmat Mahsud, a senior journalist associated with Arab News, remarked that there was no concept of burqa in Mahsud culture. It was the Ganrh Khat which would serve as a burqa. After the displacement, a large number of females now wear burqa even in Waziristan (personal communication, April 3, 2022). Women from the tribe also revealed that the design of burqa has also changed now. Earlier, females would wear shuttlecock burqas but now many women wear the modern fashionable burqa in Waziristan which was unimaginable few years ago. The women also showed this researcher the traditional burqa and its new designs.

Responding to this researcher's question as to why they don't wear their traditional Ganrh Khat in the settled districts, many of them complained that they cannot wear it in the settled districts due to its climate. There may be some truth in this claim but women from Mahsud tribe living in Takwarha area of Tank district still wear the traditional dress. One woman from Takwarha village confessed that it is a bit difficult to wear the Ganrh Khat in places like Tank where temperature starts sharply increasing from the start of March and temperature reaches above 45C in June, July, and August but they have no other option as it is the major component of traditional female dress among the Mahsud.

Pant/jeans and shirts for small children is also a developing trend in the Mahsud area. Its use among the Mahsud tribe is not only limited to the settled areas but many people prefer jeans/pants shirts for their children even in Waziristan. (M. Saleem, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

Traditionally, it was male family members' responsibility to bring cloth and other items for their womenfolk without much input from the women. The male would either bring cloth etc. for women without any option with the women to select from or would bring very few items from which the women had to select. During their stay in the settled districts, the women from Mahsud tribe observed other females going to markets for shopping. Thus, they started visiting female-run shops in their localities and now many of them go to such shops or even male-run shops to select cloth and shoes etc. of their own choice. (Rukhsana, personal communication, February 7, 2022).

In simple words, the change in dress and outlook was so evident and drastic that now several people reported that Taliban have warned the locals against walking bareheaded. Some people even reported that Taliban even shaved heads of some youth in Makin area for not observing culturally appropriate social code. When the researcher asked people whether Taliban are acting on the behalf of Mahsud tribe to preserve its culture, almost all of them disagreed, saying that Taliban use such tactics to create space for themselves in the society. One interviewee said that Taliban know well that Mahsud people are conscious about their culture and thus they try to exploit this sensitivity of the people to their own advantage. People also reported that Taliban have been issuing instructions to the people not to allow their women to go outside of their homes without male companions, against use of smartphones in the area and making designs in beard, etc. This, according to the locals, is done to earn sympathy



of the people who are extremely unhappy with their presence in the area despite some twenty years of military operations. Not all interviewees were ready to talk on this topic due to security concerns. Those who agreed to talk to the researcher on this issue did so on condition of anonymity that too through strong intermediaries between the researcher and the interviewees.

A few days after Eid ul Azha, an incident was reported on social media in which a young boy was killed by the Taliban after he refused to hand over his smartphone to them in the Lada area of South Waziristan. According to the locals, Taliban have banned smartphones in the area claiming that it spreads vulgarity in the society. As smartphones are being used by common people to record videos of events there, the Taliban want a complete ban on them.



Mahsud elders with traditional turban

Source: Khyber News, June 4, 2018.

<https://khybernews.tv/tribal-elders-assure-full-support-to-forces-for-maintaining-peace-in-south-waziristan/>



A shopkeeper preparing Chitrali cap (widely used in South Waziristan) in Chitrali Bazaar, Peshawar.

Source: Abdul Razzaq/Express Tribune, 05 July, 2015.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/913014/chitrali-bazaar-the-bustle-of-yore>



A little girl in traditional Ganrh Khat

**Credit:** The photo was captured by the researcher during her fieldwork in Peshawar in March 2022.

## **Food**

Food is one of the basic needs of human beings as individuals need to eat so they may live an active life. The social act of consuming food, like speaking and taking care of ourselves, is a part of how we become human. Though our main motive behind eating is hunger, but biological factors are not the only ones that determine our food choices. Instead, our food choices are influenced by tastes, senses, emotions, and exposures which themselves are determined by our culture (Tarr, 2016).

According to one sociological approach, selection of food is neither random nor haphazard but shows patterns and regularities. People eat food in a socially ordered way and thus food is considered as a cultural element. In different cultures, there are specific right and wrong table-manners, good and bad methods of presenting dishes and clear understandings about food appropriate to different occasions. (Murcott, 1982).

People mainly learn food practices and habits from their parents. It is from social groups that people learn about meals' timing and structure, the place where it can be eaten (table etc.), and how to eat it. The food learning process is both explicit like verbal communications and implicit like daily routine (Monterrosa et al., 2020).

As individuals, we grow up while consuming the food of our respective cultures and thus it becomes a part of who we are. We develop such a deep association with our cultural food that at times we simply want our cultural food in moments of stress and frustration (Le, 2017). Though people develop close attachment with our cultural foods, their cultural food practices and habits change in the acculturation process when they as immigrants are exposed to foods of other cultures and alien culinary and food acquisition practices (Monterrosa et al., 2020).

Like any cultural community, Mahsud tribe too has foods peculiar to it. Typical Mahsud dishes include Kharha Ghusha<sup>13</sup> (خڑا غوشہ)، Larhmeen<sup>14</sup> (لاڑمین)، Kharha Zemna<sup>15</sup> (خڑا زیمنا) and Kashkari<sup>16</sup> (کاشکری). Similarly, Mahsud cultural bread included kook, waishalyea, naghan, and dhodhay (Rehmanullah, personal communication, May 16, 2022; B. Bibi, personal communication, May 10, 2022). Kook, waishalyea, and naghan are made from wheat flour while dhodhay from corn flour. The routine meal of Mahsuds used to be waishalyea, and naghan as bread and some curry made of beans, potatoes, vegetables, and lentils etc. For dhodhay, the ideal curry used to be a mixture of desi ghee and milk/yogurt though people would also consume it with simple yogurt or desi ghee or even lassi. Kook was a type of bread which people would take along while setting out on a long journey as it can be kept for several days without any fear of it getting moldy or decomposed (H. Bibi, personal communication, May 7, 2022).

The typical meal for the whole village etc. like on the occasions of marriage or some other important event of Mahsud tribe included dishes like larhmeen, warha marhay<sup>17</sup> (واڑہ مارہے)، and de mrheya ghurhi (shortening-oil extracted from animal fats). Many people would cut bread into small pieces and soak it in kharha zaimna and then would put shortening on it. Larhmeen used to be a compulsory item in wedding meals. (A. Maseed & H. Khan, personal communication, May 6, 2022).

Following their displacement and long interaction with other cultures, many people simply abandoned their traditional dishes. A middle aged man from Mahsud tribe,

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<sup>13</sup> Mutton or beef boiled in water and salt. Its curry is then used as a dish for warha marhay.

<sup>14</sup> For making larhmeen, meat of organs or other body parts of an animal is first boiled in water and at the end oil is added to it to make it as a dish. Mutton is usually preferred for making this dish. It can be served both as a dish and as just meat.

<sup>15</sup> Curry made of water and salt.

<sup>16</sup> Animal fats' residue after oil has been extracted from it through boiling.

<sup>17</sup> Bread broken into small pieces and soaked in curry of chicken/goat/sheep etc.

when asked about changes in foods remarked that "kook, waishalyea, naghan used to be integral part of our meals but now they are cooked very rarely as majority of people now cook chapati" which is commonly cooked in the settled districts like Tank, D. I. Khan, and Bannu etc. (L. Shah, personal communication, December 12, 2021). Another interviewee said that their traditional dishes are now slowly fading out. He said that many people do not prepare these dishes even after their return to Waziristan. This points to the lasting impact of migration on the Mahsud culture.

Unlike their traditional wedding meals, now the majority of the people prefer rice as a single dish or rice and a curry. As compared to the traditional dishes mentioned above, now people, especially the young generation, like rice and pulao (pilaf). Several people who attended wedding meals in Waziristan recently confirmed that rice with meat was the only item offered in the meal. This highlights the developing trend and taste for meals other than traditional ones. One factor for this may be that the young generation grew up away from their typical cultural values and thus developed a taste for foods available in urban cultures.

A senior government servant who did not want to be named said that Waishalyea, kharha zaimna and ghurhi were the major components of their meals. "It had its own taste at that time when there were limited food choices. After the displacement, rice has become an integral part of our meals on weddings and other items mentioned earlier have fallen out of favor" (personal communication, March 22, 2022).

It seems that preparing meals other than the typical traditional ones is comparatively easy. For example, a woman in a focus group discussion said that cooking waishalyea and naghan is difficult and needs more firewood while making chapati is comparatively much easy and can be cooked even with using garbage like straw and

dried leaves as firewood. As many of the displaced people did not possess enough financial resources to purchase gas and costly wood for daily cooking, the idea of abandoning the traditional bread which consumes more firewood and replacing it with chapati must have been a pragmatic approach.

Traditionally, in the case of meals for the whole village on the occasion of a wedding or some other event, the concerned family would distribute dough among other households so they may cook bread for them. As now people usually go for rice, so this practice is falling out of favor. (Ikramullah, personal communication, June 30, 2022). Similarly, people were earlier dependent on each other for tasks like slaughtering animals and cooking big meals for whole villages. After exposure to the urban culture, now many people prefer to hire services of professionals for this purpose. For example, one interviewee said that when they were preparing a meal for the whole village following the death of his father, they did not rely on their community like before. Instead, they hired the services of a tribesman who had learnt cooking by working with a marriage hall operator in a major city. (N. R. Mahsud, personal communication, May 13, 2022).

Another change has occurred in the timings of meals. Traditionally, meals used to be offered after Maghrib prayers. After the displacement, the tribesmen observed meals being offered well before Maghrib. This idea attracted many of them and now many people follow this practice even in Waziristan. (M. Haroon, personal communication, January 25, 2022). It may be noted that many people appreciated this change on the ground that all paths are stony and thus walking in the darkness after Maghrib was quite difficult, especially for children.

Among the Mahsuds, people would prepare ginghrhay<sup>18</sup> on occasions like the first or third day of marriage or the 40<sup>th</sup> day after a child's birth. Now this has totally changed. Almost all people cook rice instead of ginghrhay (I. Bibi, personal communication, March 17, 2022). During a discussion at a focus group discussion, a woman remarked that she does not remember any marriage during the last few years where they were served with ginghrhay. She added that rice has completely replaced ginghrhay on weddings etc. The researcher also observed many young teenage girls who had no idea of how this ginghrhay is prepared.

An Islamabad-based journalist, when asked for his opinion on the topic, said, "On Eid, people would prepare foods like ghee-yogurt, curry, and rice. Now one finds Biryani as a common food served by people on Eid. Other foods like kharha ghusha and larhmeen are slowly and gradually disappearing from our traditional meals."

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<sup>18</sup> Ginghrhay was a mixture of corn, wheat, and beans boiled together. It was a simple dish without any other ingredients.



1



2

Waishalyea bread with ghee and yogurt/milk. Waishalyea bread with ghee extracted from sheep.

**Photo 1 Source:** Arab News report by Rehmat Mehsud: "In Pakistan's northwestern tribal territories, Pashtuns are losing appetite for traditional food." Published 15 May, 2021. <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/1858721/pakistan>

Photo 2 Source: Mansoor Khan Mahsud's personal collection. Picture taken in September 2021



1



2

Larhmeen

The photos were taken by the researcher during fieldwork in Tank (picture 1 on July 14 and picture 2 on July 17, 2022).





Kharha ghusha

Photo taken by the researcher during her fieldwork in Tank on July 23, 2022.



Kashkari

Ginghrhay

Photo taken by the researcher during her fieldwork in Tank on July 14, 2022 (Kashkari) and April 16, 2022 (Ginghrhay).

## **Marriage and wedding ceremonies and rituals**

Marriages serve as a reproductive contract between the opposite genders (Burch, 2019) and weddings are almost a universal phenomenon (Buckley, 2006). Reasons for men and women to enter into marriage contracts vary and they include economic, religious, and socio-cultural factors (Dewi et al., 2019).

Keeping in view the expenditure involved in performing marital contract, we can easily understand the personal, and socio-cultural importance attached to the institution of marriage (Buckley, 2006). The many wedding rituals and ceremonies like clothing, decorations, and bridal party all have great significance for the couple, their family and culture (Joseph & Alexander, 2018).

The wedding ceremony is basically rites that formalize the marriage contract between two people but it has developed into a performance that often reflects identities, cultural values, social norms, and needs (Joseph & Alexander, 2018). Though wedding ceremonies involve different rituals and customs, the exact meaning of all such rituals is not always clear and historians are also not always in position to explain the logic beyond certain wedding rituals (Chesser, 1980).

Weddings is not just the expression of happiness of the newlywed couple and their family but it also socialize the bride and groom for the new roles as married couple. Differences exist in the rituals surrounding wedding ceremonies in various cultures. In some societies, a wedding ceremony lasts for several days involving numerous rituals (Kalmijn, 2004).

Like any other culture around the world, marriage ceremonies and rituals are one of the most eventful and joyous occasions in Mahsud culture. The main marriage rituals and ceremonies in Mahsud culture used to be performed on three different days. The

first day was when the marriage party would go to the bride's home. On the second day, the marriage party would take the bride from her home to the groom's home. Meals also used to be given on this day. The third important day was after a one day break after the meal day.

Based on extensive discussions with both male and male interviewees and participants of FGD, a typical Mahsud marriage was like this. On the day when the marriage party would go to bring the bride, the bridegroom's family would cook a special dish called *ginghrhay* for women of the village who would come to the home on the first day. This phase would start from morning and would come to end before afternoon when the marriage party would leave for bride's home.<sup>19</sup> The marriage party was to stay at the bride's home for the night and take the bride the next morning. Night stay of the marriage party at the bride's home was a must even if the bride's home was in the same village.

The bridegroom's side was to provide sheep/goat to the family of the bride for the dinner of the marriage party while the bride's family would slaughter sheep/goat on the next morning to give lunch to the marriage party. Number of goats/sheep was determined on the basis of the number of people in the marriage party. Usually one goat/sheep was given to 10-15 people.

Those going in the marriage party were supposed to take a *Garnrh Khat* and a white *chadar* for the bride. The *Garnrh Khat* was to be borrowed from some woman in the village keeping in view its size and condition while the *chadar* belonged to the bride's brother-in-law. The *chadar* was to be put on the bride while bringing her from her

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<sup>19</sup> Usually the marriage party leaves for the bride's home in the afternoon. In the case of long distance or short distance, it may also go early or a bit late.

parents' home. The family and relatives of the bride would throw raw eggs, vegetables, and fruits etc. on the marriage party when it would enter the house of the bride.

Physical strength has always been highly valued among the Mahsud. In order to prove their physical strength, the male members of the marriage party were to accept a duel challenge from the villagers who would gather at the bride's home in the evening and next morning. The duel used to be unarmed and governed by some rules. Age and physical characteristics of those facing each other from the two sides were to be taken into account.

Women from the bride's family (including relatives and even some from the village) would tease the female marriage party members in different ways. They would throw raw and rotten eggs on them, would tear their clothes, would pass insulting comments and would make fun of them in other ways. In some cases, women and girls from the bride's village would challenge women and girls from the marriage party to enter a duel against them.

Male from the marriage party were supposed to prove their marksmanship before taking the bride with them. For this purpose, they, with their guns, were to hit the mark installed at a certain distance. Unless someone from them would hit the target, they could not leave the home of the bride.

Before leaving the home of the bride, women from the bridegroom's side would steal some utensils etc. and would take it along. It was a normal practice rather than an act considered to be immoral or wrong. On the morning when the marriage party would leave the bride's home, women from the bride's side would put black marks on foreheads or cheeks of all women and young girls going with the marriage party. They would mix hair oil and black powder obtained from the bottom of metal pots or

top of metal griddles to prepare this black ink-like material. Those resisting the blackening of their faces were to be forced.

As almost all male members of the marriage party would carry guns, so they would also resort to aerial firing with intervals. The sound of firing of the marriage party would alert the villages through which the marriage party would pass. Thus, residents of every village would welcome the marriage party with aerial firing irrespective of whether the villagers knew the family of the bridegroom or not. The villagers would start aerial firing as soon as the marriage party would enter into their village borders and would continue it intermittently till it would cross the limits of that village. As male members of the marriage party would also respond by firing but sparingly as they would possess a limited number of rounds with them. On arrival in the bridegroom's village, the whole village would start firing and it would continue till the bride was seated in her new home.

When the marriage party would reach back and the bride taken to her room or some other place inside the house then her brother or uncle or male cousin accompanying her would thrice say that the bride is not ready to sit down and is asking for Manrhas<sup>20</sup> (مانرّس) (a gift). On this, groom's mother, sister, or sister-in-law would respond by saying that "Zyerha Gho da ye we" (we give her the yellow cow) or "de kor waak da ye we" (we give her the authority over the whole household). It was just a practice without any practical implications.

On reaching back, the women in the marriage party would go to their home (women who were from the village and had accompanied the marriage party would go to their respective houses without waiting for the main meal while women who had come

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<sup>20</sup> Manrhas is a gift in the form of cow, goat, sheep or hen given to freshly married girls by their parents etc.

from other villages to the bridegroom's home for marriage would stay with the family). In the evening, the family would give meals to the whole village. The meal was to be served after Maghrib prayers and only male and children would attend it.

The day after Rukhsati used to be *tasha rez* (empty day). It used to be an eventless day. The third day (*dreyama*) was again a day of events and celebrations. The day was almost exclusively for females. The family would prepare gingham for the women and children visiting the home. The bride was made to bring water from spring led by male children who were the first offspring of their parents. This was done with the hope that her first offspring will be a boy.

Following their displacement and long exposure to other cultures, many marriage related rituals of Mahsud tribe have undergone changes. These changes can be observed in almost all aspects of marriage starting with the engagement. Earlier, following the engagement, those from boy's side would distribute money among those who would play a role in bringing the two sides closer for the engagement. Now this trend has considerably changed and many people now distribute sweets. Earlier, there was no concept of sweets.

Earlier, Ganrh Khat was a must for the bride but now the situation has changed and many people simply skip it. Similarly, many people don't take the white *chadar* along for the bride. Unlike the traditional practice, these days marriage parties in majority cases do not stay for night. Instead, they only stay for lunch and then return on the same day. Even many people now entertain the marriage party with high tea after which it returns on the same day. According to a participant of a focus group discussion, "marriage parties nowadays rarely stay at the bride's home. Those who come from remote areas stay for night, otherwise everything is done on the same day.

Night stay of the marriage party has almost become an exception." In some cases, when one side insists for a night stay of the marriage party, a few people go as the marriage party to the bride's home and stay there for night. Then the next morning more people join them from the groom's side and thus take the bride with them in a large marriage party.

Another important change has occurred in the way the marriage party is treated by the family of the bride. Unlike in the past, now people extend utmost respect and care to the marriage party. Thus, the practice of throwing raw eggs and vegetables has also stopped. Similarly, tearing clothes and blackening faces of females in the marriage party has almost vanished. The practice of blackening of females' faces is now considered as "*Jahalat*" (ignorance or goofiness). The practice of stealing some utensils from the bride's home has also fallen out of favor.

Earlier, walima (locally called *khairyat/marhay*) used to be after Maghrib prayers. Now many people serve it immediately after the marriage party returns from the bride's home. The dishes served too have drastically changed.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, earlier women would not stay for the meal as it was to be served after Maghrib but now many women who come to attend the marriage are served food as it is served in day time.

Nowadays, people mostly observe the dreyama immediately after the wedding day. Some people even totally skip dreyama and end their marriage ceremonies after the wedding day. This is the common practice among the local people of Tank and Dera Ismail Khan Districts.

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<sup>21</sup> Its details will be given in the section about food.

The custom of Mehndi is getting popular among the Mahsuds. In traditional Mahsud marriages, there was no concept of Mehndi. Another major change in marriage practices and custom is that a new trend has developed of doing marriages in marriage halls.

## **Death and burial rituals**

Death is not just a biological phase among human beings rather it is a complex phenomenon having social, cultural, and economic aspects as well. Due to its different dimensions, it has long been a subject matter of research for scholars especially anthropologists who have been studying death related rituals and customs in different cultures (Ali, 2021).

The loss of near and dear ones is an unavoidable experience for humans which is usually followed by a funeral and some other grief rituals. Though the observance of some rituals after death of family members and friends is an almost universal phenomenon, but the purpose of funeral and other related rituals vary across religions and cultures (Mitima-Verloop et al., 2021).

Following someone's death, people with common bonds like religion or ethnicity observe different rituals to recognize the death and honor the departed soul and the bereaved family. Thus rituals play a role in legitimizing grief, providing an arena where death is acknowledged and its finality is recognized. Rituals create space for the mourning family to express its grief and emotions and help it to continue its own functioning after the death of loved ones. Generally speaking, rituals after someone's death include disposal of the dead body, holding funerals, wakes, and gathering celebrations that differ across religions, cultures, nationalities, socio-economic standing of the concerned family and ages of the deceased (Hidalgo et al., 2020).



In Mahsud culture, great importance is being attached to different rituals and ceremonies attached with disposal and burial of dead bodies. One of the most important features of death ceremonies was the burial of dead bodies in their native graveyard. Before the displacement, almost all the dead bodies would be transported to their native villages irrespective of where one died. In case someone died in the Gulf countries, the whole village would wait for the arrival of the dead body and then would make all necessary arrangements for the burial and other rituals. Similarly, people would bring their dead from Karachi and other remote areas of the country so they may be buried in ancestral cemeteries. (M. Ahmad, personal communication, May 12, 2022). Burying someone's relative outside of Waziristan was kind of an alien idea for the members of Mahsud tribe. People even considered such families as inferior for their inability to bury their dead bodies in their native graveyards (Jahanzeb, personal communication, May 12, 2022). According to one interviewee, a female relative of them died in December 2005 and her dead body was taken from District Tank to the native village despite the fact that roads were blocked due to snowfall and thus the dead body was taken on foot for several kilometers.

As a result of military operations and displacement, people of Mahsud tribe were forced to bury dead bodies of their relatives outside of Waziristan. Resultantly, Mahsud tribe established its own graveyards in cities like Tank and Dera Ismail Khan etc. and thus started burying dead bodies in their new settlements. (H. Jan, personal communication, March 18, 2022). Some people still prefer and do bury their dead in their native home towns but majority of the people now bury their dead in their new locations. This is a major shift in the thinking of most of the people of the tribe. Historically, burial of a Mahsud outside of Waziristan was looked down upon as something unbecoming of a Mahsud family. This shifting in thinking is evident from

the rapidly expanding graveyards of the Mahsud tribe in areas like Tank, D. I. Khan, and Karachi. (N. Ahmad, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

The burial of close family members outside of Waziristan due to the prevailing circumstances actually promoted this practice at a later stage as well when people can take their dead to their native towns. For example, an interviewee said that they wanted to bury his father in Waziristan but it was not possible (people were not allowed to go to Waziristan) and thus was buried in Tank. He said that now he, his brothers, and his mother also want to be buried in Tank alongside his father. Thinking with regard to the burial of the dead has so changed that recently a man died in Waziristan while most of his relatives were in Tank District. His relatives strongly suggested to the brothers of the deceased to bring his dead body from Waziristan to Tank for burial as it would be difficult for so many people to go there for his last rituals<sup>22</sup> (N. H. K. Mahsud, personal communication, May 30, 2022).

Traditionally, digging graves has been the responsibility of the community, especially of the residents of the concerned village. Now after disruption of their socio-cultural fabric in their new abodes, the family of the dead is responsible for it and usually it is done through paid laborers (M. Sajid, personal, communication, May 18, 2022).

A major death related ritual was Eskat. Eskat is the practice of distribution of money after the funeral prayer of a deceased to earn reward (sawab) for the departed soul. The money was to be distributed among all the participants of the funeral prayer and the women visiting the home of the deceased before burial. The amount distributed was not fixed and depended upon the financial position of the bereaved family. Thus, the amount given to each individual ranged from 5 to 500 rupees. Some people would

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<sup>22</sup> Though his brothers did not accept the suggestion on the ground that he was on medication for a long time and thus his body had swelled and there was a possibility that it would start to smell.

also use this occasion to show their financial position and willingness to spend money for the soul of the deceased. (M. Rehman, personal communication, May 24, 2022).

During discussions with people, it emerged that in settled districts like Tank and D. I. Khan, there is no such practice like Eskat. People usually distribute ground peanuts, dates, or some sweets after the funeral prayer. Following their displacement, the Mahsud tribe started adopting the custom of the settled districts. At present, very few people follow the practice of Eskat. Some people have even borrowed the practice of settled districts to distribute ground peanuts, dates, or some sweets.

It may be noted that sermons of religious scholars may also have played some role in the discouragement of this practice as many religious scholars consider Eskat as un-Islamic or something having no justification in Quran and Sunnah.

In Pashtun society, relatives, friends, and neighbors of a bereaved family give meals to the close family members of the deceased for a few days. Among the Mahsuds, the practice is called *Shaal*. The normal practice of *Shaal* is that one household prepares lunch while dinner is given by another household and the process goes on. Traditionally, each family giving *Shaal* would slaughter a separate sheep/goat to offer it in dinner or lunch. It may be noted that *Shaal* is based on reciprocity. If A gives *Shaal* to B on the death of his close relative, B is bound to reciprocate whenever someone from A's family dies. Similarly, *Shaal* is reciprocated in proportion to the one given by the first party. (N. Khan, personal communication, June 3, 2022). The scope of *Shaal* also varies from case to case as in case of death of a young male or prominent elder *Shaal* was to be given not only to the immediate family but also to the cousins and even second cousins of the bereaved family. (Haidar, personal communication, March 20, 2022).

After the displacement, many people now switched to chicken instead of goat/sheep. One reason behind this could be their financial constraints but it seems that a mixed culture in the settled districts also has influence on it. According to one interviewee, some people even now give cash to the bereaved families to arrange meals for themselves. This is a totally new phenomenon as far as Mahsud culture is concerned.

In some areas, villages have established committees which make food arrangements for the bereaved family from a combined fund. For example, a woman from the Janaata area of Sararogha Tehsil at a focus group discussion said that their village has established a fund and every married man is supposed to deposit two hundred rupees per month in this fund. When the fund reaches a specific limit then contributions are stopped for some time and resumed only after some money is spent from the fund so space becomes available for new contributions. It has also been decided that only chicken (rather than goat/sheep) will be used in meals to the bereaved families.

Another change that is taking place in death related rituals in the Mahsud tribe is the use of cement blocks for covering graves. Earlier, people would use long blocks of stone prepared by people themselves for covering graves after the burial of dead bodies. People would extract these stone blocks from mountains. Now many people prefer cement blocks available in the market. (Zarwali, personal communication, May 24, 2022).

Traditionally, condolences by one family member with a bereaved family would be considered enough but now people's interaction has dramatically increased and now people try to attend funeral prayers or go for condolences in individual capacity rather than on the behalf of his whole family. It means that attendance of funeral prayers of a deceased by one family member of a family is now not enough if other family

members have acquaintances with the bereaved family. (K. Z. Khan, personal communication, March 20, 2022).

The above account of the major rituals and rites and the changes taking place in them is a clear indication that the Mahsud culture is in a transition phase.

## **Economy**

Government jobs, transportation, labor in Middle Eastern countries and major cities like Karachi, trade and agriculture were the main sources of the income of the Mahsud tribe. As a joint family system was a main feature of the society, earning was not mandatory for every male member of the family. If one or two people of a large family went to the Gulf countries then the rest male members of the family felt relaxed. Thus, there were even people who were married and had kids but still did not contribute to the family income. The displacement and exposure to a different lifestyle brought major changes in this attitude. According to Dr. Khan Zeb, who works as a lecturer in Govt. Degree College Tank;

Before the displacement, the common practice was that one or two family members would earn money while the rest would just consume it with many able bodied male sitting idle. After the displacement, their attitude changed and now every male tries to earn money and contribute to the financial stability of the family. (Personal communication, March 27, 2022).

A senior government officer also expressed similar views. He said that traditionally, a few family members would go to Middle Eastern countries and

the rest would sit idle and just spend the money sent home by those working in the Middle East. Now every male tries to earn money.

Selling fruits and vegetables on roadside or on pushcarts has never been an attractive idea for the people of this tribe. They would look at such businesses with disdain. After displacement, they started adopting almost all professions like operating pushcarts to sell corn, peanuts, fruits and vegetables, selling chicken, working as porter etc. Adopting these professions was actually breaking some social taboos. (Sarwar, personal communication, April 28, 2022). At present, one can find hundreds of them operating pushcarts, rikshas, and roadside stalls in cities like Tank, D. I. Khan, Peshawar etc. (Samad, personal communication, March 18, 2022). This is a major change in the attitudes of these people.

In Waziristan, there was huge waste of manpower as many young and able bodied male would do no business etc. When they saw life in the settled districts, their thinking changed in positive way and thus they started small scale businesses and driving rikshas etc. This practice automatically added to the family income. (Naimatullah, personal communication, March 23, 2022).

According to Noor Rehman Mahsud, who teaches at a public sector university, after migration from their native villages, the refugees were to pay electricity bills, to buy firewood, and pay house rents, and in some cases even to purchase drinking water. Managing these necessities required more resources. This then developed a pressure on all male members to contribute to family income (personal communication, April 15, 2022).

The displacement of the Mahsud tribe not only multiplied its income sources but also brought gender diversity in it. With the exposure to a new socio-cultural environment, a new trend in the economy of the tribe is that now many women have opened home-based stores. These stores are being run not only in the settled districts like Tank and D. I. Khan but in Waziristan too. A woman named said that there are five such stores in her village in Janata. Similarly, women from Pyazha Ishangi and Meera villages too reported such stores in their localities. Another interviewee from the Lada area of Waziristan also confirmed that some women have opened small shops in their houses. She added that now there are NGOs that train women for small entrepreneurs like handcrafts etc.

Traditionally, females would contribute to the family economy indirectly by working in fields, bringing firewood, rearing sheep, goat, and hen and even doing manual labor with male family members like wall construction etc. After the displacement, many women started shops in their homes where they entertain female customers. Thus, they are now directly contributing to family income. This contribution to family finances has also increased her status in the family. (N. Rehman, personal communication, April 15, 2022). This shows the change in the overall attitude toward life. After extensive interaction with people both male and female of the tribe, the researcher can claim that economically people have become better after the displacement. The earlier wastage of huge manpower has considerably dropped as almost everyone is now earning.

It may be noted that many economists argue that socio-cultural structure of societies play a significant role in economic development/underdevelopment. One of the reasons for the weak economy of the region may be its cultural values. Being a conservative society, many people from the tribe oppose the tourism industry in their

areas on the ground that it will bring "obscenity and vulgarity" to their culture. Similarly, the fact that a few people work and the majority would sit idle also seems to be a major reason for economic issues. Though their culture may have played a role in keeping the economy underdeveloped, we cannot absolve the state of its criminal negligence. We don't see any example of serious efforts by the state for the economic and social development of the region. State's main concern in this area has been security oriented rather than the well-being of the people.

## **Architecture**

Architecture within a society is the outcome of a multidimensional process influenced by many elements including social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental ones (Saurav, 2016; Herbig, 2017). Certain rules and regulations apply to architecture and it has a strong bond with cultural behavioral norms of a society. Therefore, architecture is inseparably linked with a culture as the former is the expression and manifestation of the later. Architecture is actually art which combines expression, technology and the satisfaction of human needs. Its purpose is to make places where the residents feel more alive and active, more human and social, and more contented and pleased. Therefore, the architectural design of a community depends upon its traditions, culture, manners and norms, knowledge, history, and geography. Thus, the form and relationships of spaces and buildings act as some kind of cultural marker, which can tell about a community's way of life and social status of its inhabitants (Saurav, 2016).

Among the Mahsuds, there was a well-established pattern of architecture. Following this displacement, their architecture design has also undergone some changes. Now many people combine the traditional and modern designs of architecture. For example,



many people now build houses with cement blocks and bricks but at the same time they keep their old design. One reason for this trend may also be the increase of wealth of people (Zarwali, personal communication, May 24, 2022).

Earlier, almost every house contained a special tower which could be used as a fort in case of gun battle. Now the concept has changed and many people totally skip this part while constructing new houses. (Safeerullah, personal communication, May 23, 2022). Some people even remove the towers from their houses constructed by their forefathers. For example, an interviewee said that owners of two houses in their village (Pyazha Tabai) removed the towers from their houses. The houses and their towers were built more than 50 years ago.

As there is still uncertainty and many people are reluctant to build new houses. Therefore, the exact impact on architecture is a bit difficult to determine at this juncture.



A typical Mahsud house

Credit: The photo was provided by Noor Hamid Khan Mahsud from his personal collection showing his house in Tabai Village, Tehsil Sararogha, South Waziristan. The house was built more than five decades ago. Picture taken in 2016.

## **Sports and games**

Sports and games are universal activities which can be found in all cultures across the world. They are essential for personal and social development of children and young people (Council of Europe, 2022).

Games and sports are not only found in present day cultures but they were also prevalent in ancient times. Archaeologists have discovered many artifacts from game play through excavations of different sites across the globe. For example, sports related relics have been recovered from sites of ancient abodes in Iraq and Egypt. Herodotus, the Greek historian, also described games and other pastimes in Egypt and

Turkey, while a Roman historian named Tacitus recorded his observations about dice games among Germanic tribes. Ancient Romans too used to play a variety of games like gladiatorial combats and chariot racing (Chick, 2015).

In every culture, there have been different games for both male and female members with men having more games than women. For example, hunting and combative sports are almost exclusively for male. Deaner and Smith in their study of sports and games in fifty cultures across the world found that women enjoyed a greater role in games in nonpatriarchal societies as compared to patriarchal ones (Deaner & Smith, 2013).

Common games among the Mahsuds were meesay, skhay/pakhsay and marbles for boys and ghoti and making dolls from old clothes for girls.

Meesay: Meesay is a game in which players form two teams. They dig two round holes at a distance of some 10-15 meters and fix a small piece of wood in the center of each of the holes. The wooden nails are pushed into the ground till they become levelled with the ground. Each of the players picks two usually round stones (called mesa with meesay its plural) according to his muscular strength. Thus, those with more power in their arms select heavy ones. A player from one team first throws one of his stones/balls from one hole to the other. He is followed by a player from the opposite team. Thus every stone is followed by one from the opposite team till all players throw both of their balls. After everyone throws his stones, the players go to the hole to check whose stones are nearest to the wooden nail. Score is allocated to one team's stones that lay nearest to the wooden nail consecutively. For example, the three nearest stones are of team A and the fourth one is of team B, team A will get three points for its three nearest stones and team B's stone breaks team A's sequence

of consecutive stones near the wooden nail. In other words, allocation of points to a team's stones stops immediately when a stone from the opposite side intervenes. If the first and second nearest stones to the wooden nail are from opposite teams, it means that one team with the nearest stone will get one point. Similarly, if the top five nearest stones are from one team and the sixth one from the opposite team, the team with five nearest stones will get five points. If one team's stone stops over the opposite team's stone then the one lying on the top is excluded from the count. While throwing their stones, members of opposite sides have the freedom to hit opponents' stones and push them away from the center of the hole.

Skhay/Khsay: This game is played by two teams without any fixed number of players in each team. Players use only one foot for running and one hand for attacking opposite players. One foot of every player is tightly gripped in the claws of his opposite hand. Before they formally start the game, the two teams specify a small mound of mud or sand as the target. One player from one team is declared as Skhai/Khsai and he in the protection of his team members goes to hit the mound while players from the opposite team try to unlock his gripped hand from his foot.

Ghoti: This game is played by girls, both minor and young ones. Five round pebbles are used in this game. A player keeps one pebble in the hand and throws the remaining four on the ground. She tosses the one pebble in the air and picks one pebble from the ground and catches the one falling before the one tossed in the air. Thus she picks all the four pebbles one by one. Then she picks two pebbles at one time. Then three and finally four and also catches the one tossed in the air each time. Then there comes other process.

Games like ghoti, meesay, and Skhay have almost completely fallen out of favor among the young generation. Mobile has become a main source of entertainment for the kids now. (Ijaz, personal communication, April 18, 2022). At present, the young generation play almost all games like football, cricket, hockey etc. Before the displacement, hardly 3-4 cricket tournaments would take place in the Mahsud area between June and August. After the return of the displaced people to their areas recently, cricket tournaments have become a common occurrence. While traveling through the main road from Speenkai Raghzai to Makeen, one observes young boys playing cricket in more than a dozen places. (Zarwali, personal communication, May 24, 2022).

A seventy years old woman at a focus group discussion said that cheechay, ghoti, and doles used to be the most common games of girls but now many girls play ludo. Another woman said that unlike in the past, now many girls remain busy in their studies and thus have little time for games.

Another traditional game among the Mahsuds was hunting. People would hunt wild hare and different types of birds. After the displacement, this practice has almost ceased. It may be noted that the army during the operation collected weapons from the people so now they don't have the means to go on hunting. An interviewee said that they would go hunting in the winter and would remain busy the whole day. But now they cannot possess weapons as the army does not allow them.



Girls playing ghoti

## **Chapter 6**

### **Mahsud culture in transition: An inquiry into the intangible cultural heritage**

#### **Introduction**

In the preceding chapter, there was a detailed discussion on the changes in the tangible elements of the Mahsud culture. In this chapter, there will be focus on the second category of cultural components: the intangible or ideational elements of Mahsud culture. Therefore, the discussion will revolve around themes like language, gender roles, hospitality, folk dance, music, and poetry, religion, and politics.

#### **Language and dialect**

Language of community can be defined as a system of signals which includes sound voices, written text/symbols and gestures that encode and decode information (Kuo & Lai, 2006). Language is probably the most important agent of the socialization process that exists in human societies. It is mainly through language that one generation passes its cultural values and norms to the next (Misic-Ilic, 2004).

The basic purpose of language is the communication of meaning to others. Culture and language have close relationships and thus they deeply affect each other. Language actually stands for the whole culture because language represents culture in the minds of its speakers. Conversely, culture also symbolizes language and is summed in the economic, religions, and philosophical systems of a country. (Kuo & Lai, 2006).

Language is one of the elements which help us in understanding a people's culture in the world. When an individual speaks a particular language, people may guess about his origin, culture, nationality, religion, and ethnicity as language reveals the cultural identities surrounding the language. Some scholars argue that a language represents the shared meanings of a particular culture and culture exchanges the meaning through language with the society members. Language, being a medium for conveying numerous ideas, emotions, opinions, and knowledge performs many functions in framing a specific community's diverse cultural identities. Language is basically considered as an instrument of sharing culture among a community's members because interacting in a language means understanding the culture of the community (Parajuli, 2021).

According to Juliet Kennedy, language can navigate and construct identity by strengthening connection among the members of a community. Similarly, well-known sociolinguist Moha Ennaji in his book argues that it is mother tongue which differentiates people of different origins from each other (Parajuli, 2021).

As discussed above, language is one of the major identity markers of a society or community. Though the Mahsud tribe speak Pashto language, there are several differences in its dialect and vocabulary even if it is compared with the tribes lying adjacent to it. After displacement and long exposure to other Pashto dialects and languages like Urdu, Saraiki, Hindko, Mahsud tribe's language has witnessed considerable changes, especially addition of words from other dialects and even languages and entry of words associated with modern technologies.

According to some of the respondents, those displaced people who settled in North Waziristan brought new words with them because of their long interaction with



Dawar and Wazir tribes. Some of the words identified by respondents to be replaced by new ones include words like woor (rain) with wair, khor (sister) with khair, kor (house) with kair, wroor (brother) with wrair, and noor (anything else) with nair.

New words not only from other Pashto dialects but also other languages have entered the daily conversation of people from Mahsud tribe. Especially English words are frequently used in Pashtu language. For example, missed call (signal), weak mobile signals (having problems in getting a point/argument), dim lights (unwilling, embarrassed, or in low spirit), low battery (unable to give plausible explanation for something said or done), balance and data are used in daily conversation even by illiterate people. They became familiar with these words during their displacement and now use them to derive meaning of their own liking.

Several respondents complained that the young generation usually mix Urdu and English words while talking in their native language thus they cannot speak pure Mahsud language. Many of those who settled in Tank, D. I. Khan, and Karachi etc. cannot speak typical Mahsud language. There are many words of typical Mahsud language that many among the young population don't understand. Words like Wreeth (roast), tashta (run), Kaurhap (dent), Nobeeda Danyo (mortal world), Krakyea (aversion) were identified as examples of vocabulary which many youth don't know about (Siraj, personal communication, March 28, 2022).

This use of words from other languages in conversation in Waziristan sometimes creates problems. For example, an interviewee narrated an incident which took place in the Kotkai area of South Waziristan. A local customer who had spent some time in Karachi after the displacement addressed the waiter as *Baira* (بیرا) which is the Urdu translation of word waiter. The waiter, being unaware of its meaning, started

quarreling with the customer saying that he used a derogatory word for him. (N. Wali, personal communication, March 28, 2022).

Similarly, words surrounding displacement like Mutasireen (It is urdu word which literally means affectees but here it is usually used for the displaced people), IDPs, tent, khaima (tent), ration, checking, check post, registration, data etc. have almost become inseparable part of the native language.

Burki tribe locally called Ormarh also live near Mahsud tribe in South Waziristan but they speak their own and totally different language called Ormarhi. One interviewee told this researcher that recently he conducted a survey among his tribe and he found that some 3-4% people of the tribe had quit their mother tongue. It is noteworthy that this tribe too was displaced along with the Mahsud tribe and remained among other communities for long years (K. Z. Khan, Personal communication, March 27, 2022).

It may be noted that this is not the first time that new words have made their way to the Mahsud language. Words like Saleja (fridge), Iqama (resident card or visa), Qandoora (long Arabic shirt), and Kafeel (visa sponsor) had been introduced in Pashtu language by Pashtun diaspora in the Gulf countries (Hassan, 2014) even before the displacement. The difference, however, is in the pace of new words making space in the local language. It is also worth mentioning that the rapid spread of technologies has also expedited this process. The use of technological devices like laptop, mp3, mobile, and GPS etc. are some of its examples (Coşkun, 2021).

## **Gender/Social roles**

Traditionally and historically, male family members have been dominant in Mahsud culture with women having very limited or minimal roles in the decision making process. Women have mostly been restricted to the domestic sphere. Decisions like

whom to invite for meals, where to marry a boy or girl, which type of business to start or job to do, on what terms to settle a dispute, which type of house to construct, etc. were issues that were almost the exclusive domain of male family members. Though the decision about marriage of both boys and girls was the choice of males, still males who did not like their wives enjoyed considerable freedom to divorce them. For women, this was comparatively rare. This is one of the reasons that divorce rate has been comparatively high among the Mahsud tribe. Similarly, there were frequent incidents of suicide by girls/women to get rid of forced marriages (G. Azeem, personal communication, May 28, 2022). In case of illness, male were always given more attention like taking them to doctors etc. as compared to women. Maybe this was also in part due to the fact that they avoided their women being examined by male doctors (H. Bibi, personal communication, May 7, 2022).

Discussions with women revealed that domestic violence against women especially by their husbands was a frequent occurrence among the Mahsuds. According to some of the interviewees and focus group discussion participants, violence against wives was considered as a marker of masculinity and those who would beat their wives were considered to be in full control of their wives, and thus domestic life.

Following long interaction with people in the settled districts of the country, men's attitude toward womenfolk seems to have undergone major change. Domestic violence has declined and it seems that women are given more say in family affairs. Even relations between spouses seem to have improved. Many women reported that their understanding with their husbands has improved after the displacement. Many told the researcher that as compared to the pre-displacement period, husbands now pay more attention to their health and wellbeing. Nasrana, a 40 years married woman with four children said that in Waziristan, they would live in their big house with

families of her husband's brothers and cousins. After displacement, their family dispersed and thus they started living as a nuclear family. This provided them enough spare time to talk to each other without any interference from other family members. She said that she was the only person available for consultation on issues of immediate nature and thus understanding between the spouses immensely increased. "Now our understanding has reached such a level that my husband hardly makes any decision without my consent" Nasrana proudly remarked (personal communication, May 28 2022). The same is true about many other families. One woman said that earlier they would not think of living as a single family away from the larger family but now she prefers single family over joint family. She said that living independently from the larger family, she enjoys vast decision making powers for her own family.

According to some interviewees, taking pregnant women to doctors used to be considered as a serious dishonor on the grounds that she will give birth to a child in the presence of male doctors. Now many people take their pregnant wives for a regular checkup before delivery. Similarly, many now prefer to take pregnant women to hospital or clinic before delivery to reduce delivery related risks.

In Waziristan, markets were almost exclusive spheres for men. It was male's responsibility to bring household items including shoes and dresses for females from the market. As there was no concept of women going to market for shopping, managing the family budget was also a male managed matter. In the settled districts, visiting market or female managed home-based boutiques was much easier and almost normal for women. This automatically provided women some financial powers as their male family members started giving them money for purchasing goods. Several women even reported that unlike in Waziristan, they now manage the total budget of the family. Another development in this regard is the opening of female-

managed shops by some women from the Mahsud tribe. These shops can be found not only in the settled districts but in villages of Waziristan as well. This new trend has further added to change the concept of gender roles in the traditional Mahsud society. As stated earlier, earning money was almost exclusively a male responsibility. The opening of female-managed shops suggests that people are mentally getting ready for the new realities of life that women too can add to direct earning of the family (unlike females' contribution to family income by rearing animals, working in the field etc.)

Another change that has taken place is an increase in demand for educated and job holder girls for marriages. As compared to earlier, now there is greater acceptability of educated girls in the family. A 60 plus years old man Haji Zar Khan said that he is in search of an educated girl for his youngest son who is doing a decent job in the Middle East. When the researcher asked him whether he does not think that the entry of an educated girl in an otherwise uneducated family will create problems as she will demand say in the family affairs, he said that they will accommodate her because educated women know much more than uneducated ones. He added that the entry of an educated girl in his family will also set the trend for female education in the future (Personal communication, May 10, 2022). This clearly indicates the changed mood as far as gender roles are concerned. Women's standing in the society has much improved during the last few years.

The same is the case of women doing jobs, especially government ones. The common thinking among average Mashuds was that women should be restricted to the domestic sphere and that females doing jobs is against their value system. The thinking was so deeply entrenched that most people would simply say that "*Allah shaza jorha de kor de pora do*" (Allah has created a woman for the house) (N. Ahmad, personal communication, April 22, 2022). Even many people would question the

honour and manliness of those males who would allow their girls and women to do jobs. Now the thinking has drastically changed. After exposure to the outside world, many people now look at females doing jobs with great respect. When a girl gets a government job, her relatives and neighbors widely discuss her and her achievements (Aurangzeb, personal communication, January 13, 2022). Even females with government jobs attract more and comparatively well off people for marriage. For example, one interviewee told the researcher that there is a girl/woman who is some 40 years old and was engaged to a student doing graduation. As Mahsud males rarely marry females older than her spouse, the major factor behind this case was that the female has a permanent job in the health department.

Change has also occurred in people's attitude toward female education. During this researcher's fieldwork, providing education to children both boys and girls emerged as one of the greatest desires of the displaced parents. Shandana, (personal communication, May 10, 2022) said that when she visits hospital she faces serious communication problems as not all doctors in Dera Ismail Khan understand Pashtu. She said that when she sees other women from her tribe speaking Urdu and using English words she becomes jealous of them. Shandana pledged to do everything to provide her minor daughter's education who is just two years old. Similarly, every family expressed desire to educate its children but resources were the main problem for them. This lack of resources and interest in education inspired some people to enroll their daughters in Islamic madrassas. At present, many girls are studying in madrassas. This is a major development in the social relations as earlier the religious sphere was an exclusive domain for men. Rozina, a 50 years old displaced woman, when asked why she enrolled her daughter in a madrassah instead of a school, said that they are poor people and cannot bear expenses of modern education. She added

that her daughter after seeing other neighboring girls going to schools would ask for admission in school. As they could not afford enrolling her in school with monthly fee and other expenses, they decided to enroll her in a madrassah and get good of both worlds (*de din o danyo gata*), (personal communication, May 10, 2022).

## **Hospitality**

Melma in Pashtu means a guest and Melmastia means hospitality. Melmastia is a key component of Pashtunwali. However, hospitality is not to be interpreted in the manner a Westerner would interpret it. In Pashtun culture, it means offering hospitality to a guest irrespective of his race, religion, and economic status (Khan et al., 2019). While writing about Melmastia, Elphinstone in 1815 observed that "[t]he most remarkable characteristic of the Afghans is their hospitality. The practice of this virtue is so much a point of national honour, that their reproach to an inhospitable man is that he has no Pashtunwali" (Elphinstone 1969, p. 226).

Melmastia is a special form of showing generosity to one's guests. Anyone who enters someone's house is provided with some food and tea. Melmastia is so well practiced by Pashtuns that guests will develop the wrong impression of the actual economic standing of a poor person hosting him as the host is supposed to offer him the best possible food to the guest. Pashtuns look at a guest as a gift from God and serving him is considered as a noble deed. Under the concept of Melmastia, a guest is given special treatment for three days. After the expiry of three days, the guest is served with the routine food consumed by other members of the family. The concept not only binds the hosts to act in a specific manner but also defines a particular behaviour for the guest to observe. For example, the guest has to leave his host's home with his

permission. Similarly, as long as a guest enjoys his host's hospitality and protection, he must refrain from raising his hand against someone (Rzehak, 2011).

Providing shelter and protection to those who ask for it is also included in the scope of Melmastia even if the one asking for it is a criminal. Among Pashtuns, there are even anecdotal stories of families providing protection to people who had just killed someone from the very family providing him protection. In such cases, the killer or protection seeker is not to be killed unless he leaves the home of the protection provider. On the other hand, if someone kills, injures, or dishonors someone's guest, he will have to pay compensation to the host for doing harm to his guest and thus damaging his honor and reputation (Ginsburg, 2011). In case someone is persecuted by someone and he asks for protection in someone's home, he will be provided protection. In such a situation, the host will do his best to protect his guest from the attackers because defending his guest is actually defending his own honor (Rzehak, 2011). The fundamental aspect is that once provided hospitality the guest is assumed to be under the protection of the host and great loss of honour will result should the guest be harmed (Hawkins, 2009). The host can also try to become arbitrator between his guest and his persecutors (Rzehak, 2011).

The concept of hospitality has also undergone some changes. Several interviewees said that hospitality norms have drastically changed. One respondent said that;

Whenever an outsider would come to a village in Waziristan, everyone would try to offer him food and place for stay but now the spirit of hospitality is faded away. As people internalized the values of other



people outside of Waziristan especially of the urban culture where people happen to be comparatively busy and thus cannot pay attention to guests beyond a certain limit, they are now less concerned about guests' entertainment. I saw many people from the Mahsud tribe who literally try to avoid guests." (Asadullah, personal communication, May 9, 2022).

This argument was also corroborated by several women. They said that after the displacement and return to their native villages, the frequency of guests has decreased. Some added that even if they receive guests they usually stay for a while and leave after taking tea.

Change has also occurred in the way hosts would treat their guests. Unlike in the past, hosts nowadays remain busy with their mobiles. This change can also be attributed to the introduction of new technologies in society (Asadullah, personal communication, May 9, 2022).

Another change is in the food presented to guests. Earlier, the guests would be presented with a limited number of dishes but now people try to make more than one dish for guests. As compared to Waziristan, making different dishes in the settled districts is easy due to easy access to the markets (K. Z. Khan, personal communication, March 20, 2022).

PTM head Manzoor Pashteen looks at this change from a different perspective. He said that a very important factor responsible for changing the norms of hospitality is the exploitation of the practice of Melmastia by outsiders. As many outsiders

exploited the Pashtun tradition of hospitality, now people are reluctant to provide shelter and food to strangers." (Personal communication<sup>23</sup>).

## **Folk dance, (dance<sup>24</sup>), Poetry, and Music**

### **Attanrh-اتن**

Dance, which is performed in various cultures as a form of exercise or emotional and social interaction, is a kind of art which involves bodily movement usually rhythmic and to music (Khan and Khattak, 2014). In addition to its physical aspect, the rhythmic movements of dance like steps and gestures usually reflect a sentiment or mood or it demonstrates a certain event or act (UNESCO, n. d).

Pashtuns also have their own specific and unique cultural dance called Attanrh. Attanrh is a broad term used for the Pashtun cultural dance though there are many variations in the Attanrh performed in different areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan (Khan, 2016). In some parts of Afghanistan and Balochistan, Attanrh has also been known as Bulbala, Hukla, Laba, Luba, Walba, Amey and Chakchakay (Kakar, 2021).

Attanrh has a long history. There are different theories about the origin of Attanrh. Dost Shinwari traces the origin of it to the hunter societies in which people would gather around their preyed animals to celebrate their hunt with dance and singing. Syed Khair Muhammad Arif in his book the Atanrh Naray (Attanrh slogans) claims that dance was part of religious rituals of people like Egyptians and Bani Israel (which one theory claims to be the ancestors of Pashtuns) (Kakar, 2022). Another theory about the origin of Attanrh links it to Zoroastrianism. It claims that the dance was a means for early Zoroastrians to get into a trance-like state. Still another theory traces

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<sup>23</sup> This interview was conducted through recorded WhatsApp voice message through a mutual friend.

<sup>24</sup> It may be noted that Pashtuns performing Attanrh do not like to be called dancers or their performance as dance. The word dance has negative connotation for them and usually the word is attached to professional dancers who do it as a profession for earning livelihood.

the origin of Attanrh to the invasion of Afghanistan by Alexander. This theory links Attanrh with ancient Pyrrhic Dance which was a part of military training in areas like Sparta and Athens (Khan, 2016).

Attanrh is usually performed in circle shape involving from two to over a hundred participants. The participants go in round and follow each other (Khan and Khattak, 2014) in a systematic manner. The traditional Attanrh is performed to the beats of dhol (drum) which vary in number (S. Khan, personal communication, March 18, 2020). At present, it is performed at weddings and other events of happiness. In some tribal societies, Attanrh has also been a means to mobilize members of the community against outside danger or attacks (Attan: A Traditional Pashtun Dance, 2016).

### ***Major Types of Attanrh***

The first type of Attanrh is the one which is popular among some Pashtun tribes of Afghanistan like Zadran, Mangal, Wardak, and Niazi. The second type of Attanrh is performed by Pashtuns in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and by the people of both North and South Waziristan. The third type of Attanrh is performed by the Pashtun tribes of Northern Balochistan such as Kakar, Achakzai, Jafar, Barech, and Kasi. A unique feature of this type of Attanrh is the waving dusmal (handkerchief) and shawls in the later stages of the *Attanrh*. The fourth type of Attanrh is performed by tribes like Luni, Nasar, Kharoti, and Sleman Khel. A unique feature of this type is that performers tie shawls or dusmals around their waist which makes their kamees (shirts) swell up when they turn.

Another important feature of this type is the head-banging. The fifth type of Attanrh is the one performed by the Khattak tribe. It is known as Khattak Dance. It is the Frontier



Mahsud tribesmen serving in Frontier Corps performing Attanrh

**Credit/Source:** Screenshots taken from a video "Mahsud Tribal Dance w rifle fire at the Khyber Rifles Mess" uploaded to YouTube by *peshawargallery* on January 25, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LP3b6wS0rRY>

Constabulary (a paramilitary force) which has immortalized this type of Attanrh (Khan, 2016). This is a special type of dance performed with swords, sometimes three swords waved by a single performer with two in his hands and one in his mouth. A negative aspect of this dance is that it is almost exclusively performed by Frontier Constabulary's personnel belonging to the Khattak tribe. Common people from the

tribe cannot perform it (unless they have themselves served in FC and were in a dance unit).

Most of the types discussed above begin in a similar way and the steps are not much different in the initial stage. Once the music or drum beats picks up in the later stages, variations among them start emerging (Khan, 2016).

It may be noted that Attanrh is not indigenous to all areas inhabited by the Pashtuns. Areas like Charsadda, Dir, Malakand, Mardan, Peshawar of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and Bajaur, Khyber and Mohmand districts of the erstwhile FATA fall in this "Attan-less zone" (Khan, 2016).

The Attanrh performed by the Mahsud tribe falls in the second category. In Mahsud Attanrh, the basic steps are consecutive back-steps consecutively to the left and then to the right, with a forward movement that completes the loop. It is in the later part that the dance takes on various variations. A distinctive feature of this style is the head banging, for which many people grow long hair. Usually two large size dhols are used for Attanrh without any other music instrument (Khan, 2016). At later stages, there are different sub-types in this Attanrh. Some of the most important are warhdagai, de lyaray ghorha, and dukrha. In warhdagai, there are again sub-variants (M. Imran, personal communication, April 25, 2022).

In Waziristan (both Wazir and Mahsud tribes) and some Pashtun inhabited areas of Balochistan like Qila Safullah, Qila Abdullah, Sanzawi, Musa Khel, Zhob and Sherani there have also been tradition of mix Attanrh by males and females. This is called bragai Attanrh in Waziristan while gada amey and braga amey in parts of Balochistan (Kakar, 2021). In Mahsud bragai Attanrh, there used to be folk poetry (Tappey/Taki) competition among the participants of Attanrh and sometimes even

male and female would respond to each other (M. Akram, personal communication, May 9, 2022).

The Mahsud tribe has made great contributions to the field of Attanrh. The tradition of Attanrh was at the brink of extinction in many Pashtun areas but among the Mahsud tribe, it was as popular as ever. They even kept it alive during the militancy when people would fear organizing such events. Attanrh is so deeply rooted in the Mahsud society that even Taliban who otherwise strongly oppose music etc. would perform Attanrh. Videos featuring Taliban with weapons can easily be found on YouTube. Similarly, old people with white beards would also participate in Attanrh. In universities in Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar, it were students mainly from Waziristan especially from the Mahsud tribe who would excel in Attanrh.

Like Khattak dance, there are also FC personnel from Mahsud tribe who perform Attanrh on special occasions. They perform with dhols and guns. The performers fire the guns simultaneously which creates the sound of a big bang (Rahim Mahsud, personal communication, May 9, 2022; Khan, 2016).

Following their displacement and long exposure to other types of Attanrh, traditional Mahsud Attanrh is no longer the only Attanrh among Mahsuds. They borrowed new versions of Attanrh from other Pashtun tribes like Akha Khels, Sleman Khels and different tribes of Balochistan (Islamuddin & Aslam, personal communication, May 8, 2022). Some interviewees also pointed out that unlike before displacement, now few people keep long hair for Attanrh.

Another change is that there used to be traditional dance (Attanrh) to the beats of drum on the occasion of Eid but now people use PM3, sound system etc. instead of

dhol. Using sound systems and MP3 etc. are a common phenomenon in the cities from where Mahsud tribe youth borrowed it. (H. Badshah, personal communication, March 27, 2022).

In this modern time when the latest technologies have reached almost every corner of the world, different types of Attanrh are widely documented through mobile mobiles and uploaded to YouTube. The easy availability of different versions of Attanrh performed in different Pashtun areas has also played a role in the entry of new forms of Mahsud Attanrh.



Use of long hair in Attanrh by the Mahsud youth

**Credit/Source:** Screenshots taken from a video "Pashto Beautiful Attan Songs- Masood Zawanana Attan-Khan Muhammad Minawal Songs' uploaded by Saleem Kakar to YouTube on 16 August, 2020.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUvXDfN\\_LDc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUvXDfN_LDc).

## Music

The history of music is as old as human civilization itself. Human beings since time immemorial have employed music as a means of recreation as well as communicating messages (Khan and Khattak, 2014). Music is one of the most universally performed arts which is found in every society (UNESCO, n. d). Music's creation, performance,



definition and significance vary from culture to culture and social context (Khan and Khattak, 2014).

Music can be in the most diverse contexts: popular or classical, profane or sacred, and closely connected to work or entertainment. Similarly, music may have an economic or political aspect: it can recount the history of a country, sing the praises of an influential personality or play crucial a role in economic transactions. The occasions on which music is played are also diverse. They include weddings, funerals, festivities, rituals and initiations, different types of entertainment, and numerous social events (UNESCO, n. d).

As structures, meanings and practices of music are culturally determined, so the meaning, significance and function of a particular music can only be understood in relation to its cultural context. While an exposition of these properties and contexts may permit the inference of meanings and functions to music and dance, as with any discussion of nonverbal communication, it can rarely be complete, definitive, or certain. (Lewis, 2013).

Just like any traditional society, there has been a rich tradition of folk music in Pashtun society. Pashtu folk songs include both characteristically dance songs and those sung individually and in chorus (Khattak, 2004). Mahsud society too has enjoyed a rich culture of folk music. There have been very popular musicians within the community like Kamal Mahsud, Jahangir, Mateen and Said Alam (M. Imran, personal communication, May 10, 2022).

Late Kamal Mahsud was the most iconic singer in the Mahsud tribe (Khan, 2016). Kamal Mahsud would do concerts not only in in areas adjoining Waziristan but across the country where young people would perform Attanrh on his songs. Many give him

credit for single handedly keeping alive the Mahsud tradition of folk music for a long time (Naeem, personal communication, February 8, 2022). Following threats by Taliban for his profession as singer, Kamal Mahsud was forced to live in Islamabad (Brohi, 2016) where he died in 2010 in a fire/gas leakage incident when his family was not home. His family accused Taliban for his death claiming the militants tampered with the gas system of the house which ultimately led to his death<sup>25</sup> (13 musicians and artists killed, 2016).

Earlier, there were few selected musicians especially from Waziristan whose songs people would listen to in Waziristan. After the mass migration to other major cities, people's taste of music diversified. Thus, Indian, Urdu, and even English songs have made their way into Mahsud culture (K. Z. Khan, personal communication, March 20, 2022). One interviewee said that travelling within Waziristan, one can find any type of music. He added that the situation has changed so much that sometimes you even forget that you are travelling in public transport in Waziristan.

Traditionally, Mahsud tribesmen would look at musicians and drummers with disdain. Now the situation has changed and educated people have entered this profession. Acceptance of this profession has increased now. The fact that now majority of the young people have smartphones further expedited this spread of outside music among

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<sup>25</sup> According to Norway based researcher Dr. Farhat Taj, who has also authored the book Taliban and Anti-Taliban, Kamal Mahsud was cheated by the media wing of Pakistan armed forces called Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). Taj claims that she had interviewed Kamal Mahsud, his son, and other family members. According to Taj, a composer from Peshawar requested Kamal Mahsud to record an audiocassette on peace related songs from Waziristan to which he agreed. Later, Kamal Mahsud discovered that his audiocassette had reached ISPR which used it in anti-Taliban propaganda including a drama called "Wana." This was done without Kamal Mahsud's consent or any payment. This alienated Taliban who started considering Kamal Mahsud as an accomplice of the army and became their target. He sold his properties in Dera Ismail Khan and moved to Islamabad. Even in Islamabad he was approached by militants in a street some months before his death with a stern warning that they are after him and will be dealt with soon. For Taj's article, see [http://www.valleyswat.net/articles/Kamal\\_Mehsud.html](http://www.valleyswat.net/articles/Kamal_Mehsud.html)

the Mahsud. Availability of smartphones and easy access to the internet has literally transformed the youth into global citizens with instant access to every type of music.

The instruments used in Mahsud folk music were Dhol (Drum), Sarinda (Fiddle), Baja (Harmonium), and Darwai/Shpelai (Flute). Recently, Rabab, locally called Raboob, also made an entry into Mahsud folk music. Now many people use it for folk music. When this researcher asked an interviewee whether he can name anyone who plays Rabab, he instantly mentioned Javed Shabi Khel. When the researcher searched for his videos on YouTube, there appeared many in which Javed plays Rabab.

## **Poetry**

There are many genres in Pashtu folk poetry (Dinakhel & Islam, 2019). They include Badala, Charbeta, Ghagoona, Ghaarhey, Ghazal, Loba, Nimakai, Rubayi, and Tappa (Khattak, 2004; Khalil, 2011). The oldest and most popular genre is Tappa (Haqyar, 2020). Lyrically, Tappa comprises two unequal meters with the second line longer than the first one. To be exact, the first line has nine syllables while the second one thirteen (Khalil, 2011; (Dinakhel & Islam, 2019).

Tappa is the only genre of Pashtu folk poetry which covers all aspects of Pashtun culture and society. It is sung both in times of grief and on the occasion of happiness (Khattak, 2004). An interesting feature of Tappa is that it is not attributed to any poet (Dinakhel & Islam, 2019) and no one knows about their origin. That is the reason that one finds the almost same Tappas in different Pashtun regions with minor differences in wording or dialect. (Sohail, personal communication, May 26, 2022).

This genre provides means of expression of sentiments of male and female, of old and young, of poor and rich, of lovers, laborers, of peasants, of happy and depressed, of

those who feel contented and deprived. In short, Tappa is used by every Pashtun for expressing his/her emotions (Haroon, personal communication, May 24, 2022).

This is such a comprehensive folk poetry genre that it covers diverse aspects of life like war, journey, separation, love, bravery, love of motherland, truthfulness, loyalty, beauty, disloyalty, gifts between lovers, beauty of eyes, deception in love, poverty, religion, romance, marriage, death, hot and cold weathers, rainy days, lovers' meeting, threats involved in meeting one's beloved, murder, departure from one's village and stay away from one's homeland, the importance of evening and springs from where young girls fetch water etc.

In Mahsud folk poetry too Tappa occupies the central stage. It is locally called Taki and sung in different ways. Sometimes they are sung by individuals to express their emotions, usually of sadness while sometimes they are sung by people in group form. Tappas can be sung in various ways like simple Tappay, mixing tappa with badala, Tappay with dhol, Ghoorhey etc. Sometimes singers (mostly common people or sometimes with a drummer among them) form two groups and respond to each other in the form of Tappay.

As mentioned earlier, Tappay covered every aspect of life in the Mahsud society. There was almost no aspect of life about which there was no Tappay. The wording of Tappay was set to the aesthetic taste of the Mahsud tribe. They were in pure Mahsud dialect reflecting Mahsud way of life. Following their displacement, many Tappay/Taki went through changes. Some words within some of the Tappay/Taki were replaced with words commonly used in the settled districts. In the following paragraphs, the researcher will present a few examples of how tappa modified during Mahsuds' stay among other diverse subcultures.

***Yori de na kawan darezhan: Parin de plor pa teepak mazai tairowana***

Due to fear, I don't want friendship with you: Yesterday, your father was cleaning his gun.

Cleaning gun indirectly convey the message that he was preparing it for use and in Pashtun society, murder is the punishment if someone is seen with alien adult girl/women.

Its new version is;

***Yori de na kawan darezhan: Parin de plor tabra ta lostai ahowana***

Due to fear, I don't want friendship with you: Yesterday, your father was putting handle in his axe.

In the settled areas of D. I. Khan and Tank, keeping guns without license is legally prohibited so many people use axes for self-defense while going out at night and even killing people. The tappa reflects the change in the thinking of people with regard to use of guns and axes.

***De toray teepakay karegara: Worhki pay mrhixhi, kheen way to de ghorhay sheena***

O manufacturer of black guns: Young men are killed with them and their blood is on your hands.

Now, the tappa is sung like

***De toray tabreenay terawinkya: Worhki pay mrhixhi, kheen way to de ghorhay sheena***

O sharpener of axes: Young men are killed with them and their blood is on your hands.

***Tooray teepakay pa makh yowhray: De mo kanbakhta yora sa de karhi deena***

Black guns riddled your body: O my unlucky lover what was your wrong.

The new version is

***Tooray tabronay raad baad sara yowhray: De mo kanbakhta yora sa de karhi deena***

Black axes badly cut your body: O my unlucky lover what was your wrong.

***Pa teepak bzha bzha shay marh ma shay: Chay prawareena de ganda khawla der kawana***

O my beloved, you may be wounded with bullets but not killed, so I may give you kisses while stitching your wounds

Now, the tappa changed from guns to axes like this;

***Pa tabreena chat pat shay marh ma shay: Chay prawareena de ganda khawla der kawana***

O my beloved, you may be wounded with axes but not killed, so I may give you kisses while stitching your wounds

In pashtu folklore poetry, beloved always their lovers to possess be brave and qualities of manliness. There are even several tappas in which the beloved asks her lover that she wants him dead while fighting bravely rather than come home alive after running from the battlefield. For example, there is a tappa

***Pa topak sowray ra shay janana: Da bay nangi awaz de ma rasha mayeena***

O my beloved, I want your body sprayed with bullets rather than alive after running from the battlefield.

Among the Mahsuds too, beloveds prefer brave, courageous and daring lovers. For example,

*De posa jet tayyaray roghlay: De Zakoyek janana wer ka jawobeena*

Jet plans are hovering in the sky above: o my anti-aircraft gun holder beloved, respond to them (with firing).

This tappa shows the influence of the continuous warfare in the Mahsud area on folklore.

*Khudai may pa tho banday badnom ka: Chay loos tarhali kacharay ta sara seena*

I want my name to be associated with yours: So we may go together to the courts with our hands handcuffed.

Among the Mahsuds, punishment meted out to lovers seen together is killing of both. In the settled districts, sometimes such cases end up in courts and police stations rather than the killing of the lovers. This tappa reflects this aspect. In it, one of the lovers tells the other that he wants his name to be associated or linked with his so they both visit court with handcuffs on their hands.

In addition to the above few examples, there are many other such tappa which reflect the influence of Mahsud tribe's long stay in the settled area.

## **Religion**

Religion is usually defined as the belief in or the worship of a god or gods. According to Clifford Geertz, religion is;

- (1) a system which acts to
- (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by
- (3) formulating conceptions

of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz, 1973, p. 90).

There is a close relationship between religion and culture. According to D. C. Mulder, study of religion denotes religion as an expression of human culture. Therefore, religion is expressed and clothed in the form of culture. Thus, understanding religion means studying culture. The reciprocal relationship between the two needs to be acknowledged: culture determines religion but simultaneously religion influences culture. The fate of the two is thus interlinked (Beyers, 2017).

Among culture, religion, and community, there is an interplay. A community is an aggregate of people who have common activities or values and beliefs based on their loyalty, mutual affect, and personal concerns. Globally, involvement in religious institutions is one of the major community engagements. These institutions are commonly known for generating a sense of community by offering different material and social support for individual members (Croucher et al., 2017).

Primordialism claims that a person following a specific religion can become part of a cultural group while retaining religious identity. It is possible but the one who retains his separate religious identity will not be equal with the other members of that culture into which he enters. For example, many immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia are welcomed in Germany but many indigenous people don't consider them as equal members of German society because of their religious identity which is different from German society. To be considered as a full member of German society, these immigrants need to share all values of German society including dress, language,



religion, and so on. Thus, religion becomes their major identity maker despite the fact that they try to adopt other socio-cultural values of German society (Beyers, 2017).

This indicates the central role religion occupies in the socio-cultural system of a society. The Mahsud society of South Waziristan is no exception to this principle. Religion or its strict interpretation has always been a dominant player in the social life of the people. Voting for religious figures in elections, preference to religious education over the modern/English education, reluctance or clear refusal to allow women to cast votes in elections, refusal to practice family planning, going to religious figures for treatment of different diseases are some of the examples in which there was considerable influence of religion<sup>26</sup>. Following Mahsud tribesmen's displacement, several changes occurred in the religious sphere.

Conventionally, people would not question the authority of religious figures in religious matters. Now there are many people who raise questions about the role of religious figures, especially their role in politics and militancy. Many people termed religious figures especially those affiliated with JUI-F as the active supporters of militants. They complained that religious figures exploit religion for their own worldly gains.

A close observation of Mahsud tribe's history and present suggests that the role of religion, on the one hand, is on decline in some ways while on the other hand, a new trend of females assuming the roles of religious figures is rapidly developing. In Mahsud society, preaching and interpretation has always been the domain of male religious clerks. In recent years, females too have joined the field. Following the

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<sup>26</sup> It may be noted that these factors cannot be exclusively linked with religion as tribal norms too played their role. However, the religious factor also was a dominant reason.

displacement, hundreds of females, especially young girls joined Islamic madrassas to obtain certificates to become alima. This is a relatively new development.

One woman told this researcher that earlier it was her brother-in-law, who is affiliated with Tablighee Jamaat, who would preach them Islam but now her daughter has become alima and they ask everything related to religion from her. This trend can be termed as females' encroachment upon a sphere (religious authority) which has historically been male domain.

Another interesting phenomenon which the researcher observed during her research was that the role of religious clerks locally called Mullah/molvi seems to be on decline. Many people including women without any education openly criticized mullahs on different grounds with some of them saying that we should not follow mullahs blindly. This decreasing trust in mullahs and their role in the society is also evident from the result of the elections since 2018.

The Mahsud area was almost a secure constituency of JUI-F. Competing against JUI-F was a daunting task. However, it faced tough competition on the National Assembly seat in 2018 general elections, provincial assembly seat in 2019, and the recently held local bodies' elections. Though JUI-F officially won the national and provincial seats, many believe that it managed to win these seats through manipulation. Several people including school teachers who performed duties on the polling day told this researcher that JUI-F won the seats through rigging. One school teacher who performed his duty on the polling day in 2019 provincial elections said that it was independent candidate Wahid Mahsud (pro-PTM candidate) who won on almost all tehsils but in the final results it was JUI-F's candidate who was declared as the winner.

In the recently held local bodies' elections, the Mahsud constituency was divided into two sub-tehsils. JUI-F won one seat while the other one was won by an independent associated with PTM. Even the seat which JUI-F won was mainly because of the candidate's personal and family links, financial resources, and support from his sub-tribe within the Mahsud tribe. He was neither from a political family nor an active member of JUI-F. These developments point toward the changing attitude of Mahsud voters as far as support to JUI-F is concerned.

Another interesting change pointed out by a senior government official from the tribe is that now many people prefer doctors over mullahs/pirs for treatment. Earlier, many people would go to mullahs for treatment of different types of diseases. Now the number of people who prefer to be treated by mullahs is on decline as most of the people visit professional doctors. There can be two main reasons for this: the easy access to doctors in the settled areas and the overall trend in the settled areas to consult doctors in case of some health issues.

## **Politics**

In the traditional Mahsud society in Waziristan, very few people took just interest in politics let alone active participation in political activities. People in general mostly looked at politics with disdain, considering it to be something foreigner and alien to their socio-cultural values. As there existed nominal state apparatus in their areas, they were usually indifferent to politics and state affairs. There were thousands of people who had never stepped out of Waziristan.

Following their mass displacement, they were introduced to new environments with political gatherings, protests, rallies and election campaigns as normal activities. This interaction with a new environment brought major changes in the thinking of the

average member of the tribe. They developed interest in politics and political activities. Political awareness among the people penetrated so deep in the society that it was this tribe from where PTM emerged. PTM was preceded by Mahsud Tahafuz Movement (Mahsud Protection Movement) established by Mahsud youth in Dera Ismail Khan which has been one of the main destinations for the displaced tribe. Though the MTM and then PTM were launched by the educated youth of the tribe, the support from the grassroots level cannot be ignored. It was actually the societal sentiments that were ultimately expressed in the form of these movements. Now protests and sit-ins are being staged frequently in different parts of Waziristan.

The political socialization and organization was not only limited to MTM and PTM. Youth from different areas of Waziristan also established local level societies. For example, youth have established societies in areas like *Wacha Khaurha*, *Shakai*, and *Badar* valley. Though these societies have limited resources and manpower, they are a step forward in a new direction and are an indication of a major change in the socio-cultural system of the tribe. (Rehmanullah, personal communication, may 10, 2022).

Following the displacement and interaction with new environments in the settled districts, the level of political participation also seems to have increased. This is evident from the recently held local bodies' elections. As most of the people from Mahsud tribe have still not returned to their native areas or they return just for spending summers there to avoid the scorching heat in the settled districts, still there was excitement during the election campaign and on Election Day. Women's turnout also seems to have increased in recent years. For example, out of the total polled votes for the National Assembly seat in 2018 general elections, 32.5% were polled by females. Keeping in view the conservative nature of the society, it is a very encouraging figure. Share of women's votes in terms of percentage of total votes was

much higher in Mahsud constituency as compared to in the other two constituencies of North and South Waziristan where the overwhelming majority of the voters are from Wazir and Dawar tribes. In NA-50 (South Waziristan's Wazir constituency), female voters' share as percentage of total polled votes was 15.61% while in North Waziristan, it was 9.93%. Thus there is a big difference in percentage of female votes in the Mahsud constituency on one hand and Wazir and Dawar constituencies on the other (ECP, 2018).

Like any conservative society, politics used to be looked upon with suspicion by the overwhelming majority of the tribe. As JUI-F has been a major player in this constituency, most of the people would vote for it on religious grounds as they feared that voting against it would invite God's wrath. Thus, contesting elections was comparatively an easy sailing for JUI-F. In 2002 elections when US invasion of Afghanistan to oust Taliban from government was a major election slogan, one could easily notice wall chalking of slogans like "*Garzam da har cha sara, vote may de mullah sara*" (I attend rallies of all candidates but my vote is with mullah). One reason for this trend was generous money spending by candidates other than mullahs. As they would provide free food and transportation to people to participate in their political rallies and the JUI-F candidate would even expect voters to not only come on their own expenses but also contribute to his campaign, so people did not hesitate to attend rallies of all and then vote for the nominee of the religious party<sup>27</sup> (N. H. Khan, personal communication, March 28, 2020). This trend has considerably changed in recent years. In the general elections 2018 and then provincial election of 2019, JUI-F faced a very tough contest from other candidates (Abdullah, personal communication,

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<sup>27</sup> It may be noted that Political parties Act 2002 was not extended to the ex-FATA at that time and thus political parties could not award tickets to candidates in the Ex-FATA. However, JUI-F would informally nominate its candidate.

February 4, 2020). Many people even some from JUI-F in private conversations confessed that the seats were officially won by JUI-F but in reality it were other independent candidates who polled more votes than JUI-F's candidates. Some pointed toward the military establishment for changing results in favor of JUI-F. When they were asked as to why did the army support JUI-F especially in the provincial elections as JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman was openly criticizing the military, they said that overtly JUI-F criticizes the army but internally they are on the same page. Some even alleged JUI-F for playing the role of intermediary between Taliban and the army thus bringing the former under the influence of the latter.

## **Attitude toward Education**

An important change has occurred in people's attitude toward education, especially female education.

Earlier, there were selected families who had properties in the settled districts and thus would educate their children. With the displacement, people who were earlier almost indifferent to education started paying attention to education, especially female education. The researcher could not observe any individual either male or female during her fieldwork who opposed education including for girls. As there are more opportunities of education in the settled areas, people's attitude toward education has totally changed. Now almost everyone wants to educate his children both boys and girls.

According to one interviewee, tens of private schools have been opened in areas like Tank and D. I. Khan where there is concentration of the displaced people. Many schools almost exclusively cater to the needs of Mahsud children. This points to the new trend.

A 70 years old woman said that 30-40 years ago, people were saying strange things about a government servant from Bangay Wala village of South Waziristan who had enrolled his daughter in school but now girls' education has become a normal phenomenon.

Many people now even send their girls to Islamic madrassas which was not the case before the displacement.

## **Chapter 7**

### **"Erosion of precious social values"**

#### **Introduction**

During fieldwork for this study, one theme which repeatedly emerged was many people's mourning over the "erosion of precious social values." Many people termed their pre-Taliban and military life as the golden period. Manan Khan, an elderly male said that no doubt there were very few amenities of life at that time but life was tension free and peaceful. He said that there were less facilities for the body but the mind was at peace. Manan added that he would love to go back to that life so he may get mental satisfaction (personal communication, July 24, 2022). This concern of losing social values due to displacement was more frequently shared by people above 50 years of age and those who had no or very little interaction with the outside world before their displacement. Some of the major concerns expressed by the people were the following.

#### **Elders lost respect**

One concern repeatedly expressed by many interviewees and participants of focus group discussions was decline in the respect of elders after the displacement. According senior journalist currently working with Arab News Haji Rehmat Mahsud;

There used to be a strong sense of respect for elders. The displacement almost totally destroyed this precious social capital of our society. When we were young, we could not imagine playing cricket or playing cards in the middle of the village in the presence of our elders. At present, this is a common practice and the young lot don't even bother



whether they are violating our centuries old socio-cultural norms. The gap between generations vanished after the displacement. (Personal communication, April 3, 2022).

When the researcher asked an elderly woman about this topic, she said that now the younger generation does not give as much respect to elders as it used to. She said that now teenagers openly play music in their mobiles in the presence of fathers, uncles, and even grandfathers. She said that it was never like this. Rustam Khan, a 48 years old transporter said that they would give respect not only to their own elders but of the whole village but now the younger generation does not give respect even to their fathers (personal communication, May 13, 2022). Ahmad Khan, a shopkeeper in Dera Ismail Khan (personal communication, April 28, 2022) said that whenever there would come an elder they out of respect would immediately vacate charpoy etc. for him but now even we see young boys sitting on chairs while their fathers stand in front of them. Several of the respondents directly or indirectly blamed the prevailing culture in the settled districts for this change.

### **Indifference towards others' sorrow and grief**

Another theme related to loss of moral and social values was the increasing level of indifference to the sorrow and grief of others, especially neighbors. Many respondents including women complained that people have become so indifferent to others' sentiments that they do not hesitate to beat drums in the village/muhallah immediately after someone's death. Middle aged man who recently returned from the Middle East explained the situation like this;

In case of death in a village, the whole village would consider it as a collective loss and everyone would share the grief of the bereaved family. Playing music or beating drums in the locality for a couple of months after the death was considered as unacceptable and unimaginable. Now people don't care much about the grief of bereaved families. One sees music programs in localities even immediately after someone's death.

A respondent from Sararogha Tehsil said that a couple of months ago, an old woman died in their village. After her burial, the young boys of the village left for a cricket match in a tournament. He said that a couple of years ago, such behaviour was unimaginable. He added that this trend is the reflection of life in the settled districts where one can easily observe one family condoling the death of their near and dear one while another family in the neighborhood celebrating its wedding ceremony. Hayat Bibi, while mourning this indifference of people toward others' grief and sorrow remarked that people have become so merciless that we observe death rituals in one house and music party in the next. She said that when they were children they would even avoid talking on the day someone died in their village (personal communication, May 7, 2022). Several people said that as compared to the past, now there are many facilities in the fields of transportation and communication, medicine, foods etc. but still they felt more satisfaction without these amenities of life. One reason behind this thinking may be the imaginary 'golden time' usually many societies refer to without any concrete proof to this effect. Among the Mahsuds, there were many who claimed that the time they spent in Waziristan before the emergence of militancy and military operations was a golden period.

## **Decreasing importance of community**

Community has always been an important factor in traditional societies. Among the Mahsuds, community or collective actions were the bedrock of their socio-cultural system. There were specific rules for individual households and the community always enjoyed priority over the individual. Ensuring security of the whole village or part thereof, making arrangements for burial of the dead, negotiating land related disputes with other communities, and making water arrangements for the fields all were issues that were tackled by the community. Collective action among the Mahsud was so strong that complete boycott of a household or family by the whole community/village/sub-tribe was a powerful and the last option to compel those who did not bother to adhere to the unwritten code of tribal life. There are many examples in which the whole village boycotted a strong family and thus they refused to prepare grave etc. for the dead person from the unruly family (as digging grave and funeral related arrangements have always been the responsibility of the community).

Following their mass displacement, people who earlier were in the same village in Waziristan settled in not only different districts but in many cases also in different provinces. Some families migrated to Sindh, some to Balochistan, some to Punjab and the majority settled in various areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This resulted in the breakup of established community life and many people were compelled to start life from scratch. Those who settled in areas with concentration of other displaced people were lucky enough to find like-minded people and thus quickly adjust themselves to the changed environment. Others settled in totally alien communities. Thus their community life was shattered to pieces. People were forced to hire tents and chairs for social occasions instead of earlier practice to borrow these things from co-villagers, to hire services of professional grave diggers rather than depend on the community, to

utilize services of professional cooks for preparing big meals rather than depend on his relatives and friends like before.

In the changed environment, importance and utility of community automatically declined for them. As they remained in this environment for many years, these practices slowly and gradually entered into their socio-cultural system. For example, Noor Rehman, who teaches at a public sector university, explained the situation in these words.

In earlier times, people were too much dependent on each other for many things due to which there was close cooperation and contact among them. As their dependency on the community is decreasing with each passing day, we see loosening the bond among villagers and community members. (Personal communication, April 15, 2022).

He presented a pertinent example in this regard. He said that some time ago, he decided to give a meal to his co-villagers in Waziristan. Unlike in the past, he hired services of a man in the locality who had worked in a marriage hall in Karachi and thus the meal was prepared by him for which he was paid. Earlier, it was relatives and friends who would cook such meals. Several other people too reported the hiring of professional cooks for preparing meals in Waziristan.

There also used to be a collective mechanism for defense of the community and the body was called Salweshtai. It was a body of male representing each household. Now, the concept and context both have changed. The head of PTM Manzoor Pashteen remarked that "Salweshtai used to provide collective security to villages but now the role of this institution has almost come to an end" (personal communication).

Many people longed for the time when their '*Khpal Pradai*' would be there in the hour of need<sup>28</sup>.

## **Changing family structure**

Among the Mahsuds, it is the joint and even extended family system which has traditionally been popular and dominant. There used to be big houses where brothers and cousins used to live together as joint or separate families (S. Ahmad, personal communication, January 18, 2022). The displacement was so sudden and massive that these families had to disperse and search for their own residences. Their migration was not a planned one so these families that used to live in one large compound did not have enough time to hire such big houses to live together or look for smaller houses in vicinity to each other. There were even families who used to live in one compound in Waziristan but after the displacement some settled in Tank, some in Dera Ismail Khan and some even as far away as Karachi (N. H. Khan, personal communication, March 28, 2020).

This displacement continued for years, many even still living as displaced persons. As their stay prolonged with complete uncertainty about their return to their native villages, many families purchased plots and constructed houses on them. Thus the trend of single or nuclear families started developing among the community. Though the joint system has many advantages, the single family system too offers many positive things. The later system has its main supporters among the young generation. This system became so much popular that many people now even prefer it over the joint system (A. Khan, personal communication, December 28, 2022). During her

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<sup>28</sup> *Khpal* means (relatives) *Pradai* (alien) but figuratively speaking it means relatives and acquaintances/friends who stand by you in difficult time or visit you on occasions of happiness.

interaction with different people including women, this researcher found many people arguing in favor of the nuclear family system on the ground that it enables every man to focus on his own children, their education, and training.

On the one hand, we find people who support, encourage, and promote the single family system arguing that it is the best for equipping one's children with the best possible education, on the other hand, many find it as an attack on the traditional joint family system. Majority of the joint system's supporters were among the 50 plus years population. Their argument was that there is strength in unity. There were people who termed the single family system as a western system which provides free hand to females to live according to their own choice. Bashir Khan, (personal communication, January 18, 2022) an elderly man, while opposing the nuclear family system questioned whether a sound minded person will allow a young woman to be alone at home with her one or two kids with her husband away for days and months. Then there were those who asked as to what will a woman living with minor children and her husband away do in case a family member suddenly falls ill at night. In short, many people looked really concerned about the declining joint family system in their society.

## **Declining identity consciousness**

Mahsud tribe is divided into three main subtribes. They are: Behloolzai, Alizai (Manzai), and Shaman Khel. Each of these three sub-tribes is further divided into smaller clans and khels. Thus, a member of Mahsud tribe had several sub-tribal identities before reaching at the top to identify himself as Mahsud. Interestingly, every adult male member of the tribe knew about his identity in descending order from Mahsud tribe to his immediate sub-tribe at village level. Whenever someone would

ask a teenage boy about his identity within the Mahsud tribe, he would instantly tell about his sub-tribe etc.

After the displacement, it seems the situation has considerably changed. According to a Quaid-e-Azam University graduate, back in Waziristan before the militancy, every child knew his tribe, sub-tribe, and khel. After the displacement, the young generation only knows that they are Mahsud without further information about their sub-tribe etc.

Atta Muhammad, who has cloth business in Karachi, said that Mahsud youth are so rapidly moving away from their tribal roots and identity that the tribe will ultimately lose its identity. According to him, today's youth are unaware of the history of their tribe and they just know how to record videos for Facebook and TikTok (personal communication, March 26, 2022).

Similar concerns were expressed by several other people. Some of them observed that on the one hand, we have been dislodged from our native villages while on the other hand, the internet and social media has brought a sea change in our lives. As this concern kept emerging continuously, the researcher also tried to empirically verify their veracity. When she asked a twenty years old college student about his identity starting from the top to the bottom, he presented his identity like this; Mahsud-Shaman Khel-Balay Khel. Then the researcher asked his 38 years old cousin whether the order was complete and correct. He recounted their six-tier identity: Mahsud-Shaman Khel-Galishai-Dati Khel-Balay Khel-Masti Khel. It shows that the younger one between the two knew about his three-tier identity within the Mahsud tribe while their actual identity was six-tier as identified by his elder cousin. This example vindicated the concerns of people about fast decline in identity consciousness.

The researcher also tried to ascertain views of the younger generation about lack of interest in identity. Many seemed concerned about their education and securing good jobs rather than retaining their sub-tribal identity. Some responded by saying that knowing about their identities starting from the family to the top will make no difference while earning money for their families will do. Their justification cannot be rejected easily. In this modern age, only retaining identity will not serve the youth. Instead, they have to compete in the job market to improve their life standard. There were also people who said that they are Mahsud and that is enough for them. Some were of the view that people should identify themselves as Mahsud rather than dividing the tribe into smaller units. The head of PTM Manzoor Pashteen uses the word Pashteen (Pashtun) with his name instead of Mahsud and this too emerged to have influenced youth's approach toward their identity. Many youths claimed that they are followers of Manzoor Pashteen and their identity is Pashteen rather than Mahsud. This trend can also be seen by looking at social media profiles in which hundreds of Pashtuns mention the word Pashteen/Pashtun/Pakhtun with their names.

## **Exposure of womenfolk to the outside world**

As mentioned earlier, women in the Mahsud tribe have traditionally been restricted to the private sphere. Though the women could go out of homes to work in the fields, bring water and firewood etc. but their interaction with non-related males was totally unacceptable and very limited. Visiting markets was almost impossible for them. Even there were people who were hesitant to take their females to male doctors for checkup.

The massive displacement forced many people from the tribe to live in completely alien environments. As the displacement was sudden and massive, many families had



no option but to live in houses with other people, sometimes even non-Mahsud. Those who could afford rents managed to live in better conditions but there were many families that neither possessed financial resources nor had relatives in the settled areas to live with. Thus they did not hesitate even to live in old and sometimes abandoned houses. One female even told that they spent some two years in an old poultry form which was no longer used by its owner.

This all means that many women did not enjoy the privacy they once had back in Waziristan. During interviews and informal interactions, many people highlighted this aspect of their forced migration. For example, an old woman named Khawzh Bibi said that "*Pakistan pa mizh dasay wakrhal chay Khudai da pa kafir na wako*" what Pakistan did with us was so bad that May non-believers too not face such sufferings.

Many people also complained against the treatment of women and children on check posts. They said that on the one hand they were fleeing the war zone to save their lives while on the other hand they had to face humiliation at check posts. Several women reported that they were made to wait for long hours in the name of entry. A man who left his home in Waziristan in the middle of night to shift his family to a safer place said that women's respect and honour is so highly valued among Mahsud that they are even respected by enemies. "In case of enmity between families, the parties are supposed to ensure that women and children are not targeted in any circumstances" he added.

Two other developments related to displacement are an increase in women's voting and visiting markets by women. During the last few years, women turnout among the Mahsud has considerably increased. A major reason for this increase in female voting is the influence of the areas where they settled. In the National Assembly election of

2018, provincial assembly election 2019, and the local bodies elections in 2022, many people agreed to take their females to Waziristan just to a cast vote. Among them, there were even people who earlier would not allow their females to go for voting even when they were in Waziristan before displacement (N. H. Khan, personal communication, June 17, 2022).

Though it is a positive development that women are taking greater part in political activities, many people from the tribe seem to be not happy with this trend. During this researcher's interactions with people, many opposed women voting. Their argument was that this is destroying their centuries old social norms. A woman in her 40s remarked that "*Allah shaza jorha de kor de pora do*" (Allah has created women specifically for home). Many men too presented this argument. They would say that they are tribal people and thus want to be distinguished from the rest of the country. As tribal identity was expressed by many to be the most important for them, they also argued against the merger of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Several people said that the merger of the tribal areas with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will result in *fahashi* (vulgarity) in the area. A local JUI-F activist claimed that Maulana Sahib (Maulana Fazlur Rehman) opposed<sup>29</sup> the merger because he wants to protect *Iman, Izzat, o Ghairat*" (faith and honour) of the tribal people. However, many other people linked JUI-F's stance with its political interests. They argued that Maulana wants the tribal people to remain backward so his party remains the only major political player in the area.

As far as women visiting markets is concerned, many people objected to this practice. Their argument was that it is against their culture and will destroy their family system.

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<sup>29</sup> JUI-F was strongly opposing FATA's merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and demanded it to be made as a separate province or administrative unit.

Some even went to the extent to say that this will encourage immoral activities. If you will give free hand to women to leave home at their will then there is no guarantee that they will not indulge in immoral activities, remarked a man. This linking of women's movement is a theme which is equally relevant to all areas of the erstwhile FATA. For example, a tribal Jirga in Bajaur recently banned the entry of women to recreational spots. The Jirga was convened by JUI-F local leaders who said that the decision was made to discourage unethical activities. The organizers of the Jirga claimed that women visiting tourist spots in the presence of male was against Islam and their local traditions and thus "totally unethical and unacceptable" (Khan, 2022).

Though many people from the tribe expressed the above concerns, there were also people who disagreed with them on different grounds. Many people rejected the notion that there is erosion of their social values. Instead, they argued that social norms never remain static. They undergo changes with changing circumstances. A civil servant who did not want to be identified said that no doubt they have a very rich culture but it has to accept new things. He said that the world is making fast progress and if we strictly stick to our centuries old cultural norms then we will never be able to compete with other people. Muhammad Sajid Mahsud, a student who is studying in a public sector university in Punjab said that they are already lagging behind, so they should try to go with the world rather than follow centuries old traditions (Personal communication, March 27, 2022).

There were others who strongly advocated female's participation in political and economic spheres. They said that half of their population comprises women so they be allowed to contribute to society. Similarly, there were those who defended women's right to visit markets. Sajid remarked that just like male who want to purchase items

of their choice, women too want clothes, shoes and jewelry of their own choice for which they should have the right to go to market.

The above account of people who consider their migration and long stay in new environments to be something which seriously damaged their cultural values seems to be what Eisenbruch has termed as Cultural Bereavement. According to Eisenbruch, Cultural Bereavement is

The experience of the uprooted person-or group- resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity: the person-or group- continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or awake, suffers feelings of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life. (Bhugra1 & Becker, 2005, para. 9).

## Conclusion

Mahsud tribe is the largest tribe residing in South Waziristan. Though it has many similarities with the Wazir tribe, but it has maintained its separate identity for some two centuries. Living in a specific territory for centuries led to a distinct socio-cultural system of the tribe. Though its system broadly provided for the structure dictated by Pashtunwali, the tribe also developed unique aspects to its culture. Concentrated within a specific location and mostly cut off from the modern world for long, the tribe successfully resisted penetration of any foreign values into its socio-cultural system. Thus, there was not much impact of globalization, modernization, and westernization on its social life. However, it did not completely resist the entry of foreign values. The fact that its members would go to the Middle East or other cities of Pakistan had some impact on its system. For example, many Arabic words like Saleja (fridge), Iqama (resident card or visa), Qandoora (long Arabic shirt), and Kafeel etc. entered Pashtu language and people even totally illiterate ones would use them frequently. This impact, however, was limited.

Then came the 9/11 incident with implications for the whole world. Following the incident, USA and its allies declared war on terror and thus a long conflict with Afghanistan as its center started. Taliban were ousted from power and thus many of them crossed into Pakistan's tribal areas. The state and security apparatus in the tribal areas, governance system under FCR, locals' willingness to not only offer refuge but also fight with them against the US, Pakistan Army's double standard to side with the US and also support militants provided safe havens to the militants in the erstwhile FATA. Under pressure from the US, Pakistan ultimately sent troops to the tribal territory to launch operations there. Thus a long series of military operations ensued.

These operations were conducted in all the tribal agencies (now tribal districts). The Mahsud territory was no exception to these operations. Security forces launched several operations in this area with the last one launched in 2009. This operation, known as Operation Rah-e-Nijat has been one of the longest military operations. As a result of this operation, almost the whole Mahsud tribe was forced to vacate their villages. The operation was so massive and abrupt that people were barely able to save their lives leaving behind everything.

Unlike many other operations, this one continued for many years thus forcing the Mahsud tribe to live in other parts of the country as IDPs for years. Still all people have not returned to their native villages. Tens of thousands of families permanently settled in Karachi, D. I. Khan. Tank and other parts of the country. There are others who return to Waziristan in summer only and stay just for a few months there to avoid hot summers in the settled districts. Thus, this forced migration of the whole tribe exposed the tribe to long stays with different semi-urban and other subcultures in different areas of the country. Their concentration, however, have been in Karachi, Tank, and D. I. Khan.

As a result of exposure to different cultures, the value system of the Mahsud tribe underwent several changes. Mahsud culture too might have influenced other cultures but the focus of this study is about impacts on Mahsud culture of other cultures. In order to systematically track these changes, the researcher used Historical Particularism and Diffusionism theories as theoretical framework and adopted qualitative method and thus most of the data was collected through fieldwork. The major findings of this study are based on her interviews, focus group discussions, and informal interactions with members of the tribe. Being a female herself, she enjoyed the advantage of extensively recording women's version on several aspects of culture.

One of the most important impacts of this forced migration has been an increase in the number of people who do seasonal migration between Waziristan and other settled districts. At present, very few families stay back in Waziristan in winter as most of the people spend just the summer in their native villages and then leave for their newly adopted abodes in the neighboring districts.

As far as changes in the socio-cultural system are concerned, the migration and long stay proved a strong influence. It affected both the tangible as well as intangible or ideational elements of Mahsud culture. Thus, dress, food, marriage and death rituals, economy, architecture, sports and games all have been influenced with different aspects of them molded in different ways. For example, many people have stopped wearing their cultural cap and instead roam bareheaded, new dishes are becoming popular at the expense of the traditional ones, death and marriage rituals too have their additions and subtractions, new actors have entered the economic sphere, new designs have made their way into the Mahsud architecture and traditional games and sports are fast disappearing thus providing space to new games. Similarly, intangible elements like language, gender roles, politics, religion, folk poetry, dance, and music, attitudes toward education especially female education, and the concept of hospitality all have undergone changes to different extent. Typical Mahsud language has accommodate new words not only from other Pashtu dialects but also from other languages like Urdu, English, and Hindko etc. folk dance called Attanrh, folk poetry and music have adjusted new versions while gender roles have seen major shifts, politics and religion too have witnessed drastic changes. The concept of hospitality too has undergone major changes.

To conclude, it can be argued that the massive displacement of the Mahsud tribe as a result of militancy and the subsequent military operations almost shook the very

foundations of its socio-cultural system. It was so abrupt and massive that it brought several major changes not only in physical features of the tribe and its society but also in its mental horizon. Like any other social phenomenon, these changes in Mahsud culture have both its critics and supporters. The supporters consider these changes as positive development while the critics think of them as damage to their centuries old socio-cultural system.

Though it was mainly interaction with other cultures that caused major changes in Mahsud culture, the role of modern technologies also cannot be ignored in this whole process.



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