

**ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT
AND AGA KHAN EDUCATION SERVICE PAKISTAN
SCHOOLS IN UPPER CHITRAL**



By

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CERTIFICATE

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I Miss. Alia Parveen, hereby state that the thesis titled "Role of Community Engagement in Educational Outcomes: A Comparative Study of Government and Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan Schools in Upper Chitral" is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree, either at Quaid-i-Azam University or elsewhere.

At any time, if my statement is found incorrect even after the receiving of M. Phil degree, the university has the right to cancel my degree.



Alia Parveen

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents and family members.

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Abstract

Due to inadequate educational facilities and Government's inattention, the people of Chitral are facing significant challenges in providing their children with good quality education. This study assesses the quality of education in Chitral from various perspectives. Since majority of schools in Chitral are under the ownership of Government of Pakistan, followed by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, therefore this study primarily focuses on the evaluation and comparison of these two educational bodies. These two institutions have been compared in terms of their engagement with community members in educational affairs, the quality of education provided, the execution of extracurricular activities aimed at improving student's soft skills, collaboration and coordination with parents, and the overall school environment. In addition, participants in the interview were asked about religious influence or discrimination within the school, the expected advantages if Government and Aga Khan Schools started working in collaboration and expanding Aga Khan Schools throughout Chitral. To achieve inclusive outcomes, I conducted interviews with students, educators, parents and community leaders in Chitral, with a particular focus on Upper Chitral. The results suggest that Aga Khan Schools exhibit a higher level of active engagement with community members and parents compared to Government Schools, and they also deliver a high-quality education. However, a substantial number of people prefer Government Schools due to their provision of free education. Both schools refrain from religious bias or discrimination. Presently, Aga Khan Schools are concentrated in the regions with a Shia Ismaili majority. However, residents of Sunni dominated areas also desired for the expansion of Aga Khan Schools all across Chitral.

Keywords: Community engagement, Religion, Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan, Government Schools, Chitral

Chapter 1 : Introduction and Objectives of the Research Work

1.1 Introduction

This research primarily aims to analyze the impact of community engagement on educational outcomes in Upper Chitral, a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. In addition, it aims to compare the influence of community engagement on educational outcomes and investigate the differences between Government and Aga Khan Schools in this regard. In contemporary times, a collective of individuals residing or cooperating jointly to pursue a mutual aim is referred to as a community and the process in which community members are engaged for a specific goal is called community engagement (MacQueen et al., 2001). The detailed explanation of the term community engagement will be provided later in this document. This section primarily focuses on introducing the thesis work, outlining its methodology, and presenting its objectives. This research work is basically about the role of community engagement in the development of education in Upper Chitral, Pakistan.

Chitral is one of the remote areas of Pakistan and is located in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). It is composed of two districts: Upper Chitral and Lower Chitral. Despite being one of the most underdeveloped regions in Pakistan in terms of resource availability and basic facilities, Chitral boasts a remarkably high literacy rate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This is because of the great cooperation from the community members in the development of education. There are different educational organizations in Chitral, but Government of Pakistan and Aga Khan Education Service are the largest educational organizations which are rendering educational services since decades. This qualitative research work is about the quality of education in Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools, and the step taken by these educational organizations to engage the local community members and enhance the quality of

education in Chitral. The people of those areas have been included in this research work, where both Government and Aga Khan Schools are operating. Since the people in these areas are either Sunni Muslims or Shia Ismaili Muslims, and I have included the opinions of the individuals from both communities in order to make the findings more in line with actual ground realities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Various communities have responded in distinct ways when approached by either the government or private organizations for potential collaboration on community-related projects. Same was the case with the people of Chitral, when the local community members were asked for cooperation in the early days of educational development. The need for cooperation with educational institutions remains, and in fact it has increased. In this research, I have identified and analyzed how the local people or community members of Upper Chitral have been cooperating with Government and Aga Khan Schools in the development of education. Moreover, I conducted a comparative analysis of the quality of education between Government and Aga Khan Schools by engaging participants in a series of questions. This approach allowed me to gather insights into the differing educational experiences provided by these two institutions. Since soft skills are critical part of the education therefore I have also asked the participants, especially students that how much they are being engaged in extracurricular activities to improve their soft skills. Moreover, I have also focused on the financial advantages of Government schools over Aga Khan Schools because it's difficult for many people to pay tuition fee in Aga Khan Schools. Lastly, I have also highlighted religious discrimination in any of these schools and have asked the participants, if they are in favor of expansion of Aga Khan Schools across Chitral, and mutual collaboration between Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools in order to provide better quality education to the people of Chitral.

There are three types of communities in Chitral including Sunni Muslims, Shia Ismaili Muslims and Kalash. This research endeavor involved the collection of data from regions predominantly inhabited by Sunni and Shia Ismaili communities. However, it's important to note that the Kalash community is excluded from the study. The decision to exclude the Kalash Community from this study is rooted in the specific focus on both Government and Aga Khan Schools situated within regions predominantly inhabited by Sunni Muslims and Shia Ismaili Muslims. Importantly, there are no Aga Khan Schools present in the Kalash valley furthermore their inclusion would have extended beyond the intended scope of my research population.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research work is significant in context of Upper Chitral. Due to the prevailing constrained financial circumstances among a significant portion of Chitral's population, sending their children to reputable schools outside the region becomes unfeasible. Education is the main route that can help people of Upper Chitral to change their socioeconomic condition. But the issue is quality of education being provided by the schools in upper Chitral. Therefore, the findings of this research may be helpful in providing best quality education to the people of upper Chitral right at their doorstep. In addition, Aga Khan Schools could be established in Sunni dominated areas to extend their benefits to maximum people, as they are currently concentrated in Ismaili majority regions. Similarly, co-curricular activities are essential enhancing students' soft skills and all schools should consider incorporating such activities into their academic schedule. Furthermore, Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools could collaborate with each other in order to enhance the overall educational environment in Upper Chitral.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the educational structure of Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools in Upper Chitral. It analyzes how Government and Aga Khan Schools are engaging community members in the educational matters and how to induce sense of community works in the students along with improving their soft skills by engaging them in extracurricular activities. This study is not challenging any educational policy rather it is an attempt to evaluate the current educational set-up and recommends suggestion to improve it further. The findings have been collected based on the experiences of students, parents, teachers and community members. Therefore, they could deviate slightly from the ground realities and could may not be entirely accurate.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework of this study has been borrowed from Mir Afzal's book; *From Educational Reformers to Community Developers: The Changing Role of Field Education Officers of Aga Khan Education Service Chitral, Pakistan*. According to him, community members in Chitral have played critical role in empowering the people, especially women, by cooperating with the organizations that have been working in the field of education for decades. According to Reid and Howard, community engagement is the best way of social cohesion, creating inclusivity in the society, giving possible solutions to the problems. Communities can progress effectively by sharing resources, collaborating with each other. Significant successes can be achieved in the field of health and education, when the community is actively engaged by the relevant organizations (Reid & Howard, 2016).

Similarly, Amend has identified that, engaging community members in the educational matters will have long lasting impacts on the educational system. The success ratio will increase, and holistic development will occur in the academic and non-academic performance of the students.

Engaging community leaders will be helpful in aligning education with real-world issues and challenges. Similarly, by involving community members, the environment of educational institutions can be made more inclusive for the people from various cultural and religious backgrounds (Amendt, 2008).

Drawing on theoretical insights from Mir Afzal's book, I analyzed the impacts of community involvement on the overall quality of education in both Government and Aga Khan Schools in Chitral, as well as their efforts to enhance students' academic and non-academic development.

1.6 Literature Review

For decades, the people of Northern Areas of Pakistan have believed that education is a powerful tool capable of transforming their lifestyle and empowering them as they have observed individuals who received an education experiencing significant positive changes in their lives. Alongside various Government and private organizations, AKEPS has been executing projects in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Chitral that are specifically tailored for the mountainous and remote communities of Pakistan, aligning with local norms and culture.

AKES, P arrived in Chitral during the early 1980s with the aim of providing education to girls this initiative was necessary as the government was facing challenges in establishing schools for girls in rural villages. Consequently, AKESP undertook the responsibility of assisting the government and local communities in establishing schools for girls in villages that were devoid of government-run educational institutions.

In order to further engage the community in educational activities, Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan is working to introduce initiatives that encourage broader participation. One such initiative, designed exclusively for female staff, aims to provide them with access to professional development training and other opportunities. Providing equal opportunities to women has led to a rise in their academic achievements and qualifications. More women now

hold senior positions, and it's anticipated that they will increasingly lead diverse organizations in the future (Sales, 1999).

Aga Khan Education Service of Pakistan (AKESP) is an independent body under Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). All the programs of AKDN, including the programs and projects of AKESP, have been designed for the less privileged people of Pakistan, who are living in the far-flung areas of Pakistan. Majority of these areas lack basic life facilities such as good educational institutes, proper health facilities and access to proper roads and employment opportunities. Despite the scarcity of these basic life necessities, most of the areas of Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral have literacy rate above 90%. This is because of Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan under Aga Khan Development Network, who have rendered tremendous services in these areas of Pakistan. AKDN is directly or indirectly benefiting millions people in Pakistan. AKDN is working in about 1100 villages in Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral (S. K. Malik & Bi, 2011).

The people of Northern Pakistan and Chitral are Muslims and follow the teaching of Islam except Kalash. However, like other sects of Islam, the interpretations of Islam by the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims vary and change over time. Most of the students enrolled in AKESP schools in the Northern Pakistan are Ismaili Muslims, but significant number of Shia (Asna Ashri) Muslim students and Sunni Muslim students are also enrolled. Students from Shia Ismaili backgrounds are highly flexible toward changing environments and strongly believe in diversity and pluralism. The faith in Ismaili Imamatus means, the followers should respond positively to the change initiated by AKDN and also other governmental and non-governmental organizations that are working for the betterment of the people. AKDN projects emphasize on girl's education, and introduce programs that address the needs of women. While the other two Muslim communities living in the Northern Pakistan and Chitral namely Shia (Asna Ashri) and Sunni Muslims, are not as flexible when it comes to women's empowerment. Therefore,

sometimes tensions arise in the Northern Pakistan, because many believe that, culture traditions and religion do not allow what is being practiced in the mountains. However, the institutions of AKDN are providing facilities to all the communities living in the Northern parts of Pakistan irrespective of any difference. All the people are being invited to take part and collaborate in making the successful execution of the projects possible (Fooladi, 2008).

Institute of Educational Development at Aga Khan University (AKU-IED) was founded in 1993. During its inauguration, the Aga Khan himself stated that the objective of establishing the educational development institute is to elevate the status of the teaching profession, which has not been given the recognition it deserves.

The creation of IED highlights the importance of teaching and the programs of the institute are designed to amplify that message. The technical work of the institute will assist teacher to enrich themselves with teaching skills and the skills related to their specific areas. Similarly, Director of AKU-IED Dr. Kazim Bacchus stated that their school programs focus more on in-service training, which is more effective plan in most developing countries than pre-service teacher education in raising students. Similarly, IED offers courses and training that are aimed to empowering the trainees to engage with community and parents of the students in educational matters (Pardhan & Thiessen, 2006).

In 1960, the global enrollment of primary schools' students was less than half. But, in 1990 this proportion was more than 75%, despite rapid population growth. There are several factors behind such a remarkable increase. Government of Pakistan had also initiated some programs that really helped to promote education in the country. Participatory models in educational management was one of those examples that really helped to boost educational activities. This model was introduced as an initiative known as School Management Committees (SMCs). Although, this initiative played a crucial role in increasing the proportion of student's enrollments it still didn't achieve its target due to non-existent monitoring and evaluation

system, lack of formal rules and responsibilities, and feudal influence. AKES,P is an example of indigenous community-driven SMC-based educational development model that has successfully engaged community members in raising awareness about the importance of education. One of AKES,P initiative the Self Help School's Programme (SHSCP), is completely focusing the local communities to help in develop community schools and has created a network of 200 Community Based schools in the Northern Areas of Pakistan namely Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral. Such Community Based schools are introduced by actively engaging the local communities from the cradle to grave of the project. Communities are engaged in planning process, and they contribute some portion of the financial expenses to be used in the construction purposes. AKES,P takes several actions to support education. They buy land for schools, cover a significant part of the construction costs, offer labs and libraries, assist financially struggling students with educational expenses, and contribute to employee salaries. These Community Based schools are the best examples of the educational projects, where local community is actively engaged throughout the process and play crucial role in successful execution of the project (Ashraf, 2015).

Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) is a successful NGO, in context of uplifting the less privileged people of Pakistan. The logo of AKES,P has a symbol of the word IQRA, from the first revelation of Allah to Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) (Surah 96, verses 19 of The Holy Quran). The foundation of present AKES,P schools was established by the 48th hereditary Imam of Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah also known as Aga Khan III. AKES currently operates around 300 schools and advance educational programs that are engaged in providing educational services to the underprivileged people across the globe. Over 200 community based schools and 100 public and private partner's schools are providing educational access to over 75,000 students across the globe. These AKES, P schools have many commendable aspects, and one of them that I would like to mention here is their

active engagement of community members and parents in educational matters. Additionally, both male and female students participate in activities that cultivate a sense of responsibility, helping to shape them into responsible citizens in the future (S. K. Malik & Bi, 2011).

AKDN is working effectively in the sustainable development of the rural areas of Northern Pakistan and Chitral. AKDN is the umbrella of four sub units including, Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP), which works for the development of rural areas and improve the socio-economic condition of less privileged people and families in the far-flung areas of Pakistan, Aga Khan Education Service (AKESP), which helps the local residents to get empowered by providing them high-quality education at their door step. AKES,P also provides books for the students of far-flung areas of Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral. Similarly, Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS, P) helps people in improving their health which has got a chain of hospitals and basic health unit (BHU) that are spread across the county. All these projects believe in community engagement, especially the projects of AKES,P are completely community center, where the community members are actively engaged. The society of community members played crucial role in establishing Hunza Educational Resource, Pakistan, which was the first ever educational resource in the Northern Pakistan that catered the needs of all English-medium schools in Hunza. The people of Hunza stood firmly with the institutions and projects of AKDN by providing best ever possible co-operation. Due to the best support and cooperation of local community members AKDN executed its projects effectively and played critical role in changing the lifestyles of the people of Gilgit Baltistan, especially people of Hunza. By understanding the need and importance of community engagement, AKES,P schools in the Northern Pakistan and Chitral, focus on enhancing the interest of younger generations in community services. To achieve this objective AKES,P schools design various activities and engage young minds in such activities, so that individuals can realize his or her civic responsibilities at an early age (Rahim, Saleem, & Noman, 2023).

The people of Chitral were deprived from getting education by the local ruler till 1937, because the rulers were considering educated people a threat to their dynasty. AKES,P launched its educational programs in 1980 with the first school. Currently, there are 1088 schools and 14 colleges in Chitral, including 45 AKES, P schools and 45 community based schools affiliated with AKES,P. These communities based schools are operated with full collaboration with the local community and engaging them in every decision making process.

Community-based schools operate in close collaboration with the local residents, involving them in every decision-making process. In both districts of Chitral—Upper Chitral district and Lower Chitral district—the government is the primary education provider, followed by the Aga Khan Education Service for Pakistan as the second largest. The common perception about the quality of education in Chitral is that, the standard of education of AKES,P schools is considered much better than that of Government Schools. Since, AKES,P schools are actively engaging community members in the matters related to schools and that could be one the main reasons behind this. But the issue is that, AKES,P schools cannot accommodate even 10 percent of the total school going students. AKES,P schools are open to all students irrespective of their culture, faith, race, creed and social status. Both the AKES logo and its mission make it clear that the only purpose of AKES is to provide quality education the people, especially to those who belong to the deprived areas of belong to financially less privileged families. When the educational institutes were established in Chitral, the literacy rate of Chitral was very low. Only 14.4% people of the total population were educated, and among them 24.12% were men and only 2.93% were women. Co-education could have been an option to enroll more girls in the schools, but at that time it was not acceptable to many parent and local leaders in many areas of Chitral. Later on, AKES,P decided to build girls schools in the far-flung villages of Chitral. At that time, neither AKES,P nor local communities were able to build schools due to scarcity of resources. But, both stakeholders namely, AKES,P administration and local communities

decided to collaborate with each other and build schools for girls under a program called Self-Help School Construction Program (SHSCP), which was introduced in 1980s. SHSCP program played crucial role in developing educational initiatives and projects in Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan. This idea helped AKES,P to establish 51 schools for girls in Chitral till now. Among these 51 schools, 34 are primary schools, 14 are middle schools, and 3 are high schools. Apart from that 44 community-based girl's schools have also been built in the remote areas of Chitral. Indeed, Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKESP) has undertaken remarkable educational initiatives in Chitral since the 1980s, with a special focus on girls' education the success of these endeavors can be attributed to the robust collaboration with the local community (Afzal, 2004).

There are three pillars for promoting girl's Education through localized and flexible service models. Some of the areas in Pakistan are still too much resistant and violent toward girl's education. These three pillars can be very helpful to the government and private organizations working in such a complex environment. The three pillars are recognition and appreciation, establishing innovative and inclusive partnership frameworks, and ensuring that the projects are sustainable and these could be highly helpful to convince local people and get their support and cooperation for the successful execution of the projects. Also, the concerns and reservations of the local community could be addressed effectively, and thus local community can be successfully engaged in the promotion of girls in such conservative areas. The power of a community crucial when we discuss any project, because most of their successes are directly dependent on the cooperation from the local people (Razzaq, 2015).

Three approaches, namely: community-wide dialogue at an externally facilitated meeting; continuous dialogue via text messages, on a high-frequency low cost text messaging platform; and elections and training of SMC (School Management Committee) members, was aimed to engage community engagement in Sindh, Pakistan. The community showed greater interest in

creating community-wide dialogue and making inclusive dialogue platform (S. Asim & Riaz, 2019).

1.7 Research Questions

In the light of previous research works on the role of community members in developing the quality of education, especially in the underdeveloped areas, following questions are raised in the mind.

- What were the challenges to motivate people to send their children especially girls, to school in the beginning?
- How difficult it was to get education with very limited resources?
- How community members have played important role in the development of education in remote areas like Chitral?
- What is the difference in the quality of education between Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools? How often these schools are engaging students in extracurricular activities?
- Is there any kind of religious influence or discrimination in the educational institutions in Chitral?
- How beneficial it would be, if Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools work in collaboration?

1.8 Hypothesis

Since its establishment in 1980, Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKESP), has played a vital role in the educational development in Chitral. Aga Khan Schools are ahead of Government schools in terms of providing quality education, nurturing students' soft skills, and involving local community members in educational affairs. At present, majority of Aga Khan Schools operate in regions where majority of the population belongs to Shia Ismaili

Muslim. Additionally, the communities from Sunni Muslim-majority regions also expressed a desire for Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan to build schools in their locality as well.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This research is composed of seven chapters and the summary of whole research is given below. This section also describes the central point of each chapter.

Chapter 1 is about the research work. It gives the basic introduction of the research work, its objective and the gap that will be filled by this work. In addition, this chapter also includes the literature review, methodology of the research work, and the questions that were designed for the participants who took part in the interview. Furthermore, Chapter 1 includes brief introduction of the community engagement and its importance.

Chapter 2 is about the demographics and historical background of Chitral. In this chapter, the geographic location of Chitral along with history have been mentioned. The history of Chitral before and after the merging of Chitral with Pakistan has been mentioned in detail.

Chapter 3 describes the arrival of education in Chitral. Apart from describing the establishment of Government educational institutions, this chapter also highlights the arrival of Aga Khan Schools in Chitral and their contribution to the development of education.

Chapter 4 describes the influence of religion on education. This chapter highlights the impact of various religions and civilization, explores about the connection between Islam and education and underscores the contributions of Muslim scholars and scientists in the fields of science, technology, arts and innovation.

Chapter 5 covers the research methodology and the methods of data collection. Providing insights into primary and secondary data sources.

Chapter 6 presents the research results and findings, including opinions from participant interview. These findings are then compared with the research objectives and hypotheses.

Chapter 7 is the last chapter, providing the research conclusion and recommendations for future work.

1.10 What is Community Engagement?

There are various ways to define community engagement. For the purpose of this research, I define it as a collaborative process involving people who are connected by geographical location, a shared purpose, or common interests. The aim is to collectively address issues that are impacting the well-being of the community or to establish programs that will benefit them in the long term. It is essential to involve the community while making progress; this is a crucial aspect in all situations.

The word 'community' has been derived from Latin word *communitas*, which has again been extracted from *communis* that means public or common and is shared by all people or many of them. *Communis* comes from Latin prefix *com* meaning together and *munis* meaning performing services. Community can also be seen as a combination of two words common and unity. These root and suffix represent the objective of the word that is a certain portion of the population is united by a common cause of a familiar thread (Hu et al., 2008).

A community basically brings people together and provides them a common platform to achieve their objectives or to fight against threat with unity. The ratio of success of any society depends on the attitude and behavior of community members (Bracic, 2018). A long lasting and effective societal structure will only be possible by engaging the community members and introducing policies that are beneficial for all the elements of the society. It is obvious that collective effort is always effective than individual effort. The community has the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities like health initiatives, educational programs, policy making, and creating awareness regarding different issues and many more. Community plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of the initiatives taken for the betterment of society and maximizing the benefits derived from them. Also, community engagement helps

in developing constructive relationship between communities and institutions, both governmental and private. This makes community engagement not only desirable but also crucial and viable, as it is likely to initiate more sustainable projects that are beneficial to improve the life standards of the local communities. This is the reason community engagement is beneficial for individuals, families, group of people, public and private organizations. Community engagement is the basic unit of dialogue, where individuals, communities and organizations can make decisions and start planning to create social capital and make them mutually beneficial for every stakeholder (J. B. Jackson, 1994).

1.10.1 Historical Background of Community Engagement

The word engagement has been used throughout human history. People were being engaged individually, in the form of a family, a group of people from a specific area or country, in order to perform a specific function or execute a project. Thus, engaging human beings has always led to invention and development. This concept is traced back to ancient civilization, where different people and communities used to work together on projects that were beneficial for the people who were engaged in it. Since centuries, tribal systems used to engage all people in taking decisions related to the local residents. Similarly, ancient Greek civilization used to practice direct democratic systems, which are allowing all the citizen to participate in the decision making process using public forum. However, the term community engagement emerged very recently and became widely popular in 1960s-1970s. Some movements such as civil right, labor right, and women's suffrage, abolition of slavery and environment conservation brought people together and compelled them to fight together because of majority of their goals and objectives were same. The main objectives behind these initiatives was to encourage communities in participating different societal matters (Chambers, 1994). Later on the importance of community engagement was realized at the top level by the government across the globe. Therefore, steps were taken to boost community engagement in policy

making and governance. Many initiatives were started and policies were introduced to promote citizen participation, community input and collaboration. Various mechanisms like public hearing, town hall meetings, citizens advisory boards, and community based organizations to engage citizens in decision making processes, were introduced by the Governments in many countries around the world (Tolbert, Irwin, Lyson, & Nucci, 2002).

With the advancement of technology, advent of social media, and the internet, community engagement has taken a new direction. This advancement has enabled the educational organizations to contact or engage community members more easily. In fact, these social sites have provided best platforms to engage communities and had shrunk the gap between the organizations and the common people to interact with each other. In the past, it was necessary to physically move and meet the representatives of the organizations or with the community members. Thanks to the advantages of social media, all the stakeholders can now convene virtually, participate in discussions, and contribute to decision-making process. This has shown positive impact across multiple dimensions including time and resource saving that were previously expended due to physical movement, and it has also facilitated increased participation in the process (Ugwuoke & Erubami, 2021).

Nowadays, community engagement is widely accepted concept and has been made mandatory part of many projects and organizations. It is being implemented in various sectors like healthcare, education, urban planning, and environmental sustainability. Its structure has been enriched with many modules or forms like community organizing, participatory budgeting, public consultation, social impact assessment and collaborative governance. Since all of its domains are considered but more emphasis is being given on fostering equitable, inclusive and sustainable communities, where it is preferred to hear diverse voices that highlight the issues and suggest possible and beneficial solutions to them. This strategy is considered very helpful

for various government and non-government organizations to actively engage community in their projects and make them beneficial for all stakeholders.

In summary, the history of community engagement shows that involving community in project or program has consistently yielded tremendous and long lasting benefits for all the stakeholders. By looking at the history it can be seen that, community engagement shows a growing attention and recognition with the passage of time. Community engagement started to act as a central in decision making processes and empowering communities to shape their own destinies. The ultimate objective of community engagement is to develop communities that are stronger, resilient, and aware of their rights and appreciate cultural and religious diversity in the society.

The purpose of that civic engagement was to encourage individuals to get engaged themselves in community services and to promote democracy by engaging citizen participations in discussion, debates, and expanding their access to social and political capital. Community engagement is more about to focus on collective effort instead of individual (Balestrini, Bird, Marshall, Zaro, & Rogers, 2014).

The main advantage of engaging common people or local community is, to understand the real time problem, and plan solutions that consider limitations, and benefit a major portion of the population. As decision making and addressing the social issues are the responsibilities of the government, and, the best model for the government to implement or execute any project, is to interact with the local community, ask their issues and problems. Government being a key stakeholder in almost all social sector, including education, health, development and administration plays an important role. Another key stakeholder is the public, which is at the center of every governmental system. Government organizations and institutions are established to facilitate public and collaborate with the public. Involving community members from stages of any work will strengthen the objectives and end goal of that specific work.

Community engagement is the key element in achieving sustainable development (Bracic, 2018).

1.10.2 Role of Community in Difficult Circumstances

Community can be engaged in different types of activities. These activities are designed according to need of the local residents or the nature of the issues they face. History is full of such examples, where communities were engaged to address the issues. For example, after World War I and II, local communities were engaged to minimize the damages caused by the wars and in rehabilitating the local effected people and also internally and externally displaced people. During Covid-19, authorities made efforts to create awareness among people, emphasizing the importance of keeping physical distance while meeting and isolating oneself if infected by the virus. Among all the strategies the most successful strategy was engaging the public in fighting against the pandemic. Due to lack of community engagement, countries with strong economy like United States were significantly affected, experiencing a large number of casualties while some developing countries like Pakistan with very weak economic situations, did not suffer that much. Throughout history, thousands of examples can be found where long-lasting successes were achieved by engaging communities in projects. Such projects are more sustainable because the people involved in them feel a sense of belonging and ownership. They are given the chance to share their thoughts and experiences.

Most of the time, they are coming up with such brilliant ideas, and later on those ideas strengthen your objectives and goals However, there is a likelihood of encountering resistance from the community because they may fear that certain projects pose a threat to their cultures, traditions, and, at times, their faith. This is the most challenging part of community engagement, requiring in-depth effort to convince local people and make project execution possible (Nygren & Olofsson, 2022).

1.10.3 Importance of Community Engagement

Since community engagement enhances the scope and importance of community in projects execution. This concept shifts the focus from individuals to more collective audience by forming inclusive groups and ensuring considerations for the diversity within society. In community engagement, citizens participate in various activities, decision-making processes, and the implementation of projects or programs designed for them. While there are many benefits to this stage, one of the most crucial is that governmental or organizational leaders can redefine their strategies, roles, and responsibilities after engaging in discussions with the local community and gaining an understanding of their needs and problems. Community engagement can be advantageous for both the local community and the government, with some of these benefits mentioned below (Bassler, Brasier, Fogel, & Taverno, 2008).

- **Higher success ratio:** Community engagement increases the chances that projects or solutions will be accepted widely. The local community members who take part in executing the project, will come forward and play significant role in the successful completion of the projects. This is because they feel emotionally attached to that project. This sense of belonging will have long term positive impact on the project and will have high chance of success.
- **Effective and viable solutions:** Since community members have good idea of the ground realities, and engaging such a diverse group, helps in developing solutions that are more practical and effective. Normally, planning process is carried out in an office, far away from that exact location where the project is to be executed. As a result, many such plans fail to achieve their target. Therefore, it is highly recommended to engage local people, so that proper mechanism can be devised to execute the projects.
- **Improve citizen's knowledge:** Engaging public is helpful to enhance the knowledge of the citizens. Participants learn the in-depth knowledge of the issues and their skills

to understand and solve the problems. Citizens or community members can also practice decision making and communication skills.

- **Empowerment and integration of people:** When people from different backgrounds are brought to a common platform, they get a chance to interact with each other and share the uniqueness of their diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. By doing so, all the groups within the community, especially the ones who are in minority will start to feel being an important part of the community and which will be helpful in constructive development.
- **Creation of local community network:** When community members are engaged in a particular project it brings many people together. Community programs are best platform for diverse people to get connected with each other and form networks. It is also helpful to let people know, what is going on and what the purposes of the project of the program are. The more people know what is going on and are interested to work toward a goal, the more chances for a community to be successful in reaching its goal.
- **Increase trust in community and government organizations:** All the government and private organizations are established to work for the betterment of different communities. Therefore, the level of their success is highly dependent on the cooperation from the community members. Sometime local community members hesitate to co-operate mainly because of the misinformation given to them. This creates lack of trust from community side and sometime they even resist the initiatives being taken for them. Such issues occur frequently and may disrupt or even sometime lead to cancellation of the projects. The best way to handle such issues, is to engage the local people or community members in discussion. By carefully listening to their reservations through these discussions possible solution can be made. As mentioned before, local community can be engaged in different initiatives and projects related to health,

education, political system, administration or development sector. A research on the importance of community engagement has shown that, community engagement could be very important for particular group of people, such as people with disability. Also, there are some negative consequences of community engagement. Community engagement may have positive benefits on the psychological health, physical health, and psychological wellbeing of the of the individuals and the community (Attree et al., 2011).

Almost all the fields of the society depend on community engagement. Huge success can be achieved by engaging public in strengthening health system, advancing education system, improving infra-structure and development sector, reinforcing political structure and democracy, promoting sustainable tourism, encouraging people toward businesses and start-ups, creating more employment opportunities and many more. It is necessary to let the community members realize that they are the major stakeholders and beneficiary of the projects that are being initiated by the governmental or non-governmental organizations. Community engagement is necessary in every walk of life.

However, the purpose of this research work is to identify and analyze the importance of community engagement in the educational system. Although, there are various government and private organizations that are in the field since centuries to empower people by providing them required educational skills. It is evident from the previous works, that whenever community has been engaged, a tremendous success has been observed in achieving the objective, which is to bring more and more people towards education, especially women, who otherwise are not allowed to leave their houses and get education as per their customs and traditions. This research work will particularly focus on the role of community in the promotion of education.

1.11 Conclusion

The success of some projects is highly dependent on cooperation from the community members. Education is one those projects that is highly dependent on the cooperation of local community. The people of Laspur, Chitral have established Aga Khan Schools and government schools in collaboration with AKDN and government. Aga Khan Schools are completely open for each and every student irrespective of creed, color, faith, social and financial status. In order to compare the quality education in Aga Khan Schools and Government Schools, I asked questions from the local community leaders, parents, school teachers and students. Engaging with all four stakeholders through inquiries greatly facilitated the assessment and comparison of the academic and extracurricular offerings between Aga Khan and Government Schools situated in Chitral, especially in Upper Chitral. In addition, both Aga Khan and government schools engage local community members in the educational matters. Like Aga Khan Schools, the Government Schools also have Parent Teacher Council, consisting of seven members, one of whom is female. However, the council is not that much active in many places because of lack of cooperation from the community members. Upon asking, it was revealed that despite invitation from the schools' side, most of the local community leaders show no interest in attending the meeting. However, the parents and community leaders are comparatively more active and cooperative in Aga Khan Schools. One possible reason for this could be that education in Government Schools is free of cost, which might lead people to take them for granted.

Chapter 2 : Demography and Historical Background of Chitral, Pakistan

Trade was the main reason people used to interact with each other in the ancient time. Like other part of the world, people were also visiting India with the purpose of trade since decades. India has remained an ideal market for trade purposes. Although, there were many obstacles for the European countries to trade with India, but the long route between the European countries and Indian has remained the top obstacles. This was making trade unsafe, expensive and unreliable for the foreigners and that was the reason, European countries were looking for a partner in India who could facilitate them in carrying out trade related activities. The situations were quite good for the Western countries during Mongol empire, but with the fall of Mongol empire and rise of Ottoman Empire they started worsening and also the historical trading route "Silk Road" blocked. During that time, European countries, led by Portuguese, stated maritime exploration to navigate route to bypass middlemen, and the long distance needed businessmen to set up secure posts. The British gave this task to the East India Company that was basically established in 1600 AD after taking permission from the local authorities. In the beginning, the purpose of the East India Company was to carry out trade related activities between the European countries and the Indian subcontinent, but, when it made its root strong, it started interfering in the political and the administrative matters of the region. After some year of its establishment, the company started itself engaging in hostilities, sidelined other European competitors and eventually overthrown the Nawab of Bengal in 1757 and then handed over the administration matters to the puppets of the European countries. The East India Company was being controlled by the British Parliament and started regulating it through successive Indian Acts. In 2nd August 1858, the parliament passed a resolution named as Government of India Act and practically implemented their direct rule over India. Thus the British remained in

power over India until 1947, when Pakistan and India emerged as independent states (Chaudhuri, 2006; Jalal, 2013; Keay & Blethen, 1995; Larson, 2014; Lawson, 2014; Roy, 2014).

2.1 Establishment of Pakistan

At the time of independence, Pakistan had very poor education system and had very few schools and universities. Although, the number of educational institutes has increased tremendously, but there is still debate about the standard of the education. It is thought that current curriculum is very old and outdated, especially in public or Government institutions. On the other hand, private institutions have updated their curriculum according to the needs of today's digital era. Since Pakistan and Bangladesh were same country in 1947, and there used to be 11,057 primary and secondary schools with 1,053,000 students in both countries combined at the time of partition (Asadullah, 2010). By 1991 Pakistan witnessed a significant increase in the number of primary schools 87,545 with over 7.7 million students' enrolled (excluding Bangladesh). Concurrently, there were 11,978 secondary schools accommodating nearly 3 million students. Over the span of 1947 to 1995, the population of present Day-Pakistan surged from 42 million to 129 million (Sathar & Lloyd, 1994). By 2000, the number of universities had expanded to 35, despite this progress, high rate of illiteracy persisted, standing at 75% in the 1990s, and 90% among women (Amir, Sharf, & Khan, 2020).

2.2 Demography of Chitral

Chitral is situated in the Koh Hindu Kush range in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and is surrounded by Hindu Raj and Karakoram. Chitral is being considered one of the very important districts of Pakistan due to its critical geographical location. It shares boundary with Afghanistan to the north-west, Dir to the south-west, Gilgit Baltistan to the north-east. It is an isolated, sparsely populated district, and economically very poor and among the least

developed areas in Pakistan. Chitral is a famous tourist spots due to its natural landscapes, pleasant weather, peaceful and welcoming people, traditional houses and food, high altitude mountains including Terich Mir. Apart from that, Chitral is a home to more than 500 glaciers and, river Kabul also known as Indus River basically originates from the mountains of Brogil Yarkhoon and Bashqaar Gol Laspur. Chitral is the only district of KPK, which has not experienced any kind of bomb blast despite the peak of terrorism in the country few years back (Baloch, 2007; F. Rahman, Holdschlag, Ahmad, & Qadir, 2011).

Figure 1 represents the geographical location of Chitral, Pakistan along with its small town and villages.

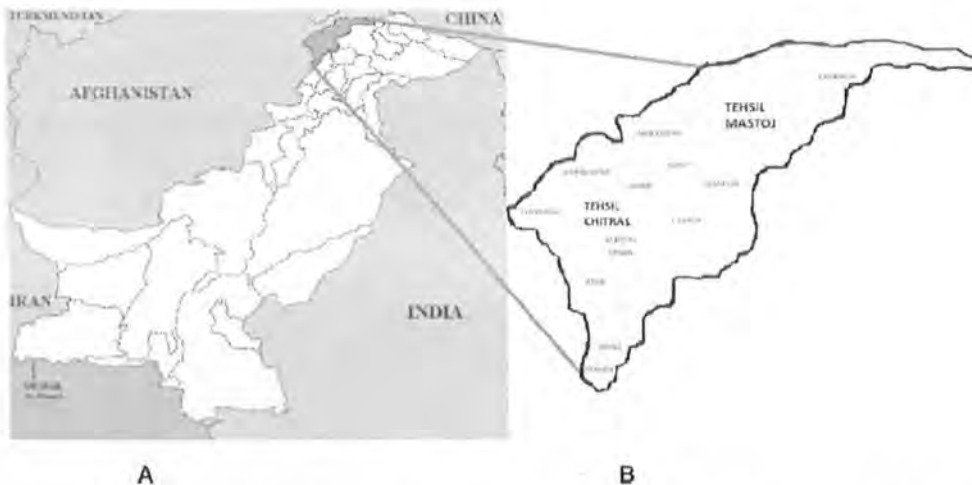


Figure 1. Geographical position of Chitral, Pakistan (Aziz, Nawaz, Afridi, & Khan, 2019)

Chitral is composed of two districts: Lower Chitral and Upper Chitral, and has got three four Tehsils, Namely Tehsil Mastuj, Tehsil Mulkhov-Torkhow, Tehsil Chitral and Tehsil Drosh. The former two are the tehsils of districts Upper Chitral, while later are the tehsils of district lower Chitral. Chitral is spread over 14, 850 Sq. Km and was the largest district of KPK before it was divided into two districts in 2018. According to the latest available census report, its total population is 447,362.

2.2.1 Historical background of Chitral

Chitral has been ruled by various rulers since decades. It has got the shortest and easiest routes for China, Central Asia and Afghanistan and therefore, used to play critical role for trade purposes long ago. The history of Chitral starts from the arrival of Fa Xian, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, who entered Chitral for the first time in 403 through Broghil pass. Fa Xian was followed by another Buddhist pilgrim Song Yun, who entered Chitral in 519. Early in the eighth century, Tibet managed to gain control over Gilgit and Yasin and then Chitral as well. The Chinese retaliated again and took control over Chitral again in 750, but faced a defeat in the next year in the hand of Arabs. Chinese also suffered with defeat in many areas in the hand of Arabs and Tibetans. In 1050, Nasir-e-Khisrow, an Iranian poet and philosopher who followed Shia Imami Ismaili Islam, arrived in Chitral, he served as a religious leader and missionary for the Shia Ismaili sect. He successfully converted people to Islam, particularly to the Shia Ismaili sect, marking the first Islamic conversions in the region. Nasir-e-Khisrow also achieved similar conversions among non-Muslims in the Badakhshan and Wakhan regions of Afghanistan, as well as in Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan of Pakistan. In 1320, the Raees family took control of Chitral and ruled until 1595 A.D. After the Raees family, Katoor family got control over the administrative power of Chitral and ruled until 1954. Due to the rapid expansion of Russian control on various Muslim regions of Central Asia, the British government conducted a survey of Hindu Kush and feared that Russian might enter Chitral through Broghil pass, they signed an agreement with the Katoor Mehtar, Aman Ul Mulk, and paid him generous subsidy to keep Russian out from the state of Chitral. Shuja Ul Mulk became the Mehtar of Chitral at the age of 12 and ruled for over four decades safe-guarded by the British Army. He was succeeded by Nasir Ul Mulk. Saif Ur Rehman was the last Katoor Mehtar of an independent Chitral State, who died in a plane crash in 1954. After the death of Mehtar Saif Ur Rehman, Pakistan took

control over Chitral's administration and Chitral was officially declared as a district of North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

Those centuries long Mehtar's era was the darkest era for the people of Chitral, because people were treated inhumanly. The poor local people were deprived from their basic rights. All urban and fertile land were captured and seized by the cruel ruler. A common citizen of Chitral was not to allow to have property of their own choice, educate their children, and travel beyond the borders of frontier. After the Chitral state fell in 1954, the people of Chitral experienced a bit of freedom in making their own choices. However, they encountered obstacles like challenging economic conditions, insufficient infrastructure, limited access to education, and a lack of necessary skills to enhance their quality of life. The enduring adverse effects of the darkest Mehtar era have resulted in a significant portion of Chitral's population still living below the poverty line, despite the region's abundant natural resources. While agriculture has traditionally been the primary livelihood in Chitral, the residents were unable to utilize the land effectively due to the Mehtar family's unlawful control over fertile lands, preventing them from engaging in business activities and similar endeavors (Afzal, 2004; Ali, Shah, Samad, Zahir, & Young, 2013; Cacopardo, 2007; Kreutzmann, 1998).

2.2.2 The Raees Period

The reason for including the Katoor and Raess periods of Chitral in my thesis is that after these dynasties ended, there was a significant shift in the lives of the people of Chitral, especially in terms of education.

As mentioned above, Chitral was ruled by Chinese and Arabs for a long period of time. Apart from them the Kalash tribe established their government over Chitral by the 10th century. They ruled over Chitral uninterrupted until 1320. Somewhere between 1005 to 1010, Sumalek, who was originally from Charkh, became the ruler of Ghizer, Yasin, Mastuj Upper Chitral, Hunza and Skardu. Sumalek's beliefs were considered similar to those of Kalash. His era was thought

to be golden era for the poor people of Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan in terms of prosperity, progress and development. Shah Nadir Raees ended the regime of Sumalek, and thereafter the Raees Dynasty and lasted for two centuries. Shah Nadir Raees, who started the Raees Dynasty in Chitral was basically from Eastern Turkistan. He attacked Chitral in 1320 and overthrown Kalash tribe and Sumalek from the areas around Booni region. With the passage of time, Shah Nadir Raees and his army defeated Sumalek and Kalash tribes in almost every region of Chitral and confined them to Birir, Rumbur and Bomboret, where Kalash people are still settled today. Raees rule started in Chitral in 1320 and ended in 1590. The population of Chitral was inhomogeneous during the period of Shah Nadir Raees. Shah Nadir, the new Mehtar, convened a meeting of tribal leaders they collectively decided to implement a taxation system that applied to all tribes. This approach proved effective and was maintained, even during the Katoor Dynasty, albeit with minor adjustments. During Raees's rule, Islamic legal principles were introduced to Chitral. The Kalash people, who were religiously persecuted in the early period of Shah Nadir's rule, were allowed to live with peace in the later period of Raees rule. With a strong source of revenue through taxation, Raees family ruled over the people of Chitral state for about 300 years, but later on due to internal issues and conflicts within the family, they lost their administrative control to Katoor family.

2.2.3 The Katoor Period

Baba Ayub was the patriarch of Katoor family, who had come from Herat Afghanistan and settled in Chitral in 1520. The sons and grandsons of Baba Ayub took advantage of those internal rifts within the Raees family and mounted an attack on the ruling family to get control over Chitral state. After a series of battles, the insurgents entered into the capital in 1590 A.D and declared their victory and control over the princely sate of Chitral. The main reason behind the success of Katoor family was that, they had support of local tribal leaders and their tribes. In 1590, Muhtaram Shah the grandson of Baba Ayub, was selected as the first ruler of Katoor

Dynasty over the state and later on became popular as Katoor I. He owned the crown from 1590 to 1630. Muhtaram Shah was joined by his brothers Khushwakht, Mohammad Raza, and Mohammad Baig who took part in the battle against Raees Dynasty and sustained injuries in the hand of Raees forces. As a reward and to pre-empt descent, Muhtaram Shah divided the administrative control of the princely state among his brothers. The Raees family continued their fight to regain the administrative control over Chitral and defeated Katoor Dynasty two times. Shah Mehmood Raees regained the administrative control over Chitral in 1630 and continued to rule for the next 30 years until 1660. Between 1660 to 1697, the Katoors once again ruled over Chitral, but lost to Raees once again in 1697. Shah Abdul Qadir Raees ruled over Chitral for one year, from 1697 to 1698. In 1698, Katoors took control over Chitral once gain and continued to rule over it (Pastakia, 2004).

At the time of partition in 1947, Chitral became part of Pakistan and the decision was made by the then-Mehtar of Chitral Muzaffar Ul Mulk. The state of Chitral executed an instrument of Accession on 6th October, 1947 that was contentedly accepted by the Government of Pakistan. Chitral was made a federated state of Pakistan in 1954 by signing a Supplementary Instrument of Accession and the Chitral Interim Constitution Act was passed. The Government of Pakistan insisted on establishing an advisory council and in the same year, 1954, a strong advisory council was formed. This administrative body continued to govern Chitral until its merger into Pakistan in 1969. Saif Ul Mulk Nasir succeeded his father at the age of four in 1950 and was the head of the state, when Chitral was merged into Pakistan during the era of General Yahya Khan. To reduce the influence of Mehtar Saif Ul Mulk, he was engaged by the government of Pakistan in various diplomatic matters of the country and was invited to represent Pakistan in abroad. The main reason behind this was to engage the head of such princely state in national matters and reduce their influence in their own princely states, so that the administration could easily integrate such princely states with the laws and regulations being implemented in the

country. Since 1969, when Chitral was merged with Pakistan, Mehtar has lost all the administrative control to the heads of the district such as deputy commissioner, police and military head, who are under the control of the Government of Pakistan. However, the symbolic title of Mehtar is still being used for the person, who is worn with the Crown. Mehtar Saif Ul Mulk Nasir was succeeded by his son Fateh Ul Mulk Nasir as a symbolic Mehtar and he is still serving as the Mehtar of Chitral, but all the administrative matters are in the hands of the Government of Pakistan (Ziring, 2009).

2.2.4 State Flag of Chitral

The princely state of Chitral was fully an independent state until 1885. After that it became a princely state under British Indian suzerainty. The princely state of Chitral had its own flag that was triangular in shape as shown in Figure 2. The flag was white in color and was composed of a mountain indicating Terich Mir, the highest mountain in the Hindu Kush Range located in Torkhow, District Upper Chitral. Apart from them, the flag had also two long green cedar tree on both sides of the Hindu Kush Mountain and there was a moon with a star. The Katoor Dynasty flew the flag above the Chitral fort in the later years of the state (S. U. Rahman & Ahmad, 2022).

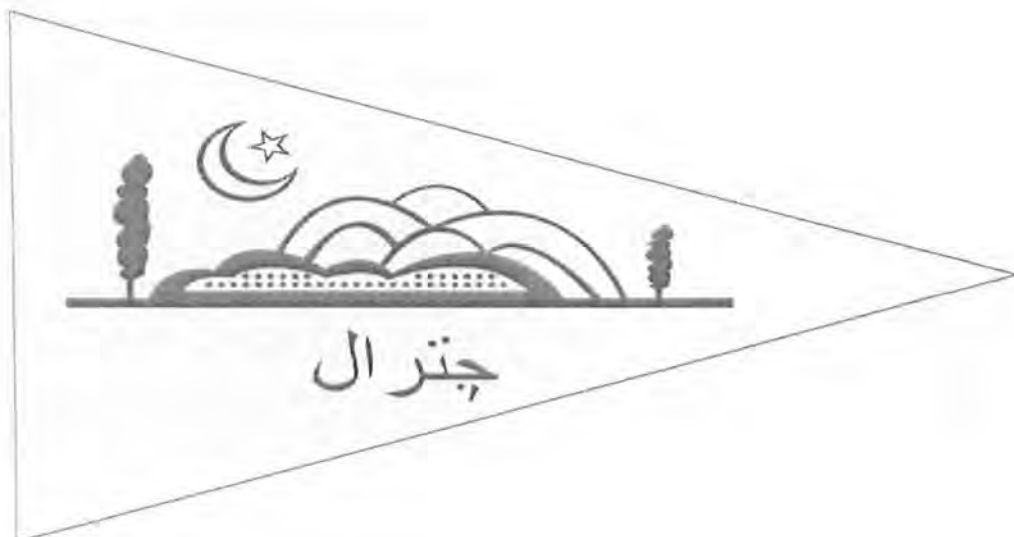


Figure 2. State flag of the Princely State of Chitral

2.2.5 Languages

Chitral is one of those areas that are multilingual. According to the report published by Munshi Aziz Uddin, five different languages were being spoken in Chitral in 1893 (Cacopardo, 2007). This finding can be countered with an argument that there could be more than five languages at that time because there are fourteen languages being spoken today in Chitral. However, the reason behind this could be, the total population of Chitral in 1893 was less than today. With the passage of time more people travelled to Chitral from other regions of the world. They brought different cultures and languages with them, and thus total number of languages increased to fourteen today. Second reason of reporting smaller number of languages in 1893 could be incomplete information. Since, Aziz Uddin had come from India and there are possibilities that he was not able to visit all the villages of Chitral and therefore, he could have possibly missed some languages being spoken in Chitral.

Currently, there are fourteen languages that are being spoken in Chitral. Those fourteen languages are, 1) Khowar, the official language of Chitral that is being spoken by majority of people, 2) Kalasha language, a language being spoken by the people of Kalash tribe, 3) Palula, 4) Damiri or Damili language, 5) Pashto, 6) Gorbati or Arandvi waar, 7) Kati or Bashgali waar, 8) Gojri or Gojor waar, 9) Wakhi, 10) Persian, 11) Kamrawi in Gabor Bakh, 12) Yadgha, 13) Sararqoli in Brugol, and 14) Kyrghyz language in Brugol (S. U. Rahman & Ahmad, 2022).

Khowar is the primary language of Chitral, spoken by around 90% of its population. It's very difficult to live in Chitral if someone don't understand Khowar. Khowar itself is a mixture of many languages like Urdu, Pushto, and Persian. The people in Chitral were speaking different languages and they were not able to understand each other's language and that had created huge communication barrier. In order to address this issue, Shah Raees gathered all he different language speakers in 1037 and formed a committee. The committee was composed of one member from each tribe. That committee formed a language that was a fusion of different

languages. Since, the fusion of different languages was prepared up in the mountains, therefore, it was named as Koh Waar. Koh means mountains and Waar means language or dialect, so Khowar means the language or dialect of the people living in the mountains (S. U. Rahman & Ahmad, 2022). As per above research, Khowar language was developed in 1037 in Chitral, but, this leads to some questions like, if Khowar was developed in Chitral, then how it is being spoken in many areas of Gilgit Baltistan, Swat, Kohistan and also some parts of India.

2.3 Integration of Chitral into Pakistan

As discussed above, Chitral was an independent princely state under the supervision of British government before the existence of Pakistan. Also, Chitral has the distinction of joining Pakistan, when it was established in 1947. It was also the first state that accepted to merge with Pakistan unconditionally. Mehtar was the head of Chitral state and was the representative of British government.

The Tehreek-e-Pakistan merged as an organized struggle in 1940 for an independent state when the resolution was passed in Lahore. Despite the British government's significant influence over the administrative matters of Chitral, the people of Chitral supported the Tehreek-e-Pakistan's struggle for Pakistan. Since there was no proper education system or communication infrastructure, the people of Chitral cooperated with the British government without fully understanding their intentions. In the beginning the British authorities tried to keep the people of Chitral out from the Tehreek-e-Pakistan or Independence movement, but later on Chitralies took part in the independence movement once they came to know the intentions of British government. In 1895, the people of Chitral openly resisted the British forces and after achieving remarkable successes, they continued to support the freedom movement. And when, Pakistan came into being in 1947, Chitral was the first state that accepted Pakistan and joined it unconditionally (M. Asim, Roofi, & Mahesar, 2017; I. Muhammad, 2008; S. U. Rahman & Ahmad, 2022). When Chitral was merged with Pakistan, the government introduced new laws

and policies that were often unfamiliar to the local population. The disruption in the traditional management system and the introduction of new policies initially led to a gap between the state and its citizens. However, over time, people became accustomed to the new rules and regulations, eventually adhering to them.

2.4 Conclusion

Chitral is located in the Koh Hindu Kush region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It has recently been divided into two districts including, Upper Chitral and Lower Chitral. According to the latest population, the total population of Chitral is 447,336. Despite the lack of basic human facilities in both districts of Chitral, they have the highest literacy rates compared to other districts in KPK. Additionally, Chitral is renowned as a famous tourist destination in Pakistan. The Kalash people and their exceptional culture attract thousands of national and international tourists every year. The first human reached Chitral in 403 from China. Subsequently, Chitral was ruled by Chinese, Arabs, Kalash and then Muslim rulers controlled the administration matters of Chitral. Raaes period was the first local Muslim period in Chitral, followed by Katoor family which ruled over Chitral for many centuries until 1969 when Chitral merged with Pakistan. Fateh Ul Mulk is the current symbolic Mehtar of Chitral.

The people of Chitral are very famous for being peaceful and for their hospitality and due to these reason, Chitral has always been considered as the safest place for national and international tourists in Pakistan since decades.

Chapter 3 : Evolution of Education in Chitral

3.1 Establishment of Pakistan and its Educational System

The history of Pakistan is a complex story and has spread over thousands of years. This region, currently known as Pakistan, has historically remained part of many ancient civilizations. Some historical places in Pakistan that is, Taxila, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, show that this region has remained a central part or important part of many ancient civilizations. Islam was introduced in this region in the 7th century by the Arab traders and Sufi missionaries. For many hundred years Muslim emperors, such as Ghaznavids, Dehli Sultanate and Mughal Empires have ruled over the state. As the independence movement gained more importance in the 20th century, Muslims also started their struggle for an independent Muslim state and established the All India Muslim League as an effective platform for voicing their concerns.

Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, also known as Aga Khan III was selected as the first president of All India Muslim League. After struggling for decades, Muslim leaders passed the resolution at Minar-e- Pakistan in Lahore in 1940. The people of the Indian subcontinent, including Muslims, got independence from the British Raj and established their own state known as Pakistan in 14th August 1947 (Bose, 2005; Copland, 1991; Khan, 1959; Noman, 2013; Wynbrandt, 2009).

Although, educated Muslim leaders had worked a lot to encourage Muslims to pursue modern and advanced education but Muslims were still lagging behind in term of understanding of modern education. Similarly, after getting independence in 1947, the education system of Pakistan was underdeveloped compared to modern standards. British had established educational institutes for limited people, and especially for elite class in urban areas. Madrasas were considered as the center of education and were thought to be an integral part of educational system. However, after the independence the government of Pakistan started to

introduce policies, that would strengthen the educational system of Pakistan and would empower the people with required technical skills that were crucial according to that era (Amir et al., 2020; Faizi, Shakil, & Rehman).

3.1.1 Educational Policies Introduced by Government of Pakistan

As mentioned above the education system soon after independence was inherited from the British and it was primarily British-oriented. The University of Dhaka (now in Bangladesh) was established in 1921 and was functioning as the prominent or leading educational institute after independence. The Government of Pakistan, introduced many policies after 1947, in order to make our educational system according to the teaching of Islam and Holy Quran, in accordance with the local cultures and traditions, and according to the needs and requirements of the local people. In 1959, the Government of Pakistan first introduced its first educational policy, which aimed to promote universal primary education and establish a comprehensive education system. It also stressed on learning technical skills and vocational education in order to meet the industrial demands in the country. In the early 1970, the Government of Pakistan decided to nationalize the educational system of Pakistan across the country to bridge the gap between people belonging to different socio-political classes. In 1979, General Zia Ul Haq introduced Islamic studies in order to promote Islamic education. The subject of Islamic Studies was made compulsory at all level, and religious institutes got more support. In 2001, the government devolved education to the provincial level and gave more authority to provinces to set up their curriculum and educational institutes. Pakistan committed to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and Education for All (EFA) with the purpose to make education accessible for all, improve its quality and eliminate gender disparities in the enrollment. In 2006, the government introduced reforms in order to improve the quality of education and increase enrollment rates. Steps were taken to train teachers, introduce better curriculum, and increase the budgetary fund for education. The National Education Policy was

introduced in 2009, emphasizing on curriculum reform, increasing the public spending on education, and promoting adult literacy program. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) was established in 2002, to monitor higher education and research institutions in Pakistan. The objective of HEC is to enhance the quality of education and research in Pakistani institutions. Like other parts of the world, Pakistan's education system also experienced significant shift towards incorporating digital technology in learning and teaching. Covid-19 accelerated the trend of such format, and thus online teaching and learning methods promoted further. Pakistan has faced many challenges in its education system since its independence. There were challenges of various nature including shortage of funding and resources, low literacy rates, gender disparities, outdated curriculum, less trained or skilled teachers, and the proliferation of madrassas with varying standards. Currently, various types of curriculum are being taught across Pakistan, and this has created a gap between students based on their socio economic status. Unfortunately, Pakistan is still facing low literacy rate and according to the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) report published in 2020, Pakistan had literacy rate around 60% with significant disparities between urban and rural population. Quality education is another major issue with Pakistani education system. The teaching method, curriculum, learning outcomes need improvement according to the latest or advanced development, so that our student's skills can meet the rapid changing needs of the world and they could be prepared well for the job market. Our education budget is one of the lowest educational budgets across the world. Our examination system is not updated, which effects the creativity and thinking capacity of the students. These challenges need to be addressed by the government, civil society and internal organizations. They must come forward and prioritize educational development, because all other developments are directly or indirectly linked with education (Ahmad, Ali, Khan, & Khan, 2014; Ahmad, Rauf, Rashid, ur

Rehman, & Salam, 2013; Hussain & Haroon, 2014; Khalid & Khan, 2006; S. J. Malik, 1989; Roof, 2015).

3.2 History and Evolution of Education in Chitral, Pakistan

In this chapter, I discuss the history of education and its evolution process in Chitral. Chitral has been ruled by various family dynasties for centuries, and these rulers never wanted the common people to get education because they believed it would be difficult to rule over an educated population. Since the people were uneducated during Raees and Katoor periods and were unaware of their rights, they faced severe brutality by the local rulers. There are limited resources about the history of education in Chitral, and I have mainly focused the book titled “From Educational Reformer to Community Developer: The Changing Role of Field Education Officers of Aga Khan Education Service Chitral, Pakistan” written by Mir Afzal (Afzal, 2004). He has discussed the history of education in detail. Also, his book has contents cover the contribution of Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan in uplifting the educational level of Chitral.

Chitral had a very low literacy rate until the last few years. There were various reasons behind such low literacy rate like poor physical resources, limited socio-economic conditions, cultural barriers to women, unstable political situation, and unattractive education system were the main reason behind low literacy rate in Chitral until the end of 20th century.

Chitral has always remained an important region because it offers the shortest route from Pakistan to China, Central Asia, and Afghanistan. The fall of Chitral state in 1954 gave freedom to the common people of Chitral from the “slavery life”. Although they got rid of cruel rulers but were left with poor infrastructure, deteriorating economic conditions, and lack of education needed for better life style. During the Katoor period, the children of royal family were going out of Chitral to get an education, and they were even going abroad using the resources of Chitral state. However, for the common people, neither there were enough educational institute

inside Chitral nor were they allowed to go outside the district to get an education. Agriculture was the main source of income for such mountainous people in those days, but due to lack of modern technology, uneven distribution of lands, and severe climatic conditions, despite their hard work and dedicate labor on the land, the inhabitants of Chitral were unable to reap advantages from their agricultural properties.

3.3 Arrival of Education in Chitral

Like other developmental programs and initiatives, Education also arrived very late in Chitral, During British period in the subcontinent, the education system was introduced in various parts of the subcontinent, but it was not able to reach in Chitral due to internal resistance by local ruler and being mountainous detached area. Until 1937, there was no single School or concept of formal education in Chitral. Most of the Katoor rulers were also uneducated and the first graduated or literate ruler was Mehtar Nasir Ul Mulk and he opened first school in Chitral in 1937 named Centennial Model School. However, in the beginning, the school was giving education to a very limited number of people. Formal education to common people actually started after the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. The education system of Chitral has gone through the Bhutto's liberalization period and Zia's Islamization periods and their respective education system. Both of these system had huge impacts on the education system of Chitral.

3.4 Arrival of Aga Khan Education System in Chitral, Pakistan

The education system of Pakistan has fallen behind global education standards. The quality of education in the major cities of Pakistan is comparatively better than remote areas with low literacy rate. As discussed earlier, Chitral is the remote district of Pakistan and Government of Pakistan had completely failed to provide the local people with basic facilities even today. There was no University in Chitral until 2018, when the then provincial government of Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf (PTI) established the "University of Chitral".

Despite the lack of interest by Government of Pakistan, the education system in Chitral started developing rapidly after 1980s and more people moved toward getting education, including girls, breaking the cultural barriers. This happened due to the arrival of Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan. To support the efforts of local government and improving the quality of education in Chitral, the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan started implementing its educational programs and establishing schools across Chitral in 1980. The number of educational institutions raised to 1088 schools, 14 colleges. Some of those schools were completely owned and run by Aga Khan Education Service, while others were being operated by mutual collaboration by Aga Khan Education Services and local community members and such schools are called community based schools. The number of Government Schools are highest in number in Chitral followed by the number of Aga Khan Schools. When I talk about the quality of education in Chitral the general perception is that, the quality of education in Aga Khan Schools are much better than the quality of education in Government Schools or in any other private school. But the number of Aga Khan Schools are less in number and they cannot even accommodate 10% of the school going children in Chitral. Educational contents of Aga Khan Schools are much updated and in-line with the global educational standard. On the other hand, quality of the contents provided by Government Schools are outdated and need to be revised. In addition, Aga Khan Education System provide regular trainings to their teachers, encourage to engage students in co-curricular activities and improve their soft skills. These are some of the reason most parents prefer to enroll their children into Aga Khan Schools in Chitral despite of free education in Government Schools.

The logo of Aga Khan Education Service is an open book, with the word "IQRA" written on it. IQRA itself is an Arabic word that means "to recite" or "to read". According to the history of Islam, IQRA was the first word received by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); the last Messenger of Allah for the guidance of Muslims. The word IQRA is mentioned in the Surah

96. Since there are hundreds of NGO's working in the education sector, but Aga Khan Education Service highly successful NGO working in the remotest areas of Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan. According to the report published on May, 2010, its reach was upto 900,000 people in 1,100 villages in the Chitral and Northern Areas of Pakistan. These schools have uplifted the socio-economic conditions of the people living there (Afzal, 2004; Monette, 2008).

3.5 Conclusion

The history of education is very old and the exact origin point of education is not clear in the available data related to history. It had gone through various ancient civilizations starting from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. But in those periods education was only reserved for the elite class. In the Medieval period, education was being provided by the religious institutions only on religious topics. However, the trend changed in Renaissance period and other subjects like science and arts were introduced. 17th to 18th century is called Age of Enlightenment, where people were encouraged to focus on critical thinking, scientific inquiry and the base of modern education was also formed. Similarly, Industrial revolution changed the overall spectrum of education system due to technological advancement and development of digital learning system. Both printing system and digital system have contributed the highest in advancing the education system.

When Pakistan came into being in 1947, the people of Chitral got independence from slavery life, but their socioeconomic conditions was in the worst form. There were very few schools in Chitral and literacy rate was very low until 1980 and the percentage of female education was almost zero. With the arrival of Aga Khan Education Service in 1980, significant progress was seen in the education sector and Chitral moved rapidly up in the list in term of literacy and reached to second highest literate district in KPK. This became possible due to support of Aga Khan Education Service to Government of Pakistan in spreading education in the far flung district of KPK, Pakistan.

Chapter 4 : Influence of Religion on Education

Throughout human history societal structure, beliefs, customs and cultures have had either positive or negative impact on the societal structure. Most of the time, these elements have acted as a barrier to the progress and developments that were crucial for the betterment of the people or members in the society. These societal elements are often deeply ingrained in people lives and therefore they create resistance to any form of change. These norms dictate, which behavior or action is acceptable in society and which is not. In the history of human beings, one of the major issues with human society was that traditional customs and cultures had very strong roots in the society, and therefore, there was no or very little space for innovation. This attitude has left many societies with worse socioeconomic situations. Furthermore, power used to be in the hand of very few people and or one person and everything else in the country or state was operating according to his wish or direction. Such centralized or hierarchal system caused many common people to suffer with extreme type of problems and difficulties. Some countries have suffered a lot due to such situations and still some countries have such administrative system up till now where one person of one family has controlled the overall administrative system of the country. Another reason of continuity of such system is, inter-generation transmission of cultural norms. This can perpetuate outdated practices and beliefs, making it difficult for new ideas to take roots and flourish. Some innovations are confined by the law or by the institutions, and without amendment in those systems, it is difficult to implement such innovations.

It is very necessary to accept and adopt any kind of innovation or development in the field of education or science and technology. Any society, that will delay their adoption of the scientific advancement will always experience loss, will lag behind in term of development and will depend other countries to fulfill their needs.

There are various factors that have hindered societies in adopting such innovations. Religious leaders have often misinterpreted religion to discourage people from perusing education, making it one of the significant factors in this regard. Almost all the major religions were against education and scientific advancement at any stage or period during their entire history. In this chapter, I have discussed the contributions of Shia Ismaili Islam in educating the people. Since the institution of the Shia Ismaili Imamate, under the leadership of Prince Karim Aga Khan, AKDN, has been actively engaged in rendering a wide range of services across the globe. Prince Karim Aga Khan, the 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, follows the footsteps of his predecessor, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III, who made significant contributions to the formation of the All India Muslim League. One of the main focus of both Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III and Prince Karim Aga Khan IV has been the promotion of modern education. They recognized the importance of education in empowering their followers and all Muslims in India and beyond. This commitment to modern education has been a consistent and enduring aspect of their leadership. However, my major focus throughout the research has been on the contributions of AKDN in uplifting the lives of people of Chitral, particularly through their efforts in field of education. It was a major shift that, religious leader came forward to provide modern education to the people.

4.1 Relation between Religion and Education in the Early Days

In the early days, religion had significant role in shaping the educational system, structure and the practices that were to be used to pursue education. The influence of different religions on modeling the education system were different in different civilizations. In some case religion encouraged people to get education while in other cases in it acted as an obstacles and kept people away from getting education.

In many ancient civilizations in Egypt, Rome, Greece, education was primarily provided by the religious institutions and the classes were being conducted inside the vicinity of religious

place. Monasteries temples and religious centers were used to gather people and provided them with education. Various religious scholars, priests and monks used to teach at those centers. Religious institutions have played crucial role in preserving knowledge and discoveries and then transforming them to the next generations and so on.

In addition, Religion has often served as the foundation for moral and ethical education. Religious education and understanding were used to instill values, virtues and ethical principles in students and shaping their characters in a better way according to the custom and culture of that society. In many ancient societies, the curriculum of education system was heavily influenced by the religious beliefs. Subjects like mythology, theology, religious history, and ritual practices were central to the education system and curriculum. In many cases education system was only established to provide training to the religious leaders, priest and monks, and it was considered unnecessary for the common people. Religion has also played crucial role in preserving various cultural traditions, myths, folklore through education. Education in the early days was very hierarchal, with access to few people belonging to certain class or religious group. Although, there were many things that had impacted our education system, but, the impacts and influences caused by religion on the education system were long lasting. Some of them were good and helped in preserving and in the development of education, while many of the religious influences hindered the development of education (Handy, 2012; R. Jackson, 2007; Ter Avest, Bakker, Bertram-Troost, & Miedema, 2007).

Although, all the major religions have influenced the education system in a great extent, but, in this research my purpose is to mention the influence of Islam on education. Since, there have been many historians, philosophers, scientists and other scholars who belonged to Islam and have contributed huge in the field of Astronomy, Philosophy, and Scientific and Technological advancement. Among different sects of Islam, Shia Ismaili Islam has stressed more on education with many contributions to the development of modern education throughout its

history. Ismailism has always encouraged its followers to pursue education and has not encouraged Ismilies only, but also the people belonging to other sects of Islam as well. All the educational facilities and resources owned by the institutions of Shia Imami Islam, are equally accessible for the people belonging to other sects, even open for non-Muslims as well. In this chapter I discuss the contribution of Islam in general in educating Muslims, and also the contributions and successes of the Ismaili institution in the field of education and the current services of the schools run under the umbrella of Aga Khan Development Network. Also, the religious influence in Aga Khan Schools in Chitral will be identified by asking questions from the students enrolled there or the graduates of Aga Khan Schools, parents, teachers and community members.

4.2 Shia Ismailism and Education

After the period of Prophet Muhammad (S.AW), division started within Islam, and it got divided onto different sects. The two main branches of Islam are, Sunni Islam and Shia Islam. Both the branches have again divided into sub-branches. Shia Islam has two main branches: Shia Ithna-Asheri and Shia Ismaili. Shia Ismiali Muslims have remained famous for their contribution in the field of education for centuries. One notable example is, the establishment Al-Azhar University during Fatimid Caliphate; the Shia Ismaili Caliphate in the ruled over the North Africa (Blanchard, 2009).

4.3 Influence of Fatimid Caliphate on the Development of Education

The Fatimid Dynasty was established in the land of Egypt in 909 and remained till 1171. This dynasty was established by the Ismaili rulers after defeating Abbasid Caliphate. During the Fatimid period, especial focus was given on the promotion and development of scientific knowledge. To get this objective, al- Hakim built Dar al-Hikmah in the al -Qahira (Cairo) as a forum for the scientists and scholars to carry out scientific activities. Historical evidence

shows that under the governing of Fatimid Caliphate, Egypt became a center to scientific advancement and reference. The first Islamic university, University of al-Qarawiyyin was established during the Fatimid Dynasty by the Shia Ismaili rulers. This university is still providing best quality education to its students, other universities and educational centers were also established to enhance the educational activities. All these educational facilities were equally available and open for Ismailis, other Muslims and even for non-Muslims as well. In the Fatimid Dynasty, numerous books were translated into Arabic from different languages. This effort greatly contributed to preserving and passing on ancient wisdom from sources like Greek, Persian, and Indian, thus expanding knowledge in areas such as medicine, philosophy, astronomy, poetry, and more (Hhindee, 2022).

Various scholars and scientists started gathering in Cairo; the capital of Fatimid Dynasty and thus Cairo became a vibrant center of cultural diversity. Through their patronage of scholars and library, the Fatimid contributed to preservation of valuable texts and information's related to different fields. In a nutshell, the Fatimid Dynasty encompassed a wide range of disciplines and helped in shaping the intellectual landscape of medieval Islamic world. Many educational institutes were built in the Fatimid period and al-Azhar University was the evidence of their educational contribution and is still functioning today (M Daud, 2022).

The purpose of the preceding discussion on the Fatimid Caliphate was to highlight the enduring role played by the spiritual leader, Imam of the time, of Shia Ismaili Islam in the realm of education over the course of many centuries. Throughout history, the incumbent Imam has consistently emphasized on the importance of modern education and equip themselves with the latest technological and scientific skills. The institutions of Ismaili Imam are engaged in a similar mission, striving to deliver highly quality education to the economically challenged people of Chitral at their door step. Consequently, the Shia Ismaili Imam's commitment to

advancing education remains unchanged, mirroring the efforts made during the Fatimid Caliphate many centuries ago.

4.4 Contributions of Shia Ismaili Imams in Educating the Muslims

As I have discussed above that Shia Ismaili Muslims have contributed significantly in the field of education. The beneficiaries were not Shia Ismailis only or Muslim only, rather many people from various cultural or religious backgrounds have been benefited from the initiatives started by the Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslim. Here I am mentioning about the contributions of the Imam of Shia Ismaili Islam for Muslims. As discussed earlier, the oldest Muslim University that is, Al-Azhar University was established by the Imam of Shia Ismaili Islam. Al-Azhar University has played critical role in motivating Muslims toward secular and scientific education along with the Islamic education and theology (M Daud, 2022). Similarly, the Imams of Shia Ismaili Muslims have played in the development of education in their tenure. However, the 48th hereditary Imam of Shia Ismaili Islam, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, also known as Aga Khan III has played remarkable role by representing Muslims in various platforms and by motivating Muslims to empower themselves by getting modern education. He had significant contribution in the establishment of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). Although the project was initiated by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, it was successful due to cooperation of many people. Similarly, Aga Khan III also extended his full support to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in terms of financial aid and guidance. He managed to collect approximately twenty-six lac Rupees through donation and personally contribute one lac Rupees to AMU (S. Muhammad, 2002). Furthermore, many educational and others institutions have been established by the institutions of Shia Ismaili Imam in various Muslim countries, and the people are getting benefits from them. If I talk about Pakistan, AKDN is working in health sector, rural development, education sector etc, and serving the people of Pakistan irrespective of their religious or cultural background. In the

next section, I have discussed the contribution of the institutions of Shia Ismaili Imam in the development of Pakistan.

4.5 Contributions of Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Pakistan

Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has played significant role in the development of Pakistan. The AKDN is a network of institutions, which operate in more than 30 countries across the globe. Although, there are many organizations working for the betterment of the people in many countries, but the thing that makes AKDN unique is its approach or nature of work. AKDN is targeting the people in the least developed countries or the far-flung areas of a country. Such areas are often marginalized and ignored by the government or other organizations due to the tough working conditions there. However, AKDN has always come forward to serve the people of these deprived areas. It is working in various sectors, including healthcare, education, culture and rural development (Poor, 2014).

AKDN has established many educational institutes in Pakistan that are providing world class education in Pakistan. Aga Khan University, Karachi is one of such examples which has got world class medical schools and treatment facilities. The Aga Khan University and its institutes have been at the forefront of providing teacher training and educational program. AKU is emphasizing on providing training to the teachers with an aim to enhance the teaching methodologies, educational leadership skills, classroom management and overall quality of education. It is continuously improving the quality of its curriculum in order to make it align with the modern educational standards. The AKDN and AKU are emphasizing strongly on the early childhood education, recognizing its importance in laying foundation for lifelong learning. The network has established hundreds of learning centers for the early child across the county especially in the Northern Areas of Pakistan and Chitral (Poor, 2014). In addition, AKDN promotes innovation in teaching and learning methods according to the requirements of today's world. The AKDN institutions are also engaged in research in various educational

fields, and as a result, they have been making contribution to the development of Pakistan's education system since decades. The educational services of AKDN in Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan are expected to have a long-lasting impact on the lives of the people in these regions. The educational contribution of AKDN provide valuable support to the Government of Pakistan in uplifting the lifestyle of people by proving them skills (Uddin & Mahar, 2022).

4.6 Conclusion

Religion has had huge impact on the educational systems of various ancient civilizations. Shia Ismaili Islam has contributed a lot in the field of scientific advancement during Fatimid Period the Muslim University that is, Al-Azhar University was built in Egypt to make Muslims in the North Africa familiar with modern education. The Shia Ismaili Imams have continued their contributions in the development of education. Sultan Muhammad Shah also known as Aga Khan III, the 48th Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslims had significant contributions in the development of Muslims in the Indian Sub-continent and was selected as the first president of All India Muslim league. He had provided significant support to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in the establishment of Aligarh Muslim University. AKDN has huge contribution in the education sector of Pakistan and has many high-standard educational institutes in the Northern Pakistan and Chitral, which are rendering educational services for decades. Furthermore, the institutions of AKDN are working in the areas of health sector, rural development, and energy production and are contributing in the development of Pakistan since long time.

Chapter 5 : Methodology and Data Collection

As discussed in earlier chapters, the objective of this research paper is to analyze and compare the quality of education in Aga Khan Schools and Government Schools in Chitral, a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Additionally, it aims to assess how these institutions and their administrations engage with the public and local communities in matters related to their schools and in improving the quality of education.

To achieve this objective, I employed qualitative research techniques and conducted interviews with individuals from various walks of life. The inclusion of participants with diverse educational and professional backgrounds aimed to provide a comprehensive and insightful understanding of the educational system in Chitral, including the factors that impact it. Before delving into the specifics, it is essential to provide a brief overview of the objectives and methodology associated with qualitative research.

5.1 Qualitative Research Model

Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to; explore and understand the research objective and complex processes. The approach to understand such complex phenomenon is quite different than quantitative research approach. Qualitative research involves the experiences and behavior of human beings, their perceptions and social interactions and does not rely on the data collected or numeric. The purpose of conducting qualitative research is to identify the deeper insights and understanding the underlying meanings and contexts of the research topic or objective. It involves collecting data in non-numeric forms, like texts, images, videos and audios. Therefore, Qualitative research gives more in-depth causes than other types of research and has got significant importance in the research field.

The data collected through qualitative research, gives many visible and invisible information that plays direct or indirect critical role in understanding or identifying in-depth results related

to the topic. Some examples of the possibility of obtaining such in-depth information include, gathering people's perspectives and experiences during interviews. Similarly, Qualitative Research helps in systematically observing and recording behaviors and interactions in a natural way. It offers the possibility of organizing group discussions and explore shared attitude, experiences and beliefs among different participants. The data collected thorough such interviews and discussions can be easily examined anytime to understand the underlying or in-depth meaning. This type of Research helps to understand the complex or large scale issue just by discussing the issue with small part of that population. Crucially, the research must remain unbiased and all the participants must not be forced or pressurized or even guided to give specific responses, rather they should be given freedom to share their genuine experiences without external influence.

Qualitative Research emphasizes factors such as subjectivity, culture, and researcher's own interpretations. The findings of qualitative research are often presented in the form of narratives, themes, and research descriptions. These formats are chosen to effectively convey convey the depth and complexity of the studied phenomenon. Researchers often use qualitative research to generate hypothesis, explore new areas of study, and provide detailed insights that can inform policy, practice, or further research on the same or different topics.

Qualitative research is a quest for meaning and understanding the pattern of the world and focuses more on engaging the true feelings and experiences of the people who are directly related to the objectives of the research. However, it should be kept in mind that qualitative research should not be used generalizing purposes in the same way quantitative research is being used. Qualitative research is mostly used in the field of education, anthropology, psychology, healthcare, etc. where human behavior and experience is important (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002; Hara, 1995; Horsburgh, 2003; Merriam, 2002; Pathak, Jena, & Kalra, 2013).

5.2 Research Participants

As discussed above, the objective of this research is to compare and evaluate the quality of education in Government and Aga Khan Schools in Chitral, particularly in Upper Chitral. In addition, both the schools were also compared in terms of engaging the community members in educational matters. The participants were also asked about religious influence or discriminations in these schools. Since Chitral is remote part of Pakistan and has got many challenges in the field of education. Although, there are many educational institutes that are providing education to the people but still they are providing education up to high school or even college level and there is not any university in Chitral except one that is, University of Chitral, which is again inadequate to accommodate all people since the population of Chitral is very high. The two main educational body in Chitral are, Government of Pakistan and Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan. The number of schools owned by Government of Pakistan are highest followed by the number of Aga Khan Schools. Both educational bodies are trying to engage local community in different ways with an objective to improve the quality of education in the far-flung villages of Chitral; a remote district of KPK, Pakistan lacking basic facilities. In this research work, I have focused on identifying the differences between the quality of education being provided by Government and Aga Khan Schools and also the steps taken by the school management to engage local community in the educational matters of the school. To achieve this purpose, I have divided the participants into two groups: the primary data source and the secondary data source. Since, I wanted to get a wide picture of the educational system in Chitral, therefore, I tried to include all those stakeholders who are directly or indirectly related to the educational matters out there. Primary participants or primary source is composed of those people, with whom either I conducted face-to-face interviews or I conducted interviews with them through electronic gadgets. Secondary participants either contributed supporting materials during the research or provided literature

and books that were used to support the research. I selected the participants as a primary or secondary participant after asking their willingness and availability for 2-3 hours long interviews.

5.3 Category of the Participants

To make this research inclusive, I divided the participants into four different categories. The purpose of dividing them into different categories or groups was to extract specific information from them by designing different questions for them. Followings were different categories of participants whom perceptions were included to carry out the research.

5.3.1 Category of current students or alumni

Since the students or alumni are the main stakeholder of these educational institutes, and they can provide best information about the educational system and the impact of Government School or Aga Khan School in their life and career. Therefore, I made a special group or category for the students and around 50% of the participant in this research work are students. Also, I ensured that the participants belong to both Sunni and Shia Ismaili sects of Islam. The purpose of including members from both the communities was to identify and explore the religious influence on the students in these schools.

5.3.2 Category of parents

This group of participants was composed of the parents of the student. Special questions were developed for the parents that cover the purpose to understand the impacts of educational institutes on their children in term progress in their careers, sense of responsibility and community works. Since Government Schools are providing free education to the students while Aga Khan Schools are charging fee, and thus parents were asked about the financial difficulties they face while spending money on the education of their children. The parents were also asked if they have heard about any kind of religious influence on their children.

5.3.3 Category of teachers

Since teachers are the front players of the educational system and play crucial role in the planning and execution process of any initiative taken to improve the standard of education in any educational organization. They are aware of everything happening in the school and overall educational system, as well as the initiatives to be taken in future. Most of the future plans are designed based upon the recommendations of the teachers. They are the best people to contact and ask about the gap in the current educational system and possible solution to address them. Therefore, I contacted around 10 teachers of both Government and Aga Khan Schools and asked them different questions about the quality of education in their respective institutions. Additionally, I inquired about the comparison between quality of education in Aga Khan Schools and Government Schools. Furthermore, I asked them about co-curricular activities in their schools and the steps being taken to create civic sense in their students. I also included teachers from both Government and Aga Khan Schools who belong to both Sunni and Shia Ismaili sects of Islam in order to get opinion from both the sides. Furthermore, I asked them about any kind of religious influence in any of these schools.

5.3.4 Category of community leaders

Community members play critical role in the success of any projects. Every community has some leaders who lead the whole community in the matters related to society. Like other sector of life, community plays crucial role in the development of education in any society. There was no concept of education in Chitral decades ago, and due to the cooperation of community leaders, both districts of Chitral, especially District Upper Chitral has got the highest literacy rate in KPK province. Moreover, these community leaders have played important role in the development of women education in Chitral, despite having many cultural and social obstacles. Such community leaders are the real heroes in my eyes because they are working voluntarily

for the betterment of the society. I contacted 10 such dedicated community leaders and asked them about their contributions and importance of community engagement in the educational system. I also asked about the possible benefits, when Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools started working in collaboration. In addition, I asked them about religious influence in any educational institutions. Furthermore, I asked the participants that how education has changed the lifestyle of the people of Chitral, especially giving access to women to get education.

5.4 Primary Sources

As discussed above, there are two basic sources which contribute in the conduction of this research work. The primary source is the major source, where I conducted interviews with the participants. After categorizing the participants into four categories, I started conducting their interviews and asked them questions designed especially for each group or category. I visited some of them personally and also visited both Government and Aga Khan Schools in Laspur Chitral. The primary participants were students, parents, teachers and community leaders as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Categories and No of Primary Participants

S.No	Category	No of participants	Address
1	Students	34	Chitral, KPK
2	Parents	12	Chitral, KPK
3	Teachers	9	Chitral, KPK
4	Community leaders	8	Chitral, KPK

Before conducting the interviews, the participants were told about the research work and its objectives, and their willingness were also asked. However, some of the participants were not comfortable with sharing their names in the research therefore, at that moment I have just quoted their opinions according to the requests of the participants. However, I can provide the details of the participants if they are needed for genuine reasons. The duration of the interview

varied from person to person but if I generalize the interview durations, it was between 3-6 hours depending upon the participants. As mentioned before, I conducted some interviews by myself, some by creating questionnaires, and some by using electronic gadgets. All the interviews were then transcribed and incorporated in the research. Thus, these primary participants of primary sources make a major part of this research work and all the findings are based on the opinions of the primary participants.

5.5 Secondary Sources

As discussed above that primary source or primary participants have great contributions in the successful completion of this research work. I have almost relied completely on the primary participants to collect data. However, to understand the historical events, history and evolution of human civilizations and educational systems, history of Chitral itself and the educational development there and many more. All these supporting materials were obtained from secondary source like previous research articles, books, reports and magazines. Although all the secondary source materials had significant contribution in making base for this research, my primary focus was on a book titled “ From Educational Reformers to Community Developers: The Changing Role of Field Education Officers of Aga Khan Education Service Chitral, Pakistan” written by Mir Afzal. This book help me understand the history of education in Chitral and role of Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan in uplifting the people of Chitral by providing them with high quality education.

5.6 Focused Areas for the Research

Chitral is composed of two districts: Upper Chitral and Lower Chitral. In terms of its geographical expanse, Chitral is vast region, covering an area of 14,858 Km². Therefore, it is physically impossible to collect data from every valley of Chitral. As I belong to Laspur, a remote village in district Upper Chitral. I found it feasible to focus on the schools in Laspur

valley, which includes a significant number of both Government and Aga Khan Schools. However, in order to make this research inclusive and to involve participants from Sunni community, I conducted interviews with students not only from Upper Chitral but also from Lower Chitral as well. Similarly, teachers from other villages of Chitral were also interviewed to get their opinion about the educational system of Government and Aga Khan Schools. However, most of the community leaders and parents belong to Laspur, Chitral. Since, Laspur is the most far-flung area in Chitral, luckily benefits from active participation by its local community members in various community projects.

5.7 Data Collection

As mentioned above I had divided the participants into four different groups based on their contribution in the development in the education or based on nature of their affiliation with the educational system. Most part of this research or we can say the experimentation part of this research is mainly based on the opinion given by the participants in these four categories. Most of the participants belong to Laspur, Chitral. I visited some participants and asked questions personally. While some of the participants were either not present in the village or belong to different regions, and it was impossible for me to visit each of them personally. Therefore, I created questionnaire and asked them to give response to the questions in the questionnaire. In addition, I contacted some participants via phone call or using other social sites. Similarly, for the secondary source, I mainly relied on internet and collected supporting data from different websites, books, research articles and magazine reports. Thus, I completed data collection process by conducting personal interviews, creating questionnaires, accessing books, research articles, reports and websites.

5.8 Challenges in Data Collection

Every work has some challenges. There were some challenges to complete this research and those challenges were of different nature. Some of the challenges that were face during the conduction of this research work are mentioned below.

First of all, Chitral has remained very backward area with the scarcity of resources since decades. It is very difficult to find information related to Raees Period or Katur Period and the dynasties existing in Chitral before that. Yet, there's limited data collected or published by British authorities. Those historical records reveal that local people suffered greatly under the control of local dynasties, making it nearly impossible to undertake any activities without their consent. Thus, it was a huge challenge to get enough contents related to the educational history in Chitral. Furthermore, the participants were scattered across different geographical locations, making it challenging to contact them individually. To address this, certain interviews were conducted through social platforms. Given that my research covers diverse subjects such as religion and financial support, some participants showed a slight hesitancy in responding to certain questions. Additionally, a significant number of local individuals, particularly parents and community leaders, faced difficulties in understanding and responding in Urdu and English. Hence, questions were translated, and their answers were recorded in the local Khowar language. Moreover, participants found it challenging to allocate 3-4 hours for the interview due to their busy schedules. Laspur Valley being a rural area, lacks internet access, posing a major obstacle in collecting and updating data from that region in Chitral.

5.9 Conclusion

Qualitative research is being considered as a research form, where data is being collected on the basis of human experiences. It gives more in-depth insight of the research topic or area. With this purpose, I decided to evaluate the educational system in Chitral and compare

Government and Aga Khan Schools in term of community engagement and quality education by performing qualitative research. In order to achieve this objective, I categorized the participants into primary and secondary sources. Primary participants were categorized into four groups including, students, parents, teachers and community leaders. All of them were interviewed either by visiting them personally or through social sites. Secondary source like books, research articles, and websites etc. helped in the literature review and understanding the history. Although, there were many challenges during this research work but luckily I was able to complete my research and achieve the objectives.

Chapter 6 : Results and Discussions

This chapter encompasses the results and discoveries, stemming from the comprehensive literature review and empirical experimentation. As previously explained, the bulk of this research is founded upon primary sources, while secondary sources play a crucial role in encountering historical contexts and lending supplementary support. The main participants were divided into four groups according to their connection with the educational system. I broadened the scope of this research considerably, aiming to incorporate various factors that linked either directly or indirectly to the educational system. Major topics or questions included in this research are related to the quality of education in Government and Aga Khan Schools, and the efforts being taken by these schools to engage local community members in the educational matters. Furthermore, questions were asked about the attitude of local community toward the schools, infrastructure of the schools and their fee structure, religious influence on the students in the schools, comparison of extracurricular activities being conducted by the school management to enhance soft skills of the students. Furthermore, I have also included the opinion of the participants about the benefits, if both government and Aga Khan Education service administrations started working in full collaboration. I asked people in areas such as Chitral town about their opinion on the expansion of Aga Khan Schools across Chitral. I received remarkably captivating responses from the public, and I observed their rational perspectives on education and both educational institutions. I was especially impressed by the thoughtful feedback provided by participants belonging to the Sunni sect of Islam in relation to Aga Khan Schools. This marks a notable shift from the situation that prevailed several decades ago.

I have provided detailed information about each topic or category in the following paragraphs. Personal information of the participants has been omitted at their request however, I can share these details if necessary and for valid reasons.

6.1 Challenges to the Educational Development in the Early Days

Like other part of the country, there were initial challenges to education in Pakistan. The network of schools was established in Chitral after 1970s and before that there were very few schools in Chitral and the local people had to travel for days on foot and stay far from their home to get primary or secondary education. This facility was only available for males, and for females there were few schools all across Chitral. That is the reason around 99.99% females in Chitral who are above 60 years' age are uneducated. There were different reasons behind the shortage of schools or educational institutions in Chitral before 1970 AD. One of those reasons was that local culture and customs of that time were encouraging people to get education, and in the case of females those traditions and customs have acted as obstacles and kept females away from education. It was therefore difficult for the local community leaders of that time, to build schools, and motivate people, especially for female children, to attend school. I conducted interviews with approximately ten community leaders and all of them belong to Laspur, Upper Chitral. Majority of them were senior citizens and have personally witnessed the initial challenges faced in the early 1970s, when common people first moved towards getting an education. When I asked about the challenges back then, they mentioned numerous initial issues. One correspondent mentioned that people of that time were pessimistic about education. Almost all the community leaders said, it was challenging to sensitize public towards education. Another correspondent said that some people were considering education against the teaching of Islam, while others were moving away by making political reasons. The same correspondent said, some areas had already Government Schools those days and the local people were not allowing Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan to build schools in those areas.

Another correspondent quoted that during those days people used to prefer to send their children in the fields for farming purposes and grazing cattle instead of sending them to school. Almost all of the community leaders said that there were lack of resources in the beginning, no proper infrastructure for education and it was challenging task to purchase land and build a building for school there. The socio economic conditions of the people were too weak and they were not able to afford educational expenses of their children. Despite all the above mentioned challenges, the educational organizations, especially Government and Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan successfully constructed many schools in almost all village of Chitral, and made education accessible for every person, who is interested, including female.

6.2 Attitude of the Community Members towards Education

In the successful execution of any project related to society, one of the most important things is the cooperation from the community members. Without cooperation from their side, or without taking the community members onboard, it is very difficult to successfully execute the project or achieve the objective. Therefore, it is very important to engage community members in such projects. But, unfortunately community members are not ready all the time to cooperate in the execution of such projects. Education sector is one of those sectors, where it is highly needed for the community members to engage themselves with the educational system in order to improve the quality of education. The attitude of community in Chitral toward education has evolved through various phases. I asked the participants, including students, teachers, community leaders, and parents, about the importance of community engagement and the current level of local community involvement. According to their opinions, there was initially minimal community involvement, but it has improved significantly over time, though further improvements are still needed.

When the community leaders were asked about the flexibility shown by people in sending their girls to school for the first time, almost all of them stated that in the very beginning, the majority

of people were reluctant to send their girls to school due to various reasons, especially cultural boundaries. Fortunately, some individuals enrolled their daughters in schools, marking the beginning of women's education in Chitral. Over the years, people made concerted efforts to educate their girls, which was a highly positive development. When the teachers were asked about the level of cooperation from community members and parents, I received mixed responses. According to the teachers, Aga Khan Schools actively engage with the local community and parents in educational matters, while Government Schools are lagging behind in this matter. One of the teachers said:

“The local community and parents are interested in the educational matters of their children, and they cooperate with school staffs to improve the quality of education by asking about the performance and ethical behavior of their children in school, and by participating in different conductive meetings.”

Most of the responses given by the teachers of Aga Khan Schools are more or less same. But, on the other side, the teachers from Government Schools gave negative responses about the cooperation from the community members. One of those responses is mentioned below:

“In the hard area of Chitral, many parents lack the literacy and knowledge necessary to provide their children with a high-quality education. While they aspire for their children to achieve prestigious positions, they are often unsure of how to ensure quality education. Additionally, they tend to prioritize domestic chores over schoolwork for their children. Nevertheless, it's important to note that very few or almost no children remain without receiving any form of education.”

However, when the community members were asked about the cooperation of local community members in educational matters, they said that the community members are actively participating in the educational matters of all the private and Government Schools in Chitral,

and they cooperate in enhancing the quality of education. But, this opinion is against what the teachers have mentioned especially Government School's teachers.

6.3 Importance of Community Engagement in the Educational System

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, that involving community members in any initiative related society is very crucial. In addition, the importance of community engagement is highly important and crucial for some projects. Education sector is one of those sectors, where community plays critical role in enhancing the quality and standard of education. During this research work, we asked the participants about the importance of the role that can be played by the society of community members in the development of educational system.

Almost all the participants including students, parents, teachers, and community leaders, emphasized the importance of community engagement. They suggested that the community should be actively involved in educational matters and that the school administration should consult with them before making decisions related to the educational system, educational organizations, and educational activities. When the students were asked about the benefits of community engagement, one of them said:

“Local community leaders and members of Chitral, can play in ensuring that educational institutions provide the best possible benefits to their community. They can work with schools to identify areas, which they can improve, such as curriculum development or extra-curricular activities. By working together, local communities and educational institutions can create a more supportive and effective learning environment for the students.”

Another student mentioned the importance of community engagement as below:

“Community members and leaders are important part of society. They have important role in the society. These leaders and members have to be aware of the issues

educational institutions are facing, and they have to work jointly, in order to solve the problems of the instructions, and in this way they can gain more benefits."

As from the above mentioned two opinions of the students, it can be inferred that in the eyes of the students, community leaders can play significant role in addressing their issues and overall improvement of the educational system. Almost all the 34 students who were interviewed for this research work agreed that community leaders should be highly engaged by the school administration in the educational matters.

The other categories of participant's including teachers, parents, and community leaders were also asked about the importance and benefits of community engagement in the educational matters. They all agreed that community can play vital role in enhancing the educational standard, resolving the issues faced by the students or the school administration by cooperating with the school administration. Since, all the stakeholders acknowledge the importance of community engagement in the educational matters therefore, the administration must form a proper way to engage community, or must improve the existing strategy to effectively engage community members.

6.4 Attitude of the Community Members toward Government Schools and Aga Khan Schools

Since there are different types of organizations in Chitral that are providing education to the students of Chitral valley. The two major organizations are Government and Aga Khan Education Service. Apart from them, there are some other private organizations as well which are owing hundreds of educational institutions in Chitral. To identify the difference in the attitude of the community leaders toward these schools, I included some questions in my research questionnaire and asked the participants for their opinions. One of the reasons behind including such questions, was to evaluate the acceptance for Aga Khan Schools in the Sunni

dominated areas. Some of the people belonging to Sunni Islam, have remained rigid towards Aga Khan Schools in the past, and have even not allowed to build Aga Khan Schools in their respective areas. One of the example of this is, the Aga Khan Hostel was burnt in 1982 incident. But fortunately, people have become more educated and now expect Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan to establish Aga Khan Schools in Sunni dominated areas, even in places where there was resistance decades ago. To make this research more inclusive, I included participants, especially students and teachers from both Sunni and Ismaili communities.

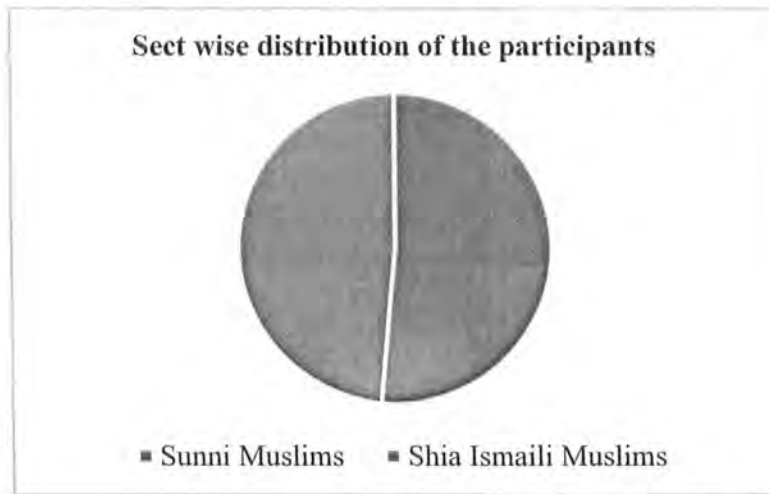


Figure 3. Sect wise distribution of the interviewed students

Above chart shows that 52% of the total who participated in this research belong to Sunni Islam, while the remaining 48% belong to Shia Ismaili Islam. The reason behind including more participants from the Sunni Islam, was to check and evaluate the quality of education being provided by Aga Khan Schools. Fortunately, the responses received from the participants were positive, and nearly all the participants from the Sunni Islam appreciated the efforts of Aga Khan Education Service. This shows that, people throughout Chitral are struggling for quality of education. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the educational organizations to improve the educational standards of their schools in Chitral and spread the chain of their schools where community wants them.

6.5 Involvement of Students in Co-Curricular Activities

Beyond academic endeavors, enhancing student's soft skills hold significance importance. Educational institutions serve as optimal platforms for nurturing these skills. However, this can only come to fruition if schools proactively introduce activities aimed at refining student's soft skills (Sami & Irfan, 2020).

Recognizing the significance of extracurricular activities undertakings, I inquired with attendees, the students and teachers, regarding the value of co-curricular engagements in student's growth. I directed my inquiries to teachers and students from both Government and Aga Khan Schools, seeking to compare and evaluate student's involvement in co-curricular activities in both of these schools.

When I asked the students about the importance of co-curricular activities in schools, 97% of the participants strongly agreed that extracurricular activities are crucial for enhancing the student's management, communication and leadership skills while 3% of the participants opposed the inclusion of extracurricular activities in schools. Remarkably, almost all of the teachers who were interviewed supported the idea of incorporating extracurricular activities within educational institutions and emphasized their significance.

When asked one of the teachers said:

"I think civic sense is the theme of education. Definitely I would encourage them to take part in any community services by giving them example from the Holy Quran, life of the Prophet (S.A.W), and other related sources."

Another teacher stressed on the importance of extracurricular activities and blamed the parents for not allowing their children to take part in co-curricular activities:

"The society of Chitral is conservative, and the mindset of the students' parents doesn't allow them to take part in extracurricular activities. But it is our mission to engage students in extracurricular activities and we will do it."

When asked, how they are engaging students in co-curricular activities? I got following responses from the teachers.

“We are encouraging our students in different societal works in order to groom their soft skills. In the morning assembly we are inculcating the goods, and try to reduce their inappropriate manners and habits.”

Another teacher responded:

“We are arranging intra and inter school competitions, with an aim to improve soft skills of the students.”

In order to compare the level up to which Government and Aga Khan Schools are engaging their students in the extracurricular activities, I asked the students as some of them have had experience of attending both the schools. Figure 4 displays the affiliation of the students with educational institutions.

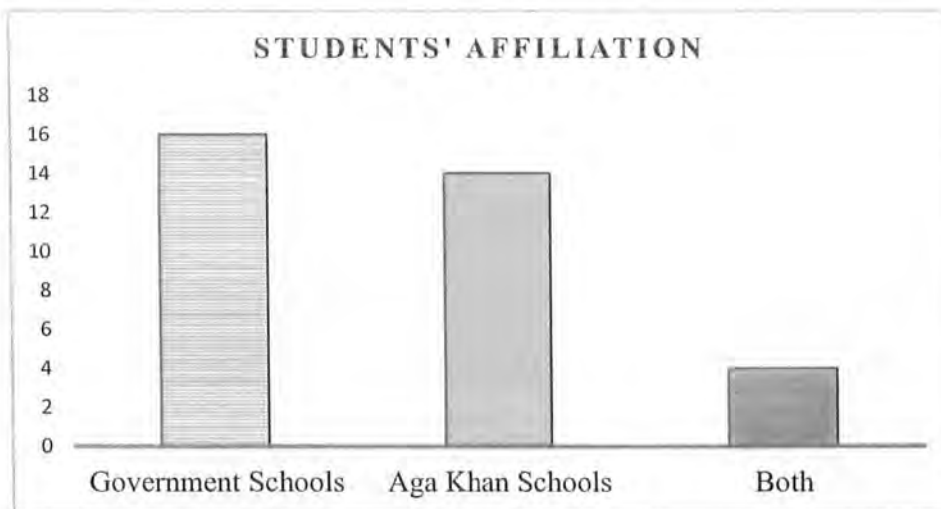


Figure 4. Student's affiliation with the educational institutions

When I asked about the comparison of Government and Aga Khan Schools in terms of engagement in social or extracurricular activities, following responses were recorded.

Participant 1 from Aga Khan School said:

“We are always encouraged to take part in the extracurricular activities, and such activities are very helpful to develop leadership skills and understand social issues.”

Participant 3 from Aga Khan School said:

“We are always being encouraged to take part in community services and even sometimes, community level projects are given to us, where we get a chance to directly interact with the community or work with them.”

Similarly, the students from Government Schools also gave positive feedbacks as follow.

Participant 1 from Government School said:

“I don’t have any personal experience but, I can suggest that balancing academic activities and community service can lead to well-rounded personnel growth and contribute positively to the society.”

Participant 2 from Government School said:

“We are often encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and community services alongside the academic activities to develop well rounded skill set and contribute to the community's wellbeing.”

Rest of the students from both Government and Aga Khan Schools gave mix responses. Some of them said that they have been engaged in co-curricular activities, while other said that they haven't. But overall, both Government and Aga Khan Schools are encouraging the students to participate in extracurricular activities and social work. And, by looking at the responses it can be observed that Aga Khan Schools put more efforts to enhance the soft skills of their students by introducing activities for them.

6.6 Quality of Education and Success Ratio

Since the goal of every educational institution is to provide high quality education. I tried to compare the quality of education in Government and Aga Khan Schools. To get better picture,

I asked the students, teachers, parents, and community leaders about the quality of education in these educational institutes, and got following responses.

When asked about the comparison in terms of quality of education, most of the teachers in favored Aga Khan Schools. One of the participants said:

“As far as I know, Aga Khan School is the best option for the people of Chitral to educate their children, because, it is providing quality education. It is only organization, which boosts and flourish the knowledge of students in every field, and enable them to compete in global level. This organization holds the ability to conduct examinations fairly, and provides best opportunities to the talented students. Furthermore, it is providing scholarships to the needy students as well.”

Apart from the above teachers, all the teachers involved in this research prioritized Aga Khan Schools in terms of high quality education, despite their affiliations with Government Schools.

However, one of the two teachers who favored Government Schools said:

“I think Government Schools have well trained and qualified teachers along with excellent infrastructure and well equipped laboratories.”

As mentioned before, most of the students who participated in this research are students or have remained students of Government Schools. I created a poll for them to rate the quality of education provided by various schools. In total, 34 students shared their opinions through the poll, and the results are shown in Figure 5. From the chart, it can be seen that the majority of the participants specifically, 62% of the students admired the quality of education in Aga Khan Schools. As mentioned earlier, most of the participants belong to Government Schools and Sunni Islam but they were in favor of Aga Khan School in terms of good quality education. Only 1 to 4% students favored Government Schools. In addition, 31% of the participants were in favor of both Government and Aga Khan Schools, while 4% of the participants rejected the quality of education provided by both Government and Aga Khan Schools.

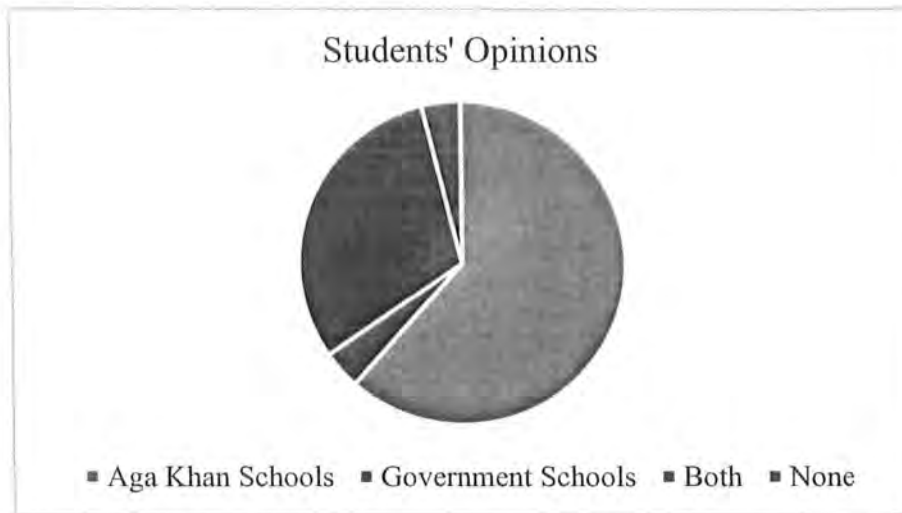


Figure 5. Student's opinions about the quality of education

Similarly, when the community leaders and parents were asked about the quality of education, most of them stated that Aga Khan Schools provide good quality education. In addition, Aga Khan Schools also emphasize the development soft skills that is why success ratio of students enrolled in Aga Khan Schools is higher than those enrolled in Government Schools. This can conclusion is supported by the fact that many students who are currently enrolled in the top Universities of Pakistan and abroad have remained students of Aga Khan Schools.

6.7 Financial Advantage of Government Schools

One of the major advantages of studying in Government Schools is that they are free of cost. The people of Chitral are financially weak, and find it challenging to afford their children's educational expenses. Therefore, Government Schools are best option for them to enroll their children, because they have well equipped labs and buildings, well trained and high qualified teachers. Bags and stationery goods are also provided to the students in Government Schools. When I asked the participants about the financial advantage of Government Schools over Aga Khan Schools majority of the participants, especially parents and community leaders expressed their appreciation for the free of cost education offered by the Government, and requested Aga

Khan Education Service Pakistan to reduce educational fee of the students in Chitral by looking at their income and socio-economic condition. However, one of the community leader said:

"I don't think that financial advantage matters, because, after six years of primary schooling in Government Schools, most of the kids are unable to read and write. In comparison majority of the students of Aga Khan Schools are much better and there is fee concession for the deserving kids."

Furthermore, majority of the teachers and students preferred Aga Khan Schools despite their high tuition fee.

6.8 Embracing Diversity

Diversity and inclusion are the vital pillars of any society. Every community should recognize the value of diversity and inclusivity, these elements hold a pivotal role in fostering unity among individuals and cultivating harmonious co-existence. People with different cultural and religious backgrounds should be encouraged and given freedom to practice their cultural traditions, customs and religious obligations. Unfortunately, a recent horrible incident occurred in Pakistan in the name of religion. A Sri Lankan citizen was tragically set ablaze by a mob in Sialkot, in addition to incidents like the Mashal Khan and Jaranwala incidents. These events highlight that some individuals in our society have turned to violence and lack an understanding of diversity, pluralism, and inclusivity. It is important to raise awareness and consciousness among individuals to pave the way for united and comprehensive progress.

Hence, instilling a strong comprehension of diversity and inclusion in children right from an early age is crucial. And educational institutes provide the best platform to achieve that. I asked questions from the teacher of both Government and Aga Khan Schools, that how they are fostering the understanding of diversity and inclusion in children. Luckily almost all the teachers of both schools responded in favor of diversity and inclusion. One of the teachers from Government School said:

“The environment in Government Schools is totally diverse and pluralistic, and we are happy to have students from different cultural and religious backgrounds.”

Similarly, a teacher from Aga Khan School told the same thing:

“In our school, there are people from different social groups, race, and religious backgrounds that make its environment very diverse and pluralistic. Due to this type of diversity, our institute enables teachers and students to socialize themselves, promote and preserve their own identities.”

For Aga Khan Schools, Shah Karim Al-Hussaini (Aga Khan IV), the head of AKDN, has addressed many times, emphasizing on the importance of diversity and pluralism. In those speeches, Aga Khan IV has urged all the institutions of AKDN including AKES to treat all people equally irrespective of their color, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. That’s the reason, there won’t be any kind of discrimination in Aga Khan Schools. This is what I myself have experienced because I was a student at Aga Khan School. Moreover, Government Schools also appreciate the diversity and pluralism in their institution, and it is a sign of bright future.

6.9 Religious Influence in the Educational Institutions

This is one of the important objective of this research work. Since Shah Karim Al-Hussaini (Aga Khan IV) is the 49th hereditary Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslims, and he is the head of AKDN. Aga Khan Schools are being managed by Aga Khan Education Service (AKES), a sub-organization of AKDN. Therefore, I was more interested to ask about the religious influence of Shia Ismailism on the Sunni students enrolled in Aga Khan Schools. To get better results, I interviewed more Sunni students than Shia Ismaili students. I am delighted to present the findings that 100% of the students responded with never having experienced or heard of any form of religious discrimination within educational institutions in Chitral, Pakistan. Especially the Sunni students who have remained part of or still part of Aga Khan Schools said that they have never felt such discrimination in Aga Khan Schools. This shows that Aga Khan School’s

administration follow the guidance of Aga Khan IV, the head of AKDN, by embracing diversity and offering equal opportunities to people regardless of their religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Since the top executives of the AKDN's organizations are led by either Sunni Muslim or Shia Asna Ashri Muslims. The current CEO of Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan, Mr. Akhtar Iqbal belongs to Chitral and he is a Sunni Muslim. Similarly, many principals and teachers in Aga Khan Schools belong to Sunni Muslim sect. The current principal of Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Seenlasht Chitral is also a Sunni Muslim. I also conducted interviews with Sunni teachers who are presently teaching in Aga Khan Schools regarding any religious discrimination or influence within those schools. They expressed that their goal is to offer equal opportunities to all students, regardless of their religious or economic backgrounds. One of the teachers said:

"No, I haven't seen or heard about any kind of discrimination, rather the utmost priorities of Aga Khan Schools are to bring reforms by vanishing such biased elements from the society."

Similarly, I asked the community members and parents about religious discrimination or influence in either Government or Aga Khan Schools. All the participant who participated in the interview said that they haven't heard about any kind of religious discrimination in any of these schools. This shows that both schools are very much open for the people from various backgrounds.

6.10 Benefits of Mutual Collaboration between Government and Aga Khan Educational Institutions

Although, both Government and Aga Khan Schools are rendering tremendous services to educate the people of Chitral separately. Apart from these two educational institutions, other private schools have also played significant role in improving the socio-economic conditions

of the people of Chitral by providing them education. However, Government of Pakistan and the Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan are the two main educational organizations there. Since, Government has good resources and Aga Khan Education Service has good experience of creating inclusive educational environment in the school therefore, a mutual collaboration between them could be very beneficial for the people of Chitral. I asked the participants if they are in favor of mutual collaboration, and surprisingly almost all the interviewees strongly supported the idea. Currently, most of the Aga Khan Schools are located in the Shia Ismaili Muslim majority areas. I asked the students, mostly those who belong to Sunni Islam if they want an expansion of Aga Khan Schools in other areas of Chitral. Figure 6 displays the responses of the participants regarding the collaboration between Government educational institutions and Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKESP), and expansion of Aga Khan Schools all across Chitral.

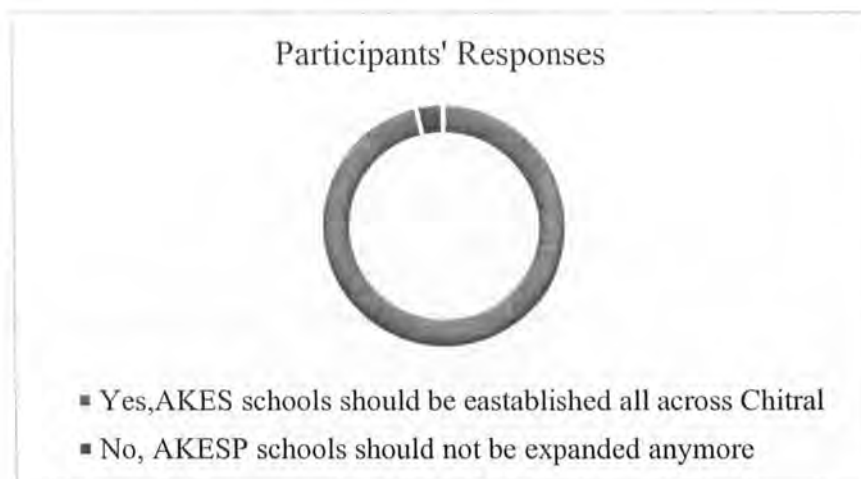


Figure 6. Participants' responses regarding the collaboration between Government and AKES and expansion of Aga Khan Schools all across Chitral

Most of the above participants belong to Sunni Muslim community and they want AKESP to establish their school in Sunni dominated areas as well. Out of 28 people who participated in the voting, 27 people were in favor of expansion, and only one person was against the expansion of Aga Khan Schools all across Chitral. One of the teachers said:

"What a great idea is the mutual collaboration between Government and Aga Khan Schools. Yes of course, it will give a lot a lot of benefits to the student of Chitral. By mutual collaboration, they will share the best standard quality of course contents, human resources, and other facilities to provide best education to the students."

The participants from all the four categories supported the idea of mutual collaboration between Government educational institutions and Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan in order to provide best quality education to the people of Chitral at their door step.

6.11 Observations from my Personal Visit to Government and Aga Khan Schools

I have personally visited both Government and Aga Khan Schools, and I observed that both institutions have good infrastructure. However, due to lack of rooms both schools accommodate two classes in a single classroom.

One of the major differences between the two is the presence of a multimedia system in Aga Khan Schools, which improves the learning experience of students. In contrast, Government Schools lack such multimedia facilities. The teachers in Aga Khan School explained that children show interests in videos and tend to learn more through it.

Another good feature in Aga Khan Schools is the provision of separate rooms for playgroup and class one students, equipped with a variety of toys and learning materials. However, Government Schools do not offer similar dedicated spaces or resources for these young learners.

In terms of supplies, Aga Khan Schools require students to bring their own stationery, whereas Government Schools provide free bags and stationery items to their students.

I recently visited the Aga Khan School, where I came to know that they have a total of 126 students and six teachers. In contrast, a Government School in the same village has only 29

students and two teachers. During my visit, the staff at Aga Khan School showed satisfaction with the number of teachers they have. However, in the Government School, the teacher expressed dissatisfaction with the staff shortage.

A Government School teacher mentioned that we have (PTC) Parent Teacher Council which consists of 7 members, one of whom is female. However, he further added that committee does not show much interest.

I asked the same question about community engagement in Government School to a Government School teacher. He mentioned that teachers alone cannot achieve much; cooperation from parents is essential. We invite parents, but they often show limited interest because they don't contribute financially, and I think that this lack of financial involvement affects their level of engagement. In contrast a teacher at Aga Khan School narrated about regular monthly meetings of community leaders and parents.

During my visits to schools, a teacher at an Aga Khan School told me that if a staff member is ill or on leave for a valid reason, which includes illness or maternity leave, they are provided with a substitute. However, when I asked about this at a Government School, I was told that such provisions are not available.

When I asked about religious influence in Aga Khan Schools from a Government School teacher he told me that although some people are affiliated with Aga Khan Schools, it is not always the case. People prioritize Aga Khan Schools because of the quality of education they offer.

A Government School teacher informed me about significant difference that impacts the quality of education in both schools: Aga Khan Schools mostly appoint local teachers, whereas this is rare in Government Schools.

As I have previously discussed, religion played a significant role in educating people in the early chapters of history. In the modern period, religious leaders, including Shia Ismaili Imam

Prince Karim Khan, began to play an important role in educating people. My main focus is on Prince Karim Khan and his contributions to the people of Chitral through AKES,P (Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan). Community leaders in Upper Chitral are taking interest in AKES,P schools because people are affiliated with it.

I asked one of the senior teachers at the Aga Khan School that AKES,P appoints teachers then trains them when a Government job is offered they leave. Is there any policy for this or how do you feel about it? Isn't it a disadvantage for your school?

He replied that the vision of AKDN is to provide opportunity to its employees. There are four main aspects of AKDN, which include goal, target, objective, mission and vision

An income observer visits the homes of Aga Khan School students to assess their home condition and financial status. Scholarships and fee concession are then determined based on this assessment. In Broke, Upper Chitral, the visitor is female, and she is provided with a little amount by social welfare department for her visit. In contrast Government Schools are free of cost for everyone and in addition students of class 9th and 10th are given small amount of stipend.

In summary, the Aga Khan School, with a larger student population, seems content with their teacher-to-student ratio, while the Government School, with fewer students, faces challenges due to a lower number of staff members.

6.12 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the findings of my research work. The findings are related to different topics. I have mentioned that how difficult it was in the beginning to motivate people to send their children to the schools, especially female children. I have also discussed the changes appeared in the behavior of the community members towards education. Similarly, all the participants including students, teachers, parents, and community leaders agreed on the importance of engaging community members in the educational matters to improve the overall

quality of education. Furthermore, I have also discussed the importance of co-curricular activities in improving the soft skills of the students. According to the majority of the participants, quality of education in Aga Khan Schools is much better than other schools in Chitral including Government Schools. Government Schools are more preferable for the people when education is seen in terms of financial lens. Fortunately, there is no discrimination in both Government and Aga Khan Schools on the basis of culture, religion, and financial status. Currently majority of the Aga Khan Schools are located in Shia Ismaili majority areas, and the people of Sunni dominated areas also want AKESP to establish schools in their areas as well. Finally, the people of Chitral are in favor of mutual collaboration between Government and Aga Khan Schools.

Conclusion

Different cultures and traditions have frequently presented challenges to the progress of education. However, local communities or community leaders have played a crucial role in dismantling these cultural and religious barriers, encouraging individuals to provide an education to their children. The people of Chitral lacked educational facilities or opportunities during the rule of Raees and Katoor dynasties. These dynasties inhibited the access of ordinary citizen to education due to their apprehension that an educated populace in Chitral might initiate movements for their rights, potentially challenging dominion. Despite the decline of control of Katoor family on the administrative matters of Chitral with the advent of British era in the Subcontinent, and its eventual disappearance after the creation of Pakistan, the common people of Chitral still exhibited some reluctance to fully embrace education, particularly when it came to girl's education, owing to cultural obstacles. The local community leaders highly cooperated with Government educational institutions and Aga Khan Education Service in establishing schools and motivating people to educate their children. The literacy rate in Chitral, particularly women literacy rate increased significantly after the establishment of Aga Khan Schools in 1980s. This research mainly focused on identifying the quality of education in Government and Aga Khan Schools, examining the steps taken by these institutions to engage community members in educational matters, and investigating any religious influence or discrimination within these educational institutions. After conducting interviews from students, teachers, and parents, it was concluded that quality of education in Aga Khan Schools is better than the quality of education in Government Schools. In addition, Aga Khan Schools also engage students in extracurricular activities in order to improve their soft skills and create sense of community works in them. Both Government and Aga Khan Schools are also engaging parents and community members frequently in the educational matters. The course contents of Aga Khan Schools are upgraded and according to the latest global editions, while the quality of course contents in Government Schools lack timely revision and up gradation. Furthermore,

the majority of the students whom I interviewed belong to the Sunni sect of Islam, and some of them have also been a part of Aga Khan Schools. I interviewed the participants regarding religious influence or discrimination within Government or Aga Khan Schools. The majority of them replied that they had never encountered such situations and were unaware of any such incidents. Both schools are working towards addressing the socioeconomic conditions of the people in Chitral by offering free education.

Government Schools are the preferred choice when it comes to resources and amenities. Many Government Schools own well-equipped laboratories with advanced equipment and computer facilities. Additionally, high qualified teachers are selected through rigorous testing process. The most significant benefit of Government School is the provision of free education. In Chitral, where majority of population faces financial constraints, Government Schools serve as the ideal option for educating their children, as they can't afford the tuition fees of Aga Khan Schools or any other private educational institutions.

In addition, both Government and Aga Khan Schools appreciate cultural and religious diversity, and give equal opportunities to their students, irrespective of their cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds. Furthermore, most of the Aga Khan Schools are located in Shia Ismaili dominated areas, and the people of Sunni dominated areas also want Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan to establish schools in their areas as well. This is a huge improvement and shows that now people have realized the importance of education and they are ready to cooperate with all the organizations which are providing best quality education to the people. In addition, I asked the participants, if they are in favor of mutual collaboration between Aga Khan Education Service and Government. Surprisingly, all the participants including students, teachers, parents, and community leaders highly supported the idea and suggested that such collaboration will be very helpful to improve the overall educational

environment of Chitral. If any kind of such collaboration is established, then the people of Chitral will get high-quality education at their door steps.

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