

PASHTO POETRY: A SOCIO-POETIC LENS ON CULTURE, HISTORY, AND POLITICS



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PASHTO POETRY: A SOCIO-POETIC LENS ON CULTURE, HISTORY, AND POLITICS



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	Awami National Party
AYP	Awakened Youth Party
CRA-N	Community Resilience Activity- North
FCR	Frontier Crime Regulations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
IJT	Islami Jammiat Talba
IOM	International Organization of Migration
JUI	Jammiat Ullama e Islam
KHAL	Khwaindo Adabi Lakhkar
KKM	Khudai Khidmatgar Movement
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MMA	Mutahida Majlis e Amal
NGOs	Non-government Organizations
NWFP	Northwest Frontier Province
PSB	Provincial Broadcasting Station
PML-N	Pakistani Muslim League- Nawaz
PSF	Pakhtun Students Federation
PTI	Pakistan Tehrik Insaf
PTM	Pakhtun Tahafuz Movement
UAE	United Arab Emirates

ABSTRACT

This dissertation, titled “Pashto Poetry: A Socio-Poetic Lens on Culture, History, and Politics,” offers a unique perspective on Pashto poetry’s portrayal of Pakhtun culture, history, and politics. It examines the role of poetry in identifying issues and challenges and proposing hybrid solutions based on scientific and indigenous knowledge. The socio-poetic aspect in Pashto poetry, which emerged in the 20th century during anti-colonization movements, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is a key focus. The 20th-century Pashto poetry is rich with themes of ethno-poetics, exploring the cultural identity construction of Pakhtuns and their relations with neighboring ethnicities and dynastic rulers from the 16th century. This dissertation addresses the emergence of Pashto poetry as ethno-poetics and its transformation into socio-poetics in the 20th century, the articulation of people’s issues through poetry, and how socio-poetic themes of Pashto poetry create an alternative narrative on culture, history, and politics of the Pakhtuns. This ‘alternative narrative’ refers to the unique perspectives and interpretations of cultural, historical, and political events presented in Pashto poetry, which often differ from mainstream narratives. The findings of this dissertation are based on twenty-six in-depth interviews, four focus group discussions, informal discussions, and observations conducted in cultural spaces, both formal and informal places, in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The socio-poetics lens was employed to understand ethno- and socio-poetics themes in Pashto poetry that function as an alternative medium of awareness and dissemination of knowledge about Pakhtuns’ culture, history, and politics.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the first week of June 2016, I encountered a protest spearheaded by the ‘Pakhtun Progressive Writers,’ a literary society, staged in front of the Peshawar Press Club¹. The rally was organized in response to the depiction of Kalu Khan, a prominent Yousafzai chieftain and warrior of the late 16th century, as a dacoit and robber and the Mughal Emperor Akbar as a hero in the lesson titled ‘The Snare’ from the 9th-grade English textbook published by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board, 2016). The demonstrators contested this representation, asserting that Kalu Khan should be recognized not as a criminal but as a valiant figure resisting the Mughal’s incursions to subjugate Pakhtuns (Khan, 2016). This mobilization reflected a broader pattern of resistance, with similar protests, seminars, and literary gatherings occurring throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, organized by literary societies and various political and social organizations. The collective advocacy led to the textbook board’s decision to expunge the contested lesson from the curriculum (Orakzai, 2016). This historical context of Pakhtun identity is crucial in understanding the socio-poetic significance of Pashto² poetry.

¹ Pakhtun is also pronounced as Pashtun in soft variety of Pashto language. In this case, I have used the word Pakhtun.

² Pashto is also pronounced as Pakhtu or Pakhto in hard variety of Pashto language. Further, it has two meanings; one is the language that Pakhtuns speak, while the other is code or the way of life. In this case, I have used the word Pashto for language while the word Pakhto for way of life.

This broader pattern operates through the Pakhtun intelligentsia, which comprises political and social activists, poets, writers, academicians, intellectuals, artists, and musicians. It addresses various issues and challenges in Pakhtun society, such as the impact of militancy, the struggle for self-determination, and the environmental crisis. It counters militancy by identifying its roots and effects while constructing an alternative narrative centered on peace, nonviolence, and resilience. Additionally, it advocates for self-determination, focusing on land ownership and identity, as well as equality in terms of class and gender. Furthermore, it addresses the environmental crisis by identifying its recent effects and sensitizes people to preserve the environment by relating environmental calamities and crises with self-determination.

In the context described above, the profound cultural significance of Pashto poetry within the broader pattern of Pakhtuns' struggle is a fascinating subject. Its themes, deeply rooted in the rich culture, history, and politics of Pakhtuns, play a unique and influential role in raising awareness about societal issues and challenges. My observations of the popularity of Pashto poetry in the broader pattern of struggle led me to several anthropological questions: what are the reasons behind its popularity and its unique role in Pakhtun society, particularly among the Pakhtun intelligentsia? How does Pashto poetry function in society? What insights does Pashto poetry offer on the culture, history, and politics of Pakhtuns, and where does its inspiration stem from? How does Pashto poetry identify and address the issues and challenges of Pakhtuns, and what solutions does it propose?

Generally, the lack of authentic sources in Pashto on Pakhtuns' culture, history, and politics is lamented, ignoring Pashto poetry as a valuable anthropological resource. From an anthropological perspective, a socio-poetic study of Pashto poetry could challenge the dominant culture, political elites, politics, the state, hegemonic

structures, and academic works on Pakhtuns that are part of the broader biased and typical representation of Pakhtuns. This is what inspired me to conduct an anthropological study on Pashto poetry as to how it functions as a form of awareness, the vehicle of meaning, and contributes to the political and social consciousness of the people, providing a valuable lens on culture, history, and politics that have remained contested due to the so-called scarcity of sources on Pakhtuns in Pashto.

As I embarked on my fieldwork and examined the literature on Pashto poetry, I was struck by the evolution and transformation of the themes of Pashto poetry. These themes, which revolve around various cultural repertoires, have emerged through multiple periods of Pashto poetry. This led me to divide my work into two phases: the first phase, which begins in the mid-16th century and culminates in the late 19th century, and the second phase, which commences in the first half of the 20th century and continues. Furthermore, I have analyzed the poetry of the first phase within the framework of ethno-poetics and the poetry of the second within the framework of socio-poetics. This study focuses on the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics and its application in Pakhtun society as a source of political and social consciousness and as an alternative source of culture, history, and politics, thereby highlighting the evolution and change in Pashto poetry.

This research primarily focuses on the socio-poetics of Pashto poetry, which plays a crucial role in various cultural spaces across Pakhtun society. Before delving into socio-poetics, this study briefly traces the emergence of Pashto poetry as ethno-poetics, historicizing socio-poetic themes and cultural repertoires. It further investigates the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics, which gives rise to new themes through the recollection and (re)imagination of ethno-poetic themes and cultural repertoires. Against this backdrop, I analyzed how socio-

poetics in Pashto poetry brings forth new themes: independence, nonviolence, unity, integration, equality of gender and class, and self-determination. This study underscores the crucial role of Pashto poetry in identifying the roots, causes, and effects of societal issues and challenges, suggesting various solutions, fostering a sense of social responsibility, and engaging the audience's interest.

1.2 The Problem

The Pakhtun region has always remained a gateway between Central and East Asia and South Asia. Outsiders at different times came to trade or conquer the fertile (Indian) subcontinent by crossing the Pakhtun region (Khan, 1983). In the case of conquering India, the outsiders face resistance from Pakhtuns throughout history. This history of invasions and resistance has influenced the literature on culture, history, politics, and other aspects of Pakhtuns and their society. However, the literature produced by others has misrepresented Pakhtuns and stereotyped them with various titles such as barbarians and uncivilized. This is because Pakhtuns remained strong opponents to the invaders, as in the case of the Mughals (Manchanda, 2018). Similar is the case with colonial writings as Shah et al., in their article, argues that on the one hand, Pakhtuns were depicted as ‘animals, unruly, insular, savages, uncivilized, childlike, barbarians and treacherous.’ On the other hand, they were characterized by a good sense of humor, bravery, and excellent fighting skills (Shah, 2022). There are two reasons for the colonial constructions of Pakhtuns: one reason was to project the superior British colonial self and to appropriate them in the colonial imagination, and the second reason was that Pakhtuns were seen through the courtly literature of Mughals, where Pakhtuns are depicted with various harmful tropes and stereotypes (Manchanda, 2018). Similarly, Nile Green (2016) argues in his edited book *Afghan History through Afghan Eyes* that Afghan history is predominantly seen through

Persian sources, whether produced in Afghanistan or India, and it is due to the scarcity of sources in Pashto. The same approach was adopted in the post-colonial period, particularly during the Jihad project in Afghanistan and later in the case of post-9/11 literature, where Pakhtun culture, history, and politics are seen through the aforementioned sources. However, no effort has been made to study Pakhtuns in the light of their written sources, particularly poetry. Pashto poetry remains the focus of literary studies, confined to analyzing genres, forms, and stylistics. However, the socio-poetic side has been ignored in the social sciences and literary studies, mainly works of/on Pashto literature. This research is designed to investigate socio-poetics in Pashto poetry. As socio-poetics in Pashto poetry has taken inspiration from the ethno-poetic period, the research initially investigates the emergence of Pashto poetry as ethno-poetics that revolves around the themes of cultural repertoires of self-construction in response to outsiders and invaders, such as Mughals, Sikhs and Britishers. The research further investigates the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics and how the ethno-poetics themes and cultural repertoires were utilized in the themes of socio-poetics inspired by regional and international political scenarios that transformed poetry from individual poets to cultural spaces and social poetics and introduced various themes that work for the promotion of a collective consciousness to counter social issues and challenges such as disunity, enmities, illiteracy and inequality in terms of class and gender, and to counter external challenges such as colonialism and its aftershocks. The research also investigates cultural spaces borne out of socio-poetics, increased literacy, and advancement of communication that works to evaluate, disseminate, and consume poetry in Pakhtun society. The prime focus of this research is to analyze how socio-poetic themes in Pashto poetry reflect culture, history, and politics and identify the

roots, causes, and effects of issues and challenges, suggesting alternative solutions for these issues and challenges.

1.3 Objectives

1. To investigate the emergence of Pashto poetry as ethno-poetics
2. To explore Pashto poetry's transformation from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics
3. To identify commonalities and differences and continuation of cultural repertoires in ethno- poetic period and their articulation in socio-poetics
4. To understand the influence of socio-poetic conditions in creating cultural spaces for evaluation, dissemination, and consumption of Pashto poetry.
5. To examine how Pashto poetry serves as a tool for identifying, interpreting, and addressing the social and cultural issues faced by Pakhtuns and the indigenous solutions proposed.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This dissertation employs two related concepts, ethno- and socio poetics, as a conceptual framework for analysis. The ethno-poetics lens primarily deals with the study of non-Western poetry. It locates and situates the *emic* understanding of the ethnic group regarding their contextual universe and society (Wynter, 1976; McKittrick, 2015; Bechtold, 2019). In contrast, socio-poetics has historically dealt with Western poetry, focusing more on the content of poetry. In socio-poetics, the poets not only produce poetry about themselves but also express the social, political, and economic conditions of the societies in which they live. This production of poetry reflects society as a whole and mirrors what poets see and observe within society. Socio-poetics often examines historical, political, and cultural factors influencing poets' and authors' literary works (Odysseos, 2023; Bhattacharya, 1983). The socio-

poetics or social poetic research approach draws heavily from the pioneer work in history, sometimes referred to as “history from below” or “people’s history or social history.” In their works, poets who address people and societal issues are known as social poets. Socio-poetics is a toolbox applicable to various forms of literature and poetry, mainly where the issues of ordinary people, surroundings, and emerging challenges are discussed and portrayed in mimesis.

1.4.1 Operationalization of Theoretical Framework

The Pashto script emerged in the mid-16th century in the Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, formerly known as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), during the Mughal reign in India and Pakhtun-dominated areas. During this period, Sher Shah Suri, a Pakhtun’s reign, was overthrown, and his servants and officials faced persecution from Mughal emperors. Many noble Pakhtuns were prosecuted, imprisoned, exiled, or fled from the Indian mainland to tribal areas under the Mughal control, but the writ of control was loose.

The Sufi-religious Roshanite movement emerged in response, opposing the Mughals and their representatives in Pakhtun-dominated areas. This movement spurred literary awareness among Pakhtuns, with its leaders producing highly theological text and emphasizing Pakhtun identity. These writings distinguished Pakhtuns culturally, politically, and linguistically from Mughals, focusing on Pakhtun leaders' upright, self-reliant character grounded in religious and Pakhtun values. In this sense, the Islamic framework and Pakhtun-centered values created a dichotomy of “us” (Pakhtuns) versus “them” (Mughal).

This dichotomy was further elaborated in Khushhal Khattak's and his contemporaries' poetry, where the *khpal* (ownself/ us/ Pakhtun) versus *prady* (foreign/other/Mughal) themes emerged prominently. The Roshanites and Khattak eras defined Pakhtun’s

character and relations with others. They also promoted Sufi thoughts in poetry and prose, which were selectively adopted by the Rehman Baba and Hamid Baba schools of thought. These schools of thought emphasized Sufism, mysticism, and the governance of the Mughals, often portraying delicate themes of love and Pakhtun identity.

In their poetries, one can discern the idealized Pakhtun “*Afghan*” character and the sociopolitical conditions of Pakhtuns under Mughal rule. This dissertation analyzes these early periods of Pashto poetry through an ethno-poetics lens. In contrast, the poetry of the 20th and 21st centuries are analyzed through a socio-poetic lens, as colonization introduced progressive and retrogressive developments in Pakhtun society. On the one hand, colonization brought infrastructure development, literary expansion to ordinary people, and increased poetry production. On the other hand, it introduced permanent retrogressive mechanisms, disrupting the egalitarian organization of tribal society. These changes led to more significant disparities in gender relations, wealth distribution, land ownership, and curtailment of freedom of movement and expression.

Such oppression fostered a rich poetic tradition that embraced new themes and social spaces while continuing classical ideologies and new globalized social and political thoughts. This period also transformed Pashto poetry along modern lines, emphasizing form and content. It also provided space for social poets to address external oppression and raise awareness about social injustice, human rights, women’s rights, economic subjugation, and the struggle against political, social, and economic subjugation. Furthermore, these poetries and poets advocated for the right to self-determination and political and economic rights within the constitutional and legal framework of the postcolonial state of Pakistan.

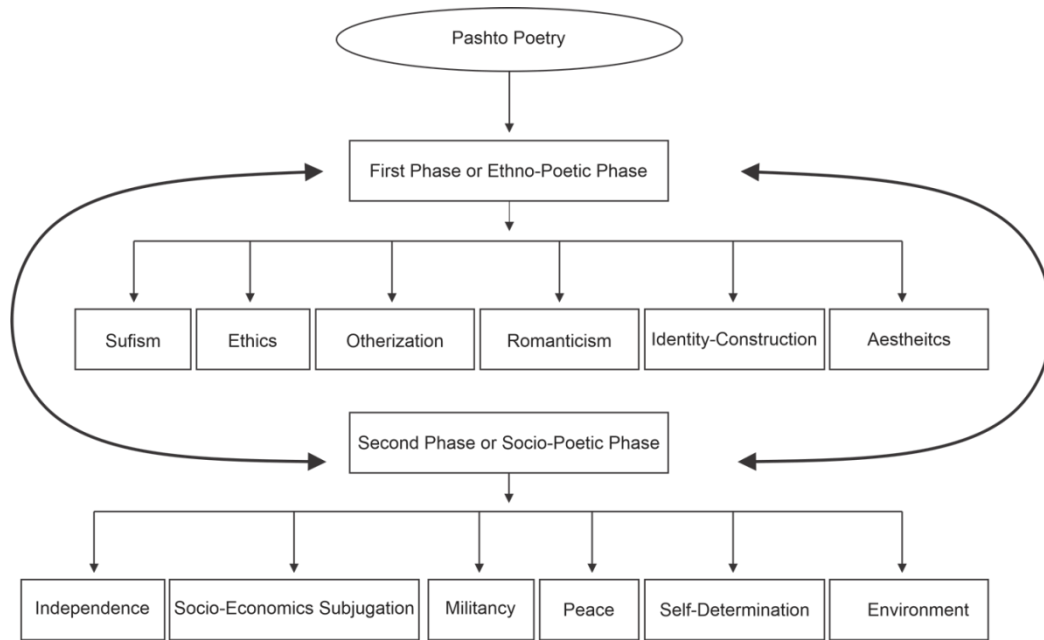


Figure 1.1. Chart showing themes of ethno-poetics and socio-poetics.

1.5 Synthesizing

The literature produced in prose and poetry of the Pashto language can be divided into two sections. The first section, or the emergence of Pashto prose and poetry in written literature, concerns society's socio-poetics. The first section, or the emergence of Pashto poetry, was in the formation and transformation phase, where the poets and writers produced literature to construct themselves or the identity of Pakhtun and their language. This part can be exclusively studied by application of ethno-poetics because it discusses only Pashto and Pakhtun mainly in its construction and discussion. Therefore, it is suitable to combine ethno-poetics and socio-poetics to study and research Pashto poetry in the historical context as the emergence of Pashto poetry and transformation from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics to discuss regional and global issues of the people in poetry.

1.6 Research Questions of the Study

1. How has Pashto poetry emerged as ethno-poetics and constructed the Pakhtun identity?
2. How was Pashto poetry transformed from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics, and how did it contextualize ethno-poetics?
3. How did socio-poetics in Pashto poetry and communication bring cultural spaces that work for evaluating, disseminating, and consuming poetry?
4. How did socio-poetic poetry in Pashto create alternative avenues for expressing cultural repertoires, political ideologies, and struggle?
5. How is socio-poetic poetry in Pashto used as a communication medium to sensitize common masses about socio-economic, socio-political, and ecological issues and solutions to them?

1.7 Scope of the Study

Literature on Pakhtuns spans several centuries; however, as Green (2016) notes, much of this work has been predominantly shaped by Persian sources due to the historical scarcity of sources in Pashto. In the post-colonial context, literature about the Pakhtuns often relied on English-language sources, which, in turn, was influenced by Persian traditions. This dissertation challenges the presumption of lack of Pashto sources. I argue that Pashto poetry is a rich medium of knowledge generation. The study aims to contribute to the anthropological field by examining Pashto poetry as a key form of social and political discourse within the Pakhtun ethnic group along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Using ethno- and socio-poetics approaches, this dissertation explores how Pashto poetry serves as a lens for understanding Pakhtun culture, history, politics, and the community's social challenges, offering an alternative perspective to the existing literature on Pakhtun identity and historical

dynamics. The findings of this study have implications for anthropology, sociology, history, and political science in understanding the historical development of Pakhtun society through Pakhtuns' narratives about self and others. Moreover, the research provides valuable insights for development organizations seeking to address social issues, challenges, and solutions through the lens of art and poetry.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

While this study aims to analyze ethno- and socio-poetics in Pashto poetry, it has certain limitations. First, due to the focus on socio-poetic themes, poetry emerging in *mushairay* (poetry recitals, plural) on themes of aesthetics and romanticism is excluded from detailed analysis. However, it is analyzed in case it overlaps with socio-poetic themes. Moreover, data for this research is collected through cultural spaces where women have less involvement than men. Therefore, women's part is less than that of men. However, I have interviewed two poetesses and attended two women-only *mushairay* and a literary gathering. Lastly, my government employment as a deputy manager of language and literature also created hindrances for me during fieldwork; in some of the cases, I felt that people avoided talking on specific topics, such as militancy or confrontation with the state that are considered sensitive topics and could potentially create issues for them. However, I was aware of the probable bias in my data collection due to my government affiliation or people's fear of discussing specific topics. To cope with this, I employed various strategies outlined in the methodology chapter about minimizing the influences and biases, but overall, the dissertation's findings can be understood in the context of *mushairay* and theoretical assumptions of the study.

1.9 Outline of the Chapters

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to this dissertation. It begins with a detailed background on the topic, outlining the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inform the study. Additionally, the chapter provides a brief overview of existing knowledge about the Pakhtuns and Pashto poetry, highlighting how foreign writers have framed and depicted these subjects while addressing the marginalization of indigenous narratives. This section of the dissertation also presents the research problem and clearly articulates the study's main objectives.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review and outlines the theoretical framework for the study. It begins with a discussion of poetry, culture, language, and discourse, establishing the foundational concepts for the analysis. The chapter also highlights the social dimensions of poetry, emphasizing the importance of an ethnographic approach to studying poetry to investigate and explore the social realities embedded within it. Further, the chapter reviews early work in ethno-poetics, offering a critique of these initial studies. It then explores how critiques of Western assumptions about ethno-poetics have opened space for studying ethnic minorities through their poetic expressions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of socio-poetics, examining how this framework allows scholars to explore the meanings within poetry and its broader significance. Additionally, it highlights how socio-poetic perspectives provide alternative approaches to studying poetry, particularly by amplifying voices that challenge hegemonic and culturally dominant narratives.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology employed for data collection and analysis, particularly emphasizing ethnographic methods throughout the research process. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm and elaborates on epistemology, research methods, and the research design for the study. It then

discusses and justifies the research techniques and tools used for collecting data and the process of collecting, selecting, and translating poetry. Finally, it discusses and justifies the techniques used to analyze the collected data.

Chapter 4 focuses on the locale of the study. It begins with a detailed examination of the geography, natural and cultural heritage, history, and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The chapter then justifies the selection of Peshawar as the study's locale, discussing its significance as a provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Additionally, the chapter traces the transformation of Peshawar from its historical identity as the “city of flowers” to its contemporary reputation as the “city of militancy and unplanned development.” It also explores the cultural diversity of Peshawar, including the various languages spoken, food patterns, clothing traditions, and religious practices. Finally, the chapter addresses the economic landscape, social organizations, and political dynamics that shape the city.

Chapter 5 examines the socio-political context of Pakhtun culture and society that contributed to the emergence of Pashto poetry as ethno-poetics. It discusses how poetry and its themes and cultural repertoires evolved historically, influenced by various socio-political forces over time and space. The chapter explores different periods of Pashto poetry, analyzing the key themes that defined them. It provides a brief analysis of the first phase of Pashto poetry, which emerged in response to the dominance of Persian as the Mughal court language and poetic tradition. The chapter also explores how Pashto poetry contributed to the process of “othering” by constructing the dichotomy of *khpal* versus *prady*, thereby shaping the ethnic identity of the Pakhtuns.

Chapter 6 examines the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics. It begins with a detailed discussion of the socio-economic and political

background of Pakhtun society during British colonization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The socio-political conditions of this period gave rise to the second phase of Pashto poetry. This phase marked a shift from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics, or *maqsadi shairi* (poetry with purpose), as literati refer to it. The socio-poetic themes revolving around cultural repertoires taken from phase one emerged during this phase and played a crucial role in identifying social issues, challenges, and potential solutions. The chapter also provides a brief analysis of socio-poetic themes in the first half of the 20th century, which contributed to the political and social consciousness of the Pakhtuns. Additionally, the chapter discusses the socio-political landscape in the post-partition era. It offers a brief analysis of socio-poetic themes influenced by the socio-political conditions of Pakhtun society.

Chapter 7 examines cultural spaces organized in formal and informal settings that emerged in the 20th century due to the rise of socio-poetics, increased literacy, and improved communication. These spaces played a key role in evaluating, disseminating, and consuming Pashto poetry. The chapter introduces these spaces and then explores how they function within formal and informal contexts. It discusses literary societies, a key institution in Pashto poetry, and examines the meetings and gatherings they organize as cultural spaces for evaluating, learning, and sharing poetry and related knowledge. The chapter also covers seminars, conferences, literary festivals, and study circles as platforms for poets and the general public to engage with poetry. Additionally, it looks at the tradition of *mushaira* (poetry recital, singular), including its history, purpose, and role in disseminating poetry among the Pakhtuns. Finally, the chapter explores cultural spaces like music, political gatherings, and protests as venues for the consumption of poetry.

Chapter 8 presents a thematic analysis of 21st century's Pashto poetry performed in cultural spaces. It begins with discussing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's socio-political conditions, highlighting key issues and challenges. The chapter then analyzes how socio-poetic themes in 21st century's Pashto poetry address these issues and propose solutions. The chapter then focuses on how poetry themes identify the roots of militancy and its impact on people, society, culture, and art. It also explores how poetry constructs an alternative narrative of peace to counter militancy. The chapter further examines themes of *khpalwaki* (self-determination) in Pashto poetry, particularly concerning autonomy over land and identity. It also analyzes poetry's treatment of marginalized groups, including issues of class and gender. The chapter also explores environmental themes in Pashto poetry, analyzing the causes and effects of environmental changes and proposing solutions.

Chapter 9 offers the final synthesis of the dissertation, drawing together the key findings and insights from the study and situating them within the broader anthropological context.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE

REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on poetry, including production, purpose, and historiography, to better understand the past and the construction of culture, history, and politics. The chapter begins by briefly discussing the concept of poetry, language, and language discourse in academic scholarship, situating it within an anthropological lens throughout history. The importance of poetry in modern academic literature cannot be ignored, as it has been a subject of scholarly interest in the past. The colonial and rigid methodologies of well-established disciplines like history and political science largely avoided recognizing the significance of poetry as a reflection of society. Poetry was often seen as an artistic production tied to individual imagination, myths, aesthetics and romanticism. However, poetry has become an essential subject in social sciences, especially sociology and anthropology, as it helps scholars understand the past through poetic production. This chapter examines existing literature to analyze how previous studies have interpreted language, culture, and poetry, exploring the impact of traditions on the development of modern poetic discourses and how contemporary poetry reflects these and new themes.

2.2. Poetry, Language, Culture and Discourse

Poetry is divided into two types: written and folk poetry (oral poetry). Written poetry, traditionally, follows a defined structure and genres of the surrounding environment and socialization of poets in these genres and is influenced by dominant literary

figures. In contrast, folk or oral poetry follows the traditions of the society where it is practiced (Webster, 2014). Every language is itself a collective art of expression. It is characterized by a particular set of aesthetic factors, phonetic, rhythmic, symbolic, and morphological features which the language does not entirely share with any other language, and this can be termed language as a collective art of expression. Sherzer (1987) argues that discourse creates, recreates, modifies and refines language tunes over time. According to Sherzer, it is both culture and language and their intersection. Especially in verbal, artistic discourse such as poetry and poetical expression alignment with political rhetoric, the potentials and resources provided by grammar and cultural meanings and symbols are exploited to the fullest. The essence of the language-culture relationship becomes a salient cultural vehicle for carrying meaning (Webster, 2019). This view of language and culture stressed the importance of speech play and verbal art. It is also a view that attempted to eschew certain kinds of reifications of language and culture meant to establish a “purposely vague” understanding of discourse (Sherzer, 1987, p. 296).

The classifications or groups are based on some strategic element common to the items grouped. These similarities are grouped into one or the other, but in terms of specification, they may differ. Therefore, they are neither more nor less ‘intuitive’ than any grouping or classification of social events. Different kinds of fruits are grouped under the fruit category but vary in shape and taste (Becker, 2019). Here, the classification of Pashto literature in poetry and prose and later poetry into ethno-poetics and socio-poetics is a classification method concerning strategies to analyze written and oral poetry to situate ethno-poetics and socio-poetics. The process within this chapter and the latter chapters are organized chronologically, where the ethno-poetics gives the impression and analysis of how non-Western poetry is categorized as

ethno-poetics and Western poetry is categorized as socio-poetics. However, the classification of the genre of poetry is more or less based on political and social relations between the knowledge and power and colonality of power during the colonial period and later on in the post-independence period. On these grounds, we need a more contextual categorization. This categorization will rely on the bias across the categories of modern specialization and to understand Pashto poetry in a historical sense and contemporary interactions with more significant socioeconomic and socio-political debates. In the following sections of this chapter in part one, I have given a critical analysis of ethno-poetics, and the latter part of the chapter discusses socio-poetics to introduce the concept used in the latter chapters based on field data to analyze Pashto poetry through ethno-poetics and socio-poetics as theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

2.3. Poetry and Ethnography

Poetry is a social product, and, like other products, it is subject to social factors. Barrett quoted by Cavanaugh (2012), explains that poetry does not exist outside of social and cultural realities. Cultural poetics or ethno-poetics aims to explore the interplay of culture and poetry. In this regard, the question arises as to how social values or social aesthetics inform the word selection in poetry and the language of poetry. The work of Zentella (2002) on Bergamasco informs us that Bergamasco's poetry has borrowed specific aesthetics from Spanish and English poetic expressions. On the same language, Jillian Cavanaugh (2012) informs us that the bivalent forms between Bergamasco and Italian are downplayed, while archaic Bergamasco forms are much valued. (Bhattacharya, 1983).

The composition of poetry does not remain static. It remains engaged with broader historical and sociocultural milieus and language ideologies that inform such choices.

The same applies to poetry, as language is surrounded by history, sociocultural milieu and ideology. Poets, too, are creative individuals and socialized language users imbricated in broader social, political, cultural, and historical conditions (Balzer, 1997; Faudree, 2015). Therefore, ethno-poetics analysis of poetry enables social anthropologists, linguists, and sociologists to understand a poem or verse as a social and situated act that needs to be ethnographically investigated.

2.4. Ethno-Poetics

The literature on non-Western societies is mainly produced by Western scholars and their domination during the colonialism and postcolonial eras. The colonial era provided the Western scholarship space to define and analyze the colonized people and reflect on their minds and conceptions of the consciousness and construction of others. In the beginning of Western scholarship, the human population was categorized into Christian and non-Christian worlds. West, as dominated by Christian belief construction and terminologies in favor, demonized the ethnos (others). The ethno- was used for all those people and religions that reside outside of Christian dominance. This kind of scholarship helped to divide the population based on religion and later based on residence. The Western knowledge gathered and collected from the ethnos helped them to work on and reproduce knowledge based on the raw materials collected from ethnos. Therefore, the ethno- concept from the beginning to today represents that the studies based on ethnos are drawn from non-Western cultures because the ethnos live in separation and isolation from others and do not assimilate with the rest of the world. By extending the conception of ethnos, numerous studies have constructed the social world of ethnos by constructing and developing ideas of ethnomusicology, ethnography and ethno-poetic expressions in non-western societies (McKittrick, 2015). In such cases, ethno-poetics is considered inferior to Western

scholarship and research approaches to socio-poetics. In Western scholarship, ethno-poetics is defined as the description and making of “we” and “them or otherization” in a culturally relative term that ethnoses only describe and know about themselves.

Jerome Rothenberg introduces the concept of ethno-poetics and its various dimensions, emphasizing its role as a necessary component of contemporary poetics. He frames his discussion around a symposium encompassing diverse cultural energies rather than a conference solely focused on non-Western traditions. Rothenberg delineates several approaches to ethno-poetics, including its intersection with linguistic and cultural anthropology, exploring the “primitive” oral poetry, performance, and its association with experimental movements in poetry. He also highlighted the significance of ethno-poetics in challenging Western notions of high art and embracing a broader range of artistic expressions. Rothenberg further extends the discourse by examining the historical and philosophical underpinnings of ethno-poetics, drawing on the works of poets and thinkers such as Vico, Herder, Blake, Marx, Engels, and others. He underscored the quest for “primary poetics” rooted in the interplay of cultures and explored the idea of poetry that explores beginnings and origins.

The discussion expands to encompass the integration of ethno-poetics into fuller human poetics, rejecting simplistic dichotomies between Western and non-Western traditions. Rothenberg advocated for a more inclusive approach that honors both universal human experiences and the diverse cultural expressions of humanity (Rothenberg, 1984). Despite Rothenberg’s contribution to the exploration of ethno-poetics and his contribution to evaluating it based on diversity of culture and expression of knowledge through poetic expressions across different cultures, the demonization of non-Western poetic expressions remained normal, labelling it as

inferior in Western academic circles as well as in the new imperial knowledge pouring from the American scholarship.

Leslie Marmon Silko, a native American writer of the Laguna Ethnicity, has worked on the Western assumptions about what makes good poetry. The Western assumptions about non-Western poetry carry repetitiveness, simplistic (perhaps even trite) images, lack of poetic devices, and meaningless words and myths without meaning in the language. Such expressions and symbolism derived from native cultures and mythic origins make it an identity marker of their poetry. The sphere of these “typical Western assumptions” needs to be transcended for a faithful interpretation of ethnic minority writings. The ‘deviance’ happens in terms of the content and form of the poetry. Therefore, the minority or non-Western poetic expressions were studied with an ethno-poetic analytical framework. Non-Western poetry is construed as a myth without content and social facts. The ethno-poetic analytical framework accommodates different styles of poetic expression that may not contend with Western assumptions and poetic lines. It accommodates oral poetry: pauses, changes in volume and emphasis, gestures, facial expressions and audience responses. It also adheres to different styles of expressions of versification and the use of metaphors thought to be obscure in the mainstream tradition of critical interpretation (Basumatary & Khiangte, 2020).

The tradition of ethno-poetics is found in the works of Dell Hymes (2003) and Dennis Tedlock (1983). By analyzing their works, ethno-poetics reveals that it studies how narratives are structured into “lines” and thus poetic. The expression of poetic lines in the definition of Jakobson has a poetic function. First, creating lines calls attention to the form over the content. Second, such structured units as the lines are the sites for the playing out of the paradigmatic axis on the syntagmatic axis, where the narratives

are formed through them. In these units, the paradigmatic axis and syntagmatic axis are the traditions of recurrent patterns, as they have histories and narrations to pass on to the next generations (Jakobson, 1960). Webster (2009) has studied Navajo poetry and the poetic expressions of the Navajo community in the USA. Navajo's poetry uses lines that do not follow the English rhyme, but the expression through these lines has histories of their experience to express them. Due to the influence of English on Navajo poets, for example, some poems and poetic expressions use rhyme in Navajo. Under the influence of Western assumptions of poetry, the studies in ethno-poetics came with alternative ways of giving space to non-Western poetries to come up with diversity and versification in poetry studies and socioeconomic histories in the poetry of non-Western societies (Nicéphore & Brooks, 2013).

Ethno-poetics has a long history of application to the poetries of non-Western societies because the poetry of non-Western societies or poetries produced by people of color were demonized and categorised as mythology and mythical creations. The suppression of non-Western poetry is entangled in the coloniality of power and Western assumptions about poetic expression in non-Western cultures. Due to criticism of Western assumptions and the emergence of Marxism and Marxist ideologies to counter the hegemonic discourse of Western supremacy, poetic studies turned inward to explore the colonized and people of color to understand their struggles and voices through their poetries. Western assumptions were based on socio-poetics, which states that Western poetry has a defined structure of poetry and lines and carries a political, economic, and cultural significance message. However, descriptive aesthetics and description of self-surround the non-Western poetries. However, the modern poetry of non-Western societies provides an opportunity for the versification and diversity of voices, expression of voice, and articulation of

sociological ideas through poetry, which is as complex as the expression of poetic traditions in any society. Such approaches to poetic expressions gave birth to socio-poetics.

In the study of poetry and poems, sociological and anthropological perspectives are gaining the attention of scholars to study the experience of poets and their poetry to explain the intricacies involved. Poetry, which draws ideas and perspectives from society and analyses the social surroundings, is called sociological poetry (Summers, 2008; Gustafson, 2009). This poetic experience and expression report social facts, simultaneously infer their meanings from human understanding, and convey a sense of friction between different registers, reading experiences, and formal rules. In a broader and general sense, sociologists and sociologists prefer to use poetics instead of poetry for their analysis because poetry has narrower perspectives and inferences. However, sociological poetry or socio-poetics broadens the perspectives to zoom out on this phenomenon. In describing socio-poetics, it is a particular kind of form and method or strategy in “answer to a problem” or problems and its dimensions are shaped by historical experience, circumstances and situations in which poetry is/was produced (Ward, 1986). Thus, even in Western standardization, non-Western poetries carry the reflections of past societies and times because their poetries are influenced by sociopolitical conditions (Mulumule, 2022).

2.5. Socio-Poetics

Socio-poetics, as the name suggests, primarily emphasizes the social and cultural context in which a poet creates his/her work. It explores how poetry reflects and interacts with the broader societal and cultural environment. It often involves examining historical, political and cultural factors that influence the work of poets and authors, as some other names and concepts are applied to the same work of poetics

and scholars working to create a diversity of knowledge through poetic expression (Odysseos, 2023). The socio-poetics or social poetic research approach is mainly drawn from the pioneer work in history, which is sometimes called “history from below” or “people’s history or social history”, and such poets that discuss the issues of people in their poetries are known as social poets (Bhattacharya, 1983).

With the same significance and importance, the literature produced in the West is labelled socio-poetics, which discusses the socio-economic problems of societies within Europe and North America. Socio-poetics provides context to the broader production of literature and describes the production of poetry and literary work. It is a mimesis in poetic and literary work (Wynter, 1976). Literary work is the production of time and social spaces where authors and poets live, and they describe and produce what they see and through what they have been. It is not necessarily important for poetic and literary work to reflect the experience of only an individual; it can be the expression of others’ endurance in literary production. Social poets and social scientists ideologically compose good, evil, truth, crime, duty, death, love, victory, etc., in their work socio-politically. Without considering the socio-economic condition of poets and social scientists, their work's very plot or motif is impossible (Bechtold, 2019).

The historical evolution of the socio-poetics concept is drawn from Marxism and Marxist theories. One of the most important theories of Marxism is the social reproduction theory. The social reproduction theory is a lens that analyzes the persistence of society over time, even as its human and material components keep changing. Its principal value is in identifying the well-being of society through literature (Weiss, 2020). Later, Langston Hughes popularized the idea in his article “My Adventures as a Social Poet”. In the article, he states that being a poet, one

thinks it is all about romanticism and nature, where the poets write verses about nature and the moon. The moon is in nature, but it is not from the land of blacks or the area of blacks in the American context. He states that when he started to write poetry about the lives of other people and composed poetic expressions about the lives of blacks, he was exiled, arrested and expelled from social gatherings to discuss poetry and people's suffering in poetry (Hughes, 1947). As most of the theoretical framework is based on poetic expressions in North America and Europe, some scholars have applied the theoretical framework to Eastern poetry (ethnos). Over some time, Nowak (2020) and other scholars of poetry theorized poetry that mainly discusses politics, resistance, gender, crimes, colonization, colonial knowledge, war, militancy, conflict, oppression and indigenous and native struggle against external powers; it also discusses internal struggles within society against and in support of different sections of society. Socio-poetics is a toolbox that can be applied to any literature and poetry, where the issues of ordinary people, surroundings, and new challenges are discussed and portrayed in mimesis. Social Poetics is my attempt to think through my relationship with the practices of poetry in Pakistan, especially Peshawar Valley. I attempt to create a connection, a new conjunction between certain pervasive practices central to the war on terror, militancy and state-society relations to expand the social struggles, protest poetry, and social spaces where such poetries are organized, critiqued and recited to contribute to the resistance against oppression through wars, militancy and political exclusion.

Socio-poetics primarily targets the audience of literary scholarship. It is seen as an important lens to look at social knowledge produced through poetry based on poets' social life and their experiences. The sociological methods of qualitative and quantitative research help scholars grasp the meaning and significance of poetry

(Llangco, 2019). The application of Eurocentric assumptions of poetry has served more damage to creativity than giving it a space for nourishing its advancement and plurality of ideas and the production of poetry itself. In the Western assumption of “man,” every human being has linear progress, but contextualizing human experience can be seen as always marked by mutual coordination and collaboration in social life. Individuals inevitably relate to one another; their relatability is self-identifying, resulting in mutually identifiable social beings because they are universally communicative and engage in everyday business to sustain a more expansive and shared sociocultural reality. His/her interaction with the wider communicative reality immerses him/her in actions and experience, and he/she derives imagination and ideas from the broader human experience. This wider recontextualizing is based on “social facts” or learning of the whole, not as an individual (Sen, 2012, p. 53), and the social lives of the society in general (Webster, 2019).

The negation of recontextualizing is reflected in an approach of Wynter’s theorization and amplification of the sociopathic struggles and practices, survival, and the artistic production of poetry, culture, and spirituality of enslaved or colonized subjects in former colonies. In Wynter’s theorization, socio-poetics is a way out of the colonial-modern and colonial rights framework. The socio-poetics is probing the possibilities for unseating the Westernized concept of ‘man’ and its description through the application of theory to understand the production poetry and articulation of human rights, ideas, and construe of social life and its description in non-Western poetry (Epps, Webster, & Woodbury, 2017).

Socio-poetics is considered an abolitionist approach in academic circles. Now, application and use of it in the literary production of non-Western literary work are rendered fungible, cast as savage and expendable, attempted to unseat Western

conception of man and unwork the colonial hegemonic, fabricated and imposed meaning on the colonized subjects. It gives a kind of freedom to reconsider the non-Western literary work to celebrate the diversity and understanding of the natives about their own lives and their approach towards colonization and afterwards life under the remnants of the colonial structure and imposed meanings on the colonized people or the people of color. It also provides the space to rehear the people whose voices and literary work were demonized, and it is a kind of exhumation of the buried meaning (Odysseos, 2023; Canelo, 2013).

The sociology and anthropology of linguistics uptake on poetry serve methodological problems in understanding society and social fields and constructing alternate approaches towards producing poetry and alternate voices that do not align with hegemonic and anti-cultural approaches. In the work of Caron and Khan (2022), poets in Pakhtun areas in general and Swat in particular struggle to bring an alternate voice, social reality, and resistance against the imperial, extremist, and destructive ideologies of war and warmongering parties. The poetry not only unveils the design of terrorism and war but also unveils the destruction of tangible and intangible space for the people. Aligned with Caron and Khan, this dissertation provides an account of the historical relationship between literary and sociological practices and texts that redefine the orientation of literature to the social sphere and reveal the construction of Pakhtun identity, language, and social reality of society during the initial centuries of Pashto poetry emergence. This part of the literary history of Pashto poetic expression is discussed through ethno-poetics lenses and the current or the 21st century's poetry, which is mainly concerned with self-determination, polity and the wars inflicted on Pakhtun land for more than a half-century, the question of class and gender, and environmental crisis is discussed through socio-poetics lenses.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the existing literature on the study of poetry in social sciences, mainly by sociology and anthropology. The anthropological lens is tied with colonial assumptions and imaginations of the exotic societies where their poetry is mainly concerned with aesthetics, romanticism and self-projection. At the same time, the modern critique of ethno-poetics analyzed poetry beyond anthropological assumptions of ethno-poetics based on the colonial principles of investigation. With critique on ethno-poetics or Western approaches towards non-Western societies, the sociologist and Marxists' frame of analysis emphasized the expansion of ethno-poetics. It included socio-poetics as the broader framework of Western and non-Western poetry analysis. It encourages that poetry is not a reflection of an individual but a production of the more considerable collective imagination and experience of people through the work of social poets who produce poetry to articulate the realities of societies.

This dissertation applies the same scholarly work and employs ethno-poetics and socio-poetics as an analytical and theoretical framework to understand the culture, history, and politics of Pakhtuns through Pashto poetry. It identifies social issues and challenges' roots, causes, and effects and suggests solutions through poetry.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The rigorous use of the scientific method, which provides empirical data with a strong foundation, sets contemporary anthropological literature apart from other social sciences. With an emphasis on the ethno- and socio-poetics in Pashto poetry, this chapter offers a comprehensive exposition of the research methodology employed, delineating the intricate processes of data collection, analysis, the process of selection and translation of poetry, and the subsequent interpretation of findings within the socio-cultural milieu of Peshawar. The chapter goes beyond a procedural description to emphasize the adaptive approaches employed to conform to local cultural norms and values, essential for researching socio-poetics in Pashto poetry. A strict, emic data collection method is unfeasible unless it is adaptable enough to handle the particular social and cultural exigencies of Peshawar's poetic landscape, considering the dynamic nature of cultural spaces. I applied qualitative research tools and techniques to collect and analyze data.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a set of ideas researchers develop in their discipline to view a subject or a phenomenon. Research paradigms in social sciences differ from those in physical or life sciences. Unlike physical and life sciences, the tools and techniques used in social science are different. The main research paradigms in social sciences are interpretive, descriptive, positivist, critical, realist, ecological, phenomenological, and constructivist. The current research is qualitative and employs a descriptive

paradigm. From the inception of my research question, which is how socio-poetics in Pashto poetry identify social issues and challenges through creating an alternative knowledge of the culture, history, and politics of the Pakhtuns, I tried to investigate what I saw, observed, and acted upon when it comes to socio-poetics in Pashto poetry. As poetry is performed in various cultural spaces in Pakhtun society, I attend these cultural spaces and ask poets, organizers, speakers, hosts, and participants about organizing, financing, and functions of the cultural spaces. These questions compelled me to engage with the fundamentals of the fieldwork and into the minds of the people connected to the cultural spaces in one way or another. Further, I conducted this research from an emic perspective, informed by the existing literature. As an insider to the community, I asked myself how and why socio-poetic themes in Pashto poetry focus on the culture, history, and politics of the Pakhtun society and how they identify the current social issues and challenges of society. To investigate the historical roots of these socio-poetic themes, I asked where these themes inspired and emerged. Therefore, I chose to write within the descriptive paradigm to describe what was in people's minds and how I approached them to write about socio-poetics in Pashto poetry.

3.2.1 Epistemology of the Research

Epistemology is the study of knowledge, how it is gathered, and from which sources it is gathered. The selection and use of epistemology mainly depend on the nature of the research and data. In social sciences and anthropology, two broad epistemologies are commonly used for data collection and analysis: quantitative and qualitative. As my research focuses on socio-poetic themes in Pashto poetry, how they emerge, and how poetry works in society, it was necessary to interview people and attend and observe cultural spaces where poetry is performed. In this sense, I have used tools and

techniques of qualitative research for data collection and analysis that help me observe, capture, and collect people's social, cultural, political, and economic experiences in the context of poetry production and dissemination. It also helps observe practices constructed in a historical context to define day-to-day interactions of people related to poetry and cultural spaces.

3.2.2 Ethnographic Research Methods

I used qualitative research methods, including rapport building, key informants, participant as an observer, sampling, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), informal discussions, photography, and recording for collecting data for this research study. I stayed at Shaheen Town of Peshawar during my fieldwork, which served as a bridge between rural and urban cultural settings. In the initial weeks, I attended cultural spaces such as literary societies *adabi ijlasona* (literary meetings, plural), *adabi ghonday* (literary gatherings, plural), *mushairay*, seminars, conferences study circles, protests, music gatherings, and other cultural settings. After a few weeks of participation as an observer, I conducted in-depth interviews and FGDs with poets and experts. Beyond in-depth interviews and FGDs, I often met and engaged in informal discussions with poets, experts, organizers, speakers, and audiences in cultural spaces. Similarly, throughout my fieldwork, the probing technique was quite helpful in asking respondents' take on themes of poetry narrated in cultural spaces and in-depth interviews, FGDs, and informal discussions. Tools and techniques of ethnographic qualitative research were helpful in the field and guided research in the writing stage.

3.2.3 Descriptive Research Design

The descriptive research paradigm differs from positivists, interpretivists, and critical theorists in how they view reality. In qualitative research, the descriptive research paradigm provides a comprehensive description of a phenomenon, event, process, or experience in its natural setting to investigate how it is experienced and understood by people. In a cultural setting, various people have different perspectives about specific phenomena and explain them according to their opinions; however, by collecting and analyzing various perspectives within their cultural context, researchers in the descriptive research paradigm attempt to comprehend how various people or groups describe a phenomenon in light of their experiences and social roles. In the context of my research, I conducted fieldwork and collected data through various tools and techniques of qualitative research. My research paradigm is descriptive, and I conducted the descriptive epistemological position in my research study.

3.3 Research Techniques

The following research was used to collect data in the field.

3.3.1 Entry into the Field and Research Reflexivity

In anthropological research, one must be involved in fieldwork to spend time with the people in their cultural setting. This research is fundamentally influenced by my previous research on different aspects of Pakhtuns' culture, literature, and other forms of art (Ahmad, 2012; Ahmad, 2015; Nadeem , Baha, & Dr. Ikram , 2022). To conduct fieldwork for this research, I spent sixteen months (2022-2023) in Peshawar, the locale of the study. Before this, I also lived in Peshawar for five years; from 2005 to 2010, I attended college for my 12th grade higher secondary school certificate (HSSC) and university for my bachelor's degree program. After completing my graduation

and post-graduation studies in Islamabad, I again moved to Peshawar, working with a development sector organization for two years during 2015-2017. For this reason, I already have some knowledge of the places and culture of Peshawar. At the end of 2021, I plan to move to Peshawar from Islamabad to conduct my current research fieldwork. Luckily, before starting my fieldwork, I got employed by the Culture and Tourism Authority of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There, I was tasked to promote and preserve the languages and literature of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. My affiliation with the culture department on language and literature seat, on the one hand, helped me spend more time in fieldwork, attending and observing various poetry-related activities. However, it also developed some issues regarding data collection, such as the nature of the topic that is relevant to my job position. This is why, on a few occasions, I felt that my position in the government department influenced the responses of the respondents. Therefore, in such cases, I use rapport-building techniques to minimize biases during data collection and keep myself very careful in data collection.

Although I was familiar with places in Peshawar, I was not aware of the routine of cultural spaces and places where these cultural spaces are organized. In this regard, some of my old friends, who were attached to poetic and literary activities in one way or another, assisted me to reach out cultural spaces and certain people to be interviewed. In this regard, my friend Tariq Khan, who has done his PhD in Pashto literature, guided me on approaching cultural spaces and certain people for data collection. At the beginning of my research, I focused mainly on observations in the cultural spaces. Tariq Khan informed me that meetings of the *Sahu Lekonko Maraka* (noble writers society) are held every Monday at 4 pm in the office of the said literary society situated in the Faqir Abad area of Peshawar city. *Sahu Lekonko Maraka* is a

Peshawar-based independent literary society active in Peshawar for over seventy years (discussed in chapter 6). This information was enough for us to attend the meeting at this stage. Since only members of the literary society can attend the meetings, we chose to arrive 20-30 minutes early to establish rapport before the session began. On coming Monday, Tariq Khan left for the Faqir Abad area of Peshawar by local transport. After reaching there, we met Zaland Momand, the president of the literary society, and informed him about the purpose of our visit. Momand welcomed us and gave his consent to sit in the meeting. At the start of the meeting, he formally introduced me and Tariq Khan to literary society members, and then the meeting started. In similar vein, I attended evaluation meetings of other literary societies. These meetings were organized to evaluate the poetry or plan literary gatherings³. Likewise, I also approached literary gatherings, conferences, seminars, literature festivals, and study circles organized by literary societies or by government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for various literary purposes. With time, I was informed by certain people during fieldwork that I should join other cultural spaces, such as music gatherings in the shrines and protests in various localities of Peshawar, to meet diverse poetic themes and data. For this purpose, I also started attending music gatherings at three shrines, including Rahman Baba Shrine, Begham Baba Shrine, and Abdul Sattar Shah Bacha Shrine, situated in different localities of Peshawar, as well as protests organized by various organizations. Further, I attended cultural spaces as a participant as an observer in my initial days. I only observed what was happening in these cultural spaces and noted it in my diary. However, with time, I started informal discussions with people, asking them about poetry themes, the organizing process, purpose, and finances of the

³ Poetry evaluation meetings are routine meetings organized by literary societies where new produced poetry is evaluated by poets. See chapter 7 for more discussion on evaluation meetings.

cultural spaces. After a few weeks, after gathering plentiful data from field observations and informal discussions, I also started in-depth interviews and FGDs.

In the context of the afore-mentioned debate, my reflexivity was both outsider and insider. In terms of culture and society, I was native; however, in terms of area, I was not native as I belong to the Mardan district. Similarly, in the meetings of literary society, non-members of a literary society are considered outsiders as poets, and literary persons consider those people as outsiders with other backgrounds, in my case, anthropology. My affiliation with a government department is also why I was an outsider to the poets and literary circles. However, there were also factors that positioned me as an insider in the research, such as my Pakhtun identity.

3.3.2 Rapport Building

The technique of rapport building brings together both the researcher and respondents. In the context of this research, the technique remained an important priority throughout fieldwork, and without this, it could have been barely possible to collect data from the targeted people. In the early days of my fieldwork, I did not need to introduce myself in cultural spaces open to the public, such as *mushairay*, literary gatherings, seminars, conferences, and music gatherings, as dozens and sometimes hundreds of people participate in these gatherings. However, after a few weeks of observations, when I started engaging with poets, hosts, organizers, speakers, and participants of the cultural spaces, asking them about poetry themes, meaning in themes, the process of organizing cultural spaces or other questions, I was needed to use the technique of rapport building to introduce myself and motive of the data collection. Contrary to cultural spaces open to the public, I needed to introduce myself on my first visit whenever I attended a literary society meeting, as only members of the literary society were allowed to participate. However, after a visit or two, my

interaction with relevant people in the literary society helped me develop trust. It is worth mentioning that while attending cultural spaces, I needed to introduce myself as a participant as an observer in the literary meetings organized by literary societies. Similarly, I used the technique when conducting in-depth interviews, FGDs, and informal discussions. There were many reasons for using the technique in literary meetings, in-depth interviews, FGDs, and informal discussions. For example, I felt many times, particularly in cultural spaces, that people feel insecure when I talk to them on topics that cover militancy and extremism⁴. However, using the rapport-building technique, I would introduce myself before asking questions to convince my respondents to discuss these topics. Similarly, in a few cases, I also felt that when people are aware of my government employment, it influences the data. To cope with this for smoothly conducting my fieldwork and avoiding probable biases, I use the rapport-building technique to develop a sincere and straightforward image among people by introducing myself and the motive behind my research work.

3.3.3 Key Informants

In qualitative research, the informants bridge the community and the researcher. The purpose of selecting the key informant is to reach reliable and authentic sources for data collection. The key informant should know more about the culture and society. Barnard says the key informant controls much information about the culture and is willing to talk and work with the researcher (Bernard, 1988). Considering the importance of key informants, I selected five from different backgrounds, ways of life, and locations. My first key informant was Tariq Khan, a poet, scholar, and literary activist, as well as my old friend. I selected him at the beginning of the research because of his literary interest; he had much

⁴ Because of the wave of militancy some of the people feel uncertain while talking on topics like militancy and extremism.

information about *mushairay*, literary societies, literary meetings and gatherings, and other cultural spaces organized in Peshawar. He helped reach *mushairay* and literary meetings and gatherings organized in the urban setup, including Bacha Khan Markaz, Mafkora Research Center, Peshawar Press Club, and other places in Peshawar city. Most importantly, Tariq Khan also arranged interviews with respondents from various strata of society. The second key informant, Ammar Wadan, is an M.Phil. environmental science student at the University of Peshawar. I met him at the university. I selected him as my key informant after observing his interest and knowledge in poetry and cultural spaces organized at various places within and around the University Campus. Wadan helped me reach *mushairay* and literary meetings and gatherings organized in academic and research organizations. He was also helpful in arranging interviews with respondents living in the area adjacent to the university town and the University of Peshawar. The third key informant was Jalal Khalil, a poet and active member of a literary society from Palosai village, to whom I met with the help of Tariq Khan. He helped reach *mushairay* and literary gatherings in the rural areas of Peshawar. The fourth key informant was Shakhkar Muhammadzai, a member of *Sahu Lekonko Maraka* (Noble Writers Society), and I met him at a *mushaira* organized by the literary society. He helped reach *mushairay*, literary gatherings, respondents, and other relevant places in the city area. The fifth and last key informant was a poetess Kalsoom Zaib, the president of a literary organization of women named *Khwaindo Adabi Lakhkar* (Sisters' Literary Society)⁵ or KHAL (hereafter referred to as KHAL). She helped me reach *mushairay* and other literary gatherings organized by women in different places in Peshawar.

Key informants helped me throughout fieldwork due to the changing nature of the spaces and places. The key informants guided and informed me about the poetry and literary gatherings,

⁵ *Khwaindo Adabi Lakhkar* is combination of three words in which '*khwaindo*' means sisters', '*adabi*' means literary and '*lakhkar*' means battalions. However, in this case the term '*lakhkar*' is used for society.

respondents, and other social and cultural settings related to Pashto poetry. Their cultural insight provided important information during my fieldwork that enriched my data about different spheres of my research. They shared information about the area, political situation, literary societies, poetry and literary gatherings, and people's experiences. Further, my first key informant, Tariq Khan, also worked as an assistant during the last two months of fieldwork. He cooperated and contributed to my research in many ways, such as composing poetry from recordings recorded at various *mushairay* recitals and compiling field data, for which I compensated him financially.

3.3.4 Participant as an Observer

In contrast to participant observation, in which the research directly participates in the daily lives of the people and their cultural context, my research was guided by participant as an observer, as I engaged with my respondents only in cultural spaces rather than observing their daily life activities. Participant as an observer is a method through which the researcher only attends the events or activities in the field without being actively involved as a participant. For this research, the technique of participant as an observer served as the primary source of data collection. It made it possible to learn and comprehend phenomena in a particular cultural context, i.e., cultural spaces organized in formal and informal places. The technique enriched the data and guided me in a particular and organized way to actively attend to the cultural spaces in the given cultural context. Throughout my fieldwork, I attended and observed literary meetings and literary gatherings organized by literary societies or government or NGOs for various poetic and literary purposes. Further, I also attended more than 15 *mushairay* organized by literary societies or other government and NGOs in different places of Peshawar. I also attended five seminars, three conferences, two literature festivals, and various study circles organized in different locations of Peshawar that

were primarily focused on different topics related to socio-cultural, political, and economic aspects of society; however, also focused on Pashto literature, particularly poetry. I also attended live music programs organized for different occasions and places, such as shrines, wedding ceremonies, protests, and political gatherings in which professionals and non-professional artists produce music and consume poetry. Moreover, I also attended protests organized where poetry is consumed in various ways, such as writing it on placards and reciting it in speeches to sensitize people.

The technique of participant as an observer was used to collect data in cultural places throughout my fieldwork and helped me find relevant respondents I interviewed later. While in the cultural spaces, I noted my observations in my diary, which served as notes from the fieldwork. I also noted couplets, dates, poets' names, and audience responses in the diary. I also used probing in the cultural spaces to clarify and elaborate on participants' responses and better understand the phenomenon I observed. I asked poets, hosts, organizers, and cultural-space speakers to explain certain couplets they narrated or consumed. I also asked them questions related to organizing cultural spaces or explaining specific excerpts that they shared during talk or speech using the technique of probing. Most of the time, during participant as an observer, I will get enough time to ask the respondents probing questions. However, sometimes, it will become challenging to ask probing questions during cultural spaces, as the activities in the cultural spaces follow a proper routine, and it is challenging to engage respondents in informal discussions. In this situation, I asked probe questions during breaks, or I asked respondents to give me time at the end of the activity, and this way, I would get much time to ask my probe questions.

Moreover, during the write-up stage, I cited the data from field notes using in-text citations while mentioning the specific method in the title through which I have

collected data, i.e., speech, poetry narration, and talk. The reason for citing data with the specific source is to differentiate the data from the field notes collected through in-depth interviews, FGDs, and informal discussions. Following this, I have titled poetry quoted from the field notes as ‘poetry narration,’ quotes from the field notes collected from seminars, conferences, and study circles as ‘talk,’ and quotes in the field notes collected from public gatherings such as *mushaira* or protest as ‘speech.’ Further, data, including poetry collected through in-depth interviews, is cited with the poet's name, and those collected from FGDs are cited with the title of FGD.

3.4 Research Tools

The following research tools were used in the field for data collection

3.4.1 Sampling

In qualitative research, a researcher cannot interview all individuals relevant to the studied phenomenon. Thus, the sampling technique is employed to select and interview a particular number of respondents who can help achieve the research goals, saving time, energy, and other resources (Seidman, 2006). In scientific research, sampling is an effective technique for representing the larger population. Goode and Hatt (1952) assert that sampling implies a more miniature representation of a larger whole, facilitating data collection and analysis.

The research questions depend on the type, nature, and number of respondents. During my fieldwork, I employed two types of non-probability sampling, including purposive sampling or judgmental sampling and snowball sampling, to conduct in-depth interviews. A total of 26 interviews were carried out with poets and experts from various life strata. Of the 26 interviews, 14 were conducted through purposive sampling. I directly selected the respondents based on my information and the

guidance and recommendation of my key informants, ensuring that the data gathered was specific to the research questions. The selection of participants through purposive sampling is necessary to collect ‘specific information’ based on research questions. Additionally, 12 interviews were conducted using snowball sampling for which the respondents were asked or assisted themselves in identifying other potential respondents. The reason for selecting respondents through snowball sampling was that it was necessary to find relevant people to be interviewed, for which the respondents were selected through purposive sampling; key informants or other relevant people in the field were helpful. Moreover, informal discussions with poets, hosts, speakers, performers, and participants in cultural spaces were conducted through purposive sampling. I also noted certain couplets or information and the respondents' views using the probing technique in cultural spaces.

3.4.2 Informed Consent

I have formally obtained consent from all my respondents. A few of the respondents already knew me and were aware of my research. This is why I asked them for an interview directly through ‘WhatsApp’ text messages or phone calls or asked them face to face while meeting them in cultural spaces. However, most respondents did not know me, and it was necessary to use the rapport-building technique to get consent for the interview. For this reason, I sent them a ‘text message’ through ‘WhatsApp,’ called them directly through their phone number if ‘WhatsApp’ was unavailable or met them face to face in cultural or other public spaces and asked them for an interview. In both cases, first, I introduced myself and conveyed to them the purpose of my research and then asked them to give me time for an interview. I knew well that the respondents prefer to read and write in Pashto when it comes to communicating with a Pakhtun; this is why I wrote ‘text message’ in Pashto. Most of

the respondents gave me time directly; however, in some cases, they asked me to be in contact, and they managed time according to their routine and informed me to visit them for an interview; in this case, I did the same as proposed by respondents. In the first month of 2022, I formally started conducting interviews. For this purpose, I first contacted Jalal Khalil, who belongs to Palosai village, which is situated near the University of Peshawar. I sent him a voice note on WhatsApp introducing myself and explaining the purpose of my contact with him, and he asked me to meet him in a café named Quetta café, as he sets their routine every evening⁶. Following his reply, I met him in the evening; he served me a cup of tea in the café, according to the area's tradition. In our first meeting, we made a gap-shape (gossip) for almost an hour, and then he asked me to contact him on the weekend (Saturday at 2:00 pm) for an interview. Similarly, I contacted him on Saturday, and he asked me to visit his *hujra* (a traditional gathering place for men serving various purposes, singular). The time was suitable for me as throughout my fieldwork, I tried to visit my respondents in the morning or the second time of the day to avoid lunch or dinner with them. It is a common practice in Peshawar that everyone will serve you lunch or dinner if you visit them in the afternoon or evening. The interview with Jalal continued for more than an hour, and after the interview, he served me tea and biscuits. The rest of the interviews with male respondents went through the same routine.

It is worth mentioning that I faced some issues when conducting interviews with women. I tried for weeks to meet them and asked them to conduct the interview. In this regard, I first met Kalsoom Zaib in a seminar and *mushaira* organized by KHAL and introduced myself. Luckily, after introducing myself, I learned that her son, Khayam Zaib, was my friend who also studied at the same university where I did my

⁶ Setting in cafés is a routine activity where people drink tea and make gossips mostly at evenings.

Masters: Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad. She gave me her contact number and asked me to contact her on Sunday. After getting consent, I visited her home the next day to interview her. I spent one and a half hours with her for the interview, accompanied by her son Khayyam Zaib, who also served us juice before the interview. Similarly, my second female respondent was Haseena Gul Tanha, whom I met in a *mushaira* organized at Islamia College University Peshawar. After introducing myself and the purpose of my research, I requested her for an interview. In the response, she suggested I be in contact, and she would give me time for an interview whenever it is possible. As she belonged to a rural area, visiting her home or interviewing her in another place was impossible. Luckily, after a few weeks, she invited me to attend a *mushaira* organized by a literary society in the Academy of Letters, Hayat Abad community hall. After *mushaira*, she gave me an hour, and I interviewed her.

Further, contrary to in-depth interviews, the method of consent taken for the informal discussion was different. As I conducted most informal discussions in the cultural spaces, I verbally obtained consent from the respondents in face-to-face meetings. However, because of the shortage of time in cultural spaces, sometimes it becomes challenging to obtain formal consent from the respondents for informal discussions. In this case, I introduce myself and my research purpose shortly and ask the respondent if I can talk to him/her and ask a few questions. Almost all respondents consented, and then I conducted informal discussions with them.

3.4.3 In-depth Interviews

In anthropological research, the researcher spends an extended period in the locale to observe what happens by watching, listening, and asking questions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). As stated earlier in the opening of this chapter, I relied on

observations at the beginning of my fieldwork. However, I started in-depth interviews once I collected plentiful data from observations. I conducted a total of 26 in-depth interviews with social poets and experts. Following the tradition of the area, I always have 15-20 minutes of general discussion with the respondents during interviews. Further, to avoid breaks during interviews, I looked into the situation, and in case the respondent offered tea or some other beverage, I tried to start the interview after finishing with it. While conducting interviews, I gave a background picture of my research and then started questions. The early questions were relevant to the demography of the respondents, while the rest were relevant to the topic. At the end of the interview, I would thank the respondent and leave him/her.

Moreover, in-depth interviews were conducted formally, following a structured interview guide that served as a primary data source for investigating individuals' perspectives on the research questions. While most of the questions in the guide were consistent across all interviewees, a few were tailored to specific groups, such as poets or experts. The questions addressed various aspects of the research topic. Further, at the start of the research, the number of respondents was not fixed; however, at a certain point, I felt a repetition in data that revealed that the in-depth interviews had rendered sufficient data. All interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed, which facilitated the development of the core content and data for the research.

3.4.3.1 Interview Guide

An interview guide is an important tool in ethnographic qualitative research as it helps the researcher collect the required amount of quality data from the respondents. To prepare an interview guide, the researcher must understand the topic well to keep track of it during in-depth interviews and FGDs. The interview guide provides

appropriate time for respondents to express meaningful responses to questions that are being asked of them. It ensures a good understanding between the interviewer and interviewee of the phenomena under study. For this research, I develop an interview guide covering every research question. The interview guide contained subjective questions and several probing points in each question to dig out more in-depth information. I also asked probing questions about poetry quoted by the respondents, which helped me reach out to themes of poetry and its meanings.

One interesting point of this research was that during fieldwork, respondents informed me that specific poetry themes emerged in classical Pashto poetry periods. I included questions to determine how and why these themes emerged. Some respondents, particularly experts, provided me with data on these questions. However, they suggested that there is much-published work on it, and I should consult it. These suggestions expanded my work, and besides socio-poetics in Pashto poetry, I also worked on how Pashto poetry emerged as ethno-poetics that founded the first phase of Pashto poetry. Further, I included and excluded some questions in the interview guide during fieldwork. For example, after weeks of observations, I included questions about ethno-poetics in Pashto poetry. However, most poets do not deeply understand how Pashto poetry emerged as ethno-poetics. For this reason, after conducting 2-3 interviews, I again excluded these questions, and to address them, I consulted published works on early periods of Pashto poetry.

3.4.4 Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a key technique in qualitative research. Like an in-depth interview, FGD involves a group discussing specific questions related to the study. They are interactive and reciprocal and provide collective insights, with participants sharing their perspectives in response to the researcher's questions

(VanderStoep & Johnson, 2009). While in-depth interviews typically capture individual perspectives, qualitative research benefits from FGDs as they allow for cross-verification of data, particularly the information gathered through in-depth interviews, and help strengthen the findings' validity (VanderStoep & Johnson, 2009). During my fieldwork, mainly while conducting in-depth interviews, I encountered challenges related to questions about the themes of Pashto poetry and the organizing of the cultural spaces and its role in evaluating, disseminating, and consuming poetry. Most respondents tended to focus on only two or three themes of poetry or shared linear responses about the organization of cultural spaces. To address this limitation, FGDs proved helpful, allowing me to gather more diverse perspectives on the themes of Pashto poetry and the role or organization of cultural spaces. Generally, the discussions in each of the FGDs centered on the overall research questions; however, in some way, I intentionally structured the groups with diverse qualities to gather a diverse range of data and fill any gaps in the findings. For example, one group examined the themes of poetry, while another explored the role of literary societies in creating cultural spaces. In other words, while each FGD covered overall questions of research, each was structured to focus on a particular objective. This way, poets recited couplets related to specific themes, which served as icebreakers and sparked further discussion among participants. Similarly, respondents of the FGDs share various information about cultural spaces and their roles.

Further, an interview guide with probing questions was developed and followed for each FGD. I conducted four FGDs, each attended by 5-7 individuals and lasting one to two hours. The first FGD (FGD1) was held with members of a literary society called *Sahu Lekonko Maraka* at their office in Faqir Abad, Peshawar. Six participants, all members of the society, took part in this discussion, which focused on the role of

literary societies in creating cultural spaces and promoting the dissemination of poetry. The second FGD (FGD2) was conducted with members of *Malgari Lekwalan* (Friends' Writers), a literary organization affiliated with the Awami National Party (ANP), at the office of *Pakhtun* magazine. Seven participants, holding various positions within the organization at provincial and district levels, were part of this FGD. This session, which lasted for two hours, aimed to explore the strategies of literary societies in disseminating poetry among the masses. The third FGD (FGD3) was held with a group of young poets and focused on the themes of 21st-century Pashto poetry. It lasted for one and a half hours. Six participants were included in this FGD, most of whom were involved in teaching or studying Pashto literature. This FGD was focused on themes and sub-themes of Pashto poetry and how these themes address and identify the roots and effects of social issues and their challenges and solutions. At the same time, the fourth FGD (FGD4) was conducted with experts, including senior poets and retired professors of Pashto literature and other social sciences disciplines. Five respondents were part of this FGD, which lasted over two hours. It was centered on how poetry themes reflect culture and society and how it works in society. Throughout the dissertation, these four FGDs are FGD1, FGD2, FGD3, and FGD4.

3.4.5 Informal Discussions

Ethnographic research studies rely more on observations and informal discussions through participation or attending activities and events. In the case of this study, I focused on attending cultural spaces organized in various formal and informal places in the research locale. Contrary to other ethnographic qualitative research, where researchers conduct informal discussions after collecting a certain quantity of data through in-depth interviews, I conducted informal discussions from the beginning.

During the early weeks of fieldwork, I started attending cultural spaces, where I conducted informal discussions with poets, audiences, speakers, participants, and organizers of cultural spaces. The questions of the informal discussion in the early stage of fieldwork were limited to 5-8 general questions, mainly related to cultural spaces. However, after I conducted a certain number of in-depth interviews, I felt saturation in the data collected through these techniques. In in-depth interviews, the respondents would share information in a linear line. Thus, I started informal discussions with more focus and detailed questions and probing into questions related to poetry and cultural spaces.

In the case of poetry, informal discussions and probing questions were used to decipher poetry narrated by poets to explore and analyze themes and meanings in it. I take certain poems and couplets from the narration of poets, speakers, hosts, performers, and audiences in cultural spaces or informal discussions. Then, I put these poems or couplets in front of narrators or, in some cases, to the audience, asking them to interpret and explain themes, meanings, and significance. These questions often led to informal conversations where they shared their explanation and views about themes and meanings. Generally, the technique of informal discussion was helpful for me in investigating the deep understanding of the respondents regarding the themes, context, and public and hidden meaning of the poetry.

However, informal discussion and probing techniques in informal discussions were not limited to poetry; I would take an argument or idea from talks or speeches and ask respondents to explain it. In this case, it works as an icebreaker to gather more information about a particular phenomenon. Similarly, in the case of cultural spaces, I also employed this technique to gather data related to organizing cultural spaces and their role in evaluating, disseminating, and consuming poetry. I asked poets,

organizers, and the audience about the organizing and financing process of the cultural spaces, its role in evaluating, disseminating, and consumption of poetry, and the impact of cultural spaces. The respondents shared their understanding of context and their perspectives on it. Thus, the technique of informal discussion was employed throughout fieldwork in analyzing and collecting data.

Overall, the informal discussions and probing techniques in informal discussions proved effective in allowing respondents to express their understanding of the themes and meanings of Pashto poetry by providing valuable insights into their deeper comprehension of themes, context, and meanings in poetry and how it works in society. It also contributed to collecting data about cultural spaces, their history and process, and how poetry functions in society.

3.4.6 Description and Profile of Respondents

Ethnographic research is the study of people or a particular phenomenon of their culture and society in their cultural environment using various tools and techniques of ethnographic research. Thus, it is significant to know the real representatives of the people or their culture. As my research primarily focuses on socio-poetics in Pashto poetry, collecting data from people related to poetry was essential. In this sense, people relevant to this research included social poets, experts / intellectuals. I conducted 26 interviews, 10 of which were with experts, and the remaining 16 were with poets. An interesting aspect of the in-depth interviews was that many respondents were, at the same time, poets and experts. However, during my write-up, it became challenging to categorize respondents who were social poets and experts simultaneously into one specific category. To address this, I have put them in the category for which I have specifically approached them.

3.4.7 Demography

Gender	Male			Female			
	24			2			
Age range	20-30 Years	30-40 Years	40-50	Above 50			
	2	6	8	10			
Marital status	Married			Unmarried			
	20			6			
In-depth Interviews	Poets		Experts		Total		
	16		10		26		
FGDs	4						
Ethnicity	Pakhtun						
Type of residence	Rural		Urban		Dual Residence		
	8		12		6		
Religion	Islam						
Highest Education Level	10th	12th	14th		16th	M.Phil	PhD
	1	2	4		12	2	5
Occupations	Students	School Teachers	College Teachers	University Teachers	Medical Doctors	Self-Employment	
	5	3	2	3	1	12	

Table 3.1. Demography of Respondents.

3.5 Collection, Selection, and Translations of Poetry

Most of the poetry analyzed in this dissertation is collected during fieldwork. The primary sources of the poetry collection included in-depth interviews, FGDs, informal discussions, and participation as an observer. I used a voice recorder to capture the poetry. I used a daily diary to document specific couplets, dates, poet names, and

audience responses, further informed by the informal discussions and probing. However, a small portion of the poetry analyzed in Chapters 4 and 5 is also sourced from published sources, including anthologies, research papers, and books. The Reason for analyzing published poetry is that during fieldwork, I observed and informed respondents that specific themes and cultural repertoires emerged over time. I consulted published sources to explore these themes and cultural repertoires' roots, emergence, and transformation. This analysis of poetry from published sources, grounded in ethno-poetics, provided valuable context for a deeper understanding of the socio-poetic themes in Pashto poetry. Moreover, poetry collected through primary sources can be differentiated from poetry sourced from secondary materials based on the in-text citations. For primary sources, I have provided the names of the poet, respondent, or narrator and the method of poetry collection employed in the fieldwork. In contrast, I have cited the specific publication for the poetry taken from published sources, i.e., a book, anthology, research paper, or other sources from which the poetry is extracted.

An interesting aspect of the fieldwork was that respondents or performers would sometimes recite the poetry of other poets when discussing the themes of poetry. In such cases, I have quoted the respondent and the poet to whom the poetry belongs. Moreover, since Peshawar is the province's capital, many poets and experts from other districts also reside there. Some poets from outside Peshawar also actively participate in cultural spaces organized for poetry in Peshawar. I conducted a few in-depth interviews with respondents from other districts in this context. I collected data through observations and informal discussions in cultural spaces, where poets from these districts participated in the cultural spaces in Peshawar. Therefore, the poetry analyzed in this dissertation includes works from poets who, although initially from

other districts, come to Peshawar to participate in cultural events or to live and work for various reasons.

During the transcription process, I selected and transcribed numerous poetry couplets. In the next stage, I organized the collected poetry into significant themes. As many of the couplets and poetry pieces expressed similar or repetitive themes, I focused on translating and analyzing poetry that most effectively represented the themes and sub-themes emerging from the data. In the next stage, I translated the selected poetry. While translating poetry, I aimed to keep the language simple and accessible to the audience. Although all the poetry analyzed in this dissertation has been translated by me, a few (4-5) pieces of poetry, which were already translated, are sourced from published materials and are analyzed in Chapters 4 and 5. Moreover, I encountered several local words that did not have direct English equivalents during translation. To address this, I retained those words in Pashto and provided explanations in the main text or footnotes.

Additionally, a few of the poetry pieces were long, and incorporating them into the main body of the dissertation could disrupt the flow of the dissertation's main argument. I included a couplet or title in the main body to analyze the poetry thematic subject matter. The complete poetry pieces are placed in the annexure, with corresponding annexure numbers referenced in the footnotes.

3.6 Data Analysis

In anthropological research, data analysis is the most complex and challenging stage due to the data's complex and sometimes incoherent nature (Seidman, 2006). It demands strong analytical skills to organize and structure diverse data collected through observations, field notes, interviews, conversations, dialogues, debates, and discussions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This study covers the ethno-poetics

phase of Pashto poetry spanning from the 16th to 19th century and the socio-poetic phase of Pashto poetry spanning from the 20th to 21st century, data is collected from published sources and through fieldwork. Thus, to analyze the collected data by its theoretical ground, I employed thematic analysis as the primary technique for data analysis. Thematic analysis is an effective tool that can be applied across various theoretical frameworks for identifying, classifying, and analyzing recurring patterns in qualitative data (Victoria & Virginia, 2013; Alhojailan, 2012). Thematic analysis operates at multiple levels, each contributing to a deeper understanding of the research problem and advancing the study's objectives.

In this study's context, the thematic analysis technique was followed in each research stage, as shown in Diagram 3.1. In the data collection stage, the theoretical understanding of the thematic analysis helped identify and collect poetry, and respondents took on poetry covering ethnic- and socio-poetic themes. Similarly, in the analysis stage, the technique guided me to process the data step by step. After transcribing data, I prepared and organized the collected data in a particular pattern that helped me review data and identify themes in data. In the next step, I reviewed the data carefully to familiarize myself and understand how to arrange it. In the next stage, I manually generated initial coding and put it in a way that related relevant codes. Further, I identified and highlighted the themes in the data, organizing them according to their interconnections that helped me to interpret, summarize, and represent the emerging themes in the data. In the last stage, I manually analyzed the data and organized it into core themes and sub-themes, which facilitated the description and interpretation of participants' views and supported the development of the chapters. During the write-up, the thematic analysis supported the organization of themes around the data, including poetry collected during fieldwork, and helped

construct a coherent theoretical argument. The following diagram shows a step-by-step analysis of the data.



Figure 3.1. Steps of Data Analysis

It is worth mentioning that I have positioned the debate on ethno-poetics in chapter 5 and the emergence of socio-poetics in chapter 6. Further, I have positioned the history, emergence, and application of cultural spaces in the current socio-political condition in chapter 7, as these cultural spaces evolved as a result of the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics and advancement in literacy and communication during colonial rule. Further, I have positioned thematic analysis of poetry collected through in-depth interviews, FGDs and informal discussions or performed in these cultural spaces in chapter 8.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter comprehensively discusses the data collection and analysis methodology, along with the rationale behind their selection. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm and epistemology of the research. It further discusses and

rationalizes tools and techniques for data collection during fieldwork. As this research mainly analyses poetry, this chapter discusses the process of the collection, selection, and translation of poetry. The chapter ends with a discussion of the methods and data analysis process.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIO-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE LOCALE

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research location in detail: Peshawar, the capital of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. However, before discussing Peshawar as the locale of the study, I begin with an overview of the historical background and current situation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to offer context about the region. Then, I briefly discussed Peshawar as a locale for my research, focusing on the areas where I have conducted fieldwork for this study. To further justify the study's location, I have briefly discussed Peshawar's past and present to explain how the once known as the 'city of flowers' became known as a city of 'militancy and unplanned development.' Furthermore, considering the locale, I offer insights into the political dynamics, cultural heritage, and social organizations of Peshawar. *Hujra* is considered the foremost pillar of social organizations. At the same time, *Jirga* (council of elders) and the kinship system hold prime status in Peshawar's social organizations. The chapter digs out the cultural aspect of the locale and discusses languages, food patterns, dress patterns, and religion. The politics and political landscape of Peshawar have finally been clarified, and they largely mirror those of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a whole. Hence, this study mirrors the social, political, cultural, and religious landscape of Peshawar and depicts the broader arena of politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

4.2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province of Pakistan, is located between latitudes 31.4 and 37.8 N and 69.16 and 47.7 E. Previously, the province's entire area was 74,521 km². However, it increased to 102741 km² after merging the Frontier Regions (F.Rs) and FATA. The province has a 40.85 million total population which adds 11.9% to the total population of Pakistan (Ali, 2023). Because of its strategic location of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the gateway of the Indian subcontinent to the east and Central Asia to the west (see Figure 4.1.), this region faced cross-border interactions, outside invasions, indigenous resistance, and sociopolitical movements that contributed unique perspectives to the sociopolitical dynamics of this region. Moreover, the process of enculturation has an impact on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's culture(s). The indigenous cultures of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been enriched by the periodic migrations and settlements of Persians, Turks, Greeks, Buddhists, and Mughals throughout the province. It also embraces some influences of other cultures due to its exposure to various ideologies and reformative and political movements. By witnessing the rhythms of various cultures, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have developed a rich cultural heritage dating back at least 5000 years. Artifacts, performing arts, gastronomy, visual arts, languages, literature, crafts, landscapes, and other cultural and creative elements are widely dispersed throughout the province. They can be found in both urban and rural settings. Further, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's picturesque landscape, which includes mountainous regions, plains, and deserts in the Peshawar Valley and southern district, is vital to its geographical significance. Mountainous places like Hindukush, which contain stunning mountain peaks, valleys, and streams; rivers like the Swat, Panjkora, Kabul, and Kunar River; and agricultural land, and deserts of Peshawar valley and southern districts allure both local and

international tourists, adventurers, and academicians, and provide them with a serene environment.

The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is home to several Pakhtun tribes with slight differences in Pashto dialects, rituals, and traditions. These tribes include Yousafzai, Utmankhel, Mohmand, Marwat, Bittani, Wazir, Mehsood, Aurakzai, Afridi, Shinwari, Khattak, and other are notable tribes of the Pakhtun ethnic group. Additionally, there are people like Gujjars, Syeds, Mian, Awan, Qazalbash, and others whose ancestry is not traced back to Pakhtuns. However, by speaking the Pashto language and adhering to Pakhtun customs, these people are also confined to the Pakhtun ethnic group. Likewise, there are two primary varieties of Pashto speaking: the soft and rigid (Caroe, 1962). Additionally, a significant portion of the province's population speaks Hindko, Siraiki, and Khowar languages. A small group of Hindko speakers resides in Peshawar, Kohat, and Bannu; however, most Hindko speakers live in the Hazara division. In the same way, Khowar holds its territory in the upper and lower Chitral districts, and Siraiki speakers live in Tank and Dera Ismail Khan. The Dardic speakers are primarily distributed in the Malakand Division's Swat, Dir, upper, and lower Chitral districts. The Torwali, Gawri, Gawro, Kohistani, and Gujjar of the Dardic people are currently working quickly to conserve and promote their languages. In addition, there are endangered languages in regions of the Malakand division and Waziristan in which some languages even lack scripts and have long been the focus of researchers worldwide as well as government and NGOs.

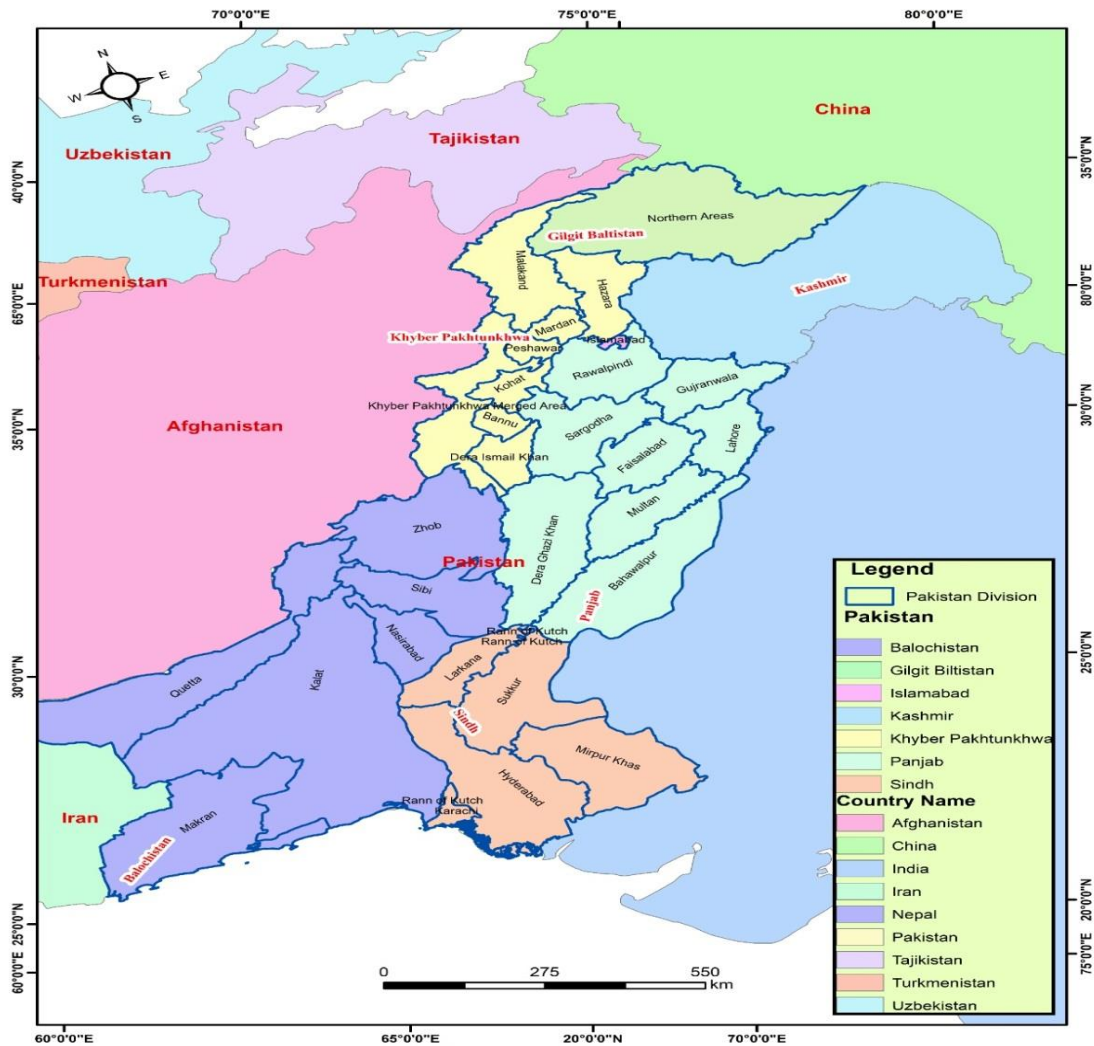


Figure 4.1. Map of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa sharing borders provinces of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Neighboring countries on the map have significantly shaped the culture, language, identity, and the emergence of ethno- and socio-poetics in Pashto poetry.

4.3. Peshawar: Locale of the Study

Generally, this research is limited to the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, the study is primarily conducted in the capital of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar. Peshawar is strategically located in Pakistan's northwestern region, surrounded by mountains from three sides and open to the Indus River on the south and southwest. It is located 37 kilometers from the Khyber Pass, which connects Central Asia and Afghanistan to Pakistan and the rest of the subcontinent.

The district covers a total size of 1257 km², and the elevation of the city area of Peshawar is approximately 360 meters (1,181 feet) above sea level. It offers a moderate climate, with warm summers and cool winters, making it a pleasant residence place (Safdar, 2018). Peshawar is primarily agricultural land but also features a tiny section of steep terrain in the southeast.

This research selects Peshawar as a locale for the study due to its rich cultural heritage, fertility in literature, and long history. Peshawar is one of the oldest cities in the region, has witnessed millennia of human civilization, and is known for its history, culture, and tradition. Its strategic location made it a crossroads for ancient trade routes, including the Silk Road, connecting the Indian subcontinent to Central Asia, East Asia, and beyond. Numerous ancient sites include Gandharan stupas and British and Moghul remnants such as Masjid Mahabat Khan, Gor Gatri, Balahisar Fort, Qissa Khwani Bazar, and Islamia College Peshawar. This is why Peshawar has been a melting pot of diverse cultures, with influences from Persia, Afghanistan, Central Asia, East Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.

Similarly, as the province's capital, Peshawar holds key offices of the government departments, NGOs, and political parties. Moreover, the prestigious educational institutions of the province are also located in Peshawar, which provides an academic environment that polishes the education of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. These institutions, along with formal education, provide various platforms and cultural spaces for literary activities and add to the dissemination and consumption of poetry. Moreover, in the last few years, the various political parties have called on many *Jirgas* (plural of *Jirga*) in Peshawar, inviting both political and literary figures including poets. This is why Peshawar has served as a fertile ground

for literary and cultural activities, remaining a hub for literary societies that have significantly influenced Pashto poetry and its themes.

I conducted my fieldwork both in rural and urban settings of Peshawar. In a rural setting, I attended and observed *mushairay*, literary meetings, literary gatherings, and music gatherings organized in *hujray* (plural of *hujra*) and the shrine of Tehkal village, Palosai Village and Bahadur *Kalay* (village). Besides participation in cultural spaces, I conducted informal discussions with poets, speakers, organizers, and participants in these cultural spaces. Similarly, I also conducted one FGD and six in-depth interviews in the rural setting of Peshawar. Further, I also spent time in rural setting of Peshawar, particularly in Tehkal and Palosai villages to observe how poetry is part of the oral traditions of the people's daily lives. The fieldwork in Tehkal and Palosai villages helped me to investigate how literary societies work in rural structures. Along with Tehkal and Palosai village, I also attended *mushairay* and musical events at the shrine of the famous poet, Rahman Baba, in Bahadur *Kalay*.

While in urban structures, I attended cultural spaces such as *mushairay*, literary meetings, literary gatherings, seminars, conferences, literary festivals, music gatherings, study circles, and other relevant cultural spaces. These cultural spaces were organized by literary societies or government or nongovernment organizations at formal and informal spaces like press clubs, community centers like Nishtar Hall, Academy of Letters, Abaseen Art Council, shrines, educational institutions such as the University of Peshawar, Islamia College Peshawar, Agriculture University Peshawar, Institute of Management Sciences, Brains Institute Peshawar, and Edwards College Peshawar, and research centers like Mafkoora Research Center and Bacha Khan Research Center. I conducted three FGDs and twenty (20) in-depth interviews in Urban setting of Peshawar. Fieldwork in metropolitan areas of Peshawar helped

collect data from respondents from diverse backgrounds, as activities in urban areas attract and are attended by people belonging to various areas of the province.

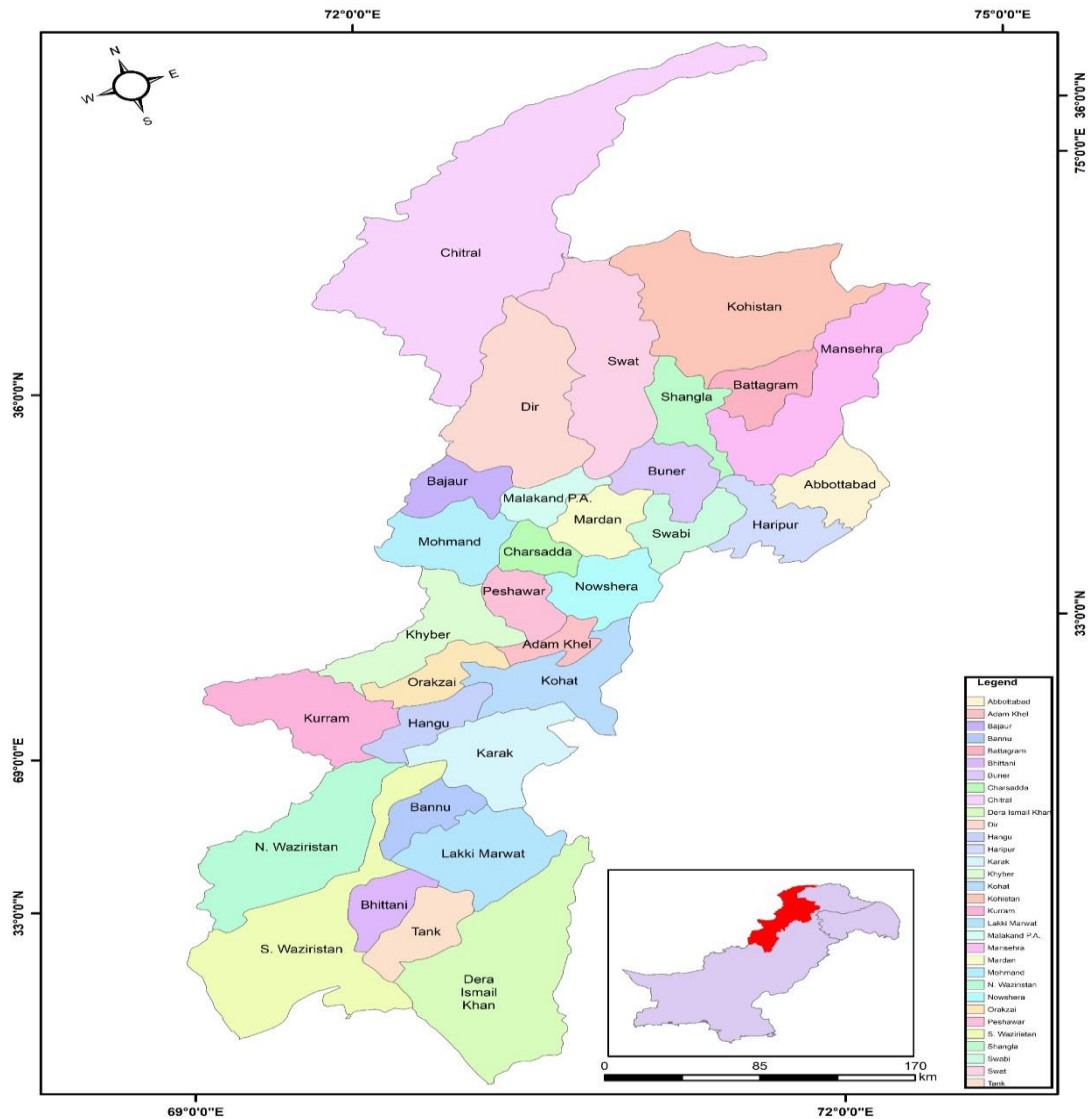


Figure 4.2. District map of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province in Pakistan, in which the district of Peshawar can be seen bordering on the east by the district of Nowshera, on the north by the district of Charsadda, on the west by the districts of Mohmand and Khyber, and on the south by the districts of Khyber and Kohat. This map provides a geographical context for the location of Peshawar within the larger region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

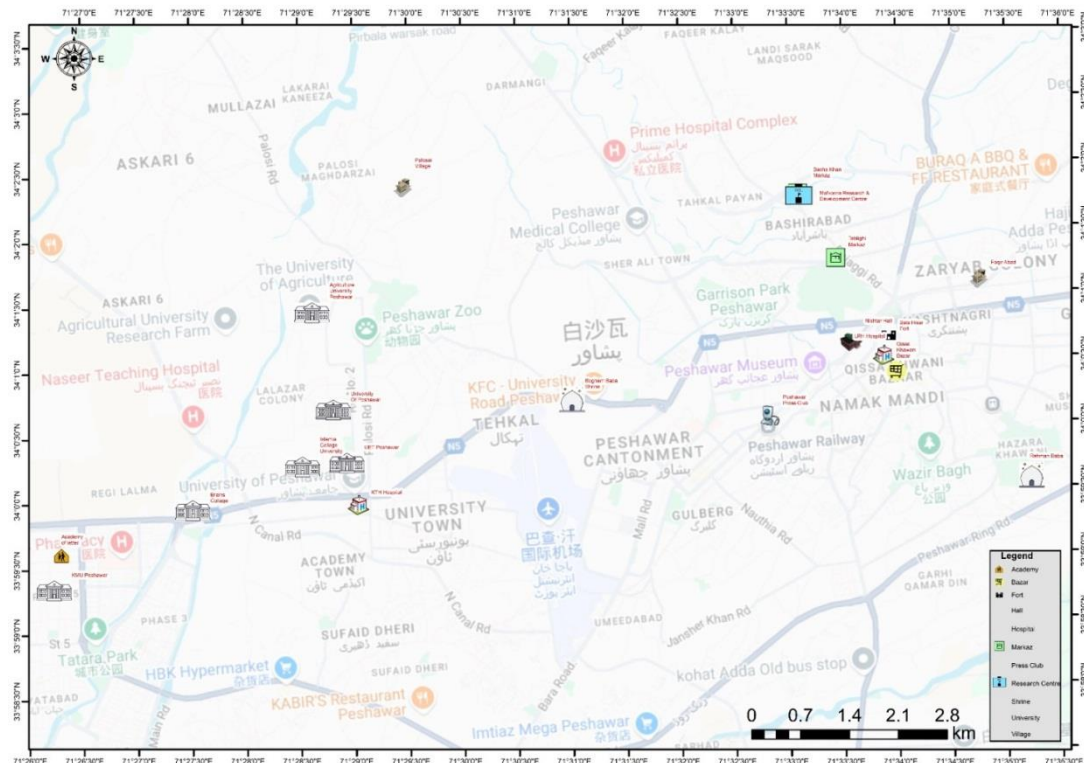


Figure 4.3. Map of research showing prominent places where I have conducted my research. The map shows urban areas on the leading university and the rural regions on the map's borders.

4.3.1. Peshawar: From City of Flowers to the City of Militancy and Unplanned Development

The terms ‘Pesh’ and ‘Awar’ are combined to form Peshawar, a city home to many artisans and where artisans come from various regions and dwell here. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Peshawar was referred to by both Al-Masoodi and Al-Biruni. Additionally, the city was mentioned in the term ‘fo-la-sha’ by the Chinese traveler Fa-Hien in around 400 A.D., and Purushapura, a Sanskrit term meaning ‘the city of flowers’ in approximately 119 A.D. Similarly, it is referred to as Bagram in Pashto poetry, specifically in the works of renowned classical *Sufi* poet Rahman Baba. In a couplet, Rahman Baba says: “Hum naghmi kandi, hum raqs ka, um khandi / Da Rahman pa sher turkee da Bagram”. (*“The turkee (Turkish like) girls of Bagram sing, dance and laugh / Upon hearing the couplet of Rahman”*) (Baba, 1984). In the

couplet, Rahman Baba used the word Bagram for the city of Peshawar. Even in poetry produced in the 20th and 21st centuries, poets have used the word Bagram to represent Peshawar. Peshawar has been called the ‘city of flowers’ in Pashto poetry and folk ballads for hundreds of years. As a well-known folk song says: “Lar Sha Pekhawar Ta Kamees Tor Mala Rawra / Taza Taza Guloona Dre Salor Mala Rawra.” (*“Go to Peshawar and bring black kamees (shirt) for me / And also bring three or four fresh flowers for me”*) (Fieldnotes). The lover in this folk song requests his sweetheart, who is traveling to Peshawar, to bring her a black shirt and fresh flowers on his return. The song's theme concerns Peshawar, a famous city for its flowers. Even in Babur's memoirs, Peshawar is called the ‘city of flowers.’ Every year in April, many government departments, cantonment boards, universities, and colleges host the *Gul-e-Dawood* (Chrysanthemum flower) expositions in various locations of Peshawar to maintain the floral legacy.

However, over the last four decades, Peshawar has witnessed a drastic change due to the ruthless policies of unplanned urbanization and development. The surges of militancy in the region and the unending war in Afghanistan badly affected its infrastructure, economics, and social life. Similarly, the advent of modernity also left a superficial imprint on the soil of Peshawar and slightly eroded the touch of originality. Furthermore, due to war in their region, millions of immigrants from Afghanistan migrated to Peshawar after 9/11. In the same way, due to militancy and insurgency in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar hosted internally displaced refugees from Swat, Waziristan, Kurram, and Aurakzai districts during 2007-2016. Most of these internally displaced persons became permanent residents of Peshawar as a result of terrorism and the war against terrorism in their respective hometowns. These changes led to an increase in Peshawar's population, which sped up the establishment

of townships, colonies, and housing societies. In an informal discussion, a poet stated that nowadays, Peshawar is a 'forest of concrete' where there are plazas and buildings everywhere (Fieldnotes). Likewise, from 2005 onwards, the city of Peshawar became the target of militants, and they ruthlessly killed thousands of innocent people in bomb blasts and target killing. These terrible circumstances badly affected almost every aspect of life. The state erected barricades on roads and fencing on the walls and other places to counter militancy.

Both the militancy and unplanned development and urbanization turned Peshawar's identity from a city of flowers to a city of unplanned growth and urbanization. By observing the gradual change in the appearance of Peshawar, poets utilize poetry to communicate their feelings. In one of couplet Sahib Shah Sabir says: "Da Pekhawar pa khaar balha shwe che wosy paki / Zra ba de tang we pa wajod ke ba de saa khafa we". (*"A calamity has engulfed the city of Peshawar / While living there, your heart will be distressed and body lifeless"*) (Fieldnotes). In the couplet, the poet says one will get bored if he lives in Peshawar, as the city bears no more charm. Similarly, Israr Atal couplet also depicts the situation of Peshawar: "Ma aw ta paki da khudai da para wajni / Da gulono pekhawar de aw kh Kabul de" (*"They are killing us without cause/ either Peshawar: 'the City of Flowers' or Kabul"*) (Fieldnotes). In this couplet, the poet refers to the current massacre due to insurgency in Flowers. In another couplet, Israr Atal also says: "Da meeni da sandaro kor wo Khan wo Pekhawar/ Yaw wakht wo balha khukali balha zwan wo Pekhawar". (*"Home of love songs, Peshawar was at its height / Once Peshawar was wonderful and alive"*) (Fieldnotes). In the couplet, the poet is nostalgic about the previous charm and beauty of Peshawar and states that Peshawar was once considered the city of flowers, life, and love stories, and it was so beautiful and young. Similarly, Rashid Khattak also writes about the present and past

of Peshawar in a couplet: “Os Pekhawar ke da gulono zikar nh kawi sok/ Os rasarkhegy da margono pa madaar khabari”. (*“Nobody speaks of flowers in Peshawar / The only debate is that of casualties now”*) (Fieldnotes). This couplet portrays the transformation in the subject matter of the discussion due to the surges of war; here, the poet writes that now the subject matter of the debate is war, death, causality, and bomb blasts, and the people are no longer discussing flowers in Peshawar. The couplet discusses the situation of Peshawar on the one hand and, on the other hand, condemns militancy, which had brought the deaths to Peshawar.

4.4. Culture

Peshawar holds a rich cultural heritage due to its diverse nature regarding religion and ethnicity. Being a Muslims majority city, Peshawar is also the home of the communities that are minorities, including Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians. Furthermore, there is linguistic diversity, where most people speak Pashto, with few speakers of Hindko, Urdu, Panjabi, and Khowar. The ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity contributes to the cultural heritage of Peshawar and plays a pivotal role in its richness. The following paragraphs shed light on the aspects of culture in Peshawar.

4.4.1. Languages

The majority of people in Peshawar speak the Pashto language. However, a minimal number of populations speak languages other than Pashto. Apart from language diversity in Peshawar, the market language is Pashto because of Pashto speakers’ majority influence. The teaching medium in government schools and madrassas (mercenaries) is Pashto, while the private schools are primarily English-medium schools. In 280 villages, there are hardly dozens of villages with a Hindko-speaking

population, while the rest speak the Pashto language. However, *Androon Sheher* (inner city) is a Hindko-populated area.

Furthermore, the Sikhs who migrated from the Swat, Bunir, and Tirah areas speak Pashto as their primary language, while local Sikhs of Peshawar speak Hindko as their primary language. The same is the case with Hindus; those who migrated from Swat, Bunir, or Mardan speak Pashto as their primary language, and those belonging to Peshawar speak Hindko as their primary language. However, almost all the non-Pashto-speaking Sikhs and Hindus speak Pashto as a secondary language. Among them, the Sikhs and Hindus who migrated from Swat, Bunir, Mardan, and Tirah consider themselves Pakhtuns. However, among Pakhtuns, there are different perspectives about belong of Pashto speaking Sikhs and Hindus. Some of the learned Pakhtuns trace them to the Pakhtun ethnic groups, while others consider them non-Pakhtuns even if they speak Pashto and follow the Pakhtun code. However, no authentic sources exist about the Sikhs and Hindus' linkage with the Pakhtun genealogy. On the other hand, the Christians speak Panjabi or Urdu and are settled in Peshawar during the British period, mostly working as sweepers and cleaners.

Additionally, there is also a small number of Dari-speaking population that migrated from Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion. These Dari-speaking people mainly reside in the Board Bazar and Nasir Bagh areas of Peshawar and are attached to various small businesses. A small population of Khowar-speaking people lives in Peshawar. The Khowar people belong to the upper and lower Chitral districts. Females of Chitral primarily work as nurses in hospitals of Peshawar, and men are famous for making woolen waistcoats, coats, and long coats. They have developed a market named as Chitrali Bazar situated next to Khyber Bazar in *Androon Sheher*, where the owners and laborers are mostly Khowar-speaking.

4.4.2. Food Pattern

In Peshawar, people routinely eat meals three times a day; however, their cultural names differ. Most people eat breakfast early in the morning before heading to their fields, jobs, business, and other activities. Breakfast is called the *da sahar chaye* (breakfast), and it is served from around 7 am to 9 am, depending on the weather. The breakfast includes a cup of milk tea, homemade bread, paratha, and rarely an egg. The lunch is called *da gharmay doday* (launch), which usually starts around noon, while Dinner is called *dh mahustan doday*. Both the lunch and dinner include *wreji* (rice) and/or *ingoli* (dish) along with wheat and/or maize bread or *chapaties* baked in *tandoor* (clay oven) which is part of the essential dietary pattern of the Peshawar. The dishes are mostly made of vegetables, grains, or beef. The most popular and often utilized lunchtime food is beef. Likewise, beef curry and a tiny fresh item are included in dinner. Regardless of the season, afternoon tea, or *da mazigar chai* (late afternoon tea), is the most popular culinary item.

In addition, the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in general, and Peshawar, in particular, are renowned for their hospitality, or *melmastia*, which has become associated with the region. In *melmastia*, Pakhtun offers chicken and rice as compulsory dishes in meals. People are addicted to Tea and welcome their guests with a cup of tea. The tourists may become weary of seeing it practically everywhere. It is interesting to note that in *hujra*, refusing a cup of tea is seen as a disrespect of tradition and a display of arrogance. People enjoy eating wheat and maize on a larger scale because their land provides it according to the season. Serving rice and *chapli kabab* (minced kabab) is regarded as an expression of hospitality, and herbs are used to make spices. The most prevalent ingredient in all cuisines is beef, while chili is

rarely used. After meals, green tea or *qehva* (green tea) is served, whereas black tea is served at breakfast.

4.4.3. Dress Pattern

Shalwar Kameez is regarded as Peshawar's preferred attire, and it is valid within the whole province. White Shalwar Kameez is common among men, but young male members do not follow this trend; instead, they favor more colorful attire. It is also true of females; the older one's dress in light colors, while women dress in bright hues on special occasions like Eid or marriages. Women are always expected to cover themselves with a *parwoney* (a large size chaddar) as *Pardah* (veil) to conceal themselves and their clothes since *Pardah* is strictly enforced in the area. However, the Abaya culture has also become popular recently, particularly among girls in schools, colleges, and universities. It is interesting to note that some colors, like dark blue and green, are perceived as feminine, while some colors, such as yellow, are linked to the occupational classes. Males frequently carry a small chaddar on their shoulders, while young people do not typically do so. Men usually wear *Charsadwaley saplay*, also known as Charsada sandals. It is uncommon to see a man in *chappal* (sleepers). Conversely, women wear leather or high-heeled sandals at weddings, offices, universities, or other occasions and wear plastic chapels at home. Women rarely wear jewelry in daily life, except earrings or bracelets. Men occasionally wear rings, but this is uncommon.

4.4.4. Religion

The majority of the local population in Peshawar identifies as Sunni Muslims and religious ceremonies and rituals play a significant role in their daily lives. However, the region is not homogenous in its spiritual practices. There are also followers of the

Panj Pir, Sufi, and Ahl e Hadeeth schools of thought in Peshawar and the rest of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This diversity of religious practices is a testament to the region's rich cultural tapestry. These sects and schools of thought have also had hundreds of sizable Madrassas for religious instruction. Numerous students from all over the province and Afghanistan receive religious instruction at these *madrassas*. These *madrassas* have a long history that dates back to the time of the Moghuls and Britishers. The famous Muhabbat Khan Jumat (Muhabbat Khan Mosque) in *Androon e Sheher* was built during the Moghuls period and named after the then-Moghul governor of Kabul, Muhabbat Khan. Another famous mosque is the Sonehri Masjid (golden mosque) in Saddar Bazar of Peshawar. Likewise, the famous Speen Jumat (white mosque) is opposite the University of Peshawar. Furthermore, the famous Mosque named Masjid Qasim Ali Khan is also situated in Peshawar and has been functional since the time of the British Raj. It was once run by famous freedom fighter Abdur Rahim Popalzai (1890-1944). Now, the grandson of Popalzai is the head of the mosque and is also renowned for seeing the moon during Ramzan and Eid, having a historic clash with the central committee of Pakistan known as the Royat-i-Hilal Committee. The *Mullahs* (clerics, plural) of the Masjid Qasim Ali Khan do not follow the decisions of the Royat-i-Hilal committee and announce Eid and Ramzan on their own if they meet the required number of *Shahadat* (witnessers) of moon sight. Many districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially the people of Peshawar Valley, celebrate their Eid with Masjid Qasim Ali Khan.

Shrines of famous Sufis in Peshawar, including Rahman Baba, Begham Baba, and Sattar Shah Bacha, are significant cultural landmarks. These shrines are not just places of worship but also centers of spiritual rituals and music. People gather around Sattar Shah Bacha and Rahman Baba shrines every Thursday's evening to play or

listen to folk music called as *mailas*⁷ or *tang takor*⁸ in Pashto. In the same way, people come together on Wednesday's evening to Begham Baba shrine to play and listen to folk music. These gatherings, filled with the sound of *Rabab* (also known as rubab, a traditional musical instrument) and *Mangay* (water pitchers used as musical instrument), celebrate the region's rich musical heritage. All these shrines remained a great source of poetry dissemination in Peshawar (discussed in detail in Chapter 7).

There are also several Churches, Gurdwaras (Sikhs worship place), and Mandars (Hindus worship place) in Peshawar. However, for the last two decades, the Sikhs and Hindus have been under high threat from the militants. Among them, the Sikhs are more vulnerable because of their outlook, as Sikhs wear *Pagray* (a typical Sikh turban), which could have easily differentiated them from the rest of the population. Due to their attire, the militants quickly identify and target them. In the last few years, dozens of Sikhs have been gunned down. This situation also forced Sikhs to leave Peshawar and shift to other cities of the country or foreign countries. The Hindus, however, cannot be differentiated because of their outlook and dress pattern, which is like the Pakhtuns and Hindko-speaking population. The Christians do not have such a direct threat as they mostly live in low-profile areas and do not have a share in business or other such high-class activities.

The secular forces, including political parties, individual writers, and poets, constantly criticize those who target the minority of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and write about their agony protesting the brutal practices against minorities and considered them as the beauty and diversity of Peshawar. Poets produce poetries on this matter and promote

⁷ The term *mailas* is derived from the Persian term *Majlis* which means gatherings. In Pakhtun society, the term is used both for get-togethers as well as for folk music gathering.

⁸ *Tang takor* is a Pashto word that is a combination of two words that is *tang* means tune of *Rabab*, a traditional musical instrument and *takor* means tune of *Mangay*: mud pitcher that is uses as musical instrument in folk music.

messages of religious harmony in their poetic themes. Further, they also regularly pay visits to the protests of minorities and show sympathy with them. In this regard, commenting on an event where a mob of Muslims destructed a Mandar in Karak district, Mumtaz Aurakzai (2023) shares his thought in a couplet as, “Da Netu Raam aw Rahim Khan tar maynza hes um nishta / Da dh jumat aw da mandar tar myanza jang waly de?”. (*“There is no issue between Netu Raam and Rahim Khan / Why is there a quarrel between the mosque and the Mandar then?”*) (Fieldnotes). The couplet means that there is no explicit conflict between the followers of the two religions. However, the fight among them is brought by those who manipulate religion for their interests. Here, Aurakzai conveys the message of religious harmony among people.

4.5. Economy

Along with other sources of revenue, like personal businesses and government jobs, agriculture is the main driving force of the local economies. A substantial percentage chose Middle Eastern nations for their means of subsistence. The economic source of Peshawar is explained in the following paragraphs.

4.5.1. Agriculture

Agriculture plays a pivotal role in the region’s economy. Due to fertile land and the outstanding irrigation infrastructure, most people rely on agriculture as a source of income for their economy. They cultivate numerous yielding crops, including wheat, rice, sugarcane, vegetables, and maize, and take economic benefit through their exportation to other regions. Similarly, fruits contribute to the region’s financial graph, and peaches, plums, apples, apricots, and persimmon are mostly grown on fertile land. Because they are grown nearby and are available in large quantities, the

natives of rural areas typically do not buy the principal crops for daily consumption; instead, urban residents do.

4.5.2 Government Services

Many educated community members, including women, seize the opportunities provided by government employment in Peshawar. They contribute their skills to various sectors such as health, engineering, revenue and administration, law and order, and education. This shift in societal norms, where women were previously not expected to work, is a testament to their empowerment and the changing dynamics of the workforce in Peshawar.

4.5.3 Services Abroad

Despite Pakistan's challenging unemployment situation, a significant number of literate and illiterate individuals demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptability by seeking economic stability abroad. They often choose to work in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and other Middle Eastern countries, contributing to their families' well-being. Their roles range from daily wage earners in private businesses to professionals in the engineering and health industries, showcasing their diverse skills and determination.

4.5.4 Business

As the province's bustling capital and business hub, Peshawar is home to a diverse range of businesses, from small local enterprises to significant national and international ventures. The entrepreneurial spirit of its people is evident in their involvement in the transportation, construction, food, and health industries, as well as smaller businesses like the marble and brick industries, adding to the city's vibrant economic landscape.

4.5.5 Livestock

The region's residents typically keep domesticated animals like buffalos, cows, and goats in the villages to meet their demand for dairy products. In this regard, men provide food for these animals, such as fresh crops from the fields, while women take care of them inside their homes and often milk them. In addition to milk, these animals also provide manure as a rich source of fertilizer for agricultural land.

4.6 Social Organization

The structure of its social organization can define the community. Various features of one community distinguish it from another. Every community has a unique way of relating to its members, leading to a distinctive way of life. As a result, each community has its unique social structure. Social organization is the crucial, dynamic component of any social system. Similarly, social organization is the foundation for establishing social ties within the group and other social institutions. Peshawar's social structure is quite exclusive, reflected in its social organization. Culture, politics, economy and society are intertwined in the social organization of Peshawar and their interactions, bonds, and conduct reflect society's social, political, and economic systems. People in this social structure live in tiny groups and interact with one another through communication to build relationships. The following sub-sections briefly discusses social organization of Peshawar in general, and of Pakhtuns in particular, who make up the majority of Peshawar's population.

4.6.1 Family Structure

In Peshawar, the family is a social unit distinguished by shared living quarters, shared means of support, and procreation. It involves adults of both sexes, at least two of whom continue a sexual connection that is legitimate, as well as one or more

biological or adopted children who belong to the sexually cohabiting adults. Family is Peshawar's fundamental building block of social structure and organization and the hub of all social activities. Typically, a family has one male breadwinner on whom the other members rely. All family members must get support from the family through food, clothing, and education. Each family member is subject to their responsibility and rights. Different family members have varying levels of prestige. The nuclear family never existed from the beginning, but it eventually formed depending on the circumstances that led to its formation. For instance, when a couple gets married, the bride is expected to move in with the groom's parents. Now, the common causes of nuclear family formation include parents' deaths or parent-child conflict. However, people from other districts reside in Peshawar due to their businesses or jobs. In this case, most families shifted from other districts live in the nuclear family system. Joint, extended, and nuclear families are Peshawar's most typical family types; however, nuclear families are less prevalent. The family structure is primarily patriarchal; the older male family member handles all family issues and significant decisions. The breadwinner must give the family's senior male member all his earnings. Older women exclusively use their authority for domestic tasks; matters of greater importance are always brought to the elder male, who has the final say.

4.6.1.1 Nuclear Families

Nuclear families, which consist of parents and their children, are typical in Peshawar's urban population because men from other districts who have jobs or businesses bring their wives and children to Peshawar. However, the concept of the nuclear family is uncommon in rural populations. Peshawar at the commencement of marriages; instead, they frequently form after two or three years of living together before eventually breaking into two or three nuclear families.

4.6.1.2 Joint Families

Most of the rural and urban population of Peshawar live in the joint family system, where a group of people share a single home and collective responsibilities of economic resources. The joint family unit, or the bond of union in consanguine, comprises two or even more brothers and their spouses. The brothers share the same financial resources in a joint family and live as one unit. Moreover, there are very few examples of joint extended families in the rural and urban population of Peshawar.

4.6.2 Kinship

In Peshawar, descent is entirely reliant on the male. It is determined that the mother has no rights to pass on to her children, either in her natural or marital home; she has no authority over any valuable resources. As a wife, a woman relies on her husband. The categories of kinship based on descent are distinct in every village. The elements of kinship in a village, which include relationships based on blood ties and marriage, are listed below.

4.6.2.1 *Koranay* (Family)

The *Koranay* (family) is the fundamental pillar and component of social structure in Peshawar. Marriage is necessary for *Koranay* to exist. First and second cousins are included in the horizontal dimension, and more than two generations are included. Families tend to have patriarchal living arrangements. As a result, after marriage, the woman relocates to her husband's home. After their marriages, the children reside with their parents. The male line determines the descent in the *Koranay* because he transmits the patriarchal line to the following generations. Traditionally, men inherit property in Pakhtun society, and only the dowry is given to the lady, who gives up her property rights in favor of her brothers. A woman can only inherit property if she does

not have a brother. In the twentieth century, girls married at 15-20, while boys typically married at 18-25. However, in the 21st century, the scenario has changed due to education, where youngsters go to schools, colleges, and universities and face unemployment. There is no fixed age for marriage; most boys get married after 25 and, in some cases, even after 30-35.

4.6.2.2 *Tarboor (Patrilineal Cousin)*

Father-side consanguine creates a patrilineal group called *tarboor*, a collection of people bundled together. Members of this group may quickly determine their connections with one another. *Tarboor* is an essential unit because of the prestige that all of its members share. *Tarboorwali* (agnatic rivalry) needs to be kept in check by all members with equal status; otherwise, the balance will be upset.

4.5.2.3 *Khel System*

The common term for a patrilineal lineage group is *khel* (sub-tribe), which clings a distinct identity to every individual. However, the *khel* of the non-landowners turn out to be nothing more than names, and the descendants given are merely made-up families. A complete patrilineal lineage, which specifies a classification of groupings and subgroups that places them all in a rigid framework, holds closely all the Pakhtun families in the hamlet. A defined procedure for integrating outsiders into this organization does not exist. Patrilineal lineage is an obvious indicator of a person's standing; outsiders cannot fit in it. Due to their patrilineal ancestry, Pakhtuns have a set position. Their primary relevance to the land, share system and public gatherings for debating settlements in native communities is their significance. *Khel* is the more significant part of the concentric circle and can be referred to as an extension of several families who share the same caste or as an extension of *tarboor*. In *khel*, individuals engage in both

primary and secondary connections. It implies that they will be required to participate in all events, happy or sad. They will fight for each other occasionally, such as when one *khel* or member has a dispute. Fieldwork has revealed that most of a village's residents share the same *khel*. After joining forces, several *khelona* (plural of *Khel*) form the larger circle known as the *qaum*. Different *khelona* are identified from *qaum* (tribe) such as Khalil, Momand or Dudadzai in the case of Peshawar, and *khel* is the group they interact with.

4.6.3 Jirga (Council of Elders)

In anthropological and literary studies on Pakhtuns, the *Jirga* is said to be a collection of councils that administer justice in both individual and group disputes (Barth, 1965). The *Jirga* is the primary body for decision-making and plays a significant role in developing the Pakhtun culture. Only the acephalous Pakhtun-detained portion of the setting is represented by the landowners' *Jirga*/public assemblages' ranking. The *Jirga* is also believed to provide a formal forum for meetings between the two opposing local blocs.

In the context of arbitration, the methods for organizing the meetings must be established before their role in the *Jirga* can be specified. Some of these directives are very formal and have a significant impact on the tactics of opposing parties. Moreover, only patrilineal descendants of the apical descendants, as defined by the relationship, who have property in their names—in other words, the concerned head of household of the Pakhtun lineage group—have the right to speak in *Jirga*. The privilege granted to every landowner head of household to debate at the assembly, regardless of how little the issue may be, is surprisingly the most essential rule.

The *Jirga* typically does not have a fixed meeting schedule. It is frequently based on member consensus, though a group of members will occasionally convene for a meeting. Even though it is claimed that each group member has the right to convene a *Jirga* to discuss

any matter, only the key leaders have the authority to do so unilaterally. Furthermore, every *Jirga* adheres to a specific set of guidelines. No one is allowed to think of themselves as superior because there is no chairperson of the *Jirga*, which is the only basis for unfettered dialogue with any of your neighbors about whatever interests you. Everyone is entitled to their voice. In the assembly, a final resolution is reached by unanimous vote. The absence of open resistance instead of any form of vote determines this.

Other decisions are occasionally taken as well. Fines are levied by the *Jirga*'s retainer or another representative in response to disapproval of the *Jirga* and damage to public property. The block pressure against the individual who breaks down the rules of procedure helps to keep them in place. However, the *Jirga* itself never takes place as a component of corporate activity; instead, talks in the *Jirga* are meant to identify prospective agreements and outcomes of negotiations. Therefore, it may be inferred from the preceding discussions that *Jirga* is a system of laws regulating local assemblies.

However, in the context of Peshawar Valley, the *Jirga* is not limited to arbitration only. Unlike the typical style, the *Jirga* works on many fronts. The gathering of literary people for a particular purpose, the gathering of locals for a collective issue, or the setting of locals with government representatives for solutions to social problems are also called *Jirgas*. In recent years, *Jirgas* of the political parties were also called by their leadership to discuss the issues and make way for collective efforts to solve problems. Being the capital of the province, these *Jirgas* were mostly invited to Peshawar, where people from Pakhtun areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Merged Districts, and Baluchistan joined these *Jirgas*. The guests from far-flung regions would stay at the *hujray* of the local people. These *Jirgas* were hosted by nationalist parties where leadership, scholars, literary people, and poets were invited to discuss collective problems and their solutions.

The discussion above also clarifies that the *Jirga* functions as a political institution because it affects block extensions via all spheres of daily life. Local blocks are becoming more prominent in *Jirga* as corporate and coordinated bodies of increased importance. The *Jirga* offers a dependable venue for gathering and resolving conflicts between opposing blocks.

4.6.4 Hujra

Hujra is a significant cultural icon for the Pakhtun people. It is a fundamental institution in Pakhtun society and can be found in regions where Pakhtuns predominate. In addition to being a guest house and dorm, *hujra* is crucial to village residents' day-to-day activities in Pakhtun society. There are more *hujray* in each ward in some areas where the proportion of Pakhtun inhabitants is higher. In addition, *hujra* serves as a platform for the *Jirga*, which is the community's dispute resolution system. A group of adult males set in *hujra*; however, women are not allowed due to the *pardah* concept among the Pakhtuns. Children of both sexes are allowed in *hujra*, but if there are too many of them, they are frequently shooed out with explicit instructions to stay quiet (Barth, 1965). Further, if an individual owns *hujra*, the maintenance and repair work is his responsibility. In contrast, if the *hujra* belongs to the entire ward, each household will take part in terms of financial and human resources in the maintenance and repair of the *hujra*. *Hujra*, the male club and a house for male companionship, also facilitates every large ceremony and high-scale celebration of personal and village occasions (Barth, 1965). In the context of this study, *hujra* plays an important role as it host variety of literary activities including *mushairay*, literary gatherings and meetings of literary societies. This aspect of *hujra* is intentionally or unintentionally ignore in existence literature on *hujra* culture of the Pakhtuns.

4.7 Political Dynamics

The political dynamics of the Peshawar are complex and shaped by historical, ethnic, and geopolitical factors. Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, has been a significant hub for political activities in the region.

1. Historical Context: The region has a rich history, with Peshawar being a hub of trade and culture for centuries. The political dimensions have been influenced by various historical events such as invasions, colonialism, and the partition of British India.

2. Ethnic Diversity: Peshawar is regarded as home to diverse ethnic groups, with Pakhtuns being the dominant community. The dynamics between different Pakhtun tribes, such as the Khalils, Dudaizais, Momands, Afridis, Yusufzais, and Khattaks, often characterize the political landscape. Ethnic considerations play a crucial role in electoral politics and governance.

3. Militancy and Security Concerns: The region has faced numerous threats related to militancy and insurgency, specifically during the rise of the Taliban in the early 2000s. Extremist groups' presence has significantly impacted political dynamics, shaping policies and security considerations.

4. Political Parties: Peshawar has various political parties, with the ANP historically having a strong presence and influence. Most of the people of Peshawar Valley are associated with ANP and consider Bacha Khan, their political mentor. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), led by Imran Khan, has recently gained popularity among youth. Moreover, Jammat Ulama e Islam (JUI), Pakistani Muslim League-N (PML-N), and Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary (PPPP) also have a basis among people. The interplay between these parties depicts the evolving political landscape.

5. Provincial Autonomy: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's provincial autonomy has been a point of discussion, with debates on resource distribution and local governance. The political dynamics often revolve around the balance of power between the provincial government and federal authorities.

6. Afghan Influence: Peshawar has been hugely impacted by various events in Afghanistan due to its connection with the Afghan border. The influx of Afghan refugees and cross-border issues have added new chapters to the political arena of Peshawar.

7. Economic Factors: Economic perspectives, which include development projects and job opportunities, play a significant role in mapping political preferences. The government's ability to address economic challenges often determines its standing in the eyes of the electorate.

In conclusion, the political dynamics of the Peshawar are influenced by historical legacies, ethnic diversity, security concerns, political parties, provincial autonomy, Afghan influence, and economic factors. Understanding these complexities is essential for comprehending the region's political landscape and analyzing its future developments.

4.8 Conclusion

As the provincial capital, Peshawar is an administrative, educational, and economic center that houses government offices, academic institutions, hospitals, and businesses. Historically known as the 'City of Flowers' for its greenery and rich cultural heritage, Peshawar has, in recent years, lost its reputation for its association with violence, militancy, and terrorism, mainly due to the ongoing war on terror. Bomb blasts, target killings, and kidnappings have become part of the city's identity,

significantly affecting both its residents and its reputation. Additionally, the city has seen a large influx of migrants from Afghanistan and other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, further altering its social and demographic makeup. These changes have also profoundly impacted the cultural and poetic traditions of both Peshawar and the wider province. The shifts in Peshawar's social fabric are mirrored in the evolving poetic landscape of Pashto, which reflects the region's broader cultural and political challenges. This chapter further explores the local culture, economy, social organization, and political dynamics, providing essential context for understanding the fieldwork setting. It highlights the significant role of Peshawar in shaping the socio-political climate of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while grounding the study in the changing conditions that influence Pashto poetry and its thematic concerns.

CHAPTER 5

ETHNO-POETICS: FIRST PHASE OF PASHTO POETRY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the ethno-poetic analysis of Pashto poetry, which emerged in the contemporary textual form in the 16th century. It investigates the historical context of the emergence of themes used in Pashto poetry in the subsequent schools of thought that laid the foundation of Pashto poetry, the regional identity of an ethnic group, and the use of Pashto as a competitor language to the dominant languages of the 16th century in the region. The cultural repertoires used in poetry shaped the development of poetic literature and played a significant role in constructing Pakhtun identity and cultural codes over time. This chapter also historicizes Pashto poetry, examining how it reflects the cultural codes in use and the ethnocultural identity of Pakhtuns by employing the binary opposition of ‘us’ versus ‘them.’ The chapter draws on analyzing historical accounts in Pashto poetry and how time and space influenced Pashto poetry to reflect on existing societal patterns. Along with identity construction and the emic approach of Pakhtuns towards their society and relationship with the external world, I have categorized the poetic development into three periods based on historical timeframe. In discussing the first period, the works of Pakhtuns and foreign authors concerning *Pata Khazana* (hidden treasure), an anthology of Pashto poetry that covers poetry from the 9th century to 17th century, which is purportedly the first written source of Pashto literature, are discussed. The chapter further discusses the second period of Pashto poetry, which begins in the mid-16th century and is characterized by the emergence of different *maktabona* (schools of thought). The

chapter discusses the third period, consisting of folk songs produced in the second half of the 18th and 19th centuries.

5.2 Ethno-Poetics: First Phase of Pashto Poetry

Pashto language in the contemporary textual form emerged very late compared to other languages in the region. Till now, its textual form is not evident before the 16th century; it is challenging to analyze the very long history of the Pashto language and its forms (Hanifi, 2013). When it emerged in the 16th century, the birth of its present-day textual form surfaced due to political struggle and contestation between Kabul and Delhi (India). Therefore, the same contestation and power struggle influenced the Pashto textual form in vogue today. Consequently, both the textual form and poetry are profoundly shaped by existing circumstances; as Garret (2004) states, poetries of all languages are influenced by time and space.

The history of Pashto poetry cannot be understood without considering the power struggles that have shaped the region. The region inhabited by Pashto speakers has always been a corridor into India for both the invaders and traders. In the face of invasions, Pakhtuns have consistently resisted providing safe passage to invading armies despite their subordinate status. For millennia, they have opposed every force attempting to conquer their lands for resources and security. Throughout history, power struggles have led to political uprisings against rulers, their policies, and the economic burdens placed on the populace. Consequently, in contemporary history, these forms of resistance and efforts to persuade rulers to recognize political rights are classified as socio-religious movements over time (Hanifi, 2013; Habibi, 2005).

The socio-economic conditions and cultural interactions with Persian, Turkish, and Indian civilizations have significantly shaped Pakhtuns: their language and literature (Hanifi, 2013). The political conflict and message dissemination resulted in the

appearance of Pashto speakers, giving rise to the current Pashto textual and literary form. Many scholars believe that the literary birth of Pashto was a political ploy to popularize the political and theological conflict with the Mughals among Pakhtuns. Oral and written poetry's subjects and genres, as well as Pashto script and lexicon, reflect the aforementioned conflicts and influences.

Before the advent of Islam in *Khurasan* (now Afghanistan), there is no written record of the Pashto language. Therefore, it is challenging to claim about the old histories of Pakhtuns and Pashto in the region (Hanifi, 2013). A manuscript known as *Pata Khazana*, which claimed to reveal the lost treasures of Pashto poetry, emerged in Pishin district of Baluchistan in the 20th century and was later advocated in Afghanistan. Despite claims by various Pakhtun scholars that it represents the earliest authentic source of Pashto poetry and literature, the claim has not been scientifically verified, and its authenticity remains contested. The 20th century marked the emergence of such anthologies during a burgeoning Pakhtun nationalism, which contrasted with Persian and other languages in the region.

To rival Persian historical narratives and poetry, state-sponsored Pakhtun nationalism eagerly sought to discover historical identities and artifacts, including archaeological sites and poetry. Subsequently, the anthology *Pata Khazana* is scrutinized and perceived as a deliberate effort by nationalists to construct a sense of nationalism and national identity within the text. According to the purported document, the evolution of Pashto poetry is categorized into various epochs, which are elaborated upon in subsequent sections. However, the earliest credible written records of the Pashto language in the current textual form trace back to the 16th century, marked by an assortment of written poetry and prose. From the 16th century to the late 19th century, Pashto poetry witnessed various genres, themes, and subjects. I have situated the

poetry produced during the above-mentioned phase in the framework of ethno-poetics. I have called it the first phase of Pashto poetry, followed by socio-poetics as the second phase of Pashto poetry in upcoming chapters that cover poetry of the 20th century and 21st century.

In addition, I have divided the present chapter into three periods⁹. The discussion surrounding the *Pata Khazana* is covered in the first period of ethno-poetics, which separates the discussion over the *Pata Khazana* anthology into three schools of thought. The second period of ethno-poetics spans the mid-16th to the late 18th century, and different schools of thought emerged during this time. The third period of ethno-poetics began in the late 18th century and continued until the early 20th century. The third period includes folksongs that carry themes of romanticism, bravery, and glorification of war heroes. The following figure 5.1. shows the development of Pashto poetry from the 9th to early 20th centuries.

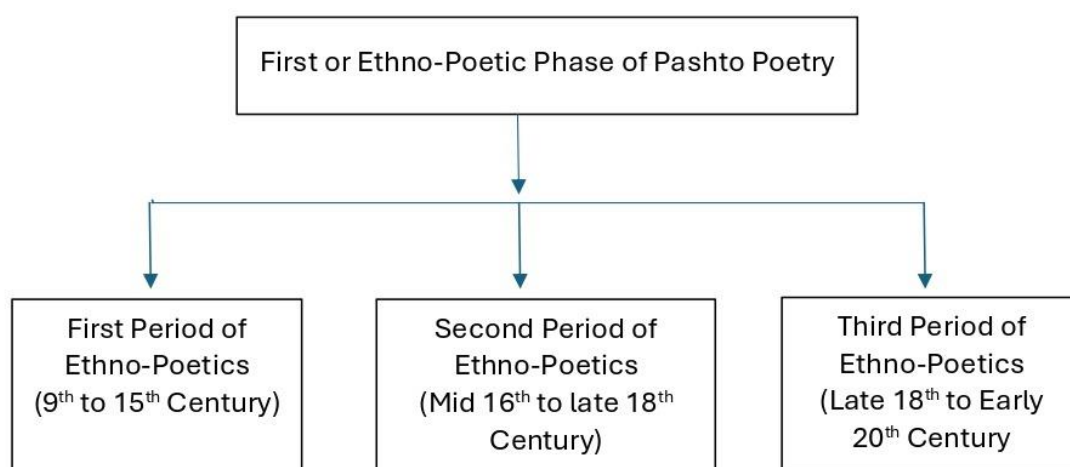


Figure 5.1. The figure shows different periods of the first phase of Pashto poetry theorized as ethno-poetics in this work.

⁹The criteria and periodization of the periods of Pashto poetry is established through the research work of different Pakhtun and foreign writers mentioned in the text. However, I have divided into two phases i.e., phase one and phase two differentiate between ethno-poetics and socio-poetics and further categorize the two phases into periods.

5.3 First Period of Ethno-Poetics

The first period of ethno-poetics is known as *Larghoni Dawra* (old period) in Pashto literature, started in the 9th century and matured in the 15th century. The classification of this period is based on *Pata Khazana*, comprising not only the oldest Pashto poetry but also biographies of poets from the 9th century to the date of its compilation in 1729 A.D. The anthology was initially collected and compiled in 1729 A.D. by Muhammad Hotak, a court writer of Shah Hussain Hotak of Qandahar. The latter tasked the former to collect and compile poetry and life details of the poets from the Pakhtun region (Andreyev, 2010; Bausani, 1971). The anthology was discovered in 1944 A.D. in Pakhtun-populated Pishin district of Baluchistan by Abdul Ali Akhunzada (1872-1944 A.D.), a famous folklorist from the Baluchistan province of Pakistan. It was published in the same year by Abdul Hai Habibi, a prominent 20th-century literary figure of Afghanistan. *Pata Khazana* embodies the details of prominent poets who lived between the 9th and 15th centuries, including Abu Hashim Sarwani (born in 838 A.D.), Sheikh Razi, and Amir Nasr Lodhi (lived between 961 and 1010 A.D.), Kharshbon and Sheikh Ismail Sarbanay (lived around 1010 A.D.), Sheikh Asad Suri (lived around 1034 A.D.), Sheikh Taiman (lived around 1155 A.D.), Skarandoi (lived around 1185 A.D.), Sheikh Mathi (lived around 1126 A.D.), Baba Hothak (lived around 1162 A.D.), Malikyar (lived around 1348 A.D.), Khalil Khan Neyazay (lived around 1485 A.D.), Essa Mashwanay (lived around 1495 A.D.), Zarghon Khan and Dost Muhammad Khan (lived around 1506 A.D.), and Sheikh Bostan Barheitsh (1582 A.D.) (Hotak, 1997).

However, there is a debate among Pakhtun and foreign scholars about the authenticity of the anthology, belonging to three schools of thought. The first school of thought calls *Pata Khazana* an unsolved question. The scholars of the second school of

thought suggest that *Pata Khazana* might be a forged document. The third school of thought believes *Pata Khazana* is an authentic source. The scholars of the first school of thought argue that the authenticity of the anthology will remain an unsolved question till we find its sources rather than relying on the document found and published in the 20th century. The most well-known European scholar, Morgenstierne, contends that the *Pata Khazana* contains a variety of writings in both old and modern styles. According to Morgenstierne, the poems by *Pata Khazana* that are currently in print do not pose any problems, such as the poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-1689 A.D) and Abdur Rahman Momand (1632-1706 A.D), also known as Rahman Baba (hereafter referred to as Rahman Baba). However, the unresolved issue is the poetry written between the 9th and 15th centuries, whose only source is *Pata Khazana*. Furthermore, Morgenstierne, quoted by Bausani (1971) expresses concerns about the anthology's chosen style, claiming that the 'Vyarana' (appreciation) poem of Amir Cror uses 'suspiciously modern' language reminiscent of poetry from later eras. Morgenstierne also states that the authenticity of the anthology needs modern research methods using the frameworks of history, literature, and linguistics (Habibi, 1977).

The scholars of the second school of thought reject the authenticity of the anthology and argue that *Pata Khazana* is not as old as the document and its publishers claim. In this regard, the works of Qalandar Momand (1988) and Saeed Gohar (1996) are prominent. Momand and Gohar claim that there was no tradition of anthology during the 17th century, so how is it possible that Muhammad Hotak compiled such an anthology in the said era? This school of thought also critiques the poetic language of *Pata Khazana*, arguing that specific vocabulary, such as *haiwad* (word) and alphabets like *zeem*, were used in *Pata Khazana* but disappeared in later classical periods and reappeared in the modern periods i.e., 20th century poetry.

Similarly, the school of thought also challenges the genres of poetry in *Pata Khazana* since some of the genres are not part of the poetry of latter periods, which seeks an explanation as to how these genres could have disappeared after the compilation of *Pata Khazana*. Similarly, this school of thought also draws attention to *Pata Khazana*'s chronological errors in reporting the ages of particular poets. For instance, Rahman Baba's death is recorded in *Pata Khazana* as 1696 A.D. Rahman Baba, however, lived until 1706 A.D, as evident from his poem about 'Gul Khan and Jamal Khan,' discussed later in this chapter. The second school of thought also criticizes *Pata Khazana* for referencing authors and publications that have neither been verified as accurate nor referenced in any other source. The scholars of the same school of thought contend that the poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak foregrounds poets from the Roshanite school of thought. However, it fails to highlight any poet from *Pata Khazana* (Momand, 1988; Gohar, 1996).

After the critique of Momand and his followers, a tradition of critique about *Pata Khazana* developed, where some wrote in favor of it while others offered critical commentary. The first source of critique on second school of thought came from Khalil (1925-2024), who wrote a book named *Tol Parsang (Weight Detector)* (1992) that laid the foundation for the third school of thought on *Pata Khazana*. Following Khalil's footsteps, subsequent scholars produced several works favoring *Pata Khazana*. They called it a genuine document and the first written source of Pashto poetry (Baryali, 2003; Ruhi, 1375 AH). Scholars from the third school of thought contend that the questions posed by the second school of thought are groundless. Contesting the criticism of the second school of thought regarding the tradition of anthologies, the third school of thought asserts that there was an established anthology tradition at the time of *Pata Khazana*. The third school of thought refers to Sulaiman

Mako's *Tazkirah O Auliya* (Memoirs of Saints) and Hussain Khan's *Israr ul Afaghina* (Mysteries of Afghans) as a reference to contend the criticism of the second school of thought. In a similar vein, the third school of thought challenges the assertion of the second school of thought that *Pata Khazana*'s poets are not mentioned in any other source by arguing that the *Tazkirah O Auliya* and Hussain Khan's *Israr ul Afaghina* also contain the names of the poets mentioned in *Pata Khazana*. Likewise, contesting claims of the second school of thought regarding chronological errors in reporting the ages of particular poets, Khalil argues that the composer might have miswritten Rahman Baba's age as 1118 AH (1696 A.D.) instead of 1128 AH (1706 A.D.).

Scholars of the third school of thought also question Momand's work concerning Bayazeed Ansari's book, *Da Khair-ul-Bayan Tanqeedi Mutalea* (A Critical Study of Khair-ul-Bayan), claiming that the version of *Khair ul Bayan* released by Maulana Abdul Qadir is not the original (Momand, 1988). However, other copies of *Khair-ul-Bayan* were discovered to be identical to the one published by Maulana Abdul Qadir. The third school of thought uses it as a foundation for their arguments, claiming that Momand's critique of *Khair-ul-Bayan* and other works are dubious and have lost significance with advances in language and literature (Khalil, 1992; Ruhi, 1375 AH; Baryali, 2003).

Despite the controversies surrounding the authenticity of *Pata Khazana*, this study examines its poetry within the realm of ethno-poetics. *Pata Khazana*'s poetry delves into themes such as Sufism, romance, ethics, bravery, and warfare. These themes encompass aspects of Pakhtun life: history, conflict, resistance, and morality. For instance, in a poetic piece, Amir Kror (1977) writes:

“Za yam zmaray pa de narai la ma atal nishta /
Pa Hind o Sindh aw pa Takhar aw pa Kabul Nishta /
Bal pa Zabul Nishta /

La ma Atal Nishta.”.

*(“I am a lion, in this world, there is none more powerful than me /
Neither in India, Sindh, Takhar, or Kabul /
Nor is there any in the plains of Zabul /
There is none mightier than me.”).*

Kror reflects on his bravery in his poetry and discusses various regions such as India, Sindh, Kabul, Takhar, and Zabul. ‘Atal’ signify ‘valiance’ and ‘Zmari’ signify ‘courageous’ respectively. These concepts have been employed in classical and contemporary poetry, shaping identities (see chapters 6, 7, and 8). Likewise, Sheikh Mathi’s (1977) poetry embodies the principles of Sufism. He expresses:

“Pa loyo ghro hum pa dakhro ke /
Pa loye sahaar pa nemo shpo ke /
Pa ghara ghag aw pa shpelko ke /
Ya da werjalo pa shpelo ke /
Tol sta da yaad naray sori de /
Da sta da meeni nandari de”.

*(“Among the high mountains and the desert's blight /
At early dawn or in the middle of the night /
From the groan of reeds and the songbirds in flight /
Or the lamentation of the bereaved forthright /
There is a soothing sound from up above /
A reflection of your kindness and love.”).*

Mathi’s poetry delves into themes of nature, flora, wildlife, and love, interweaving with Sufism and its discourse on the divine. Additionally, nature motifs are intertwined into earliest and contemporary poetry as expressions of patriotism and national devotion.

However, Morgenstierne, Habibi (1977), and others suggest that the authenticity of *Pata Khazana* remains open and necessitates further scholarly investigation. The debate suggests that uncovering new poetic materials from the 9th to 15th centuries,

combined with linguistic and historical research, could validate the enigmatic question of *Pata Khazana*.

5.4 Second Period of Ethno-Poetics

The second period of ethno-poetics is *Classikee Dawr* (classic period) in Pashto literature because of its classical style and richness spanning from the mid-16th to late 18th century. During this period, Pashto poetry was first documented in written form in the current script, marking the inception of authentic written poetry (Bausani, 1971; Andreyev, 2010). It reflects the sociopolitical milieu of Pakhtuns in the broader context of the Mughal empire in India. It has also introduced new genres, styles, subjects, themes, and metaphors (Zaiwar, 2018b; Rishteen, 1988).

The period starts with the emergence of *Rokhani*¹⁰ *Tehreek* (hereafter referred to as Roshanite movement) that ignited literary pursuits among the Pakhtuns, leading to the emergence of numerous poets who bequeathed a rich poetic legacy to subsequent generations of Pakhtuns, particularly poets. Influenced by the Roshanites' resistance to the Mughals, Pashto poetry became a means of communication between the populace and writers for the first time, fostering the spread of Sufi ideologies and practices. The Roshanites' poetic contributions laid the foundation for a school of thought called *Rokhani maktab* (Roshanite school of thought)¹¹. Following Roshanites, Khushal Khan Khattak's poetry addresses his time's social and political issues. The Roshanites laid the groundwork for Pashto poetry and prose, weaving complex themes of Sufism and spirituality, which are also evident in Khattak's work. However, Khushal Khan Khattak's poetry is further shaped by the socioeconomic conditions, internal Pakhtun tribal conflicts, and his defiance of the Mughals.

¹⁰ *Rokhani* is also called as *Roshani* in soft variety of Pashto language.

¹¹ *Rokhan* is also called as *Roshan* in soft variety of Pashto language.

Consequently, his poetry predominantly revolves around the sociopolitical dynamics of Pakhtun society, which set the foundation for the Khushal school of thought. Contemporaries of Khushal Khan Khattak, such as Rahman Baba and Abdul Hameed Momand (1660-1732 A.D), also known as Abdul Hameed Mashokhel and Hameed Baba (hereafter referred to as Hameed Baba), offer poetry that, while differing in content and ideas, also embrace Sufi traditions, romanticism, and ethics. Rahman Baba's and Hameed Baba's works are influenced by Persian Sufi poetry and romanticism, which hold a distinct place in Persian literary tradition. Their poetry lays the groundwork for unique schools of thought within Pashto poetry.

While discussing the second period of Pashto poetry, I have divided it into the above-mentioned schools of thought, namely the Roshanites school of thought, Khushal school of thought, Rahman school of thought, and Hameed school of thought, which are separately discussed in the following sections.

5.4.1 Roshanite School of Thought

Roshanite school of thought emerged in the second half of the 16th century and ended in the mid-17th century. It is associated with the Roshanite movement founded by Pir Rokhan, who was born in 1524-25 in Jalandhar in the family of Ansar of Arab origin in India. He was educated in Jalandhar and was trained in the technicalities of Sufism and later in *Sharia* of Islam. With the arrival of British colonialism in India, colonial writers and administrators have written about the role of Pir Rokhan and elaborated on his role in the mountainous region of Waziristan or Kaniguram. He and his followers, known as Rokhanyan¹² (hereafter referred to as Roshanites), had produced prose and poetry in Pashto despite scholars' disagreement over the Pir Rokhan's

¹² *Rokhanyan* are also called as Roshanyan in soft variety of Pashto language that means followers of Roshanite movement.

ethnicity. Roshanites conceived the current Pashto script and other genres to propagate their ideas, preachings, and political messages against the Mughal emperors (Maghmom, 2011; Zaiwar, 2018b). However, before discussing the poetic works of Roshanites, I have discussed the historical background that led to the emergence of the Roshanite movement.

The political uprisings from different regions of Mughal India surround the birth of the Roshanite movement. During the time of Pir Rokhan, the Mughal Empire crumbled and went to war with different regional states, challenging their supremacy over the vast waste of the Mughal Empire. Before the throning of Akbar, the Sur Dynasty was ruling over the Indian empire, and it ruled for 16-18 years. Many nobles of Pakhtun origin were scattered in India and opposed the Mughal empire as Akbar overran the Suri Dynasty. Many of the Afghan families moved back to their hometowns due to the Mughal injustices. As a result, the family of Pir Rokhan also relocated to Kaniguram village, which is now a town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's South Waziristan district (Maghmom, 2011).

Pir Rokhan got his early education from his father and his father's students. He visited different areas, including Samarqand, to build a stable business. However, he again moved to Mughal India, where he married a girl named Shamso, who was from the Lodhi family. Following disputes with his father and sibling over various issues, he returned to his native place, Kaniguram. Upon arrival, Pir Rokhan performed *Chilla* (worship for forty days in seclusion), attracting followers and devotees. However, over time, he established the Roshanite movement and gained most traction in the Pakhtun-dominated areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan (Maghmom, 2011). Some scholars, like Yaqubi (2024), consider him an operative of Akbar who continuously supported him after his surrender to Akbar. Yaqubi thinks Akbar used Pir

Rokhan against his stepbrother Hakim, a Mughal ruler of Kabul. However, some other writers see it as a religiopolitical movement that persisted for over a century, challenging and threatening the Mughal passage between Kabul and Delhi (Bilgrami, 1995).

Despite its underlying motivations and intentions, the Roshanites not only armed resistance as a method against the Mughal but also used a multifaceted medium against the Mughal. They deliberately used the Pashto language to disseminate their beliefs and preachings. They crafted political slogans against the Mughals, which resulted in the foundation for developing the Pashto script, which remains in use today (Zaiwar, 2018a). Their medium established political ideas among Pakhtuns. Their poetry and prose were a milestone for political and socio-cultural consciousness that profoundly influenced the Pakhtuns and the Pashto language. The conscious use of poetry and prose in Pashto ushered in a new period of the Pashto language and literature against the Persian, the dominant culture's language (Habibi, 2005). The movement gave birth to many poets including Mullah Arzani Khaweshgi (1523-1619 A.D), Mirza Khan Ansari (1548-1630 A.D), Wasil Rokhani (1582-1658 A.D), Daulat Lawanri (1585-1660 A.D), Kareem Dad (1561-1662 A.D) and Ali Muhammad Mukhlis (1610-1664 A.D) etc.

Fakhruddin Iraqi, Sanai, and Jalal Uddin Rumi's poetry in Arabic and Persian influenced the themes of the early poets of the Roshanite school of thought. The chief reason for the Arabic imprint on the Roshanite school of thought is that the latter subscribed to mystical and Sufi Islam. Persian influence on the Roshanite movement can be understood in that Persian was the court language of the Mughals in India, which directly influenced Pashto. Moreover, with Sufism as its central theme, the

poetry of the Roshanites seems to be the story of *Wahdat-ul-Wajood* (Sufi tradition in Islam believing on the unity of existence)¹³. As Arzani (2005) writes:

“La Ilah Illa Ho Ye /
La Shareek Wahda Laho Ye /
Za La Ta Yam Ta La Ma Ye /
Ho Maana Anaa Ma’aa Ye”.

(“*There is no God, but You are /
No companion, you’re the only one /
I’m because of you, you are of me /
I’m with you, and you are with me.*”).

In the couplet, the poet discusses *Wahdat ul Wajood*. Referring to God, he says, ‘I am from you, and you are from me.’ Themes in poetry reflect the concept of *Wahdat-ul-Wajood* that the Roshanites followed.

Similarly, poetry themes also revolve around the Sufi path’s teachings for finding God’s ultimate truth and his inspiration. It emphasizes eight stages of Sufism that are similar to the *Chishtia tareeqat* (*Chisti’s path*); however, they are different in form and way. Almost all poets of the Roshanite movement have discussed the eight stages of Sufism in their poems (Maghmom, 2011). Arzani (2005) describes the eight stages as follows:

“Yaw aqwaal ye shariat dey /
Dey da kho wayi pandona /
Bal aq’waal ye tareeqat dey /
Bandagi, rojy, munzoona /
Drem halat ye haqeeqat dey /
Pasbaani ka da damona /
Ma’arifat ye nandara da /
Yaw naqaash pa kul naqshona /
Bal qurbat ye nezdeeki da /
Ra nezday tar sha ragoona /

¹³ *Wahdat ul Wajood* and *Wahdat ul Shuhood* are two different school of thoughts in Islamic Sufi traditions.

Bal wasal ba she la dost /
 Laka laila wa la majnoona /
 Bal tawheed ye de yak rang /
 Paki wrak she nur rangoona /
 Bal akhir ye Sakoonat dey /
 Sakoonat ye de ganona.”.

*(“One of his sayings is Shariah/
 He always speaks of virtues /
 Another of his actions is the pathway/
 Asking for worship, fasting, and praying /
 The third condition is Reality /
 To take care of God’s Reality /
 Knowledge of God is the sight /
 He is obvious in all creatures /
 Rapprochement is His proximity /
 He is nearer to us than Aorta /
 Meeting with God is as such as /
 Meeting of Laila with Majnun /
 Unity of God is the oneness of colors /
 It obliterates all the other colors /
 The last one is the dwelling of the soul /
 Soul at rest in peace forever.”).*

The couplets talk about the eight stages of the Roshanite’s thought. It says about every stage, its method, and its impact. The stages of the Sufism explained in the poem are *Shariat (Sharia)*, *Tareeqat (order)*, *Haqeeqat (realization)*, *Maarifat (inner knowledge/ secrets)*, *Qurbat (nearness)*, *Wasal or Waslat (meeting)*, *Tauheed or Wahdat (unification)*, and *Sukoonat (eternity)*. For different aspects of Sufi thought, the Roshanites have used symbols in their poetry (Shah, 2013). Without knowing these symbols, it is impossible to understand the poetry of the Roshanites. These symbols are used for specific ideas and thoughts of the philosophy of the Pir Rokhan,

and without a deep understanding of the ideas and thoughts of the Pir Rokhan, it is not easy to understand meanings in Roshanite poetry (Maghmom, 2011).

Another important theme of the Roshanites' poetry is the love and respect for the founder and leader of the movement, Pir Rokhan. As Mukhlis (2003) says in a couplet: "Kh talib ye da wahdat da mayyo wawra / Pir Rokhan da dagha mai-ferosh dey." ("If you've thirst for the wine of Wahdat / Pir Rokhan is the wine-seller of those."). The ideality of Roshanites' followers lies in the ideology of Pir Rokhan, which was based on the creation of a cult believing in *Wahdat-ul-Wajood* that only follows its master, or pir, as Pir Rokhan. Therefore, the Roshanite's poetry refers to the people wondering if they can find a true master of truth; the master of truth is Pir Rokhan (Yaqubi, 2024).

Although the Roshanite school of thought is not mainly focused on Sufism, other themes such as identity and romanticism can also be found in their poetry, especially in Mullah Arzani's works. As Mullah Arzani (2005) writes:

“Da faqeer Pakhto khabari /
Laka speeni malghalari /
Arzaani Afghan wokhkali /
Da khpal zra la tasawri /
Da Pakhto waina ramoz da /
Posheeda la kor o kar /
Arzaani pa Pakhto zhaba /
Dh la zra wokhko da she /
Yaw waina ba kram aghaaza /
Pa Pakhto ba ye kram saaza /
Da faqeer dewaan Pakhto dey /
Da Saadi dey la Sheeraza /
Arzaani pa Pakhto wokhkal /
Ludani pat haqaiq /
Da Pakhto khabari wawra /

La de arzaani Afghan”.

*(“The Pashto sayings of the destitute/
Are just like white pearls /
Arzani has expelled Afghans /
From his heart of imagination /
The sayings of Pashto are symbolic /
Hidden from every idle and worker /
Arzani spoke out in the Pashto language /
The Heart’s tears of blood /
I shall commence a speech /
And construct it through Pashto /
The book of Faqeer is in Pashto /
Like the book of Sa’adi of Sheraz /
Arzani described in Pashto /
The hidden thoughts of Reality /
Listen to the sayings of Pashto /
From your own Arzaani Afghan.”).*

The couplets show the poet's intentions, where he is consciously writing in Pashto as he says, ‘I will initiate a talk in Pashto.’ The couplets also carry words like Pashto, Pakhtun, and Afghan. Maghmom (2011) believes that Arzani used words like Pashto, Pakhtun, and Afghan for political purposes and purposefully for the first time, as there is no authentic evidence that anyone used these words before the Roshanites. It is also worth mentioning that terms like Afghanistan and Pakhtunkhwa were used for the first time in the same period by Akhund Derweza, who was the opponent of the Pir Rokhan and left with various sources of prose discussing Islamic ideas and issues with the Roshanite movement (Kakakhel, 1994).

The poetry of the Roshanites consciously increased people’s awareness and encouraged others to do so. Perhaps due to Roshanite's contribution, the later poets of the classical periods wrote about various themes, including romanticism, ethics,

identity, bravery, taunts, and honor (Rishteen, 1988; Zaiwar, 2018b). By giving a thorough reading of the implicit message in the Roshanites' poetry, it can be ascertained that they not only introduced the Pashto in the contemporaneous text but also provided a prototype of Pakhtuns' identity and laid down the foundation for the poetry of resistance as well as cultural codes, which are later known as *Pakhtunwali* (way of life), where the cultural codes play an important role to inform the behavior of Pakhtun (Ahmed, 1980). Further, poetries of the Roshanites are used as a source in the political milieu and serve as a nationalistic approach towards Mughals and later subsequent non-Pakhtun rulers in India and later Pakistan (Khalil, 2008). Along with this, Roshanites also laid the foundation for prose in Pashto, and they extensively wrote about the relationship between the spiritual world and the importance of guide/pir about God. Other contributions of the Roshanite movement were Pashto music, rags, songs, and dance, popularly propagated in Deccan (India) after their submission to the Mughals (Yaqubi, 2024).

The rise of the Roshanite movement at that time was surrounded by a powerful regional tribal confederation in the borderlands. Influential tribal leaders and religious figures headed each confederation. Therefore, the Roshanites were confronted on many fronts, like religious ideologies, fights, and tribal allegiances with and against them. Orthodox Islam prevailed in the area, and the Roshanite movement could not sustain the same momentum (Husain, 1994).

5.4.2 Khushal School of Thought

Soon after the assimilation of Roshanites into the service of Mughals in the mid-17th century, Pashto poetry was left without any popular figure of the same time. After their assimilation, Pashto's only popular and most revered poet is Khushal Khan Khattak. He was born in 1613 A.D. and lived till 1689 A.D. Being a poet, warrior, and

leader of his tribe, Khushal Khan Khattak has a unique character compared to other classic poets (Rishteen, 1988). He was born into the well-known family of the Khattak tribe, and his grandfather and father were loyal to the Mughal Emperors. The Mughal form of governance was indirect, and it was run through intermediaries, which is known as Turko-Persian governance. The Mughal governance in the area was achieved by appointing regional representatives. The Mughals could collect taxes, provide security, and secure passages to trade caravans between central Asia and India through these appointees. In the same milieu, the Khushal family was tasked with protecting the Mughals' interest in the Pakhtun area near the river Indus on the main route of south and central Asia. To protect the route, Khushal's family fought with the Yousafzai tribe for many years, and Khushal Khan Khattak remained part of these fights (Rishteen, 1988).

After his father's death, Khushal Khan Khattak became chief of the tribe. After a few years, Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan got sick, and his sons started fighting for the throne. As a result, Aurangzeb came into power in a contestation. Aurangzeb imprisoned his father and brothers who resisted his throning. Through contestation for power struggle, Khushal Khan Khattak supported Aurangzeb. After becoming emperor of India, some sections of tribal groups in the borderlands developed differences with Aurangzeb, and Khushal Khan Khattak fought with them on behalf of the Mughals. For his services, he received *mansab* (rank) and other perks and privileges (Rishteen, 1988). However, after getting off his *mansab*, the tribe members disagreed with Aurangzeb. There are different reasons for the disgruntling of the tribe members against Aurangzeb and Khushal Khan Khattak. One of the prime reasons for disgruntling was the path chosen by Aurangzeb for throning. He used violence to imprison his family members and made his way to power. Another reason was the

road tax collection and the increase in the land taxes by Aurangzeb. Heavy land taxes caused panic among the section of the area against the Mughals and Khushal Khan Khattak. Therefore, his tribe section sided with the Yousafzai warlords to wage a war against the Mughals. Upon criticism by Khushal Khan Khattak regarding the heavy land tax, Aurangzeb put him in prison and solitary confinement (Momand, 1951).

After spending two years in prison, he was released with the help of Mughal notables. Khan & Himayatullah (2020) state that the imperial Mughals were still interested in using his services against the rebellion tribes, and his release from jail was a political move to get his back up against the rebelling tribes. Upon his release from jail, Khushal Khan Khattak was not interested in waging a fight against his Pakhtun fellows. However, after some time, when Afridis (Afridi tribesmen) and Yousafzais (Yousafzai tribesmen) started resistance against the Mughals, he supported them and started a continuous fight against them. It was because of the extended help Yousafzais gave to his family members by sheltering them during his imprisonment.

This moment allowed him to instill ethnic nationalism, the Pakhtun code of honor, and the foundation of chivalric charisma in his poetry (Khan & Himayatullah, 2020). This is why his post-imprisonment period poetry covers various themes of bravery, honor, war, ethnic attachment, and portrayal of Mughals as unjust rulers. As in a couplet, Khushal Khan Khattak (2001) writes, "Da Afghan pah nang me otarrala toora / Nangyalay da zamanay Khushal Khan Khattak yam." (*"Girded I, my sword in the Afghans' honor/ I'm the valiant Khushal Khatak of this age."*). However, in his poetry, it is very ambiguous to understand the word Afghan through his poetry. His allegiance and alliance were limited to a few tribes who stood against the Mughals, but at the same time, these tribes were in alliance with the Mughal governor in Kabul. The scope of the Afghan concept in his poetry is limited to the tribes living near Khushal

abode in the plain and Yousafzais mountainous regions in the current political boundaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similarly, the following couplets are also evident of the post-imprisonment poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak (2001), which carries themes of bravery and revenge against the Mughals:

“Pas la banda ye da azm /
Da Khushal da khatir jazm /
Ya newaly makh Makki ta /
Ya Maghulo sara razm.”

*(“After the hardships of imprisonment /
Khushal has utterly determined /
Either worship the God of Kabba /
Alternatively, fight the Mughals ruthlessly.”).*

In the couplets, he says that after imprisonment, I have decided to either turn to Kaaba for worship or to fight with the Mughals. Similarly, the same intentions are also articulated in poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak (2001) over the construction of Langar Kot fort in Mardan, as he writes:

“Langar’kot maghulo saaz kro /
Za pa nang bya da Afgan shom /
Kh yousaf wo kh mandanr wo /
Za da waro neghuban shom.”.

*(“The Mughals build up Langarkot /
I fight for my Afghans /
Whether yousazai or Mandanr
I am safeguarding them.”).*

The couplets discuss the Mughals’ construction of the fortress of Langar Kot and Khushal’s intentions to fight the Mughals. The term *nang* (prestige) in the couplet means honor, a cultural repertoire in the poetry of the Khushal school of thought and subsequently in poetries of later periods.

Despite his political life, Khushal Khan Khattak is the only figure, and his family lavishly contributed to Pashto literature. After Roshanites, his writing produced highly qualified poets and prose writers in Pashto script. Due to their invaluable contribution, the afterward poetry and prose writers aligned with poetry themes in Khushal Khan Khattak's poetry are called Khushal *maktab* (Khushal school of thought). The famous and popular poets of the Khushal school of thought are Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak (1633-1716 A.D), Ashraf Khan Hejre (1634-1694 A.D), Sikandar Khan Khattak (1661-1747 A.D), and others. The Khushal school of thought poets produced poetry in various genres, and it is that almost all of its works are extant. Further, the poetry of the Khushal school of thought consists of various socio-cultural themes, including hunting, folk wisdom, sexuality, love ethics, and aesthetics (Rishteen, 1988). Through its themes, the Pashto language became sublime, replete with history, society, culture, psychology, and geography that established the pillars of Pakhtun identity, cultural motifs, and societal codes of conduct.

Unlike the Roshanite's poetry, the important turn in the poetry of the Khushal school of thought is that it explicitly mentions the Mughals. It talks for the unity of the Pakhtuns, taunts Pakhtuns, and condemns the Mughals. As Khushal Khan Khattak (2001) writes:

“Har chaar da Pukhtana tar Mughal kha da /
 Itfaq warsara nishta der arman /
 Da Behlol aw da Sher Shah Khabari awrom /
 Che pa hind ke Pukhtana wo Badshahan /
 Shpag wowa perai ye dasi bashahi wa /
 Che pa dwe pori drast khalak wo hairan /
 Kh tawfeeq da itfaq Pukhtana momi /
 Zor Khushal ba dobara she pa da zwan.”.

(“Every action of Pakhtuns is better than Mughals /

*Wish if they had unity among them /
I'm listening to Behlol and Sher Shah /
That Pakhtuns were the kings of Hindustan /
They had such a rule for six or seven generations /
That all the folks were astonished of their rule /
If the Pakhtuns could find unity among themselves /
The aged Khushal will become young again.”).*

In the above couplet, Khushal Khan Khattak compares the histories of Pakhtuns in India. Mughals twice down-topped Pakhtun rulership. Therefore, the sentiments of losing power in India were high during Khushal Khan Khattak. The anti-Mughal sentiments were propagated through Roshanites, and later, the hardships inflicted on Pakhtun and Khushal Khan Khattak are evident from the poetry of the Khushal school of thought. The ultimate rulership of the Pakhtuns in India faced hardships, and later repercussions on the Pakhtun elites can also be observed in his poetry. The large population of Pakhtun was scattered across India, and they could not reunite to struggle to regain power. He calls disunity among Pakhtuns a significant cause of their suffering caused by the Mughal occupation. A thorough reading of the Khushal school of thought shows that it intentionally positioned the Mughals as ‘other’ and ‘oppressors’ and asked Pakhtun to fight against them¹⁴.

The poetry of the Khushal school of thought not only condemns the Mughals but also condemns and taunts those Pakhtuns who supported the Mughals. In a couplet, Sikandar Khan Khattak (1399 AH) writes about his elder brother Bahram Khan, who supported the Mughals against his father Khushal Khan Khattak, and his brothers:

“Bahram Khan laka aranda /
Ya pa shan laka spaidar /

¹⁴ The ‘otherization’ of Mughal by Khushal Khan was termed as ‘*mughalwala*’ (being Mughal) in the modern poetry (socio-poetics) that is use for the outsiders who attack or occupy Pakhtuns. See chapter 6 for more detail discussion.

Nh ye chob pakar nh panri /

Nh ye gul pakar nh bar.”.

(“Bahram Khan is like Aranda tree /

Or is he like the poplar tree /

Neither needs branches nor leaves /

Neither needs flowers nor fruits.”).

In the couplet, the poet taunts his brother for supporting the Mughals. After Khushal started resistance against the Mughals, one of his sons, Bahram Khan, started supporting the Mughals. The couplet says that Bahram is like a *spaidar* (populus ciliate) tree, which is useless. However, the poetry themes honor those who fought against the Mughals for the cause of Pakhtuns. While talking on similar themes, a follower of the Khushal school of thought and son of Khushal Khan Khattak, Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak (1317 AH), also writes:

“Kha zwanan che da gunbat pa maidan womral /

Da har zwan pa zra ke nanga Afghani da /

Hamagi zwanan zama da zra arman de /

Paki baila da Abdul tandaa zwani da.”.

(“When the gallants were killed in Gumbat /

Every youth had great honour for Afghans /

All those young ones are my heart’s desire /

Unique was the youth of Abdul in them.”).

The couplets cover various themes, including history, bravery, *nang*, sacrifice for homeland, and appreciation for Afghans who sacrifice for the same homeland against invaders. The above couplet reflects on the engagement of the Mughals with the Pakhtun at Gunbat in Kohat during the war. This engagement was between the Pakhtun forces and the Mughals. The Pakhtun forces were mainly composed of Afridis and Yousafzais.

Along with chivalric themes in the Khushal school of thought, their poetries also preserved cultural values and norms of the time. For example, Khushal Khan Khattak himself visited many areas of the Pakhtun land, so he used various terms and vocabularies of the Pashto language (Hanifi, 2013). Khushal Khan Khattak confesses that he worked in the Pashto language to preserve and promote it. While talking about his intention and struggle for Pashto, Khushal Khan Khattak (2001) writes:

“Da Khushal Khan Khattak pa zhaba barkat sha /
 Che wayal kra pa Pakhto la hara baaba /
 Kh da nazam, kh, kh da nasar, kh da khat de /
 Pa Pakhto zhaba me khaq de be hisaba.”.

*(“Blessing be upon the thoughts of Khushal Khan Khattak /
 He writes on every aspect of the Pashto language /
 (“Be it the poem, prose or the letters /
 I do have immense rights to the Pashto language.”).*

In the couplet, he discusses the different genres of Pashto poetry he uses. He says that my honesty with the Pashto language makes me produce poetry in different genres.

In this regard, poets of the Khushal school of thought also use many of the proverbs in poetic form. For example, in one couplet, Sikandar Khan Khattak (1399 AH) writes:

“Da matal pa drast jehan ke mash’hoor de / Tar weshtoni nandarchi saray batoor de.”
(“The proverb is well-known in the whole world / That the spectator is valiant than

the shooter.”). The couplet is written on a Pashto proverb, “*Tamashgeer da nakhi means the world*” (spectator always targets the right spot). Similarly, in another

couplet, Khushal Khan Khattak (2001) says, “Sar de dromi, maal de dromi, patt de nh zi / Da insan khobi hama wara pa pat da.” (*“Not life, not wealth, but honor is*

everything. A man is known by his honor.”). The couplet says that life and wealth are

useless without honor. To him, honor is more important than life or wealth. In another

couplet, Khushal Khan Khattak (2001) says, “Marg pa sal zala behtar de tar jwandona

/ Da izzat sara che nh we zeest rozgar." (*"Death is way better than such a life/ When there is no esteem in life."*). The couplet says that death is preferable without respect in life. The couplet depicts Khushal Khan Khattak's understanding of life, culture, society, honor, and respect.

Moreover, the poetry of Khushal school of thought also carries themes of Sufism. In a couplet, Khushal Khan Khattak (2001) says, "Pa har sa ke nandara da hagma makh kram / Che la deri paidai na pa'deed sha." (*"I see that face in everything, which is hidden due to abundant visibility."*). In the couplet, he praises the creator, saying he is hidden because of too much visibility; however, I see him in everything. Similar themes can be found in the poetry of other poets of the Khushal school of thought. In a couplet, Sikandar Khan Khattak (1399 AH) says, "Che pa loh aw pa mahfooz ke sa yadegy / Hagha weeni arifan pa zra safa ke." (*"What is told in the hidden tablet? The sages can see that in a clear heart."*). The couplet refers to the relationship between God, Sufis, and understanding the ultimate truth. The debate among Muslim scholars is about knowing the hidden or invisible things. The Quran indicates that the persevered tablet or the book keeps the predetermined destination of all creation in the preserved tablet. It is commonly held that the friends of God know the predestined fate of the people and the invisible future (Özsoy, 2024). The scholarship in the form of poetry and prose of the Khushal school of thought is well preserved in text and widely available. The analysis of the existing literature produced by the school contains various themes regarding Pakhtun and its relationship with the external world, i.e., the Mughals (Rishteen, 1988).

5.4.3 Rahman School of Thought

Rahman Baba (1632-1706) was born in 1632 A.D. in Bahadur Kalay (his ancestral village) in Peshawar and died in 1706 A.D. His shrine is situated at Hazar-Khwani in

Peshawar. Rahman Baba's poetry is unique in its popular folk style and themes. In terms of style, his poetry contains various folkloric terms, proverbs, and sayings that discuss the ethics of society. Similarly, the poetry of Rahman Baba carries themes of aesthetics and Sufism influenced by Persian and Arabic languages and works of literature (Rishteen, 1988). Several poets of the classic period were inspired by the poetry of Rahman Baba, who worked along the same lines and established a school of thought in Pashto poetry named the Rahman School of Thought. Poets of Rahman school of thought include Khwaja Muhammad Bangash (1630-1700 A.D), Muhammad Younas (lived around 1640-1720 A.D), Maaz Ullah Momand (lived around 1688-1752 A.D), Misri Khan Gigyanri (1665-1715 A.D), Abdur Rahim Hotak (1728-1795 A.D), and Abdul Azeem Ranizay (lived around 1753-1837 A.D).

Rahman Baba lived at a time when Peshawar was under the control of the Mughals. The resistance against the Mughals in the borderlands has a vast history and historical disagreements between the governors of the borderlands and the central authority in India. To quell the rebels, the Mughals used force as diplomatic missions to reconcile with borderlands. Despite their diplomatic and force relations, they inflicted and formulated repressive policies against Pakhtuns because of the mass resistance from the Pakhtuns throughout their reign in Kabul and India. However, Rahman Baba was contemporaneous with Khushal Khan Khattak, and both talked about Mughal rules and condemned them. However, the difference between these two is that Rahman Baba only discusses issues and condemns the repressive policies of the Mughals; however, he does not present solutions to the problems but relates them to the degrading nature of society and ethics. Contrary to Rahman Baba, Khushal Khan Khattak not only discusses issues but also gives solutions to these issues as his themes of resistance against the Mughals and relating issues with the disunity of the Pakhtuns

on the individual and tribal basis for personal gains are examples of Khushal's Poetry suggesting solutions. (Andreyev, 2010; Zaiwar, 2018). In one couplet, Rahman Baba (1984) says: "Pa sabab da zalemano hakemano / Kor aw gor aw Pekhawar dre warra yaw w dee". (*"Because of the cruelty of cruel rulers/ Home, grave, and Peshawar are the same."*). The couplet of Rahman Baba depicts the condition of the city of Peshawar when the Mughals were sovereigns and Pakhtuns were living in turmoil. However, it does not discuss the solution to the problem, like the poetry of the Khushal school of thought that calls for unity among Pakhtuns and collective resistance against the Mughals (Rishteen, 1988). Rahman Baba's poetry about the famous incident of Jamal Khan and Nasar Khan is another example of relating issues to ethics. In the last decade of the 17th century, a group of people under Nasar Khan's command set ablaze Jamal Khan's house, where hundreds of people who were gathered in Jamal Khan's house for the wedding ceremony of his son were burned alive. Nasar Khan and Jamal Khan were Khans¹⁵, and both struggled to get the official status of Khan, either from Kabul or Mughal India. Rahman Baba briefly discussed the event in one of his poems. In one couplet of the said poem, Rahman Baba (1984) says, "Der yaran wo da Gul Khan aw Jamal Khan / Pa kar nh sho yaw pa wakht da daristan." (*Many were friends of Gul Khan and Jamal Khan; none came to aid when the time was difficult*). In the couplet, he says that Jamal Khan and Gul Khan had many friends (Gul Khan was Jamal Khan's friend who also died in the same event), but no one came forward for their help and rescue on the day. The couplet depicts the thoughts and ideas of Rahman Baba, who relates the issues of society with ethics by suggesting that no one supports you when you are in hot water. Instead, he prefers the Sufi life, as in another couplet, Rahman Baba (1984) says: "Za ashqi yam sarokar me

¹⁵ The title of Khan was given by Mughal to their loyal.

de la ishqa / Nh Khalil, Nh daudzai aw nh momand yam." (*"I'm a lover, and all I care about is love; I'm not Khalil, Daudzai, or Mohmand."*). In the couplet, Rahman Baba says I am a lover and do not believe in tribalism or being with Khalil, Daudzai, or Momand¹⁶. In his poetry, Rahman Baba claims that he is the poet of love and aesthetics and disowns the tribal structure of the society that revolves around fights and resistance or causes intra-tribal feuds.

The important aspect of the Rehman school of thought's poetry is the articulation of its folkloric style and interplay of the themes of aesthetics, ethics, Sufism, and history. Both the themes and style make the poetry of Rahman Baba the language of the people that becomes part of daily conversation. Still, in daily conversations, Rehman Baba's poetry is used as a proverb and sayings among Pakhtun. Due to his folkloristic style, Rehman Baba's poetry is about ordinary people and poetry of society where they see and analyze the condition of society and the deteriorating condition of ethics through his poetry. In the same line of debate, in one couplet, Rahman Baba (1984) says: "Kohi mh kannu da bal saray pa lar ke / Gany sta ba da kohi pa ghara lar she". (*"Don't dig a pit in the way of others / Someday you'll have to go that way."*). The couplet carries the theme of societal ethics, saying that one day, they will face the situation if they do not dig well on the others' routes. Similarly, in another couplet, Rahman Baba (1984) says, "Hagha zra ba da tofana pa amaan we / Che keshtai ghondi da khalko bar bardar she". (*"The person will be at peace in all odds / When, for folks, he is like a boat in typhon."*). The couplet says that those who support others will never see sorrow. In the same way, in another couplet, Rahman Baba (1984) says:

"Da har cha sara che kre hagha ba momi /
Da hes tukham mewa nh dromi barham /

¹⁶ Khalil, Momand and Daudzai are subtribe of the Ghoryakhel tribe of the Pakhtun social structure who reside in Peshawar district.

Kh umeed laray la Raham la Karama /
Sta hum boya pa har cha bandi karam.”.

*(“What you sow, will you reap in the field /
Not the fruit of any seed goes disarray /
If you have hope from the Merciful and the Bountiful /
Must you be kind to others all the time.”).*

The couplets says that all seeds grow into plants, and in the same way, everyone will face whatever she/he does. It further says that do mercy if you want mercy. All the above-mentioned couplets carry themes of ethics, history, and Sufism, and these couplets play a role in the cultural repertoire of Pakhtun society to warn and socialize its members.

Throughout his poetic works, Rahman Baba preferred to live an ascetic life. He called himself a *malang* (ascetic) who does not have to run after worldly needs. In a couplet Rahman Baba (1984) says: “Nh she da malango da khanano sara kali / Charta Aziz Khan charta malang Abdur Rahman”. (*“Friendship of mendicant and rich is not practical / The rich Aziz Khan and poor Abdur Rahman cannot be alike.”*). Rahman Baba calls himself a *malang* and says a *malang* cannot live among Khans (landowners, plural), referring to his brother Aziz Khan. In contrast, his poetry praises *malang* and Dervish (mystics) people. In a famous couplet, Rahman Baba (1984) says: Drast dewaan da Rahman zar tar da ghazal sha / Che bayan ye kro kirdar da darveshano”. (*“Rahman will surrender his whole book to a poem / The poem that described the qualities of Mystics.”*). The couplet shows his love and affection for Sufis and Sufism. Rahman Baba poetry also contains mystic themes. In one of his couplets, Rahman Baba (1984) says: “Za da yar meeni pa yar pasi shaida kram / Kh sok ma ganri, za nh yam, wara dey dey.” (*“The love of my beloved made me head over heels in love / If someone thinks of me, it’s not me, it’s my beloved all around.”*).

It depicts the mystic themes in Rahman Baba's poetry. In the couplet, Rahman Baba says that I lost in love with my beloved because of his/her love, and now it is not me, but it's all my beloved.

5.4.4 Hameed School of Thought

Hameed Baba was born in 1660 A.D. in Mashokhel village of Peshawar and died in 1732 A.D. He was a contemporary of Rahman Baba and has many similarities and differences with Rahman Baba's poetry in terms of themes that make them unique in their ways. For example, similar to the poetry of Rahman Baba, Hameed Baba's poetry also carries themes that discuss Mughal kings and their injustices. In a couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) says, "Da sa dawr da gadroon raghi wakht nur sho / Che shewa da adilano zulm zor sho." (*"What an age of dejection; times have changed / the just people have turned cruel."*). The couplet condemns the injustices of the Mughal kings. In another couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) talks about the death of King Aurangzeb of Mughal India. The couplet says, "Sa ba shor nh we da hind pa maikhana ke/ Che aurang sakha da hukam jam naskor sho." (*"Why'll there be no clamour in the bars of Hind / As Aurangzeb has tumbled from the throne?"*). In the couplet, Hameed Baba is talking about the death of Aurangzeb while saying that everyone will be happy in India as his power has been lost. However, similar to Rahman Baba, the poetry of the Hameed school of thought does not discuss solutions for ending justice or, in other words, does not carry themes of resistance.

During Mughal's reign, there was enormous support for literary people and their work. Due to court patronage, Persian poetry reached its zenith in the Mughal Empire in India, where various poets from Iran also came to live in India as court poets (Sharma, 2017). The traditions of Persian also, in one way or another, influenced Pashto poetry, as can be seen in the poetry of previous periods, such as the Roshanite

school of thought, the Khushal school of thought, and the Rahman school of thought. However, the case of Hameed Baba is different as he closely read Persian works and translated them into Pashto, which highly influenced his poetry by Indian Persian poetry. In various poetry couplets, Hameed Baba claims that his poetry competes with Persian poetry. As in a couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) says, “Farsibano da hairat goti pa ghakh kre / Che Hameed sukhan saazi kra pa Pakhto ke.” (*“The Persians were astonished by the look of it / When Hameed uttered so eloquent poetry in Pashto.”*). The couplet says that Persians became curious when Hameed produced poetry in Pashto with a high rhythm compared to Persian poetry. In another couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) says, “Che hes chari pa farsi ke monda nh she / Hasi saaz de Hameed ekhy pa Pakhto ke.” (*“You won’t find such a piece in Persian poetry/ The kind of music Hameed has played in Pashto.”*). The couplet says that what Hameed has produced could not be found in Persian poetry. The couplet reflects Persian poetry's fame, where Hameed proudly competes with it.

His poetry influenced many classical era Pakhtun poets, including Kazim Khan Shaida (1728-1778 A.D), Kamgar Khattak (1688-1752 A.D), Mirza Khanan (1713-1789 A.D), Muhammad Biyaz (lived around 1785 A.D) and Pir Muhammad Kakar (1708-1799 A.D) and laid foundation to a school of thought in Pashto classical period known as Hameed school of thought. The poetry of the Hameed school of thought contains a very high content of aesthetics and metaphorical love produced in refined poetic expression. It also brought rare and unique imaginations called *Nazuk Khyali* or *Moshagafi* in Persian (elegant thinking/delicacy or subtlety of idea or perception), metaphors (*Tashbeehat*, *Iste’araat*, *Kenaayi*, and *Mubalighy*), analogies, and themes to Pashto poetry.

Among others, the *Nazuk Khyali* is called the uniqueness of Hameed school of thought, where he introduces creative metaphors. In one couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) says, “Che mashghol da sta pa makh da khaal o khat shom / Mashghola rasakha pati da kitab shwa.” (*“When I was consumed with the sight of your figure’s spot and line / I forgot the habit of reading books at all.”*). In the couplet, Hameed Baba says I had left the books when I started seeing the *Khaal* (tattoo) and *Khat* (facial hair appear with puberty). Similarly, in another couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) says, “Da ashna la khaal o khat na malomegy / Che Hameed ba musafar da Hindustan she.” (*“From the spot and line of my beloved, it’s evident that Hameed will become a wanderer of India.”*). The couplet says that while seeing *Khaal* and *Khat* of my beloved, I guess I will leave for travel of Hindustan. Talking about the poetry of Hameed Baba, Pir Muhammad Kakar (1335 AH), one of the poets of Hameed school of thought says, “Pas la doya moshagaf Abdul Hameed de / Che ye wowee kha nazuk nukta daan sher.” (*“After them is Abdul Hameed, the critic who created such a fine and subtle lyric.”*). In the couplet, the poet praises the style of Hameed Baba’s poetry by calling him a *moshagaf* (delicate) poet. Hameed Baba (1383 AH) also calls himself the poet of *Ishq* (compassion/ passion), as in one of his couplets, he says: “Che nazil sho da ishq tandar la asmana. Ma hameed da gham laiq warta las wonewo.” (*“When the thunderstorm of love was descended from the sky, I, Hameed, opened my palms to catch the griefs of love.”*). In the couplet, he says that I have accepted the hardships of love. Rahman Baba's poetry with love themes is called *majazi-shairi* (figurative poetry).

Poetry of the Hameed school of thought also contains cultural themes that reflect a cultural understanding of the Pakhtuns. His poetry of *nang* and *namoos* (honour) is one example, where he talks about cultural codes. However, Hameed Baba’s poetry is

unique because he used these romanticism and allusiveness cultural codes. In a couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) says, “Prot pa weeno ke lat pat kha yam pa pat ke / Nh da sro zaro pa takht bandi be'pata.” (*“It’s better to be soaked in blood with honor rather than living as a disgraced king.”*). He says that I accept sacrifices for honor, but I do not accept the king's chair with dishonor. In another couplet, Hameed Baba (1383 AH) says, “Che da bal nang o namoos satali nh she / Wo ba nh sati sok khpal nang o namoos.” (*“The one who can’t keep the honor of others/ He won’t be able to keep his honor.”*). The couplet says that those who do not care for others’ honor and respect will not receive any respect. The couplet, on the one hand, talks about ethics, while on the other hand, it discusses *nang* and *namoos* that work in constructing Pakhtun identity during and after the classic period. These codes shape Pakhtuns’ lives and are called Pakhto or the Pakhtun way of life in today’s Pakhtun society, which is discussed in the coming chapters.

5.5 Third Period of Ethno-Poetics

Peshawar and its surrounding areas witnessed fights between Pakhtuns and Mughals throughout the Mughal era. However, from the 18th to early 19th century, following the fights with the Mughals, the Pakhtuns also indulged in Fights with Sikhs as Pakhtuns were in power in many areas of Mughal India that Sikhs threatened. As a result, various areas of Peshawar valley situated on the side of the river Sikhs occupied Indus from Mughals in the early 19th century. Similarly, in the third decade of the 19th century and afterward, when the British were in control of the Indian subcontinent, the Pakhtuns faced several invasions from the Crown in an attempt to capture the Peshawar valley. First, the Britishers took administrative control of the Peshawar valley from Sikhs in the mid-19th century, and later, they expanded their control to other areas such as Malakand and Khyber.

Moreover, three wars, generally known as the Anglo-Afghan wars, were fought between the British Crown's Indian forces and Afghanistan in 1839 A.D, 1878 A.D, and 1919 A.D. The British expansion and encounter with Pakhtuns that started in the third decade of the 19th century turned into colonization at the end of the 19th century. The Britishers not only physically and administratively colonized Pakhtuns but also introduced various policies of language and cultural oppression. This era of conflict and turmoil put an end to the second period or classic period of the ethno-poetic phase of Pashto poetry (British colonialism and policies are discussed in detail in next chapter 6) (Hanifi, 2013; Bausani, 1971). However, during the same era, third period of Pashto poetry emerged, refer to as folkloric period, which I positioned as the third period of ethno-poetics. The emergence and themes of folkloric period are discussed in the following sub sections.

5.5.1 Emergence of Third Period of Ethno-Poetics

In Pashto language, the third period of ethno-poetics is known as *ulasi dawr* (folkloric period). The term '*ulasi dawr*' is a combination of two words, namely *ulasi*, which means 'folk', and *dawr*, which means 'period'. Thus, *ulasi dawr* refers to the nature of the poetry, specifically the Pashto oral tradition folk songs that gained popularity during this period. Thousands of folk songs of various folk genres were produced by women and men and passed down orally for generations (Rishteen, 1988). Although it is argued that oral traditions occur in illiterate societies, British colonialism gave birth to Pashto oral traditions, as the publication and contribution of written records in Afghanistan and Pakistan lack inventories of poetry production with poet names. However, poetry production continued in oral traditions among the ordinary people during the same period (Pelevin, 2020). As the classical period's schools of thought

developed around the religious, tribal, and Sufi traditions, it continued to articulate the amalgamation of all the previous poetry, and new genres of Pashto poetry emerged.

Because of its folkloric nature, the poetry of the third period gained popularity among the masses, which is why the aesthetics of Pakhtun society became focused on the production of folk poetry. Various poetry from different folk genres were produced during this period, including *charbaita* (a long poem containing four lines as unit, singular), *tappa* (folksong, singular), *sandara* (song), *loba* (genre of folksong), *nemakai* (genre of folksong), *gharay* (genre of folksong), *lughaat* (genre of folksong), *naray* (genre of folksong), and *bagatay* (genre of folksong). Pashto folk poetry reached its zenith in this period, proving to be the ‘*zareen dawr*’ (golden period) of Pashto folk poetry as termed by Pakhtun literati. People started narrating and singing poems about the glory of wars and victories of their heroes, religious songs and legends, romantic and love songs, and songs of aesthetics (Bausani, 1971; Gairsas, 2008). These folk poetries depict the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions of the Pakhtun-populated landscape.

The poetry of the folk period of the Pakhtun society is documented and analyzed by various foreign writers before and after British colonialism. In early foreign works, Raverty’s (1867) book ‘*Gulshan-i-Rooh*,’ Darmesteter (1888) book “*Chants Populaires des Afghans*” (*Da Pakhtunkhwa Da Sher Khar o Bahar*), Mackenzie (1958) article “*Pashto Verse*” and Enevoldsen (1967) book “*Sound the Bell, O Moon, Arise and Shine*” are worth mentioning. Similarly, the printing press also played a vital role. The printing press machines were brought into Peshawar and Kabul in the second-last decade of the 19th century, and the publishing of Pashto text started during the same period, which, in one way, helped document folk poetry (Hanifi, 2010).

Similarly, documenting and analyzing folk songs gained popularity among Pakhtun scholars in the second half of the 20th century. In this regard, works produced under the tutelage of the Academy of Sciences of Kabul and the Pashto Academy of the Peshawar University are worth mentioning, where Laiq (1363 AH), Dr. Shaheen (1984), Tair (1987), and Dawar (1999) documented and analyzed folk poetry that various local and international publishers publish. The third period ended in the early 20th century when social movements emerged in the then Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which gave birth to the modern period of Pashto poetry, which is covered in the next chapter. Moreover, for analyzing themes of folk poetry, I have categorized these folk songs into two categories, i.e., *badala* (ballad, singular) and *charbaita* as long poems and the remaining genres as short poems. These two categories and their themes are discussed in the following pages.

5.5.2 Themes of *Charbaitay* and *Badalay*

Both *charbaita* and *badala* are long poems based on stories. However, both are differing in their pattern and composition. *Charbaitay* (plural of *charbaita*) are long poems containing 4-line verses one after another, following the same pattern in the 4th line of each verse. Contrary to *charbaita*, *badala* (ballad) is a poem based on dozens of couplets where each couplet has the same pattern. Both *charbaita* and *badala* are based on stories of romance and war. However, *charbaita* mostly talks about current-era stories such as fights with the intruders or intra-tribal fights. Contrary to *charbaita*, *badala*, along with current stories, also covers old stories, and most of these stories traveled from other cultures, such as stories of prophets, kings, and love stories. Both genres proved to be the most popular genres of the folk period.

Moreover, *charbaita* became people's voice for their aesthetics and love, glorifying their fighters' armed resistance who fought against Sikhs and Britishers in 19th century. Almost every fight between Pakhtuns and the Sikhs and Britishers is depicted in *charbaita* (Caron, 2016). The following *charbaita* quoted by Maghmom (2007) depicts the story of the Nawagai (area of Bajaur district) fight where Pakhtun fighters and colonial forces engaged.

“Shaheedan munga la zulma la ferang u /
Pa sro weno da khpal deen tol lala'rang u /
Pa arman sara jara pa munga mh krai /
Khaista horo da Jannat sara hum sang u.”.

*(“We, the martyrs of the cruelties of British /
We are soaked in blood for the sake of our religion /
Don't shed tears in sorrow for our sake /
We're alongside the houris of paradise.”)*

The couplet discusses the situation of war and mourning after they depart the martyrs of Nawagai and says, “We are martyrs because of the oppression of the Britishers, and the bloodshed has turned us like red flowers of the garden. Our people do not need to be sad for us, as happy days are waiting for us in heaven, and it further says:

“Da watan gatal pa nang aw pa ghairat she /
Kh khpal zan mu qurban nh kro bya be'rang u /
Pasay wronro Pukhtano zan qurbani krai /
Pa shno stargo da ferang ter o khadang u.

*(“It takes honor and valor to win your homeland /
We're disgraced if we can't sacrifice ourselves /
Get up, O Pakhtun comrades! Sacrifice yourselves /
We're facing the arrow and shaft of the blue-eyed British.”)*

The *charbaita* also analogies between the religious jargon and secular trends of protecting the land from occupation. It consoles the relatives by giving justification by

referring to religious jargon like *martyrdom*. It asserts Khushal's assertions to depend on the honor of Afghans and their lands against the others, or the binary of *khpal* and *prady*. It utilizes the symbolic concepts of *nang* and *ghairat* (honor) for the liberation of the land. It asks the residents (Pakhtun) for liberation, as Khushal demands unity among Pakhtuns against the Mughal. The *charbaita* became the most articulated genre for expressing and disseminating any message. The themes of the couplets revolve around the themes of freedom, standing for liberation, the binary of honor and dishonor, and sacrifices for land. Similarly, another *charbaita* quoted by Bausani (Bausani, 1971) talks about the fight between Pakhtuns and Britishers in Waziristan. It says:

("The heroes are fighting; Mullah sahib is their chief /
May God preserve him; he is a fragrant tree from the high hills /
He has put the perangai in chains /
And English women in London are terrorized").

The *charbaita* is tributing and praying for Mullah Pawanda and his comrades, who led the historical resistance to the Britishers in Waziristan. The *charbaita* depicts that people in the folksongs have celebrated the fighters. The extolling of the religious figure shows the nature of resistance to Britishers from all segments of society, as religious and tribal leaders always lead the resistance in the borderland in one way or another against the intruders.

Badala, also called *Masnawi*, remained a popular genre in the folkloric period. As stated earlier, the themes of *badalay* (plural of *badala*) are primarily based on old-era stories, and due to this reason, it is also called *Dastan* (story) (Heston, 1986). There are *badalay* written in the classic period of Pashto poetry. However, the genre gained popularity in the folkloric period, where dozens of poets wrote hundreds of *badalay*. The themes of *Badalay* are primarily based on love stories or stories of prophets,

kings, and other historical figures. One example is the famous badala of Ramdad Khan, written by Ali Haider Joshi and analyzed in his article ‘Verse Narrative from the Bazaar of the Storytellers’ by Heston (1986). The *badala* of Ramdad Khan revolves around his story of family enmity, where his paternal cousins killed him. With the introduction of printing machines, most of the *badalay* also got published. The genre of *badala* is still alive among the masses of society, and poets use it to produce stories in poetic form (Tair, 2020; (Heston, 1986).

5.5.3 Themes of *Tappay*

Along with *charbaita* and *badala*, the tappa (singular) genre, also called *misra and landay*, became popular in the folk period. Thousands of *tappay* (plural of *tappa*) were produced in this period. For extended periods, various scholars believed *tappay* was purely women's production. However, in recent research, both Pakhtun and foreign writers argue that tappa is not only women's production but both men's produce (Grima, 1998). In her ‘anthology of Pashto Tappa,’ Salma Shaheen collected five thousand *tappay* (Shaheen, 1984). *Tappa* is still used in day-to-day conversation and sung in music both by men and women (Khan, 2008; Griswold, 2013).

Tappa contains many themes like politics, love, aesthetics, separation, and morality, and it has remained a popular genre since its inception in Pashto poetry. Moreover, *tappay* serves many functions in Pakhtun culture and society, i.e., it is used as catharsis, a source of knowledge, and entertainment. For example, women use *tappay* for catharsis and lament the patriarchal system of the Pakhtun culture, where they have less freedom than men. As a *tappa* says, “Plara qala dey hadeera sha / Che tre na dromi pa jara malalay jona.” (“*O father, may your citadel be ruined, so the dolorous girls won’t leave crying.*”) (Ahmadzai, 1393 AH; Laiq 1363 AH). The *tappa* reflects upon the agony of women when they leave their parental home at the time of the

wedding. In Pakhtun traditions, women depart from their parental homes at the time of their wedding and live with their in-laws. In some cases, in-laws in Pakhtun tradition, particularly in women's voices, are termed a place of tormenting experience. Secondly, lamenting also arises from a feeling of disapproving behavior where the listener is warned of the inflicted hardship due to his/her actions.

In the same way, there are *tappay*, which carries political themes. These *tappay* revolves around a historical context or incident, immediately affecting the popular imagination. The historical incident of Maiwand (the second Anglo-Afghan war in 1877) is still part of the collective consciousness of Pakhtuns. It is remembered in *tappay* as '*Dh Maiwand Ghaza*,' or war of Maiwand in Pashto literature. *Malala*, the brave daughter of a local chief, incited and mobilized the Pakhtun *lashkar* (battalion) against British troops; she played an important role in the famous victory against the British (Samandar, 2006; Griswold, 2013). Similarly, the famous *tappa* about Chitral also evolved around when the Britishers occupied Chitral. The *tappa* says, "Charta chitral aw London charta / Be nangi zor shwa perangyan chitral ta zeena." ("*Chitral and London are miles apart; disgrace rules; the English are going to Chitral.*") (Enevoldsen, 1967). This *tappa* refers to the occupation of Chitral, a small and remote area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that lies after Dir and Swat in the north and hosts different religious and ethnic groups. In 1895, Chitral and surrounding areas directly came under British rule, and later, they were ruled by local collaborators. Therefore, the above *tappa* not only tells the story of the Britishers' march on the Pakhtun and Chitrali land, but it also invites and uses it as a *peghor* (taunt) to the population against the British occupation of Chitral (Huttenback, 1970). The cultural repertoire of *peghor* is one of the important tenets of *Pakhtunwali* that not only provokes the feelings of inactive people but also prevents the members of society from remaining

inactive from seeing the injustice. It is a stimulant to alert and mobilize people against the British occupation of Chitral.

As Pashto poetry's existing written record, the *tappa* concept seems new. However, the people commonly use the articulation of past events that occurred before the emergence of Pashto in textual form. As the history discussed above, the tradition of text among Pakhtun was rare; it is pertinent and important that they relied on oral traditions to transfer and transmit events of the past to a new generation as the purely literary circles or individuals seemed rare in large and vast areas of Pakhtun-populated regions (Thane, 1999). Some *tappay* recall historical events during that period, but they are challenging to find in literary works as the style of *tappa* is articulated in folksongs. Due to referring to historical events in *tappa* has gained scholars' attention about the origin of the folksongs and description of the historical events (Griswold, 2013; (Tair, 1987). The following quoted *tappa* are examples of the oral history traditions: "Kh da khalo lakhkari raghli / Za ba gomal ta da khpal yar dedan ta zama." (*"If there came the troops of Khalo, I'd go towards Gomal to see my love."*). In the *tappa*, a woman says that if Khalo's battalions return from their service for the king, she will go to Gomal to see her beloved. According to traditional accounts, Malik Khalo was a warrior and leader of Pakhtun troops in Mahmood Ghaznavi's battalions, which invaded India in the 11th century. Historical accounts suggest that the Pakhtun troops from Waziristan accompanied Mehmood Ghaznavi to these areas via the Gomal Pass (Bausani, 1971). The Gomal Pass has historically served as a gateway for moments of trade goods and armies. This route played an important role during the colonial occupation of Baluchistan and Waziristan, providing a safe and short distance for accessing Sindh from Afghanistan (Docherty, 2007). As the *tappa* does not carry the exact dates of the event, it only references the event. It is good acumen

to assess the timeframe on the assessment of the historical account to contextualize the reference. The judgments related to timeframe work are good acumen in the social sciences. The assessment in the oral accounts is neither a widely recognized nor well-established method to represent the historical events literary methodology solely.

In the same line of assessment, Maghmom (2011), Faran (2015), and Laiwal (1396 (Sun Year)) claim several themes in *tappay* refer to the influence of Zoroastrianism on *tappay* during the Islamic period, or it is said that it is possible that before the advent of Islam, the Zoroastrianism was practiced by Pakhtuns. They kept on the oral traditions through these *tappay*. In this regard, the scholars quote a *tappa*, that is, “Mazigari de hery mh kra / Ta ba da naaz hery kawi rikhtya ba sheena.” (“*Curse thee not, it's dusk / Your frolic curse will turn into truth.*”). The *tappa* reflects the cultural myth surrounding the dust time. According to Maghmom and Faran, this *tappa* reflects the Zoroastrian belief that dust time prayers are answered; in this case, the *tappa* reflects the influence of Zoroastrianism on Pakhtun culture in its entirety despite conversion to Islam (Faran, 2015; Maghmom, 2011; Lewal, 1393 (Sunyear)).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the emergence of Pashto in textual form during its first phase. The origin of Pashto script and poetry in this period is contested and debated mainly due to the uncertain nature of documents (*Pata Khazana*) that have purportedly emerged or been discovered from the personal collection of Pashto literary figures in Baluchistan. This anthology introduces Pashto literature as having existed over a long period in the 9th and 11th centuries and covers the life histories of poets and social settings of the Pakhtun society. Along with this, documented evidence and script methodology that emerged alongside the Sufi movement in the tribal areas of Pakistan demonstrates the construction of communities based on language, with Sufi masters

playing a significant role in shaping the concept of Sufism and the relationship between masters and followers in the realm of Islam. This movement is known as the Roshanite movement or the renaissance of Pakhtuns in India. The movement played an important role in the unification of Pakhtuns against the Mughals, and the medium of textual Pashto was used purposefully to spread their political and religious teachings.

The Roshanite school of thought implicitly and the Khushal school of thought explicitly defined the communities based on language, creating a dichotomy between us (ingroup) and them (outgroup). This construction is based between us (*khpal*) and them (*prady*). It is closely related to the Pashto-driven tradition of *khpal* and *prady*.⁷ The binary opposition and dichotomy of *khpal* and *prady* is the most recurrent theme in the Roshanite and Khushal schools of thought, with the *khpal* referring to the Pashto-speaking group and the *prady* to the Mughal or Persian-speaking group. The aspirations of the *khpal* group were centered on speaking Pashto, evoking the pride and honor of Pakhtun, and communicating in Pashto to create a unified force under the leadership of religious and elite leaders against the intruders and invaders, especially the Mughals. The Mughals were not seen as rulers but also embodying a mindset that relied on brutal force to inflict hardship on the subject with impunity. In response, both schools of thought fostered ethnic aspirations, alienation, and identity, rallying against the Mughals and Mughal mentality '*mughalwala*' under the leadership of Sufi master Pir Rokhan and later Khushal Khan Khattak. This chapter, therefore, navigated the theme of ethnic identity construction among Pakhtuns and employed an ethno-poetic lens to understand the construction of self and the use of native language as a means of resistance in the form of poetry against the Persian-speaking Mughals.

The first school of thought, affiliated with the Roshanite movement, introduced Pakhtuns to reading and writing Pashto and produced a variety of poetry. The themes of poetry of the Roshanite school of thought carry themes of identity construction that revolve around themes of Sufism, Ethics, and Pakhtun-ness. Following the Roshanite period, the Khushal school of thought, including Khushal Khan Khattak himself, fought with the Mughals and their representative in his tribal land. Consequently, the poetry of the Khushal school of thought carries themes of identity and unity along with themes of Sufism and ethics. Similarly, during the same period, another school of thought named after the leading figure of the school of thought, Rahman, also emerged. Rahman Baba did not participate in battles with the Mughals but only referred occasionally to the inflicted hardship and violence in Peshawar. The poetry of Rahman's school of thought revolves around Sufism, ethics, injustice, and romanticism. Due to squabbles and infighting between pro- and anti-Mughal elites around Peshawar, Rahman Baba referred to Peshawar as a 'graveyard.' Rahman's school of thought is also distinguished by its folkloric style, which makes it popular among the masses. In contrast, the Hameed school of thought emerged during the same period and was highly influenced by Indian Persian poetry. The themes of the Hameed school of thought revolve around aesthetics, romanticism, and the expression of complex ideas in Pashto poetry compared with the Persian dominant language of the time. However, due to its language and style, the poetry of the Hameed school of thought remained unpopular among the general masses due to the complexity of ideas and vocabulary. The Hameed school of thought delicately utilizes the metaphors of nature to describe the beloved's aesthetic description.

At the end of Hameed's school of thought, the emergence of folk poetry marked another period in Pashto literature. During this period, a more central governance and

control mechanism were forcibly introduced to Pakhtuns by Sikhs and later the Britishers in the early 19th and 20th centuries. This period lasted into the 20th century and remains popular among the general masses. Thousands of folk songs were produced during this period, celebrating wars and Pakhtun struggles against Sikhs and British forces and embodying romance, nature, and cultural metaphors.

This chapter adds to the existing theory of ethno-poetics by arguing that during the Middle Ages, Pashto poetry not only explored themes of romanticism, Sufiism, religious scripts, war, battles, and tribal leadership but also addressed the deteriorating conditions of social values, ethics, the quest for wealth, and the injustices inflicted upon masses by unjust rulers. Therefore, it suggests that South Asian poetry, including Pashto poetry, encompasses not only ethnic descriptions but also a delicate elaboration of the social issues prevalent in poets' societies. Furthermore, Pashto poetry adopted various themes and influences over time, laying a foundation for coming generations to rely on the past while articulating the local circumstances of border communities of the surrounding societies.

CHAPTER 6

THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIO-POETICS IN PASHTO POETRY

6.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the development of socio-poetics in Pashto poetry. The 20th-century Pashto poetry adopted many themes and ideologies, continuing previous centuries' themes. To situate and contextualize 20th-century poetry in Pashto, it is important to understand and locate sociopaths in poetry. In the same period, Pashto poetry is influenced by the political struggle against colonization in the form of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement (KKM), a socio-political movement of Pakhtuns. The renaissance nature of the movement gave birth to a new movement and ideology among the Pakhtuns and Pashto poetry, which is positioned as the second phase of Pashto poetry in this dissertation. The discussion about the birth of this second phase of Pashto poetry is followed by a discussion on how the birth of the second phase turned Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics. The chapter explores how socio-poetics identifies issues and challenges and their fundamental causes, consequences, and potential solutions. The chapter concludes with the metamorphosis and poetic voyage that occurred in the pre-and post-colonial eras of the twentieth century, which influenced Pashto poetry. The 20th-century Pashto poetry is affected by two significant events: British colonization of the region and the postcolonial era following independence and partition of India. The pre-independence poetry concentrates on the political struggle for freedom from British domination. In contrast, the post-partition poetry focuses on Pakistan's state's policies for Pakhtuns in

terms of language and ethnic recognition inside Pakistan. It also analyzes the relationship between Pashto poetry and nationalism in Pakistan and Afghanistan and progressive and revolutionary politics in Pakistan and its neighboring countries.

6.2. Contextualising Background

Britishers conquered the Pakhtun-dominated province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following the Second Sikh War in Punjab. Before forming the Commissionerate province of Punjab in 1901, the Sikh Empire acquired Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 1834 after conquering the Barakzais in Peshawar and other surrounding districts. The Sikh rule was short-lived due to British wars with the Sikh empire in Punjab. Due to the annexation of Peshawar and adjacent areas by Sikhs into their empire, the current areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were considered part of Punjab, and regions under Sikh rule were made part of Punjab when the British marched towards Punjab and battled for political and economic dominance in its fertile lands. As a result, the Sikhs were vanquished, and their previous territories were annexed under British Indian control. The British secured complete dominance in Punjab in 1848–49 by defeating Sikhs in the second British-Sikh War.

The border between British India and Russia was deliberated to create a grey zone of influence between the competitors. The deliberations were based on a policy of great game, whether to have direct control over the grey zones or to have friendly rulers in the zones. As a result of these deliberations, both policies were adopted to deal with Russian fear by annexing some areas and making some areas as friendly zones for influence. Afghanistan, Iran, and the state of Kalat were created to maintain good relations by appeasing their rulers to tilt British India regarding their foreign policies (Tapper, 1983). Despite the policy design of creating friendly countries, the British always asserted influence, as well as tested military might in Afghanistan to topple the

government and later reinstall the same despotic and disgraced rulers in Afghanistan for political interests. Shah Mahmoud Hanifi defined installation and reinstallation as the circular migration of Afghan political elites throughout history after the emergence of colonization in South Asia (Hanifi, 2016).

To achieve policy goals, British India never remained committed to fixed borders. It has always maintained the policy of fluid borders in India. It used violent tactics and tribal skirmishes and raids as reasons to expand the border beyond its political authority (Simpson, 2021). As a result, British India fought three wars and many low-scale invasions of Afghanistan land. It annexed them into British Indian political authority by signing an agreement with Afghanistan on the line of separation between Afghanistan and British India, known as the Durand Line (Qassem, 2008). The Durand Line partitioned the Afghan land between Afghanistan and British India (Later on Pakistan). It divided the land and the shared history, culture and religion of the Pakhtuns between two different communities. The partition also divided the strength of Pakhtun and divided their political and economic interest within the respective countries. Some of the people on both side of the border felt the feeling of *beltoon* (separation). Such feelings were later translated into Pakhtun nationalistic movements, transforming them into different political parties in Pakistan. During the British period, the British also started policing the Pakhtun tribes and political figures to secure internal political stability.

The mechanism of political stability also led to tribal resistance and internal wars between tribe members and British armies in the highland areas. The tribal resistance and military might of the British armies gave birth to infamous expeditions in the region and political and war heroes in the region (Omran, 2009). The administrative and political environment of the time created geopolitical tensions across the Pakhtun-

populated northern, western, and southern borders that influenced the socio-economic and political conditions of Pakhtun society.

In 1901, a new Chief Commissionerate province, NWFP, was carved out from Punjab and created political boundaries in line with the Afghanistan territories annexed by Sikh and later taken by Britishers (Shah, 2007). With the creation of the NWFP, British India created a buffer zone between the NWFP and Afghanistan, named Tribal Agencies or tribal areas. The tribal areas were governed through Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR), which was imposed in 1901. The FCR amalgamated British Legislative law and tribal code of conduct or *Pakhtunwali*. Through this legal mechanism, the British recognized some of customary institutions like *Jirga* and tribal elders to assist the political agent appointed by central government to serve the tribe members and maintain law and order in an arbitrary system of delivering political justice and tribal order maintenance in the tribal areas (Marsden & Hopkins, 2011).

The tribal council of *Jirga* consisted of *malaks* (chieftain/ officially recognized leaders), political agents and other political agent staff to deliver governance and justice. Such governance created a de facto governance system of tribe members and local administration. This also frustrated the ordinary people with their agony and frustration with tribal raids over areas under British protection. Therefore, in Pashto poetic literature, the government-appointed *malaks* and their agents are cursed and criticized for their duality to sell themselves for personal gains, perks and privileges. Their governance system also turned the egalitarian and horizontal relations into vertical relations and also made a few rich and large sections poor and subordinate to their tribe members in the political and economic composition of the society (Murtazashvili, 2016; Taj, 2023; Iqbal, 2011).

The grip of local *malaks* and administration was strengthened, and commoners were made to pay the cost of privileges of the local elders. With the same line of action, the tribe members, as well as Pakhtun in the mainland, were alienated from their political and social rights and were brutalized through the continuous brutal engagement of revenge, expeditions and suppression through banning social and political activities in the region and along with this, their language was also pressed to its strength. It promoted the central Indian language, Urdu, among the people at the cost of eliminating Pashto or making it part of the official language in the Pakhtun-dominated areas (Rahman, 2002). This is the reason the Pashto language and literature witnessed a decay. No significant work was produced in the Pashto language and literature until the 19th century, except for the production of folksongs discussed and analyzed in chapter 5. However, the 20th century proved to be a new era in the history of Pakhtuns, where various social, reformatory, and political movements emerged. These movements transformed Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics, as discussed in this chapter (Ruhi, 2005).

6.3. Beginning of the Second Phase of Pashto Poetry

The milestone of the second phase of Pashto poetry was laid down in the 20th century in British-occupied areas of Afghan land. However, the exact foundation of the second phase is contested among Pashto intelligentsia. Some believe that the second phase began in the last decade of the 19th century and consider poets like Rahat Zakhalee (1884–1963) and Mir Ahmad Shah Rizwani (1860–1934) as the founders of the modern era of Pashto poetry. These poets were based in Lahore, where they were involved in teaching (Marwat, 2021). However, some other scholars argue that the era began with the emergence of the social movements in the Pakhtun-dominated areas with Maulana Mahmood Makhfi (1884–1946), and he is regarded as the founder of

the modern Pashto poetry (Haiwadmāl, 1393 AH; Shalman, 2014). Despite the difference of opinion about the beginning of the modern era, almost all academicians and literary figures agreed that various events, regional and international political scenarios, socio-economic and political conditions, and the influence of the reformative cum social and political movements brought a paradigm shift in Pashto poetry that transformed Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics (Anjum, 2023; Marwat, 2021).

The transformative journey of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics continued throughout the 20th century. Based on important movements in the 20th century, I have divided this journey into two periods. The first period is from 1920 to 1947, while the second period is from 1947 to the end of the 1980s. The transformative journey in the first and second periods of socio-poetics and themes that emerged during these two periods are analyzed in the following sections of this chapter. This journey is followed by discussion and analysis of cultural spaces that worked as platforms for recollecting and reimagining the past to create new poetics frameworks and approaches in the next chapter, 7. In addition, I consider contemporary poetry the third epoch of socio-poetics analyzed in Chapter 8.

6.4. Historical Background of the First Period of Socio-Poetics

In the second decade of the 20th century, various social, educational, and literary activities were initiated by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as Bacha Khan (1890–1988). Bacha Khan himself was inspired by the social, reformist, nationalist, and pan-Islamist movements of India that came into being as the result of the War of 1857. In his autobiography (1983), he writes that I was inspired by the *Al-Hilal* magazine of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, published in Calcutta, India. In 1912, Bacha Khan, with the help and advice of Haji Sahib Turangzai (1858–1937), established a school named

Azad School in Utmanzai village of Charsadda. The school was designed to educate individuals in their mother tongue, Pashto. Along with that, Bacha Khan organized various gatherings to raise awareness regarding the socio-political condition of the region as well as the broader situation of India under British control. Due to his anti-imperial participation and local peaceful protests, he was sentenced to jail for six months by the British for organizing a protest meeting in his village Utmanzai of Charsadda in 1919 against the firing on innocent citizens in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar (Shah, 2007).

Soon after his release from jail, Bacha Khan, along with his companions, participated in the pan-Islamist *Hijrat* (migration) movement and migrated to Afghanistan with the Muslim leaders of India in 1920. Afghanistan was declared an independent state in August 1919 as the result of the third Anglo-Afghan war, where Afghanistan claimed its foreign policy from British influence. Muslim leaders of India started the *Hijrat* movement as part of the *Khilafat* movement, which aimed to restore the Khilafat (caliphate) for the territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire, known as the Ottoman Empire (as it was before World War I).

During the *Hijrat* movement, Bacha Khan's efforts influenced the promotion of Pashto in Afghanistan. During his talks with King Aman Ullah Khan (1892-1961), Bacha Khan advocated for promoting the Pashto language. Aman Ullah Khan, a Pakhtun, was unable to speak Pashto. However, after Bacha Khan's advocacy, he learned to speak Pashto. As quoted by Bacha Khan in his autobiography (1983, p. 174), "When I met Aman Ullah Khan in India in 1923 on his way to Europe, he spoke to me in Pashto". On King Aman Ullah Khan's command, the Afghan constitution was adopted and translated from Dari into Pashto in the same year (1923). These steps eventually led to the recognition of Pashto as the only official language of

Afghanistan in 1934 while removing Dari as an official language also dominant in Afghanistan. Pashto became a state language for the first time, having never been an official or academic language (Dr. Ayaz & Dr. Khan, 2008; Rahman, 2002). However, in 1938, the Dari language was also recognized as the second official language of Afghanistan. Following Afghanistan, the princely state of Swat also announced Pashto as its official language and started using it for communication in the day-to-day internal affairs of Swat in 1938 (Rome, 2024).

Soon, the *Hijrat* movement witnessed its failure, and the participants returned to British India. However, the failure of the movement had an impact on the Pakhtuns' socio-political consciousness. On the one hand, they interacted with the Pakhtuns of Afghanistan, where they built new relations. On the other hand, they realized that independence from the British could not be achieved without education, socio-political awareness, and unity of the people (Marwat, 2012). To achieve these goals, Bacha Khan and his fellows founded a reformist movement called *Anjuman Islah Ul Afaghina* (Reformative Movement for Afghans) in 1924 to unite people against the Britishers with reformative strategies. The movement aimed for social reformation in Pakhtun society, and for this reason, it opened dozens of Azad schools (primary and high level) in various areas of the province, formed committees to eliminate tribal feuds and enmities, and carried out cleanness campaigns for streets and villages (Marwat, 2012; Sohail, 2018).

Another inspiring step was launching the monthly *Pakhtun Magazine* in the Pashto language in 1927. The magazine was intended to promote Pashto language and literature and raise awareness through essays on society, culture, politics, and economy (Habibi, 2008). Bacha Khan was its first editor, and the magazine was published in the Utmanzai village of Charsadda and printed in Amritsar in its nascent

days (Amir, 1986). The magazine was banned various times by the Britishers from its inception until the partition of India. The magazine inspired a generation of poets and writers.

Following the formation of *Anjuman Islah Ul Afaghina*, a youth organization was proposed by Mian Akbar Shah (1899–1990). Mian Akbar Shah was an active member of the Anjuman and received his education at Islamia College Peshawar. He visited the Soviet Union and neighboring countries in the mid-1920s, where he was inspired by youth organizations such as Young Turks, Young Bukharans, Young Khivans, and others. Following Mian Akbar Shah's inspiration, a youth organization named *Da Sarhad Da Zalmo Jirga* (Frontier Youth League) was founded in 1927 in the NWFP on the same model as other youth organizations of that time in the neighboring countries (Roy, 2013). Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar (1899-1977) became its first president, and Mian Akbar Shah became its secretary general. Membership in the youth organization was open to every youth without discrimination of caste, ethnicity, or religion (Jan, 2002). The organization aspired to strive toward the same goals as *Anjuman Islah Ul Afaghina*. However, unlike the *Anujman Islah Ul Afaghina*, the young movement began active combat with the British for independence. The youth organization quickly garnered considerable membership among the youngsters of the then-NWFP (Marwat, 2012).

Similarly, another organization, KKM, was founded in 1928 as a continuation of the *Anjuman Islah Ul Afaghina* and the *Da Sarhad Da Zalmo Jirga* (Shah, 2007). Initially, KKM was a social movement with a socio-reform agenda focusing on eradicating social evils such as enmities, inter- and intra-tribal feuds, social stratification, and reforming society through education, economic upliftment, and religious reforms (Shah, 2007). However, over time, it became a political movement

influenced by the freedom struggles of India, where the ideology of nationalism and progressive politics served as the basis for the freedom struggle (Gandhi, 2004). 1931, the movement announced its affiliation with the Indian National Congress and resisted British colonialism through various non-violent strategies. Within a short period, the KKM established its organizational structure all over the province, particularly in the rural areas that were hitherto neglected by the mainstream political movements of the subcontinent (Shah, 2007).

KKM placed a high value on culture and art, believing that through these mediums, it could readily enhance public awareness. In this sense, Bala (2013) contends that the political struggle against British colonialism, the social reform agenda, and the promotion of culture and literature have been the primary goals that have defined most of KKM's lengthy struggle. The cultural activities of the KKM brought a paradigm shift in art and literature. Kurtz (2011) noted that the movement brought a new life for the Pathans and a splendid revolution in art, culture, poetry, and their utter social life. Owing to the deep-seated tradition of poetic expression and oratory within Pakhtun culture, Pashto poetry is profoundly shaped by the cultural practices associated with the KKM, which is examined in the subsequent section.

6.4.1 First Period of Socio-Poetics: Transformation of Pashto Poetry from Ethno-Poetics into Socio-Poetics

A paradigm shifts in Pashto language and literature gave birth to a new era in which poetry was transformed from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics, termed *maqsadi shairi* in Pashto. In its literary meaning, *maqsadi shairi* means 'poetry with purpose'. Conceptually, *maqsadi shairi* is poetry that carries themes serving a social purpose, such as creating socio-knowledge to view society and construct alternative narratives and discourses (Akbar, 1958; Faran, 2020). While tracing the roots of *maqsadi shairi*,

poet and scholar Tariq Khan (2022) stated: “It was KKM that brought *maqsadiyat* (purposiveness) to Pashto poetry”. Similarly, professor and writer Yaseen Iqbal Yousafzai (2023) also expressed in the Pashto conference organized at Nishtar Hall that “It is the result of Pakhtun magazine and the poems of Ajmal Khattak (1925-2010) that transformed Pashto poetry into *maqsadi shairi* and turned poets into the torch of the benightment”. In this regard, Marwat (2021) also writes that both KKM and Pashto poetry influenced each other; KKM worked to promote poetry, and poetry served as a mobilization tool for KKM.

Using themes and cultural repertoires of ethno-poetics, socio-poetic poetry reinterpreted the Pakhtunkhwali (way of life) codes that define individual status in Pakhtun society. Living in a Pakhtun community requires everyone to observe various *Pakhtunwali* codes. Following these codes, known as doing Pakhto, guides them on what to do and what not to do (Ahmad, 1980; Lindholm, 1980). In their poetry and other writings, Khudai Khidmatgars (Servants of God, plural of Khudai Khidmatgar) claimed that *Pakhtunwali* and its codes, namely, *melmastia*, *badal* (revenge), *ghairat*, had made life difficult for the Pakhtuns. They believed that these norms and codes, in one way or another, gave birth to social evils such as internal feuds in the case of *Badal* (revenge) (Gandhi, 2004). For this reason, the KKM worked to redefine the meaning of *Pakhtunwali* and its elements. This helped KKM change the perceptions of Pakhtuns from being *ghairati* (honorable, the superior image of Pakhtuns as a nation) to being peaceful, tolerant, and believer in coexistence. In this way, KKM concentrated on modifying people's behaviors so that they could learn to coexist peacefully with others. The reason for such emphasis was that colonialists distorted Pakhtun codes of life in a way to facilitate the colonial governmentality of the tribes on the border with Afghanistan. Therefore, the tribal identity and static image were to

be reformed through redefining the cultural code (Simpson, 2021). To campaign for the reformation of society, poetry proved to be the most powerful tool in changing the perception of people about elements of *Pakhtunwali*. For the KKM and production of poetry, bravery was to fight for independence from the British rather than fighting for one's people (Buneri, 2012). Abdul Malik Fida (1897-1957) (1957) writes in a poem titled "*Da yaw'wali paigham*" (a message for unity):

“Da ghulamai Pakhto pregdo nawi Pakhto jorawo /
Da nur makhlooq pa shan wazar da alwato jorawo /
Zmung Tehreek de da yaw'wali da paigham da para /
Khudai paida kre u da zulam ihtetam da para.”.

(*“Let go of the rites of slavery, let's build a new Pakhto (way of life) /
Let's make wings to reach the skies like others /
Our movement is for the message of unity /
God has created us to end the system of brutality.”*).

The couplets give the message of unity and say that we must reject the '*Pakhto*' (way of life) constructed by the enemies, which means defining the cultural code with the appeal of modern-day needs.

Similarly, KKM also started reforming and redefining various cultural repertoires such as *nang*, *be'nangi* (dishonor), and *peghor* that have deep meanings and functions in Pakhtun society (Ahmad, Badshah, & Haq, 2022). KKM started using it as a stimulus to mobilize and raise awareness among people for independence. In this regard, poets use *peghor* as a cultural repertoire to taunt people for their hardships. In this line of debate, Khudai Khidmatgar (servant of God, follower of KKM, singular) and poet Abdul Malik Fida (1957) write:

“Ghulami ke khushali aw akhtar nishta /
Da rando pa ranra wrazi akhtar nishta /
Tof lanat da ghulamano pa jwandun sha /
Che we khwah pa ghulami mar pa taghoon sha.”.

*(“Slavery has no happiness or Festivity /
Blind people do not celebrate daylight /
Send curses on the life of enslaved people/
Those happy in slavery should die of leprosy.”).*

The use of *peghor* in the aforementioned poetic composition is intended to provoke people into fighting for independence. The poetry piece laments the lives of the colonized, claiming that there is no Eid or any happiness for people who live under slavery.

The reinterpretation of codes and cultural repertoires introduced various themes in Pashto poetry that transformed Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics. The new themes that emerged in the first period of socio-poetics included independence, nonviolence, secularism, resistance, gender equality, unity, and modernization. The new themes revolving around the cultural repertoires of the ethno-poetic phase of Pashto poetry worked to sensitize people by identifying issues and challenges in society, exploring their roots and effects, and suggesting solutions (Akbar, 1958). In this line of debate, poet and scholar Sami Uddin Arman (2022) expressed that *maqsadi shairi* has transformed Pashto poetry in such a way that if one is interested in knowing about the problems of the Pakhtun society, he/she can find it in only one book of a Pakhtun poet. These themes of the first period are analyzed in the following sub-sections.

6.4.2 Themes of Poetry in the First Period of Socio-Poetics

The following themes emerged in the first period of socio-poetics.

6.4.1.1 The Theme of Independence: *Da Azaday Shairi*

Independence remained a popular theme in Pashto poetry in the first half of the 20th century. The reason was that poetry was inspired by the KKM and its predecessors,

who were struggling for the freedom of their land from British colonialism. The theme of independence in Pashto poetry highlighted colonialism as a system of oppression by calling it as “*na’khaq nizam*” (illegitimate system) and mobilize people to end it, as Khalil (2011) quotes poetry of Khudai Khidmatgar (literally servants of God; KKM followers) and poet, Sahibzada Idrees (1902-1984):

“Char chapera gorama nizam da istebdad wenam /
 Fard paki barbad wenam millat paki barbad wenam /
 Lwe de ko warokay de nizam ke ye nakhad wenam /
 Jwand da gharebano paki sakht laka Farhad wenam /
 Zra me tre khafa de da nizam ra ghorzawal ghwaram /
 Zulam preyestal ghwaram, khaq ochatawal ghwaram”.

*(“It’s the system of tyranny I see wherever I go /
 Doomed are they whether people or nations/
 In this system are trapped, whether young or old /
 In this system, the life of people with low incomes is hard, like Farhad /
 My heart ails, and I must overthrow this system /
 Let the oppression perish and rights be uplifted”).*

The poetry piece talk of the effects of colonialism on people of all ages. It asserts that the colonial system is founded on injustice and has cruel effects on people. It also expresses anger against this oppressive system and intends to replace it with a just one. The poetry not only condemns and identifies colonialism and its effects on people but also mobilizes people to struggle against colonialism. In this regard, Abdul Khaliq Khaleeq (1895-1978) (1974) writes:

“Da zmung soba ba hum yaw gulistan she /
 Kh zalmi charta pa khpal watan qurban she /
 Kh zalmo da azadi qadar malom kro /
 Khpal watan ba war khkara laka zandan she /
 Pa de jwand da ghulami ba she khpemana /
 Kh huqooq warta malom da kul insan she.”

*("The frontier province will turn into a garden /
If the youth lot were sacrificed for their homeland /
If the youth found the value of freedom /
Their homeland will seem like a prison to them /
They'd repent of the life of slavery /
If they should know the humans' rights").*

In his poem, Khaleeq relates life under British colonialism to a life of *ghulami* (slavery). He treats his life as despondency and the dooms, and the solution, according to him, lies in the unity of youth and fighting for freedom. The poem uses the word 'slavery' as a *peghor* to taunt people and to mobilize them for fight for freedom. In a similar vein, Muhammad Akbar Khadim (1888-1954) (1928) also writes:

*"Kh de khyal da azaday da khpal watan we /
Kh da oor de lagedali pa watan we /
Nur ghamona da dunya kra wara shata /
Kh de meena da laila ta da watan we /
Mashoqa pa jara zari Monday nh she /
Azadi sara yaw dar we bal rasan we /
Nh kalona da ghulam pa ghulami ke /
Nh sa'at da azadi kh zankadan we.".*

*("If you had the thought of freedom of your homeland /
If your homeland was on fire /
Put behind all the worries of the world /
If you love your dear homeland /
The beloved is shedding tears in separation /
Freedom has either gallows or victory /
Neither there's slavery forever for enslaved people/
Nor the last breath of freedom are the same.").*

The poem blend themes of nationalism, freedom, resilience, taunt, and sacrifice for the political cause of Pakhtuns. It talks and calls for people to sacrifice to win freedom. Poets not only write on the themes of nationalism, freedom, and resistance

but are also hopeful about their struggles. Similarly, Gul Ahmad Kaka (1885-1967) poetry quoted by Sabir (2001) also says:

“Jang da Azaday la hamesha zalmi watali de /
Ra ba worry ghonchi da gulo nan saba ke tali de /
Baaz kh da aghyar pa mangol nast we hes khatar nishta /
Mung da zra pa ghwaho batoran warta satali de.”
(*“The youth has always fought the war of independence /
They will bring freedom’s flowers very soon /
No worries if the eagle is sitting at the enemy’s arm /
We have nourished the brave with our heart’s flesh.”*).

This poetry stimulated people, particularly youth, to mobilize for the struggle against colonialism. These poems promoted messages of nationalism and freedom and attracted poets to promote both Pashto poetry and the political cause of the Pakhtuns. In this manner, the KKM attracted and organized dozens of poets who were also active members of the KKM and spent years in jail for their political struggle. The poetry produced in the early days of the KKM gained widespread popularity.

6.4.1.2 Poetry of Nonviolence: Mobilizing and Uniting People Against British Colonialism

During British colonialism, the Pakhtuns were divided along many lines, such as tribalism, internal feuds, social stratification and others. This division was a hurdle in the way of the KKM, which united the people to struggle against the British (Gandhi, 2004). Further, throughout the second half of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, Pakhtuns carried out various armed resistances against Britishers. To eliminate internal feuds and social stratification, to unite people against the British, and to transform armed resistance into nonviolent resistance, the KKM based its ideology on nonviolence. The KKM and its predecessors actively campaigned against internal feuds and social stratification by organizing *islahi-jirgy* (reformative

councils) (Banerjee, 2000). Similarly, poets also started producing poetries on the themes of nonviolence and unity and mobilized and united people regardless of class, caste, or tribal differentiation. Poetry with themes of nonviolence is discussed in the following sub-sections.

6.4.1.2.1 Mobilizing People for Eliminating Internal Feuds and Enmities

As discussed in the previous section, the Pakhtuns indulged in inter and intra-tribal feuds and enmities during British Colonialism. To mobilize people to eliminate feuds and enmities, Poetry uses the theme of nonviolence to end enmities and unite to fight the Britishers. In this regard, Abdul Malik Fida (1957) writes in his poem titled “*Da Khudai Khidmatgaro Aqeeda*” (The Faith of the Khudai Khidmatgars):

“Kh sar aw maal pe dwanra warkam hum da faida da zmung /
Klaka pa adm e tashadud ke aqeeda da zmung /
Maidan ta dwe yaw da Khudai da muhabbat da para /
Da Khudai makhlooq ta naseehat kro da ulfat da para /
Munga khidmat kro tor aw speen rata tameez nishta /
Che munga mana da khidmat kre dasi schez nishta.”

*(“I bargain of profit if I lose my wealth and life /
Such is our faith in the philosophy of nonviolence /
We plunge into the field of action for the love of God /
We advise on God’s creation for the sake of affection /
We serve the people, whether black or white /
Nothing can stop us from serving God’s creation”).*

The poetry themes talk about the faith and ideology of the KKM, which is nonviolent. On one hand, the theme discusses nonviolence as a strategy for uniting people without any ethnic, racial, or religious discrimination. On the other hand, it considers nonviolence to be a political strategy against the British. In a similar line of debate,

poetry themes also condemn enmities and sensitize people through taunting. In this regard, Ghani Khan (2011) writes:

“Har sumra dala kh she da de dala na kha de /
Da masheen pa las che da ror marg pasi rawan de /
Fiqah shariat Pakhto pa dagha zay tamama da /
Weena da Pakhton pa bal Pukhtun bandi harama da.”.

*(“Every cuckold on earth is better than him /
The cuckold who seeks his brother’s head /
All laws are the same whether Fiqh, Shari’ah, or Pakhto /
The life of Pukhtun is forbidden for another.”).*

The poetry piece draws a clear principle: no Pakhtun is allowed to kill his fellow Pakhtun. It uses the term “*dala*” (pimp), a derogatory term as *peghor* and says that a pimp is better than the one who killed his brother (fellow Pakhtun). It further says that killing fellow Pakhtun is forbidden and unlawful, and even both *Fiqah* (jurisprudence) and Pakhto (way of life) end here when it comes to killing fellow Pakhtun.

Similarly, the nonviolence-related themes sensitize people about the causes of enmities and warn them about the result of anger and enmities against others. As Khudai Khidmatgar and poet Fazal Rahim Saqi (1904-1994) (1957) writes:

“Kh sre stargi nh ghwari da cha /
Stargi sre la qahra mh kra pa hes cha /
Tregolai da bal tanbi lara war nh kre /
Kh de khwaha we da khpal kaala haya.”

*(“If you don’t seek others’ anger /
Don’t you show anger to others /
Don’t push the door of others /
If you desire your own household’s decency”).*

The themes of the couplet discuss the consequences of anger and enmities. It says that if one doesn’t want anger from others, he should not look at others with anger. It further states that one should refrain from attacking others' doors if one wants peace

and respect for one's home and family. The couplet promotes nonviolence and peace among the Pakhtuns. In a similar context, Khudai Khidmatgar and poet Fazal Mahmood Makhfi call the prevailing situation of the Pakhtuns as ‘*jehl*’ (ignorance) that causes disunity and mobilize people for peace and progress, as Shalman (2014) quotes Makhfi’s poetry in his biography, that says:

“Ay jehla wrak she munga de wrak kro /
Munga wrakego arman arman de /
Jehal nasha da saray pre mast dey /
Zmunga har tan mast pa khpal zan dey”.

*(“O ignorance! Be gone, you’ve destroyed us all /
Alas! We’re going to be wasted /
Ignorance is addiction, and it addicts /
Our people are intoxicated in themselves.”).*

The couplet discusses illiteracy and calls it ‘*jehl*’, which brings enmities and disunity. The poetry also warns people to unite or risk losing their identity. Further, poetry propagated nonviolence to end enmities and unite people for the cause of independence.

6.4.1.2.2 Elimination of Social Stratification through Poetry

Due to its agrarian nature, the occupational class has a long history in Pakistani society. People in certain occupations are called *Qasabgar* (manual workers). The *Qasabgar*, including *Jola* (cloth maker), *Tarkaan* (carpenter), *Chamyar* (shoemaker), *Kulaal* (potter), *Lohar* (blacksmith), and *Naayi* (hairdressers who work as professional cooks in the festivities), etc. People belonging to these occupations are considered a separate segment of Pakhtun society (Barth, 1965). Some believe that these segments of Pakhtun society do not fall into Pakhtuns’ lineage and are called non-Pakhtuns (Ahmed, 2011). This division is neither permanent nor static but fluid

with the changing circumstances of the person or family. These circumstances can be changed by conquest, money, Pakhtunization and following social conduct enforced by *Pakhtunwali* or the ideal code of conduct of Pakhtuns (ibid). Along with this, KKM worked tremendously to acknowledge and appraise the working classes during the colonial period for creating self-reliance on the Indian economy and local products. Therefore, their role and contributions were extolled, and they were considered equal and valuable members of the Pakhtun society. To unite Pakhtuns without any ethnic, religious or class discrimination and to encourage local industry, KKM worked towards the elimination of social stratification. The KKM changed people's perception by giving its definition of 'being Pakhtuns,' that is, everyone who lives in the Pakhtun geography, speaks Pashto, and does Pashto, are Pakhtuns (Khan, 1983). To shatter this social stratification, KKM awarded ranks within the organization to people from downtrodden classes such as *Qasabgar*. In line with the struggle of the KKM, Pashto poetry also played a role in eliminating social stratification and uniting people beyond their ethnic, occupational, or religious affiliation. The themes in poetry worked to mobilize people toward eliminating social stratification, highlighting its effects on society. In this regard, poet and Khudai Khidmatgar Abdul Malik Fida (1957) writes:

“Mung da dunya na tashadud zulm o sitam wrokawo /
 Da khpali khawri na da ghair spera qadam wrokawo /
 Da Pakhtano na imtiaz da zyot aw kam wrokawo /
 Da nifaq botay da khpal mulka cham pa cham wrokawo.”

(*“We strive for a world free of violence and tyranny /
 We want our soil free of wretched foreign occupation /
 We want to eliminate the distinction between low and high from Pakhtuns /
 We want to vanish disunity from our streets.”*).

The themes of the couplet condemn the violence of outsiders and their acts of aggression. It emphasizes the need to unite Pakhtuns to resist outsiders (in this case, the British). It sees social stratification as a hurdle to uniting people, so it aims to eliminate social stratification to bring Pakhtuns together. In another piece of poetry, Abdul Malik Fida (1957) also writes:

“Tala targha kro da nifaq aw be ilmai bamono /
Terawo jwand da na’pohai pa pahwano rasmono /
Mast u da Mian, Mullah, Malak, Khan pa rasmi torono /
Watali u da qaam walai da nam o nanga baba.”
*(“We’ve been robbed by discord and ignorance /
We lead our lives according to old, ignorant ways.
Intoxicated are we by the smearing of Mian, Khan, Malak, and Mullah /
We’ve been deprived of the honour of nationalism.”)*

The themes in Abdul Malik Fida's poetry discuss the effects of social stratification. It points out that by following outdated cultural norms and traditions, social stratification has been created in society. It further says that we have failed to unite as a nation by following the *Mian* (spiritual leader), Khan (landowner, singular), *Mullah* (cleric, singular), and *malak*, who are a source of enacting these old norms and traditions.

Poetry does not merely identify the issue of social stratification and its effect but also carries themes that advocate for the unity of the people and the elimination of social stratification. As Abdul Malik Fida (1957) says in another couplet:

“Bad da hes cha sara pa zhaba pa qalam nh kawo /
Gham da watan pa munga farz de da zan gham nh kawo /
Farq pa insan ke da Arab aw da ajam nh kawo /
Munga tayar u da har qisma mossebat da para.”
*(“We don’t hurt anybody either by speech or by pen /
The affliction of homeland is above our needs.”)*

*We don't discriminate between the Arab and non-Arab /
We're ever ready for every kind of bereavement."*

Themes of poetry reflect the aims of the KKM, which include the unity of people beyond any religious or ethnic discrimination. It states that we don't harm anyone with our language or writing, nor do we believe in any discrimination based on ethnicity or religion. Furthermore, it expresses that we are ready for every type of sacrifice to eliminate social stratification and to struggle for the independence of our land from the British.

Similarly, the KKM's struggle to eliminate social stratification aimed at promoting local products and boycotting foreign products to support Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. To support occupational castes and promote local products, Bacha Khan started *Charkha* (wheel/machine for making local clothes) to weave clothes called *khamta* (local clothes made by *charkha*), which are handmade local clothes for himself (Gandhi, 2004). The technique of weaving clothes on *Charkha* was also used in the vocational training of the Azad Schools¹⁷. The KKM actively campaigned for the use of *khamta*, and every Khudai Khidmatgar was asked to wear *khamta* to promote local industry, to support occupational classes of society and to boycott the imported clothes and products to economically target the British imports in India (Sohail, 2018). In the same line of debate, a Khudai Khidmatgar poetess Nageena¹⁸, quoted by Shah (2012), says:

“Da watan jola ba geda bandi mor she /
Da Khamta na khpala paka laman wokra /

¹⁷ The *khamtha* clothes are still made in Charsadda and Peshawar districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and people wear it with proud. Some of the people also call it “*Bacha Khanay kapray*” (Bacha Khan's clothes).

¹⁸ Due to society pressure many of the women would write poetries and articles (prose) with pseudo names to the Pakhtun magazine. This is the reason their age and more details of the poetess aren't available.

Taraqi pa khpalo matto bandi kegi /
 Tof lanat pa rakht asbab da dushman wokra /
 Shazalmi ba toyawi pre khpali weeni /
 Ta charkha bandi khidmat da watan wokra /
 Da khamta da aghosto pa badala ke /
 Khor! sail da azaday da Gulshan wokra.”.
*(“The homeland’s weaver would be sated /
 Make Khamta as your main attire /
 Progress is subject to one’s own exertion /
 Send curses upon the enemy’s attire /
 The youth will shed their own blood /
 You need to serve your homeland in real /
 In reward for wearing Khamta’s clothes /
 O’ sister! Ramble through the freedom’s garden.”).*

The poem sensitizes people to support and promote local products, such as *khamta*, to strengthen the local economy and to support occupational castes. It suggests that development is only possible with the promotion of local industry, which cannot be succeeded while relying on imported products. The poetry themes also connect cloth making with the struggle for independence, emphasizing that supporting the occupational classes and promoting local industry is a path to independence.

6.4.2.2.3 Mobilizing People for Nonviolent Resistance

Nonviolence and its related themes in Pashto poetry mobilized people to eliminate enmities, internal feuds, and social stratification and mobilized people for nonviolent resistance against British colonialism. The KKM employed nonviolent strategies, including protests and marches, to resist the British. Through its themes of nonviolence, the poetry helped mobilize people for the KKM’s nonviolent resistance. On various occasions, the British used violence against the KKM to suppress the

movement and its struggle. However, throughout these years, Khudai Khidmatgars glorified the message and struggle of nonviolence through various expressions.

In 1930, various protests and marches were organized by the KKM. In the same year, Bacha Khan and other freedom fighters were imprisoned. The KKM called a march on the 23rd of April 1930. During March, the British used violence against the marchers, beating and shooting protesters. Many Khudai Khidmatgars were killed during the violence. Poets responded to the incident by condemning the violence while simultaneously glorifying nonviolence to mobilize people. In this regard, Khudai Khidmatgar and poet Fazal Rahim Saqi (1957) write in his poem titled “*Da Qisa Khwani Da Shahedano Pa Yaad Ke*” (In the Memory of the Martyrs of Qissa Khwani):

“Mung da adm e tashadud warsara jang kre de /
Na’khaqa toye krali zmunga zalimano weeni /
Da farharono da zwanano tli chapi da weno /
Da kondo rondo baheedali da chashmano weeni /
Pa masheen’gan sori’wori zalmi yadegy zmung /
Wakhi tan josh da ashqano da azaday da ashqano weeni /
Manrai ba pre’wozi da zalim sarmaya’dar pakhpala /
Che warta dand chapera she da mazdorano weeni.”.

*(“We’ve fought them with nonviolence /
They wicked spilled our blood wrongfully /
The wounds of our young ones left marks of blood /
From the eyebrows of widows have dripped pyre of blood /
We remember our youth brutally killed by firearms /
The blood of the young ones warms up for freedom.
The castle of the wicked landlord will collapse one day /
When there’s enough blood of the workers surrounded”).*

The poetry narrates the story of the incident in which many were injured and others were martyred. On the other hand, it speaks of the nonviolent struggle, conveying a

message of hope that the colonialists' violence will soon end through nonviolence. The poetry also carries themes of independence and praises the people's struggle. The poem by Ghani Khan (2011) titled "*Pa Mardan da Bacha Khan march*" (Bacha Khan's march in Mardan) is another example of poetry that embodies themes of nonviolent resistance. The anthem recounts the story of the march in Mardan, led by Bacha Khan in 1942. During the march, British soldiers initiated a lathi charge (violent crackdown), in which protesters were beaten. Bacha Khan himself was beaten during a lathi charge, resulting in fractured ribs. However, the Khudai Khidmatgars didn't lose courage and remained committed to nonviolence. One of the couplets in the anthem says: "Jang la dey mansour rawaan towp aw nh topang lari / Nh da toro praq lari aw nh da zgharo shrang lari". (*"The Pakhtun Mansoor is going to wage war without cannons and guns / Neither does he have the lighting of the sword nor the jingle of shields."*). In this couplet, the poet compares Bacha Khan to Mansoor, who is believed to have sacrificed himself for his truths in the 12th century. The couplet glorifies Bacha Khan's nonviolence, emphasizing that he wields no tools of war, such as a cannon, gun, sword or shield, but relies solely on nonviolence.

6.4.1.3 Emergence of Poetry of and for Women

As discussed in previous sections of this chapter, an individual's status in Pakhtun society is defined by *Pakhtunwali*, which is idealized through various folk genres such as folksongs, proverbs, and folk stories (Dupree, 1979). The Pashto folklore genres that idealize *Pakhtunwali* also reinforce the worldview of men towards women in Pakhtun culture and society (Badshah & Sarfaraz Khan, 2017). The famous maxim: "*khaza ya da kor we aw ya da gor*" ("woman is good to be kept either in home or grave.") symbolizes the restriction on women's mobility (Dawn, 2012). In this context, as a patriarchal society, women are more susceptible to facing injustice and

discrimination in *Pakhtunwali*. Moreover, through the norms, customs, and values of *Pakhtunwali*, girls' expectations are influenced by family members from early childhood, which limits the space for the existence and disagreement of women compared to men. Male family members decide about a girl's education, lifestyle, employment, and even the number of children she bears (Jamal, 2014). Women are expected to follow the codes of *Pakhtunwali* having different connotations of *nang*, *ghairat* (bravery) or *namoos* that forbid women's freedom (Grisswold, 2013). For example, women are considered to observe *parda* (veil), which is the main element of *Pakhtunwali*, and it is considered shameful to allow women out of the houses. Similarly, suppose a woman speaks against the codes of *Pakhtunwali*. In that case, she is labelled as *Be'Sharma* (shameless) or *Klak'stargi* (rude), devaluing her very existence and right to live with dignity (Grima, 1998; Grisswold, 2013).

The transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics introduced themes that challenged the existing codes and customs of *Pakhtunwali*. The poetry began questioning the status of women and how men treated women in society. It started deconstructing the values, codes, and customs that created a common understanding of the subjugation of women in society, as poetess and Khudai Khidmatgar, Alif Jan Khattaka (1931-2019) (1946) writes:

“Khazi hum zrona lari zro ke khwahishat lari /
 Sar ke mazgha lari mazgho ke ihsasat lari /
 Kanri kho nh de hum da sta pa shan jazbat lari /
 Kha khyalat lari balke la ta na zyati lari /
 Da be gunah marghai de band kre pa panjaro ke wali /
 Waya kre khakhi de de jwandai pa hadeero ke wale?”.

(“Women do have hearts, wishes thrive in them /
 They do have brains; feelings arrive in them /
 Not are they stones, they've emotions like you /

*They've decent thoughts, more than you /
Why did you trap these innocent birds in cages? /
Why have you buried them alive in graveyards. ").*

The poetry piece Poetess talks about the suppression of women in Pakhtun society. It questions the tradition of the veil, where women are kept at home, not allowed to roam freely like men, nor permitted to go to school or access male spaces such as *hujra* or sports grounds, etc. While challenging these codes of *Pakhtunwali* through her poetry, poetess and Khudai Khidmatgar, Sayeda Bushra Begum (1922-2002) (1954) also writes:

*"Ma pa Iran, Mesar, Iraq, Turko ke wo nh led o /
Da riwaji parda da laso khpo zanzeer de zama /
Che pa tabah haal da Pakhtun me nazr okro pa ghor /
Pakhtuna sta da tanazul asbab taqseer de zama."
(*"I couldn't find it in Iran, Egypt, Iraq, or Turkey /
The traditional veil is like a chain in my hands and feet /
When I pondered upon the destruction of the Pakhtuns /
I found out that your downfall lies in my error. ").**

In couplets, Bushra Begum criticizes the concept of the veil among Pakhtuns. To do so, she references Muslim countries like Iran, Egypt, Iraq, and Turkey, where the tradition of veil is not as strict (although in later stages, the practice of veil became compulsory in Iran) as in Pakhtun society. Couplets say that the veil is like handcuffs and chains that have stifled her creativity and productivity. It also connects challenges faced by Pakhtun society with the subjugation and suppression of women, asserting that Pakhtuns are enduring hardships and forms of slavery because their women do not have equal rights to men.

6.5 Second Period of Socio-Poetics: Progression in Socio-Poetic

Themes in Pashto Poetry

The second period of socio-poetics started with the partition of India when the Britishers left the subcontinent in August 1947, dividing India. The themes of poetry that emerged in this era were affected by a historical journey of its own as well as by the ongoing socio-political conditions of the region. The following sections discuss the historical background of the second period of socio-poetics and then discuss emerging themes.

6.5.1 Historical Background of the Second Period of Socio-Poetics

During the partition of India, the Pakhtun-populated areas were made part of Pakistan, and the Pakistani state began following the Britishers' policies to counter ethnic nationalism and identity politics in the newly formed state (Rahman, 2002). Soon after its creation, the government of Pakistan overthrew the KKM government in the then NWFP, and hundreds of Khudai Khidmatgars, including poets, were imprisoned. On the 12th of August 1948, the KKM staged a protest in Babara village, district Charsadda, against the government's dismissal and the imprisonment of Khudai Khidmatgars. The police opened fire on the protesters, killing and injuring hundreds of Khudai Khidmatgars. Dozens of poets and writers attached to KKM were also put in jails. Further, following British policies, the state also started promoting Urdu and English as official languages and mediums of instruction in schools in the Pakhtun region and the rest of the country (Rahman, 2002). The Pakistani state also banned books of Pakhtun poets that use language as a tool to unite people to resist state violence (Marwat, 2021). To fill the vacuum left by the jailing of poets, the Pakistani state founded Pashto Academy Peshawar in 1952 and started state-sponsored Radio programs from Radio Peshawar (Caron, 2015).

In the same years, the *Wekh Zalmyan* Party (Awakened Youth Party- AYP) emerged in 1947 in Afghanistan. The party's primary purpose was to reunite Pakhtuns across the Durand line and to work for political and economic change in society (Bezhan, 2017). The party has given birth to many poets who produced a variety of poetry focused on themes of politics, economics, and culture (Ruhi, 2005). The poem of Abdul Habib Safi (1914-1983), quoted by Bezhan (2017), portrays the objectives and sentiments of the AYP very well:

*“If I am an awakened youth [wish zalmi] /
I’ll make the name and fame of the nation /
I’ll take Charsada [district], where beloved young men were martyred /
I’ll secure Pakhtunistan for the nation /
If I am an awakened youth /
I’ll open the jail’s gates to my brothers /
I’ll liberate the imprisoned souls /
I’ll secure Pakhtunistan for the nation /
If I am an awakened youth /
I’ll take revenge for my brothers /
Get a national reward /
If I am an awakened youth /
I’ll elude the bad traditions /
Get rid of the prejudices /
For my martyred brothers, I’ll get flowers /
I’ll secure Pakhtunistan for the nation”.*

The poem portrays the intentions of the AYP and its supporters, whose main objective is to unite Pakhtun across the Durand line that has divided Pakhtuns. Besides poets active with AYP, there were also poets from peripheries, such as Malanag Jan (1914–1957), who produced poems to unite Pakhtuns across the Durand Line. These poets enjoyed great space in political gatherings and folk music (Ruhi, 2005). Along with AYP, Afghanistan also started sponsoring the promotion of literature by publishing

books, magazines, journals, and numerous pamphlets on the state level (Bezhan, 2017).

To counter Afghanistan's propaganda, the Pakistani state also started sponsoring magazines named *Jamhur-i-Islam* (Islamic State) and *Abaseen* (Indus) published in Karachi to counter Afghanistan's propaganda. Poetry was produced and published in these state sponsor magazines to propagate against the Afghanistan government on both sides of the borders. The following couplets best shows the hostility of the two states against and how Pashto poetry was used to propagate against each other:

*“Oh! Pakhtuns of Kabul, be awakened and be ready /
For the creation of independent democracy /
How far you will be under the yoke of despotism /
Try and be independent (liberate) yourself /
From the personal despotic government.”*

The couplet propagates against the government of Afghanistan and asks people to revolt against the king and bring democracy to their country. The aforementioned couplet shows the propaganda of the two states against each other (Marwat, 2021).

The above-mentioned socio-political situation and its influence on Pashto poetry and literature gave birth to a new debate among literary people in the 1950s, where some poets and scholars were campaigning against the social side or socio-poetics in Pashto poetry. They believed that literature should be used for the sake of literature. At the same time, poets and scholars who were attached to progressive political thoughts believed that literature should be used for the sake of life (Khalil, 2012). In Pashto, the debate is termed '*adab da adab da para*' (literature for literature's sake) and '*adab da jwand da para*' (literature for life). Explaining the two views, poet and scholar Tariq Khan (2022) expressed:

Adab da adab da para means that literature should be used for expressing aesthetics and internal emotions for humans. It shouldn't be used for

discussing social and political issues. However, the '*adab dh jwand da para*' means that literature should be used for the cause of betterment in human life by discussing socio-political issues.

Those in support of '*adab da adab da para*' were mainly those affiliated with the Muslim League. This political party struggled to create Pakistan or those affiliated with state institutions such as Radio and Academic institutions. While those who were in support of '*adab da jwand da para*' were those affiliated with progressive and nationalist movements and parties. While supporting the argument of the latter, poet and scholar Sami Uddin Arman (2022) narrated a quote from Ajmal Khattak:

Writing poetry about my beloved's beauty, lips, hair, and cheeks is acceptable to them. However, it is unacceptable when I ask about the lousy condition of my beloved's lips, hair, and cheeks.

The debate resulted in the intermingling of the themes of aesthetics and romanticism with themes of socio-poetics. This gives birth to new themes in Pashto poetry covering aesthetics and socio-poetics. The following poem, titled '*Za hum zalmay yam*' (I am also young) by Ajmal Khattak (1958), is one example of poetry that carries both themes of aesthetics and socio-poetics:

“Za hum shair yam da cha dangi speeni gharay sara /
Da lavangeen pa taal khpal fikar zangawali shama /
Za hum fankar yam da che toro khumari stargi ke /
Da peghaltob sharab be jam da kaso skali shama /
Husan ba sa kram che zargay pe khwar o zar laram /
Meena ba sa krama che jwand pa ougo bar laram /
Che rana char chapera tol mahol salgai salgai we /
Waya da sro shondo khanda bandi ba sa poha sham /
Che khpal karali fasal tol rata azghi azghi kri /
Da bal da gulo pa muska bandi ba sa ukama.”

*(“I too am a poet for someone’s fair and tall neck /
I can wander my thoughts on the patience’s swing /*

*I, too, am an artist in someone's intoxicated black eyes /
 I can drink the wine of virginity without any goblet /
 Let the beauty peel my heart to the core /
 Let the love make my life a burden /
 When the sobbing circles me all around /
 Tell me, how can I fathom the laughing of red lips /
 When all my seasonal crop is nothing but thorns/
 What use is there of other's flowers to me.").*

The poem carries themes of romanticism and aesthetics while, on the other hand, it carries themes of socio-poetics. It says it is easy to write about the beauty of the beloved, but how could I write it when there is crying all around, and I have no authority over resources?

Moreover, the emergence and fame of socio-poetics drew new principles of production poetry among Pakhtuns, and it became necessary for a poet to write about issues and challenges of society. In this line of debate, poet and scholar Sami Uddin Arman (2022) narrated a couplet of a Khudai Khidmatgar and poet Saif Ur Rahman Saleem (1929-2007): “Saleema sam de ka ghazal shar’e tha / Lag paki zikar da khpal qaam kawa”. (“O Saleem! Put your ghazal per the doctrines of Pakhtunwali (the Pakhtun code of conduct) / Do mention your people in it.”). The couplet says that if a poet does not discuss his nation and the problems of his people, his poetry is not according to the principles. Talking about the couplet, the respondent stated that because of the emergence of *maqsadi shairi* (socio-poetics), it had become a principle to write about different problems and issues of the Pakhtun society”. This became part of the deep consciousness of the poets and poetry of those who supporter of the idea of “*adab da adab da para*” also got influenced by the socio-poetic themes.

The aforementioned sociopolitical situation, along with the political and ideological influence of the former USSR (see sub-sections), influenced the themes of Pashto

poetry. Various new themes emerged, further modifying Pashto poetry's socio-poetic themes. These themes addressed various socio, cultural, political, and economic questions of the Pakhtuns, which are analyzed in the following sub-sections.

6.5.2 Themes of the Second Period of Socio-Poetics

The following themes emerged in the second period of socio-poetics.

6.5.2.1 Pashto Poetry Response to Independence

The early political events made mistrust among the Pakhtun, the then NWFP, and the newborn Pakistani state. KKM struggled for many years to get freedom from the Britishers. However, in the newly created state after the independence, KKM faced the same as they faced under British colonialism. Because of the state policies, Pakhtuns, in general, and the poets were particularly concerned about their identity as they believed the new state was not accepting it. That is why the KKM and other political entities were unhappy with the post-partition scenario, where they were insecure about their identity and land ownership (Akbar, 1958; Akbar, 1971). In this regard, while criticizing the policies of the newborn Pakistani state, poets started questioning independence. In this line of debate, Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar (1958), poet and Khudai Khidmatgar writes in his poem “*Da Sanga Azadi da*” (What sort of freedom is this?):

“Khwari, loga, barbanda mu tar wosa de pa barkha /
Kh dasi azadi we da kho nh da zama khwakha /
Da komi selai yawrali zama da karali wanri /
Zama pa qismat prewato la komi lori kanri /
Pa bagh da sro gulono ke cha okrali lanri /
Niamat da azaday ke mu Naseeb nishta pasanri /
Pa khwand ye sa poye nh shoma halwa da kh batti da? /
Da sanga azadi da?”.

*(“If liberty means starvation and stark nakedness, I hate it /
 What type of windstorm it was? /
 Which below off and scattered my gathered harvest /
 Who planted wild grass in my garden of roses? /
 Probably, we are not destined to /
 Enjoy the blessing of freedom /
 Not a flash of it – not a grain of it /
 What sort of freedom is this? ”).*

The poetry piece says that after the independence of the subcontinent, the newly born states of Pakistan and India were thrown into a system where the lives of the poor, sufferers, and oppressed were not changed. This is why the poetry questions the independence in the newborn state, where they experience hardships and violence from the beginning. In the same line of debate, poet and Khudai Khidmatgar Wali Muhammad Tofan (1919-1983) (2014) writes:

*“De azaday da azaday gatonko zrona maat kral /
 De pasarli da bulbulano wazarona maat kral /
 Pa khaq ghohtalo zamani zmung sarona maat kral /
 Yaw so wahshyano da islam pa nom satrona maat kral.”*

*(“This freedom has betrayed us freedom fighters /
 This spring has cost the nightingales their wings.
 The world has crushed us time and again for demanding our rights /
 In the name of Islam, a few savages have broken heads”).*

The themes of the poetry depict the post-independence scenario. It says that independence has broken our desires, which we struggled with during British Imperialism. The second couplet is about the post-independence scenario where the home privacies of the Pakhtuns were disrespected in the name of Islam (Pakistan).

6.5.2.2 Emergence of the theme of Self-Determination

Post-partition political scenarios gave birth to new themes where the dominant theme of *Azadi* was transformed into *khpalwaki*. The term *khpalwaki* is derived from the Pashto word '*khpalwak*' which combines two other words, '*khpal*' and '*wak*', meaning 'ownership' and 'authority'. In a literal sense, *khpalwaki* means autonomy of self or self-autonomy. Conceptually, the term *khpalwaki* means 'self-determination,' which covers the authority of self (identity) and authority over land. This is why the themes of poetry of the second period revolve around the theme of self-determination. In this line of debate, Wali Muhammad Tofan (2014) writes:

“Da azaday pa nom jangona Pukhtano kre de /
Pa dagha shama ghorzangona Pukhtano kre de /
Pa gran watan bandi nangona Pukhtano kre de /
Jwand la da jwand ziny sangoona Pukhtano kre de /
Zaka khpal khaq da Pakistan pa azaday ke ghware /
Pukhtana khpalu pora barkha de khadai ke ghware.”

*(“In the name of freedom have fought we Pukhtuns /
Round this candle have leapt we Pakhtuns.
Upheld honor of beloved homeland have we Pakhtuns /
For life, some hardships are upheld by us: Pakhtuns /
That’s why they seek their right in Pakistan’s freedom /
in this delight seek the whole share we Pakhtuns”).*

The poetry talks about the struggle and sacrifices of Pakhtuns for independence; based on that, they want their due rights in the newborn Pakistani state. It says that the Pakhtuns struggled against the Britishers to get independence. This is why they must have their due rights in the Pakistani state. In a similar line of debate, Wali Muhammad Tofan (2014) also writes:

“Khaq mu dey mung da azaday gatali /
Khana swal’gar da de bazar kho nh u /

Che mung ye wakaro aw bal ye reebi /
Sa naokaran da cha da plar kho nh u.”

*(“We’ve won the right to our freedom /
We’re not the beggars of this bazaar, O Khan! /
We’ll sow it, and others will reap /
We’re not the servants of somebody’s father”).*

Poetry's themes question independence on the one hand and give a message of hope and resilience on the other. It says we do not accept others reaping the fruits of independence while we have struggled and achieved it.

For the Pakhtuns, the struggle for self-determination became dominant in politics and poetry. The poets started producing poetry on the theme of self-determination to make people aware of their due rights in the newly born state. In this regard, Ajmal Khattak (1958), in his poem “*Jannat*” (Heaven), writes:

“Ma de khpal zra ta sar war khkata kralo /
Dh pa aotaro stargo mata katal /
De sheen asman ta ghoredo wayal ye /
Ma awredal tre da yaw so lafzona /
Wayal ye ay da la’ makaan Khawanda /
Pa khpal makaan ke khpal ikhtyar Jannat de /
Gany da dagha lewanto da para /
Kh naar we naar kh daar we daar Jannat de.”

*(“When I looked at my heart /
It looked back with perplexed eyes /
It was humming to the God /
I heard it saying these words /
O the omnipresent Lord /
It’s heaven to have authority in one’s house /
Otherwise, for this madness /
Starvation or gallows both are Heaven”).*

The themes of the poetry of Ajmal Khattak compare self-determination with heaven while saying that self-determination at home (homeland) is not less than heaven. The poetry also carries themes of resilience as it says that I am ready to face hardship in terms of hunger or gallows for self-determination. Similarly, in another piece of poetry, Ajmal Khattak (1958) also expresses:

“Da Rohistan na da khaist aw khwand Jannat jor she /
 Tas nas Pakhtun na da asia da zra taqat jor she /
 Da me manzal da me Jannat de warawan yam warta /
 Nh pa Mullah yam nh pa Khan yam nh pa zan yam warta.”

*(“In my beautiful land /
 For the Pakhtuns, I want a love of life /
 Of beauty and fraternity /
 That alone in my destination /
 That alone in my heaven /
 That alone I will pursue /
 For I do not like /
 The Mullah or the Khan”).*

In the couplets, Ajmal Khattak, on the one hand, asks for a good life for Pakhtuns while, on the other hand, he criticizes those who oppose their struggle and identity, i.e., *Mullah* and *Khan*, who create hurdles in the way of his destiny.

The poetry of self-determination also discusses the question of identity to raise awareness and mobilize people to struggle for ethnic identity. In the post-partition struggle, the progressive and nationalist people were blamed for their wanting to rule Pakistan, or they want to break the country. In a similar line of debate, Marwat (2021) quotes couplet of Khudai Khidmatgar and poet Abdul Akbar Khan, that says:

*“I am not such a fool as to want rule over other people in [Pakistan] /
 All these I want is: /
 The reflection of the Pakhtun entity in the constitution of the country /*

*The region where I live to be named after my people, the Pakhtuns, who live there
(Pakhtunistan/Pakhtunkhwa) /*

And good education for my children in their language, Pashto /

As long as these aspirations are fulfilled /

I don't mind even if I remain poor, hungry, and naked".

In couplets, the poet prioritizes bread and cloth as secondary priorities and language and identity as foremost. Among other themes, identity politics remains the focus of poetries in the second period. For poets, the struggle and aim in the post-colonial state were self-determination and countering state policies.

6.5.2.3 The Emergence of Revolutionary Theme

Due to its closeness with the USSR and China, the political landscape of Pakistan was influenced by regional and international political scenarios soon after its inception. Many political leaders and workers inspired by the ideologies of socialism and communism who formed the Communist Party Pakistan (CPP) in the early 1950s. However, it was banned soon after its formation because of allegations of a coup (Yaqubi, 2021). Banning nationalist and communist political parties and movements such as KKM, CPP, and others led to the formation of a grand alliance in the form of the National Awami Party (NAP) in 1957. The NAP was based on leftist ideology and included nationalists, communists and other progressive political forces belonging to various units of Pakistan (Yaqubi, 2015; Yaqubi, 2021). These developments led to the emergence of revolutionary politics in the political landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that introduces theme of revolution in Pashto poetry. Talking about emergence of revolutionary theme in Pashto poetry, scholar and writer Noor ul Amin Yousafzai (2023) expressed in a conference at Nishtar Hall:

The period between the 1950s and 1980s was revolutionary throughout the world. This period was not revolutionary in terms of politics but also terms of

art and literature. In the same period, Pashto poetry witnessed various new themes revolving around revolution and revolutionary politics.

Due to inspiration from international political scenarios, Pashto poetry also carries themes that discuss international politics. Pashto poetry, on the one hand, started discussing international politics while, on the other hand, started relating the case of Pakhtuns to global political scenarios. Therefore, we see Pashto poetry talking about people and causes from various corners of the world. In a similar line of debate, poet and Khudai Khidmatgar Aslam Kamali (1886-1966) (1958) writes:

“Tijarat zama naseeb shwe da london /
Astogan way tamam umar da burlen /
Sada jwand bolshavikee zama naseeb dey /
Kakarai ke mey mazgha way de lennon.”.

*(“Had London's trade be my fate
Had I been fortunate to live in Berlin for ages /
Had I adopted the simple life of Bolsheviks /
Had I the brain of Lenin in my head.”).*

The poetry, on the one hand, supports the Bolshevik lifestyle and the ideology of socialism by praising the ideas of Lennon. On the other hand, he dreams of a world where everyone can move around without difficulties. The couplet shows that poetry of the second period of socio-poetics talks about world politics.

Similarly, it talks about various oppressed people and recognizes their political struggle. Hamesh Khalil (2017) in his poem “To Patrice Lumumba”, writes:

“Che tanda gharo la de jam de khairazai rawro /
Ta be aramo la aram da sokalai rawro /
Salam da amn ta ikram da wadanai rawro /
Ta che Congo lara paigham da azaday rawro.”

*(“You’ve brought the cup of freedom to the parching lips /
You’ve brought the rest of prosperity to the restless /*

Salutation O the torchbearer of peace /
You've brought the message of freedom to Congo").

Khalil wrote this poem in memory of Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961), the freedom fighter and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo who was assassinated in 1961. The poetry praises the struggle of the Patrice Lumumba for independence. In his poem, Hamesh Khalil (2017) also writes:

“Da Africa da tori khawri speen saba ta ye /
Da toro toro gham zapalo shpo saba ta ye /
Pa zrono toro pa rang speeno qaza ta ye /
Nan da jehan da har insan da zra sadaa ta ye.”
*(“You're the light of Africa's wretched land /
You're the light of dark and woeful nights.
You're the justice for fair-skin scavengers /
Today, you're the cry of every human of the world”).*

The poetry piece honors Lumumba and talks about his struggle and sacrifices for his people. Pashto poetry produced in the second period of socio-poetics talks of revolution as a solution to society's problems. This is why the 1970s-80s era is called the revolutionary era of Pashto poetry. Many revolutionary anthems and songs produced during that period became popular. The famous anthem “*Da Inqilab Tarana*” (“Anthem of Revolution”) is one example of it as termed by scholar and writer Noor Ul Amin Yousafzai (2023)¹⁹. The anthem was written by Rahmat Shah Sayil, who talks about revolution and considers it the only solution to the problems of Pakhtun society. While talking about revolutionary poetry, Noor Ul Amin Yousafzai (2023) also shared a couplet of Ajmal Khattak that is meant to mobilize people for revolutionary struggle:

“Malgaro tash pa logedo unashwa /

¹⁹ See annexure 1 for complete anthem.

Zay che lamba sho da khpal zan osezo /
Da nawi gul da khasmani da para /
Da zor khwarali gulistan osezo”.

*(“Comrades it is not enough to smoke /
We must turn ourselves into flame /
To create new flowers, it is not a joke /
Clean up the garden to build again”).*

The couplet compares the existing struggle with smoke and asks people to struggle more, comparing it to burning like flames. The metaphor of burning self is used for sacrifices needed to reach destiny.

6.5.2.4 Emergence of theme of Class Question

Contrary to gender, class question couldn't gain popularity in the first half of the 20th century because of the popularity of the ethnic question in the political landscape of the then NWFP. A very blurred picture of the class question can be seen in the poetry produced in the first half of the 20th century about class questions. Nevertheless, class themes gained popularity in the second period because of the influence of progressive and revolutionary politics. However, again, the class question was only limited to peasants and manual workers. The reason was that there was no working class of industries or other factories in the then NWFP or other Pakhtun areas till the late 1980s²⁰. Poetries revolve around the theme of class questions in the second period of socio-poetics, on the one hand, identifying the sufferings of downtrodden classes and, on the other hand, mobilizing people for possible solutions. In this regard, poet cum activist Karam Sattar Yaqobi (2023) speaking in a panel discussion at a conference organized by Culture Department at Nishtar Hall, narrated couplets of revolutionary

²⁰ Industries were established in 1988 onwards that is discussed in chapter 8.

poet Master Sher Afzal (1933-live) that talk of peasant's lives in Pakhtun society. The couplet says:

“Ma we toriya umbarak sha khabar shwe yama /
Che sta pa kor ke yaw kakay mah e taban paida sho /
Tori we warsha pa Khanano bandi zeray waka /
Che da dehqan kara dehqan ibn e dehqan paida sho.”
*(“Congratulations, O farmer! I've heard/
You've found a baby boy like splendid moon /
Go and tell the Khans, ask the farmer /
That a farmer born to a farmer's son.”).*

The couplet projects peasants' lives in the Pakhtun society. It questions the societal hierarchy where peasants and laborers remain at the lower ladder of wealth distribution. In literary meaning, the couplet covers the story of a peasant who is critical of the class system in society. However, conceptually, it criticizes society where a peasant remains a peasant generation after generation. Poetry themes identify issues and effects and mobilize people to solve these issues. It mobilizes people for unity and struggle to change their fate. In this regard, professor and writer Yaseen Iqbal Yousafzai (2023) narrated couplets of Saif Ur Rahman Saleem (1929-2007) at the Pashto conference organized in Nishtar Hall:

“Zama khwarano mazdorano ronro /
Ay makhkomano mazdorano ronro /
Zeeray che munga itehad uko /
Pa khpal tanzeem mu itemad uko /
Munga manzal ta der qareeb raghlo /
Munga mazal laka da baad wokro /
Os ba kh khair wo khpal jehan jor kro /
Munga Taqdeer ba da insan jor kro /
Stori ba zmaki ta pasqeegy zmung /
Mung ba da zmaki na asman jor kro.”

*(“My poor labor brothers /
O’ my suppressed victim brothers /
Give the good news for a call of unity /
To give trust to our own organization /
We’ve come closer to our destination /
We’ve covered the distance like wind /
Now, we will make our own homeland /
We shall fashion the fate of humans /
The stars will be riled to see our Earth/
We shall make this earth a paradise.”).*

On the one hand, poetry talks of people’s unity while, on the other hand, it shows them how to get rid of the prevailing oppressive system. The theme of poetry suggests that the power-hungry upper class has created a system where the poor are suffering, and the wealthy are living luxurious lives. The poetry piece calls on suffering workers to unite for a great cause. It also hopes for a better tomorrow as it says we are close to our destiny. In the poetry piece, the ideal system of the world is similar to heaven, where all humans will live happily.

6.6 Conclusion

The 20th century proved to be a new era of Pashto poetry where Pashto poetry was transformed from ethno-poetics to socio-poetics. The struggles for freedom during colonialism were the main factor behind the emergence of socio-poetics in Pashto poetry. The socio-poetics in Pashto poetry serves many purposes in Pakhtun society, i.e., sensitization of people regarding societal issues and problems. It works as a stimulant and tool of awareness by identifying issues and problems in society, their roots and effects, and suggesting solutions. The Pashto has seen two periods in the 20th century. The first period starts in the 1920s and reaches the end of 1947. The second period starts in 1947 and goes till the end of the 1980s. Throughout these two

periods, the ethno-nationalism remained a popular theme of Pashto poetry. At the same time, the themes of freedom, nonviolence, resistance, self-determination, gender, class, and revolution revolved around ethno-nationalism. The first period was influenced by the social conditions of colonialism, where poetry used the concepts of Pakhtun culture, such as *nang*, *ghairat*, and *peghor*, as stimulants in people's awareness of freedom. At the same time, the theme of nonviolence works to eliminate internal feuds and social stratification in society. Similarly, a blurred conception of the themes of class and gender helped bring equality to a society that worked in unity among different strata of society for resistance against the Britishers. However, in the second period, the poetry themes turned from independence to self-determination. Because of the mistrust of the newborn state, the themes of poetry revived around the theme of self-determination, covering the questions of identity and ownership of land. Other themes, such as the poetry of class, gender, and revolution, were influenced by progressive and revolutionary politics.

CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL SPACES: EVALUATION, DISSEMINATION AND CONSUMPTION OF POETRY-A CRUCIAL EXPLORATION

7.1 Introduction

Pashto's poetry transformation from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics has created various cultural spaces for various purposes. These cultural spaces bring an intellectual depth to Pashto poetry through critique and analysis, functioning to improve both the content and structure of the poetic expression and the alternate sources of knowledge, socialization, expression of thoughts, and overall message of the poetry. This chapter primarily concerns how these cultural spaces emerged, organized, and sustained in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and how they work to transform, evaluate, and disseminate poetry. The chapter begins with a discussion on how literary societies known as *adabi tolani* emerged as a cultural space and how it works for the evaluation and dissemination of poetry. The chapter further discusses and analyzes seminars, conferences, literature festivals, and study circles as cultural spaces for poetry analysis and evaluation. This chapter also discusses how various types of *mushairay* function and work to disseminate poetry and poetic messages among the masses. The chapter ends with discussing and analyzing the cultural spaces organized for poetry consumption. It briefly outlines how poetry is consumed in protests, political gatherings, and music gatherings as tools of expression and resistance, serving as a source of catharsis and entertainment while providing a social space for ordinary people.

7.2 Pashto Poetry in Cultural Spaces

As discussed in Chapter 5, poetry in Mughal India was primarily confined to the royal court, a tradition known as court poetry (*darbari shairi*) (Schofield, 2024). In contrast, Pashto poetry has been vital to public discourse since its inception, a testament to its rich cultural heritage. However, due to the non-availability of writing in society, the textual written Pashto poetry remained within the literate families and individuals. Nevertheless, in the 20th century, the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics, combined with increased literacy rate and publishing technology in Pakhtun-dominated areas, transformed Pashto poetry from individual poets to poetic platforms. Various poetic platforms were formed to produce new alternatives, approaches, and frameworks by recollecting and reimagining the past. Caron & Khan (2022) refers to these platforms under several names, including poetic networks, informal circles, and social spaces. For poets' meetings and get-togethers, Caron (2018) employs the idea of social spaces and casual circles; poetic networks, on the other hand, are literary institutions where poetry is practiced and disseminated. However, I have taken these spaces as cultural spaces in this research. Cultural spaces are frameworks where different aspects and components of cultural patterns are practiced, enculturated, and socialized (Ferdous & Nilufar, 2008). Cultural spaces are always a community phenomenon, and to understand cultural spaces, it is essential to understand the patterns of cultural spaces, such as environmental characteristics and surrounding people (Young, 1994; Rapoport, 1977). In the context of this research, by "spaces," I mean the phenomenon, such as poetry, its evaluation, public recitation, and consumption, that occur in a particular environment and are participated in by people. The phenomenon is a cultural space because it is organized in a cultural setting with cultural themes to promote culture and its components. Further, contrary

to Caron, the cultural spaces in my research and poetic spaces also cover other spaces, such as music gatherings and protests, that work for evaluating, disseminating, and consuming poetry. Thus, the cultural spaces in this dissertation include *adabi tolanay* (literary societies), literary meetings, literary gatherings, literary/literature festivals, seminars, academic conferences, study circles, *mushairay* (poetry narrating gatherings), music gatherings, protests, and *jalsay* (political gatherings).

Moreover, in the context of Pakhtun society, particularly in Peshawar, the locale of this study, these cultural spaces are organized in formal and informal places. The formal places in the context of this research are those dedicated to taking culture as a performance for preservation, celebration, and promotion. These places can be owned and established by public and private funds generated for cultural activity around Pashto poetry. In most cases, cultural spaces are organized in public and private buildings like buildings, rooms, halls, lawns, classrooms, seminar rooms, conference rooms, or community halls owned by governmental or NGOs such as university campuses, colleges, educational institutions, press clubs, hotels, and community halls. However, by informal places, I mean those places that governmental or NGOs do not own. Individuals or communities mostly own these informal places, such as *hujray* or shrines, or public spaces, such as chowks, roads, or lawns. In the last few decades, these cultural spaces have played a vital role in evaluating, learning, disseminating, preserving, and promoting Pashto poetry, ensuring cultural continuity and pride. The emergence, organizing, and financing of cultural spaces are briefly discussed in this chapter.

7.3 Literary Societies: A Key Cultural Space for Evaluating and Disseminating Poetry

Different names, such as *adabi jirga*, *adabi maraka*, and *adabi tolana*, are called literary societies. *Jirga* and *maraka* are derived from the Persian-Turkic language, which means council or gathering of people. At the same time, *tolana* is a Pashto word that means society. These terms serve different meanings and contexts in other situations in Pakhtun society. However, literary people use it as a name for literary organization by attaching the word *adabi*, i.e., *adabi jirga*, *adabi maraka*, or *adabi tolana*, which means literary society. Further, using different names, such as *Jirga*, *maraka*, or *tolana*, differentiates one literary society from another. The name of a place, natural object, literary figures, or other things also differentiates literary societies. In this case, '*Rahman Adabi Tolana*' (Rahman literary society) is named after Rahman Baba, '*Tehkal Adabi Tolana*' (Tehkal literary society) is named after a village, and '*Tatara Adabi Tolana*' (Tatara literary society) is named after a mountain situated in Khyber district attached to Peshawar.

Further, literary societies follow a formal hierarchal structure with a president, senior vice president, secretary general, vice president, finance secretary, information secretary, and joint secretary. These literary societies organize literary, literary gatherings, *mushairay* (poetry recital gatherings), and also publish books. Presently, almost fifteen literary societies are working in Peshawar. Among these, only eleven are active, while the rest of the four are dysfunctional and rarely organize literary activities. The functional literary society is called *fa'aala tolana* (functional literary society) and organizes weekly or monthly activities for its members. Some societies have been working for the past seven or eight decades, founded in the 1950s and 1960s; the *Tehkal Adabi Tolana* (Tehkal Literary Society) and *Sahu Lekoonko Maraka*

(Noble Writers Society) remain thriving today (see next section). The history, funding, organizing, and activities of literary societies are discussed in the following pages.

7.3.1 History of Literary Societies

The history of literary societies goes back to the early 19th century when these were formed at various colleges and universities in Europe and the United States. These societies were formed due to the strict policies of the administration of colleges and universities regarding several educational institutions (Gieser, 2010; McMullen, 1973). Likewise, in the subcontinent, the tradition of literary societies traces back to the second half of the 19th century, when a literary society named Delhi Society was formed as the result of a meeting convened by Colonel Hamilton in 1865 (Tripathi, & Das, 2022; Parekh, 2020). Similar societies, often called literary organizations, were also formed later and focused on the poetry and prose of Urdu literature (Zafar, 2023). Analogous literary societies were also founded in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the emergence of socio-poetics in Pashto poetry drew influence from Indian literary societies. In 1925–1926, Islamia College Peshawar hosted the founding of the first literary society called *Bazm-i-Sanah Sharqiya* (Organization of the Praise of the East). After a few years, the society was renamed *Bazm-i-Adab* (organization for literature), a scholarly forum. The literary society organized various events, including publishing the Khyber Magazine, featuring works in Pashto and Urdu. In this society, students served as cabinet members, while professors held the position of president (Khalil, 1994).

Another literary society named “*Pakhto Adabi Jirga Naokhar*” (Pashto Literary Society Naoshehra) was founded in 1934 by Khudai Khidmatgar and poet Abdul Khaliq Khaleeq and others in Naoshehra district of the then NWFP (Marwat, 2021). The *Pakhto Adabi Jirga* published dozens of books in a very short period. The same

literary society is still actively promoting the Pashto language and literature. In 1936, another literary society named “*Zalmy Leekwal*” (Young Writer) was founded in Hashtnagar village of the district of Charsadda and was functional till 1939. Khudai Khidmatgar and poet Ameer Nawas Khan Jalya (1907-1979) was its first president, and Master Abdul Karim (1908-1961) was its Secretary General (Rahman, 1995). In the same continuity, Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari (1907-1994) established another literary society called *Pashto Bazm-i-Adab* (Pashto Literary Gathering) in 1938 in Peshawar. In the same year, Nasrullah Khan Nasar established the *Pakhto Adabi Tolay* (Pashto Literary Society) in Tehkal, Peshawar (Khalil, 1994).

Likewise, on the Afghanistan side, *Maraka Da Pukhto* (Society for Pashto) was founded in 1922 in Afghanistan with the government's support. This society was aimed at working for Pashto language and literature. The literary society published two books, ‘Pashto Grammar’ and ‘*Yawazina Pukhto*’ (Unified Pashto), which helped people learn how to read and write Pashto. Another literary society called *Pukhto Adabi Anjuman* (Pashto Literary Organization) was established in Qandahar in 1932. This literary society also organized various activities, such as publishing multiple subjects about the Pashto language and literature in the literary magazine *Pakhto* (Khalil, 1994).

Additionally, two literary societies, *Anjuman-i-Adabi* (literary society) and *Anjuman-i-Pashto* (Pashto Society), were established in Kabul and Kandahar in 1930 and 1931, respectively. The two societies soon combined, and with public assistance, a new society called *Pashto Tolana* was established, later renamed *Uloom-i-Academy* (Academy of Science). Its purpose was to preserve and promote the Pashto language and literature and to standardize Pashto as an official language and its use in the domains of power, such as offices, judiciary, and learning places, as well as to work in

the subjects of the humanities and social sciences. The society was also intended to counter Dari, which was already the official language of Afghanistan (Dr. Ayaz & Dr. Khan, 2018).

After the partition of India, the social and political scenario gave a new turn to literary societies because of the influence of revolutionary politics. In this regard, the literary society *Anjuman-i-Taraqi Pasand Musanifeen* (organization of progressive writers) was the first literary society founded by prominent poets and writers of the province (Raaz, 2004). The freedom fighter Sanobar Hussain Kaka Jee (1897-1963) was its first president. The progressive and revolutionary politics inspired the founding of *Anjuman-i-Taraqi Pasand Musanifeen* (Organization of Progressive Writers). However, soon after its foundation, it was banned by the government. The members of the *Anjuman* founded another literary society named *Ulas Adabi Jirga* (People Literary Society) in 1952. Members of the *Ulas Adabi Jirga* played a vital role in promoting revolutionary poetry and the poetry of class and gender along with themes of self-determination (Khalil, 2012); (Raaz, 2004). While talking about the active role of the members of *Ulas Adabi Jirga* poets', Sher Muhammad Momand (2023) expressed during his talk at Pashto:

Members of the *Ulas Adabi Jirga* were not only poets and writers but also researchers and political activists. They produced books and magazines in different fields, including history, politics, society, culture, and art. Most were prominent members and position holders of the progressive parties from village to provincial to central level.

As its members were also active in politics, it was easy for them to mobilize poets and writers throughout the province, and that is why this society proved to be a new beginning in the field of Pashto poetry and literature (Caron, 2015; Adeeb, 1991).

Following *Ulasi Adabi Jirga*, dozens of literary societies were formed in villages, tehsils, and district levels. In his book, Muhammad Javed Khalil (1994) documented more than 100 literary societies working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the district or tehsil levels, founded between the 1950s and 1990s. In the same period, literary societies were also established in Baluchistan, where Pakhtuns are the second largest population of the province. Pashto Academy was founded in 1971 in Quetta, Baluchistan, and is still active. Along with literary societies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, similar literary societies were also established in major cities of the Sindh and Panjab provinces, i.e., Karachi, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Islamabad. These literary societies actively promoted language and literature by organizing various cultural spaces.

7.3.2 Works of Literary Societies

Literary societies organize *adabi ijlasana* (literary meetings) and *adabi ghonday* (literary gatherings) for various purposes. These meetings and gatherings work to evaluate and disseminate poetry and message in poetry. Meetings and gatherings of the scholarly societies are discussed in detail in the following pages.

7.3.2.1 Literary Meetings

Literary meetings are regular meetings held by literary societies on a weekly, bimonthly, or monthly basis. These meetings are organized in various formal and informal places in Peshawar and are exclusive to literary society members rather than the public. Nonetheless, informal attendance at the meetings is permitted for members of other literary societies and the public. The prime purpose of the meetings of the literary societies is to evaluate poetry. Nonetheless, they also plan literary gatherings and establish the organizational structure of the literary society.

Meetings organized for the evaluation of poetry are called *tanqeedi ijlasoona* (evaluation meetings, plural). *Tanqeedi ijlas* (evaluation meeting, singular) combines two words: ‘*tanqeedi*’ means critical, and ‘*ijlas*’ (singular) means meeting. In this sense, the literal meaning of *tanqeedi ijlas* is meeting for critique. However, in conceptual meaning, *tanqeedi ijlas* means meeting organized for the evaluation of poetry or meetings in the assessment in which poets present their new made poetry for evaluation. Meetings in the poetry assessment follow a formal pattern where a poet or poetess is nominated to present poetry for evaluation. During a meeting, a poet or poetess narrates his/her poetry in one go for the poet’s general understanding and then narrates it couplet by couplet. Fellow poets listen to each couplet and discuss its various aspects, such as form, structure, style, content, theme, and language. A respondent discussing the role of meetings in the advancement of poetry stated:

In the last seventy (70) years, the meetings evaluating poetry have played a vital role in bringing new thoughts, ideas, themes, and genres to Pashto literature, particularly Pashto poetry (FGD1).

While attending evaluation meetings, I observed that most young poets presented poetry for evaluation. In very few cases, senior poets presented poetry for evaluation. During an evaluation meeting of the *Sahu Lekonko Maraka*, a young poet, Shazad Khan, presented his poetry piece in the ghazal genre for evaluation. Senior poets commented on the ghazal’s themes, style, and vocabulary. While discussing couplets, the senior poets suggested removing two couplets from the ghazal. At the end of the meeting, when I asked the reason for suggesting removing the two couplets, a senior poet added: “The one couplet lacks meanings while the other couplet theme was irrelevant to the overall subject matter of the ghazal.”

Similarly, in another evaluation meeting organized by the same literary society, poet and president of the literary society Zaland Momand (2022) commented on a poetry

piece of a young poet, Shakhkar Muhamadzai, that “*da lafzono fazol kharchi nh da pakar*” (avoid lavishness of the vocabulary). At the end of the meeting, I asked Zaland Momand what he meant by “lavishness of the vocabulary,” and he replied:

Sometimes, young poets try to use complex and heavy vocabulary in their poetry to inspire their audience. However, these vocabularies affect the theme and style of their poetry. This is why I suggest they keep their poetry simple in the beginning so that they can learn the art of producing poetry first. Then, it would be easy for them to use any vocabulary with experience.

Further, in the same evaluation meeting, while commenting on Shkhkar Muhammadzai's poetry piece, a senior poet, Arman Badshah (2022), proposed to use another word instead of “*shahadat*,” which refers to martyrdom. When I asked him the reason behind the substitution of the word, he laughed and replied: “We, poets, also have a censorship policy (taunting the state for its censorship policies).” He went on to say:

I am aware that the poet used the term *shahadat* to raise awareness among the public. Nevertheless, they are transforming Pashto poetry into ‘*jang-zada shairi*’ (war affected poetry) that somewhat supports the militant narrative. That is why I recommended replacing it.

The collected data shows that evaluation meetings provide a learning environment by evaluating poetry pieces. During evaluation meetings, poets learn and improve their abilities to produce good poetry. Alternatively, poets can be socialized in poetry evaluation meetings. Additionally, it aims to broaden and deepen the poets’ critical knowledge and comprehension of various poetic topics. The same evaluation meetings apply to poetry and other genres of Pashto literature, such as prose, fiction, drama, and so on (Fieldnotes).

Moreover, meetings organized to plan literary gatherings involve discussions on managing funds, selecting a location for gathering, nominating the host[s], chief

guest[s], and speakers, and preparing an agenda. Similarly, meetings organized to form organizational structures of society follow the same routine, where discussions are held annually to select or elect a cabinet. In these meetings, literary society members propose names for different positions, such as president, vice president, secretary general, financial secretary, and joint secretary. Consensus is typically made to form the cabinet. However, in some cases, elections are also held when there is more than one candidate for a position.



Figure 7.1. Senior poets listening to and evaluating a ghazal during a poetry evaluation meeting organized by *Sahu Lakonko Maraka* at the office of the literary society. The flex on the wall features the society's name, along with an image of its founder, Qalandar Momand. In the background, books published by the society are seen on the table. Additionally, the teacups in front of the participants indicate that tea is served during literary society meetings. The tea cost is covered by the funds collected by literary society members each month. (Source: Author)

7.3.2.2 Literary Gatherings

The lack of coverage of ethnic groups' histories, particularly that of the Pakhtuns, in the Pakistani curriculum has drawn criticism (Khan, Cheng, Shah, Ullah, & Jianfu,

2020). In response, literary societies organize literary gatherings as an alternative approach to addressing this issue. Unlike meetings for evaluation, the literary gatherings are open to the public and involve debates featuring poets, authors, and intellectuals. The format of the discussions at these meetings resembles lectures, where the audience listens to the speaker talking on a topic. Literary gatherings are arranged on various occasions for various purposes. *Maozoati ghonday* (thematic gatherings), *Taziyati ghonday* (condolence gatherings), *Kaleezay* (death anniversaries), *Stayeny ghonda* (celebration gatherings), and *Makh katanay ghonday* (book launch gatherings) are types of literary gatherings organized on different occasions. However, the purpose of all these gatherings is to provide an intellectual space for debate on various aspects of literature, in this case, poetry.

Thematic gatherings, cover various topics, including politics, economics, society, and literature. They aim to educate poets and a broader audience on specific themes or subjects. During my fieldwork, I attended thematic gatherings organized by KHAL on the topic of “women’s role in the promotion of Pashto literature” and *Tatara Adabi Tolana* (Tatara Literary Society) on “the themes of Khushal Khan Khattak’s poetry.” Similarly, young poet Ammar Wadan (2022) described thematic gatherings of the literary societies as equivalent to study circles where members of literary society learn a great deal about themes of poetry”.

In addition, *Taziyati Ghonda, or gatherings* for condolences, is organized to condole. Experts and intellectuals are invited to discuss the poet’s life and work in this literary gathering following his passing. During fieldwork, I attended a gathering organized by *Malgari Lekwalan* (literary society affiliated with ANP) for the condolence of three poets, Saleem Raaz, Ameer Razaq Ameer and Tahir Afridi, who died in the first half of 2021. The gathering was organized in Bacha Khan Markaz, and various poets,

intellectuals, political figures, family members, and their close friends talked about their lives, works, and achievements (Fieldnotes). While talking about the role of the poetic works of Ameer Razaq Ameer, poet and scholar Khadim Hussain (2022) quoted couplets of Ameer Razaq Ameer during speech at condolence gathering at Bacha Khan Markaz:

“Insani tehzeeb zapali de jangono /
Wabagano balagano aw ranzono /
Da botan che pa kandaro ke monda she /
Taswerona de zmunga da nekono”.

*(“Wars have ruined human civilization/
By plagues, calamities, and ailments /
The artifacts found in the ruins /
Are the portraits of our ancestors”).*

While explaining the couplets, the speaker went on to say that:

In Pakhtun society, it is a common saying that Pakhtuns are descendants of one common ancestor. However, the said poetry couplets of Ameer Razaq deconstruct this presumption as it says that civilizations (cultures) are constantly hit by wars, epidemics, and ailments that have caused great migrations. Because of these migrations, the communities are mixed up by people of various ancestors. Thus, a community cannot remain descendants of one common ancestor.

The speaker further stated that:

These poetic discourses, on the one hand, deconstruct the colonial knowledge that creates divisions among people in the name of Pakhtuns and non-Pakhtuns. On the other hand, it creates spaces for peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

Moreover, the second couplet in the poetry piece talks about the ruins (Buddhist remains) and says that the statues found in these ruins are pictures of our ancestors. The second couplet also raises people's awareness of the importance of the Buddhist

remains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The narration of the couplet and commentary was meant to praise Ameer Razaq Ameer for his contribution to raising people's awareness through poetry.

Likewise, death anniversaries are observed and commemorated through the organization of *Kaleeza* (commemorating gathering). During fieldwork, I attended four commemorative gatherings organized to commemorate the death anniversaries of Ghani Khan, Sahib Shah Sabir, Khaliq Ziyar, and Abdur Rahim Majzoob. Hundreds of people from all walks of life took part in each of these gatherings, where people, including poets, political figures, and intellectuals, talked about the lives and works of these poets. In this regard, Fazal Rahim Marwat (2022), a professor of history, in his talk on the life and works of his father, Abdur Rahim Majzoob, at a condolence gathering organized for his father, stated

The poetic works of Abdur Rahim Majzob are an inspiration for young poets. He has socialized a generation of poets and writers in our district (Lakki Marwat) and the rest of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Those poets and writers are now struggling through poetry and prose to make people aware of the ongoing situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Moreover, literary gatherings play a crucial role in fostering community engagement. Celebrating poets known as *Stayen ghonday* (plural of *stayan ghonda*) are held to honor poets. In recent years, various specific days have also been announced in the name of poets for commending their works. These days are celebrated once a year for each poet, mostly on their birthday. These, the 'Rahmat Shah Sayil's Day,' 'Dervesh Durrani's Day,' and 'Pir Muhammad Karwan's Day' are prominent on which various literary societies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan organized literary gatherings to commend the contribution and works of these poets. Moreover, random gatherings are also organized to commend poets and their works. During my

fieldwork, I attended a commendation gathering organized in the name of Dr. Hanif Khalil on August 28, 2022. The *Acheeni Adabi Tolana* (Acheeni Literary Society) organized the gathering to honor Dr Hanif Khalil, a poet and scholar who works as a professor of Pashto at Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad. Several poets and writers discussed Hanif Khalil's works during this commendation gathering, fostering a sense of community engagement.

The data I collected unequivocally demonstrates that literary gatherings are cultural events and vital sources of alternative education for poets and the wider Pakhtun society. Poet Amjad Shahzad's (2022) perspective on the educational value of literary gatherings is particularly insightful:

The Pakistani curriculum doesn't teach about the identity and culture of the Pakhtuns. This omission results in a lack of education about politics, literature, art, history, and culture. In contrast, literary gatherings allow people to learn about various aspects of literature, art, history, and culture.

Furthermore, the respondent shared that the curriculum taught in Pakistani colleges and schools often glorifies the Mughals as heroes. However, in literary gatherings, the Mughals are viewed as foreign oppressors who targeted the Pakhtuns and are seen as harsh and hostile invaders. For instance, poets of the Roshanite movement who opposed the Mughals for many years are celebrated as heroes within Pakhtun society; similarly, in the case of the poets of Khushal Khan Khattak's school of thought, who fought against the Mughals and wrote poetry denouncing the Mughals (Pelevin, 2015). As highlighted in literary gatherings, this perspective contrast challenges the state narrative that portrays the Mughals as heroes while those who fought against them are considered traitors (Shahzad, 2022).



Figure 7.2. Photo of a *stayan ghonda* (commendation gathering) organized by KHAL at Brainz College Peshawar. Dozens of male and female literary figures from the general audience participated in the gathering, and various poets and experts talked at the event about the history and contribution of women to Pashto poetry and literature. (Source: Author)

7.4 Cultural Spaces Organized in Academic Places

The regional history taught in the Pakistani curriculum always remained in conflict with the history of ethnic groups in Pakistan. The heroic representation of the Moghul rulers is one example of it. According to the Pakistani curriculum, the Moghuls were Muslim leaders who ruled India for around three hundred (300) years. The Pakistani curriculum also links the creation of Pakistan with the Moghuls (Jalal, 1995). However, the state-designed history conflicts with the local histories of the ethnic groups of Pakistan, including Pakhtun, Baloch, and Sindhi. For example, in the context of Pakhtuns, Moghuls were invaders with whom the Pakhtuns fought for hundreds of years. Similarly, print and electronic media and other means of communication also promote the state narrative. However, there is little room for representation of the local voices, actions, and histories in the Pakistani curriculum

and media (Khan, Cheng, Shah, Ullah, & Jianfu, 2020). Moreover, the ethnic-based struggles of the ethnic groups in Pakistan encounter the state-designed history. In the context of Pakhtun society and literary societies, certain academic places tend to create cultural spaces to counter state narrativization of history and promote an alternative narrative. The cultural spaces organized in academic places include literature festivals, conferences, seminars, and study circles. Poetry is also discussed and analyzed in these cultural spaces, which works both for evaluating and consuming poetry. The cultural spaces organized in academic places and their role in evaluating and consuming poetry are discussed in detail in the following pages.

7.4.1 Poetry in Literature and Literary Festivals

The Dosti Welfare Organization, in partnership with the University of Peshawar and other governmental and NGOs, arranged the three-day (24th–26th) “Peshawar Literature Festival” in May 2022. The University of Peshawar’s Institute of Education and Research (IER) served as the festival venue. The availability of several rooms with cutting-edge sound systems and seating capacity facilitated holding multiple sessions at a time. It was the driving force behind the festival’s organization at the IER. An official report states that 5,000 attendees from various backgrounds participated in the festival. Similarly, on the eve of International Mother Language Day in February 2023, the “Peshawar Literature Festival Second Edition” marked the start of the festival’s second edition. It retook place at the University of Peshawar’s Institute of Education and Research on February 21 and lasted for a week. Numerous governmental and nonprofit ministries and organizations worked together to create the festival in its second iteration. Among these groups were the National Commission for Human Development, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, and the Dosti Welfare Organization, collaborating with the University of Peshawar.

Thirty-five thousand people participated in the second edition of the Peshawar Literature Festival (Shinwari, 2023).

Panel discussions, author presentations, *mushairay*, art exhibitions, book stalls, food stalls, and other events were all part of the literary festival. The author's presentations and panel discussions were among the events that inspired the participants. The inaugural Peshawar Literature Festival edition featured forty-panel discussions, while the second edition featured sixty-five-panel discussions (Fieldnotes). The table and figure below show the specifics of the panel talks.



Figure 7.3. Participants listening to speakers during a panel discussion on the topic Pakhto Adab aw Hindi Sabak (Hindi School and Pashto Literature) at the Peshawar Literature Festival on February 23, 2023, at the seminar hall in the Institute of Education and Research, University of Peshawar. Literary people can also be seen in the front rows among the students in the back rows. It shows that literary people from various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also participate in the literary festivals. (Source: Author)

Name of Festival	Total Number of Panel Discussions	Panel Discussions related to Pashto poetry
Peshawar Literature Festival 2022	40	10
Peshawar Literature Festival 2023	65	12

Table 7.1. Number-wise details of the panel discussions in the two festivals organized in 2022 and 2023. In the first festival, 40-panel discussions were organized, of which 10-panel discussions were related to Pashto poetry. Similarly, in the second edition of the festival, a total of 65 panel discussions were organized, in which 12 panel discussions were related to Pashto poetry.

During the panel discussions at the literature festival, poets, writers, scholars, and specialists discussed various aspects of the province's culture, politics, history, economy, journalism, social issues, and literature. The panel discussions organized on Pashto poetry were unique and provided an opportunity to delve into facets of poetry. Panel discussions aimed to enlighten the audience about poetry's history, themes, genres, and social functions. A respondent highlighting the significance of the festival during a panel discussion stated:

Pakhtun poets, authors, and academics can expand their knowledge of global poetry trends by actively conversing about popular subjects and genres across various languages (Fieldnotes).

Further, panel discussions at literature festivals provide a platform for emerging poets and scholars to showcase their work and receive feedback from the public. Young academics can get critical evaluations of their research and literary works through book launches and conversations. One participant highlighted the festival's importance while saying that the literature festival acts to spread literary and poetic information. It offers everyone, especially aspiring poets and authors, the opportunity to hear from experts in poetry and literature. It allows people to learn about poetry and its various facets (Fieldnotes).

2 nd Dosti-Peshawar Literature Festival Day-3 23-February-2023				
Time	Abdur Rahim Popalzai Hall	Hamza Baba Hall	Ahmed Faraz Hall	Zaitoon Bano Hall
09:00 AM 10:15 AM	<i>Singing with Mountains: The Language of God in Pukhtoon Highland</i> Author: Dr. William E. Sherman Moderator: Mr. Muhammad Shafiq	<i>The Gatekeeper</i> Author: Dr. Aamer Jamal Moderator: Mr. M. Tanzeel Iqbal	کوربانه خیالونه مهمانان گرامی: پروفیسر ممتاز خان ، محترم رازوال کویستانی ، ڈاکٹر حنیف خلیل ، عمران خان آزاد میزبان: زیر نوری عدم برداشت: کثیر چقی عوامل اور حل	بندوکش کی ثقافتیں ، تاریخ اور زبانیں مهمانان گرامی: پروفیسر ممتاز خان ، محترم رازوال کویستانی ، ڈاکٹر حنیف خلیل ، عمران خان آزاد میزبان: زیر نوری عدم برداشت: کثیر چقی عوامل اور حل
10:30 AM 11:45 AM	غنی خان: ژوند او زمانه لیکوال: پروفیسر ڈاکٹر سید وقار علی شاہ کاکاخیل گوریہ: ڈاکٹر گزار جلال	نیم زاد <i>Neem Zaad: A Transgender Response</i> مصنف: حیات روغنی مترجم: پروفیسر گوهر نوید میلنہ: ماہ گل	بندگو زبان اور تا نیتی ادب مهمانان گرامی: ڈاکٹر گل ناز ارشد ، ڈاکٹر تزیں گل ، نسیم نصرت میزبان: گل ارباب	مولانا برداشت: کثیر چقی عوامل اور حل مهمانان گرامی: مولانا عطیف الرحمن ، ایچ کمار ، انجم جاوید میزبان: ملائی اختر
12:00 PM 01:15 PM	Book Talk: <i>Snuffing Out the Moon</i> Conversation with: Dr. Osama Siddique Khan (Author) Dr. Aasem Bakhshi (Translator)	National Awami Party: Nature and Direction of Politics Author: Dr. Himayat Ullah Moderator: Mr. Ijaz ur Rahman	Linguistic Sexism In 'Rishta Culture' of Peshawar: A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Language in Newspaper Marriage Advertisements Panel: Dr. Amjad Saleem, Mahnoor Sher, Syed Imran Ali Moderator: Alma Irfan	Sikh Community in Peshawar Author: Ms. Naheed Hussain Moderator: Mr. Hira Shah
02:30 PM 03:45 PM	The representation in Colonial Discourse: The Racial Image and Spatial image of the Pukhtoos Panel: Dr. Gulzar Jalal, Dr. Ahmad Naeem, Dr. Danish Ahmad Moderator: Khwaja M. Bilal Sethi	قصہ خوانی: داستان گوئی میلنہ: گل محمد پتیب، نورالامین یوسفزئی، معروف محمود گوریہ: نالہ شمال یوسفزئی	بندگو زبان اور توہمتاں کافر نس مهمانان گرامی: پروفیسر غزالہ یوسف ، پروفیسر ملک عمران فریدی ، ڈاکٹر ارشد میزبان: ڈاکٹر گناز ارشد	عاصم بخش: ایک میاچہ Conversation with Aasem Bakhshi Host: Aslam Mir
04:00 PM 05:15 PM	پشتو افسانہ: یوہ جائزہ میلنہ: محمد زبیر حسرت، نورالامین ، فرہاد محمد غالب میزبان: سید الامین احسن	<i>Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam: A Debate</i> Panel: Prof. Amjad Hussain, Mr. Shehzad Ali, Prof. Farhana Qazi Moderator: Aslam Mir	بندگو زبان اور افسانہ نگاری ڈاکٹر راحیلہ خورشید میزبان: ڈاکٹر گل ناز ارشد	Classical literature on Islamic History Panel: Ms. Maham Hanif, Ms. Farheen Nawaz, Mr. Yamman Ul Hasan Moderator: Ms. Sabeeha
2 nd Dosti-Peshawar Literature Festival Day-4 24-February-2023				
Time	Abdur Rahim Popalzai Hall	Hamza Baba Hall	Ahmed Faraz Hall	Zaitoon Bano Hall
09:00 AM 10:15 AM	بندگو زبان اور پاکستانی زبانیں: اشتراکات مهمانان گرامی: پروفیسر تمینہ عفت ، ڈاکٹر خادم ابراہیم ، شبیر حسین امام میزبان: محمد ضیاء الدین	مجلوب: شاعری او فکر میلنہ: ڈاکٹر فضل الرحیم مروت ، ڈاکٹر محب وزیر ، پروفیسر جاوید احساس گوریہ: سید الامین احسن	وزیرستان: علمی او ادبی خدمت لیکوال: حیدر داوڑ گوریہ: احسان داوڑ	مولانا روم کا پیغام: مهمانان گرامی: ڈاکٹر یوسف حسین ، پروفیسر سید عبور حسین میزبان: اسلم میر
10:30 AM 11:45 AM	<i>The Muslim Extremist Discourse: Constructing Us Versus Them</i> Author: Dr. Faizullah Jan Moderator: Dr. Sumera Gul	Multi-lingual Poets Panel: Ms. Kayenat Hameed Khan, Ms. Spugmay Ali Khattak, Ms. Kiran Batool Moderator: Ms. Neelun Afridi	پشتو ژبہ کتنی د ماشومانو ادبیات میلنہ: ڈاکٹر محمد علی دیناخیل ، ڈاکٹر نورالبر امر گوریہ: ڈاکٹر ظفر اللہ بخشال	پشتو ادب او سبک بندی میلنہ: ڈاکٹر بنارس خان خٹک، ڈاکٹر حنیف خلیل، ڈاکٹر خالد لطیف کیف گوریہ: سید الامین احسن مجمع کی دوسری عورت
12:00 PM 01:15 PM	پوٹھوہار: خطہء دل ریا مصنف: شاہد صدیقی میزبان: اعجاز حسین	Curricula in Pakistan and Multifaceted Identity: A Reflection Panel: Prof. Ghulam Qasim Marwat, Dr. Muhammad Sohail, Ms. Robeena Shaheen Moderator: Dr. Sami-ud-Din Arman	Writing Science for Public Panel: Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Rashid, Dr. Habiba Rashid Moderator: Mr. Muhammad Bilal	مصنف: بشری اقبال ملک مهمان گرامی: ڈاکٹر سلیم مسعود، میزبان: عزیز اعجاز
02:30 PM 03:45 PM	Contemporary Issues of Pakistan Author: Mr. Ejaz Hussain Moderator: Ms. Salma Gul	پختون خوا کی ادبیات اور میڈیکل ڈاکٹر مهمانان گرامی: ڈاکٹر عبد الجلیل پوپلزئی، ڈاکٹر میان افتخار حسین، ڈاکٹر یسمند یوسفزئی میزبان: ڈاکٹر شہزاد نیمگري خوبونه	پروفیسر رحمت اللہ درد مهمانان گرامی: احمد جان مروت، پروفیسر جاوید احساس ، نادر خان علیل میزبان: سید الامین احسن	شمس الرحمن فاروقی کے ناول "کئی چاند تھے سر آسمان" ایک جائزہ مهمانان گرامی: فضل کبیر، نظیر ساگر میزبان: اسلم میر
04:00 PM 05:15 PM	Language Contact: A Case Study of Pashto په پښتو ژبه یو نظر: میلنہ: ڈاکٹر نصر اللہ جان وزیر ڈاکٹر یوسف جناب، ڈاکٹر فقیر محمد فقیر گوریہ: سید الامین احسن	لیکوال: نوید جمال گوریہ: ڈاکٹر نورالبر امر	Resistance Literature in Pashto: A Chronical Panel: Dr. Hanif Khalil, Dr. Sajjad, Dr. Sohail Khan Moderator: Dr. M. Shehzad	گاف میں شہر کے پرندے مصنف: ڈاکٹر اسحاق وردگ مهمانان گرامی: ڈاکٹر سید زبیر علی شاہ، تاج الدین تاجور، سعدیہ خلیل

Figure 7.4. Schedule of the 3rd and 4th Day of the Peshawar Literature Festival 2023 (2nd edition). It illustrates the panel discussions during the literature festival, including panel discussions related to Pashto poetry. The panel discussion on Pashto poetry includes the lives and works of poets from various periods, the emergence of themes, poetry of resistance, and the impact of time and place on poetry. (Source: Dosti Welfare Organization)

7.4.2 Poetry in Seminars and Conferences

Seminars and conferences organized in academic places also work for the learning, dissemination, and consumption of poetry. The themes of the conferences and seminars are sometimes purely relevant to poetry, while in some cases, poetry is

discussed partly in the conferences and seminars. While conducting fieldwork, I attended five seminars and three conferences organized in different places, including Nishtar Hall, the University of Peshawar, and Bacha Khan Markaz. Universities and government departments mostly organized these seminars and conferences. Contrary to literary gatherings, these seminars and conferences are avenues where participants come from various backgrounds. The diversity of the participants allowed me to look into Pashto poetry from various aspects. Talking on a similar subject during the inaugural ceremony of the Pashto conference, the stage secretary stated:

Pashto literature must be examined today via the prism of other disciplines, especially the social sciences. Conferences are opportunities for scholars from diverse fields to learn about different facets of Pashto literature that support their work in their respective domains (Fieldnotes).

The Pashto Literary Society and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority collaborated to arrange the Pashto Adabi Conference. This three-day conference took place in Nishtar Hall in June 2023. There were twelve panel talks at the conference, which were solely focused on Pashto literature. The panel discussion covered different aspects of Pashto literature. Out of twelve, six-panel discussions focused on poetry, while the remaining six focused on various aspects of prose in Pashto literature (see Figure 7.5). Further, there was a formal format to the panel discussions, with three to four speakers participating each and the panel president wrapping up the discussion. In contrast, panel discussions ended with a question-answer session.



Figure 7.5. The schedule shows the topics, speakers, and timings of the panel discussions of the 3-day Pashto Conference organized in Nishtar Hall from 23rd to 25th, 2023. The topics of the panel discussions cover various aspects of poetry from the classical period to the contemporary period, including 1. Afghan nationalism in Khushal Khan Khattak's poetry; 2. The Life and Works of Ghani Khan; 3. The Literary Contribution of Ajmal Khattak; 4. The Thematic and Genre-wise Journey of Pashto Poetry; 5. The Literary Contributions of Hamza Baba; and 6. The Poetry of Rahman Baba. (Source: Facebook page of Pashto Literary Society)

Similarly, I have attended four seminars organized at various locations in Peshawar.

The seminar included: 1. Grammatical Issues and the Development of Reading & Writing of Pashto; 2. Promotion of Pashto Writing among the General Masses; 3.

Translations from/to Pashto Language & Literature; and 4. Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak: Life and Works. In these seminars, scholars discussed various aspects of the Pashto language and literature. In the seminar titled ‘Grammatic Issues and the Development of Reading and Writing of Pashto,’ popular Pashto poet Rahmat Shah Sayil (2022) briefly talked about how poets can play a role in grammar issues, as he stated during his talk:

I have noticed that some of our young poets also have grammar issues when it comes to writing. I insist that poets and literary societies focus on grammar and arrange grammar classes for poets and ordinary people.

In the third seminar, works of early orientalist, particularly Revery (1867) and Dar Mestator (1888), were discussed along with later works by various scholars in translation from/to the Pashto language. Similarly, in the fourth seminar, the works of Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak were discussed by various scholars with expertise in classic-era poetry. Collected data shows that these seminars and conferences provide great learning for poets and ordinary people.



Figure 7.6. The senior scholars and writers discuss the way forward for the conference in Salma Shaheen Hall, Pashto Academy, during the two-day seminar organized by Pashto Academy at the University of Peshawar on May 17th and 18th, 2022. (Source: Author)

7.4.3 Poetry in Study Circles

During fieldwork, I attended various study circles organized by literary, academic, political, and NGOs. Study circles organized by the Mafkoora Research Centre and Dosti Welfare Organization and a study circle named the Peshawar Study Circle organized by a youth group are prominent study circles in Peshawar and are organized every month. Similarly, political, literary, and research organizations occasionally organize study circles. Among these, study circles organized by Bacha Khan Research Center, *Tatara Adabi Tolana* (Tatara Literary Society), and Pakhtun Students Federation, a student organization at the University of Peshawar, are prominent. Moreover, the study circles follow a way of informing people. Posters are made to

inform people about the study circles shared on different social media pages and groups. The organizers make posters for each study circle and share them on various social media platforms, as well as a source of information about the time, place, and topic, as shown in the poster below (see Figure 7.7). Further, the study circle follows a formal structure in which the speaker talks on the topic for almost an hour, followed by a questions and answers session.

While talking about the roots of study circles, many participants and speakers of the study circles responded that the tradition of organizing study circles goes back to the 1970s when the progressive and nationalist political parties were active in organizing study circles. However, study circles' tradition lost charm after the USSR's fall. In recent years (2015 onwards), the tradition of study circles has again gained popularity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Peshawar. Usman et al. (2020) define study circles as informal spaces organized in places with formal structures, such as universities, government libraries, and offices of NGOs. Further, the contents discussed in these spaces are not usually part of the curriculum of the formal education system or have no space in mainstream print and electronic media as a respondent informed that study circles provide space for people to discuss society, culture, art, and related things not discussed in schools or other places of society (Fieldnotes). Talking about the rapid increase of the culture of organizing study circles, poet and scholar Sami Uddin Arman (2022) expressed:

There was a proper mechanism for learning politics, art, and literature in *hujra*. However, due to the transformation of the *hujra* culture into *bethak* (guest room) culture, people lost the opportunity to learn in *hujra*. This is why the revival of the study circle is a space for poets and ordinary people to learn about various aspects of social life, including literature.

During the last two years, 102 study circles were organized, and 69 focused on topics related to history, economy, politics, society, social issues, etc. Further, 12 study circles were organized purely on various aspects of poetry, while 21 study circles covered Pashto poetry partially (see Table 7.2.). Further, I have attended almost 10 study circles organized by Mafkoora Research Center, Peshawar Circle, and Dosti Welfare Organizations that directly or indirectly focused on poetry. The prominent topics covering Pashto poetry are as follows:

1. Identifying Literary Schools in Modern Pashto Poetry.
2. The Incapacitated Song of Pakhtunkhwa: The Story from Banr
3. A Critical Comparative Study of Coleridge Kubla Khan and Ghani Khan's 'Zama Mahal' (My Palace).

As explained in the above data, along with other aspects of art, culture, politics, economy, and society, these study circles also cover various aspects of poetry. Study circles are alternate avenues for evaluating poetry and learning its various aspects. Talking about study circles, a participant during a study circle arranged at the University of Peshawar stated:

We cannot learn about poetry in school and college. However, the arrangement of study circles by different people is an opportunity to critically understand poetry as well as other genres of literature (Fieldnotes).

Similarly, a participant in a study circle organized at Mafkore Research Center also expressed that we learn about different aspects of poetry in the study circles, which helps construct alternate narratives in Pakhtun society.

Organizers ↓	Topics →	Poetry	Partly related topics	Other Topics	Total Number of Study Circles
Mafkoora Research Center		4	11	22	37
Bacha Khan Markaz		0	2	10	12
Peshawar Circles		2	2	29	33
Dosti Welfare Organization		1	2	2	5
Others		5	4	6	15
Total		12	21	69	102

Table 7.2. The data is collected through participating in study circles and visiting the offices of the mentioned organizations. It shows the number of study circles organized by different organizations from January 2021 to August 2023.

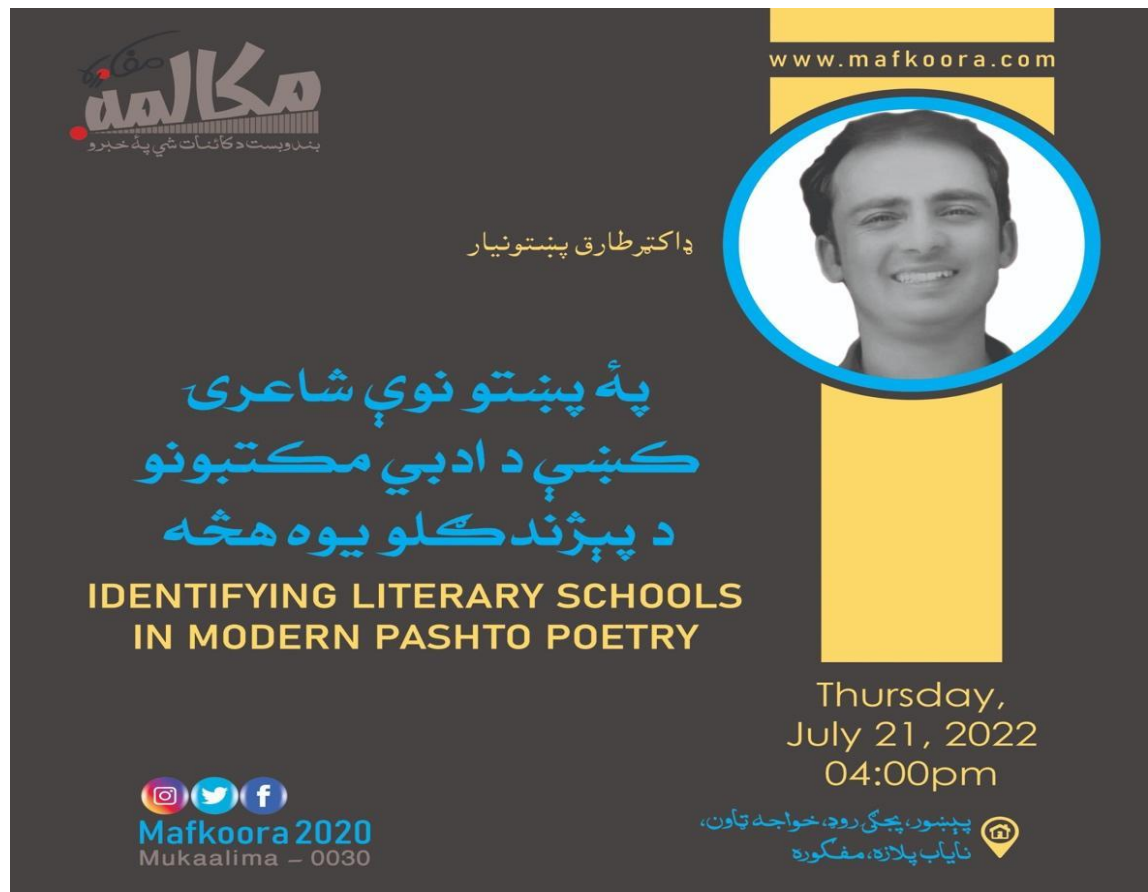


Figure 7.7. Poster of the study circle shared by Mafkoora Research Center on its Facebook page and website that shows the topic, name of the speaker, and date, time, and venue of the study circle. The Mafkora organizes a study circle in the name of ‘Mukalima (debate)’. (Source: Facebook page of Mafkoora Research Center)



Figure 7.8. Famous Pashto poet Mumtaz Aurakzai, speaking to the study circle titled ‘Themes of modern Pashto poetry’ organized in Mafkoora Research Center, Peshawar, on 17th of September 2022. Participants can be seen listening attentively to the speaker. Various artworks exhibited on walls and tables can also be seen in the picture, which is meant to sensitize people to cultural heritage. (Source: Author)

7.5 *Mushairay*: Cultural Spaces for Performing and Disseminating

Poetry

Poetry is an emotional and sentimental form of expression and narrating it in front of two or more individuals is known as *mushaira*. Abdul Manan Bhat (2020) calls *mushaira* an event scheduled for a specific day and time where poets come together to narrate their poetry. It is an Indo-Islamic tradition that dates back to the Mughal dynasty in India in the early sixteenth century when *mushairay* were organized in courts and other specific areas related to courts for entertainment purposes. However, after the 1940s, the focus of the poets shifted, and today’s *mushairay* is organized for

literary and political purposes and the exchange of aesthetics among the people (Bhat, 2020).

The origins of *mushairay* among the Pakhtuns can be traced to the early 18th century. Like the Mughal courts, these *mushairay* were organized in Shah Mahmood Hotak's court (Bausani, 1971). However, the transformation of ethno-poetics into socio-poetics in the first half of the 20th century brought *mushaira* into public discourse. KKM organized various *mushairay* in the late 1920s and 1930s and onwards to mobilize people to the struggle for freedom against British colonization. A respondent went on to reference Bacha Khan, saying, "*Koma khabara che mung pa gento ke nh sho kawali, shair hagma khabara yaw nazam ke uki*" (A poet can explain and recount in a poem what we cannot explain in hours). This is the reason *mushaira*, which KKM organized, served many purposes. On the one hand, *mushaira* was a source of aesthetic vitality and entertainment; on the other hand, it addresses the difficulties of daily life. In the same line of debate, famous poet Manerwal (2022) added that "in the 20th century, *mushairay* served as a Pakhtun newspaper for a substantial period and spread awareness and information among people".

In the current socio-political condition of Pakhtun society, *mushairay* are organized on village, tehsil, district, and provincial levels as well as in colleges, universities, research institutes, and other formal and informal places. Several types of *mushairay* are held for various purposes. Some are arranged occasionally, while others are held regularly. Occasional *mushairay* are those organized by literary or non-literary societies or organizations to celebrate festivity, condole or commend poets, or those organized on particular themes. Regular *mushairay* are those organized by literary societies monthly, quarterly, participated only by members of literary societies (see following sections), or those organized as annual celebrations of spring or winter such

as '*dh manrray gul mushaira*' (*mushaira* of apple flower), '*sharsham gul mushaira*' (*mushaira* of mustered flower), '*da sparli mushaira*' (*mushaira* of spring) or *nawroz* (Persian/Central Asian new year festival) *mushaira*. Similarly, regular *mushairay* are also organized to observe the anniversaries of the death of poets, Sufis, and other figures. Furthermore, *mushairay* involve finances and is organized by various entities through proper planning and execution. The types, purpose, organizing, and funding of *mushairay* are discussed in the following pages.

7.5.1 Types of *Mushairay*

In Pakhtun society, there are two types of *mushairay*: '*makhsos mushairay*' (exclusive poetry gatherings, plural) and '*ulasi mushairay*' (inclusive poetry gatherings, plural). Regarding nature, there are three more forms of the '*makhsos mushairay*' and '*ulasi mushairay*': '*azada mushaira*,' (poetry recital open in terms of theme and genres, singular), '*Tarkhi mushaira*,' (*mushaira* on given poetic line, singular), and '*maozoaati mushaira*,' (thematic poetry recital, singular). *Azada mushaira* is open in theme and genre, and poets can narrate poetry produced in any genre on any theme. *Tarkhi mushaira* is the one in which poetry produced on a particular poetic line is narrated. Meanwhile, *maozoaati mushaira* is the one in which poetry produced on a specific theme is narrated. The types and forms of *mushairay* are discussed in detail in the following pages.

7.5.1.1 *Makhsos Mushairay*

Makhsos mushairay can be joined only by literary society members and is not publicly advertised. *Makhsos mushairay* are organized in the literary societies' offices or other locations, such as *hujray*, where the literary society's members conduct *regular meetings*. For poets, these *mushairay* provides amusement and a means of

catharsis. It is worth mentioning that there are two further types of *makhsos mushairay*: “*rasmi mushaira*” (formal *mushaira*) and “*gher rasmi mushaira*” (informal poetry recital). The main difference between the two is that formal *mushairay* follows a formal structure and is held during regular meetings of the literary societies attended only by literary society members. At the same time, informal *mushairay* are organized without proper planning or announcement and are held anywhere.

Moreover, *makhsos mushairay* are like evaluation meetings and serve as a learning platform for aspiring poets. The poets evaluate the form, genre, and themes of each other’s poetry and provide feedback for modification and improvement in poetry as a respondent mentioned that the *makhsos mushairay* serve as a source of learning for poets looking to improve their newly written poetry craft (Masror, 2022).



Figure 7.9. A photograph of poets taken on May 9, 2022, during a *gher rasmi makhsos mushaira* at Sajid Shaiq's *hujra*. Poet and author Sajid Shaiq is renowned for his knowledge of poetry from the Pashto classic age. Three other poets visited him while I was there to conduct an informal discussion with Sajid Shaiq. Following much gossip, the poets decided to convene a *mushaira*, and each recited poetry. One of the poets asked Sajid Shaiq

to discuss the poetry of Hameed Baba, a well-known poet from the classic era, after *mushaira*. Additionally, Sajid Shaiq offered tea to the guests, showing that serving tea is complimentary during *makhsos mushaira* in *hujra*. The image also illustrates how *hujra* is an informal setting for organizing *mushairay*. (Source: Author)

7.5.1.2 Ulasī Mushairay

Ulasī mushaira is the combination of two words: *ulasī* and *mushaira*. The word *ulasī* is derived from *ulas*, which means common masses, while *mushaira* means poetry recital. Thus, *ulasī mushaira* refers to a *mushaira* organized for the public. *Ulasī mushairay* is primarily organized in open spaces and attended by hundreds of people. However, in some cases, it is also organized in halls and community centers. During my fieldwork, I attended various *ulasī mushairay* (plural) organized in various locations of Peshawar on different occasions. These include “*da Ghani makhaam*” (Ghani Khan’s Evening), “*nawroz mushaira*”, “*da Sahib Shah Sabir makham*” (Sahib Shah Sabir’s evening), and Pakhto *mushaira*.

On March 10, 2022, the Pakhtun Student Federation hosted a *mushaira* titled “*da Ghani Khan Makhaam*” to remember Ghani Khan’s death anniversary. Numerous poets from Peshawar and other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa read poems aloud. Speakers also discussed Ghani Khan’s life and contributions and how his poetry relates to the current political and social climate of Pakhtun society. While talking about the purpose of *mushaira*, Khizar Wazir (2022) an organizer in an informal discussion expressed that “The *mushaira* is organized to celebrate Ghani Khan and allow youth to learn about Ghani Khan’s poetic works”. Senior poets were asked to speak about Ghani Khan’s life and work during *mushaira*. These poets included Shams Bunerī from District Buner and Sadiq Zharak from Quetta. Speaking about Ghani Khan’s contribution, senior poet and writer Shams Bunerī (2022) expressed in his speech:

Through his poems, Ghani Khan has espoused message of nonviolence, which is desperately needed today—not just for Pakhtuns, but for everyone on the planet.

Similarly, in his speech, Shams Bunerī added that Ghani Khan's poetry teaches us the meaning of life, and young people should read him and comprehend his ideas.

Similarly, I also attended the *Rahman Baba mushaira* organized on the death anniversary of Rahman Baba by *Rahman Adabi Tolana* (Rahman Baba Literary Society) at Rahman Baba Shrine on April 15, 2022. Poets from Peshawar and other parts of the province narrated their poems in the annual *Rahman Baba mushaira* of Rahman Baba. An organizer said, “I have witnessed this mushaira for the last 35 years, the month of April each year to observe his death anniversary” (Fieldnotes). Similarly, I also attended the *Chasht mushaira* (poetry recital in the name of *Chishtia* Sufi tradition) on May 25, 2022, that is organizes every year at the shrine of Abdul Sattar Shah Bacha on his death anniversary. The *Chasht mushaira* is a multilingual *mushaira*, where poets of different languages, including Urdu, Pashto, Hindko and Siraiki, take part and recite their poetries. *Chasht* is derived from the word *Cheshti*, which is the name of a school of thought in the Sufi tradition of the subcontinent and Central Asia, fully named *Chistiya Silsila* (Chishti’s sufi order), a Sufi tradition of the sub-continent and Central Asia.



Figure 7.10. Audience listening to poetry by a poet in Pakhto *mushaira* organized by Islami Jamiat Talba, a student organization at the University of Agriculture, Peshawar. Hundreds of audiences (primarily students) participated in the *mushaira* and listened to poems narrated by poets. The photo shows the cultural setting of *mushaira* in open air, where the audience can be seen sitting on chairs. (Source: Author).

7.5.1.3 Azada Mushaira

Azada mushaira is open to themes and genres. In other words, the poets are not bound to narrate poetry on a particular theme or genre. Poets narrate poems based on different genres, including *nazam* (poem), *azad nazam* (free verse), *ghazal*, *sandara* (song), *qita* (four-line poem), *haiku* (3-line stanza), etc. During fieldwork, I observed that *azaday mushairay* (plural of *azada mushaira*) mainly covers themes of peace, nonviolence, condemnation of war, love, the poetry of the environment, self-determination, and poetry of gender and class. During fieldwork, I attended various *azaday mushairay* (plural) events on different occasions. The *mushairay* discussed in

the previous section, such as *Ghani Khan mushaira*, *Chasht mushaira*, *Rahman Baba mushaira*, *nawroz mushaira*, and *Pakhto mushaira*, were all *azaday mushairay*.

7.5.1.4 Maozoati Mushaira

The *maozoati mushaira* combines two words: ' *maozoati* ' and ' *mushaira* ' in which ' *maozoati* ' means thematic while *mushaira* is poetry recital. In this sense, *maozoati mushaira* means thematic *mushaira* or theme-based *mushaira*, in which poets are bound to narrate poetry on a specific theme. However, poets can narrate poetry in any genre that aligns with the theme. During fieldwork, I observed that most of the thematic poetry in the post-9/11 scenario revolves around peace, nonviolence, social cohesion, coexistence, social harmony, and environmental crisis (see chapter 8). The purpose of *maozoati mushairay* is to produce and narrate poetry centered on a specific theme, allowing the audience (and readers after its publishing) to gain different perspectives on a particular theme. While talking about thematic poetry, poet and lecturer, Hayat Khan (2022) expressed:

At *maozoati mushairay*, people listen to poems from different poets focusing on a specific theme. In this way, theme-based poetry collections help craft and explore narratives on various issues.

In the same line of debate, the respondent further added:

The theme-based poetry gathering encourages the creation and sharing of theme-based poetry and brings together poets who have previously written on specific themes.

Maozoati mushairay is scheduled on various occasions, such as International Day of Peace on September 21, International Mother Language Day on February 21, and International Women's Day on March 8. However, in some other cases, *maozoati mushairay* is also held randomly. These *mushairay* are organized by literary organizations and government and NGOs. *maozoati mushairay*, organized by the

International Organization of Migration (IOM) under the Community Activity-N (CRA-N) project, is one example. The IOM, under CRA-N project, organized capacity-building workshops in Peshawar for poets from the Merged Districts, erstwhile FATA. More than one hundred poets were trained in Peshawar to produce thematic poetry based on unity, resilience, peacebuilding, social cohesion, coexistence, and interfaith harmony. During these workshops, the CRA-N organizes *maozoati mushairay* on themes like peacebuilding, coexistence, interfaith harmony, etc.



Figure 7.11. Participants are attentively listening to poetry narration in a *maozoati mushaira* on the theme of “*man*” (peace) organized by *Malgari Lekwalan* (friend’s writers), a literary society affiliated with ANP at Bacha Khan Markaz Peshawar.

7.5.1.5 Tarkhi Mushaira

Tarkhi mushaira (singular) is a type of *mushaira* in which poets narrate poetry composed on a particular poetic stanza called *Tarkha* (singular). *Tarkha* is either a newly written or a selection from classic or modern poetry based on poetic

inventiveness, or a theme relevant to current and pressing situations. History of *tarkhi mushairay* in Pakhtun society traces back to KKM and its predecessors who organized *tarkhi mushairay* (plural) on various occasions to develop and promote poetry on the theme of independence. *Tarkhay* (plural of *tarkha*) given by the KKM focused on themes related to freedom, nationalism, struggle, and resistance inspired by the ideology of the KKM. During fieldwork, I attended several *tarkhi mushairay* organized by literary societies or NGOs in various localities of Peshawar. Abas Khalil (2022), a participant of the *tarkhi mushaira* held on March 6, 2022, at a *hujra* in the Peshtakhara village of Peshawar, added:

The *Tarkha* originates from the poetry of poet and scholar Hanif Khalil. We plan to organize a few more *mushairay* to print a book of poetry created using the mentioned *Tarkha*. The book's release will be an effort to honour Hanif Khalil's contributions.

Tarkha's take on *mushaira* was '*Takhayul me dh maximum Lara paid kora,*' taken from Dr Hanif Khalil's poetry 'Peace.' The *tarkhi mushaira* was part of the commendation gathering organized by *Shamma Pakhto Adabi Jirga* (Shamma Pashto Literary Society) in the name of poet and scholar Hanif Khalil²¹.

Similarly, CRA-N organized three *tarkhi mushairay* during workshops at the Shelton Rezidor Hotel in Tehkal, Peshawar, where three badges of poets were trained to produce poetry on various themes. During the workshop, poets of each badge were tasked to compose poetry on the *Tarkha*, given to them on the first day of each workshop. On the second day, a *tarkhi mushaira* was organized where poets narrated their poetry pieces produced on given *tarkha*. The given verses in the said *mushairay* were:

²¹ "*Shamma*," which means "candle" in Pashto, Urdu, and Persian, is a literary metaphor for light.

1. “Kh wrorwali mu pa watan ke raghla.” (*“If brotherhood is enshrined in our land”*)²².
2. “Jangona pakar nh de, Fasadona pakar nh de.” (*“War need not be there; riots need not be there”*)²³.
3. “Amn yaw maslak dey, ma pre klak emaan rawaray dey.” (*“Peace is a faith; I strongly believe in it”*)²⁴.

The main themes of the poems include peace, nonviolence, peacebuilding, unity, resilience, coexistence, and interfaith harmony. Almost a hundred poets produced and narrated poems on given *tarkhay* in the *tarkhi mushairay* organized by IOM in the CRA project.

7.5.2 Purpose of *Mushaira*

Mushairay serves many purposes. The primary purpose of *mushairay* is to convey positive artistic emotions and sentiments to people. It also provides a platform for poets to express their awareness of ecology and the connections between different environmental elements, especially about humans. It also helps poets pursue aesthetics and spiritual catharsis and facilitates literary and artistic socialization for both poets and their audiences (Bhat, 2020). People in the literary community often remark that literature is the embodiment of life. This is why *mushairay* are structured to use poetry to communicate life’s meaning and purpose to readers. In the same context, poet and writer Shaheen Buner (2022) expressed:

²² Read two complete poetry pieces on the said *tarkha* presented in *tarkhi mushaira* in annexure 2-A and annexure 2-B.

²³ Read three complete poetry pieces on the said *tarkha* presented in *tarkhi mushaira* in annexure 3-A, annexure 3-B and annexure 3-C.

²⁴ Read three complete poetry pieces on the said *tarkha* presented in *tarkhi Mushaira* in annexure 4-A, annexure 4-B and annexure 4-C.

Poets are “*nabz shanas*” (pulse knower) who knows the problems of the people. They situate the issues and its effects on society and write about solution to those the issues.

Mushairay in Pakhtun society sensitize people about various issues of society. Explaining the role of *mushairay*, poet and writer Nisar Ahmad Khan aka Nisar Lala (1942-alive), in an informal discussion, narrated a couplet of Rahmat Ullah Dard (1937-2016), a famous poet from Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: “Sok Peghambar aw sok shair she darda / Pa cha quran pa cha ghazal nazil she”. (“*O Dard! Some are made messengers, and some poets / Qur’an is revealed on the former and lyrics on the latter.*”). The couplet says that some people become prophets, and others become poets. God reveals the holy book to the former and reveals Ghazal (poetry) to the latter. While talking about the couplet, Wazir expressed that ‘identifying issues in society and providing a solution to it remains the obligation of the prophets, a role performed by poets in Pakhtun society’. He added that the poetry seems to be war stories due to the damage from militancy and military operations. Because of it, *mushairay* among Pakhtuns give the feeling of oration by prophets after their nations faced torment” (Lala, 2021).

Similarly, the surge of militancy and extremism in the past 20 years has limited spaces for cultural expression, including performing, visual, and literary arts. The decline of spaces for cultural expression has disrupted the socio-cultural discourse in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In this sense, *mushairay* significantly reshapes the sociocultural discourse by reclaiming the spaces and places where literature, art, and culture are celebrated and challenging the state and militants’ narratives (Caron & Khan, 2022). As poet and professor of literature, Dr Izhar Ullah Izhar (2022) added that “*da amn mushairay* (*mushairay* for peace) directly counter militancy and narrative of

militancy”. While talking in a similar context, poet Amjad Shahzad (2022), while delivering a speech expressed during *nawroz mushaira*:

Poetry and other artistic expressions are powerful deterrents against militancy and violence. However, they are of no use if not disseminated among people. Organizing such *mushairay* is necessary for its dissemination, where we can use poetry against the forces of militancy and extremism.

Mushairay in Pakhtun society is not only about the narration of poetry, but speeches are also delivered by senior poets and intellectuals on various aspects of poetry and the socio-political condition of society. These speeches help us understand complex poetry and its themes and the complexities of the socio-political conditions through poetry. In this regard, political and religious scholar Maulana Khanzeb (2022) expressed in his remarks at Ghani Khan *mushaira* held at the University of Peshawar on 10th of March 2022:

Some certain misconceptions and stereotypes place our poets in inaccurate categories. One example of this stereotype is that ordinary people cannot understand Ghani Khan’s poetry because it delves into deep philosophies. I assert, nevertheless, that Ghani Khan’s poetry is understandable to all. The problem is that we must study Ghani Khan's poetry repeatedly to understand it exactly, as we read books in other languages. Reading Ghani Khan’s poetry is essential because it shows us the path to prosperity and peace.

Along with narration of poetry and speeches, *mushairay* also carries traditions like ‘*naara-baazi*’ (sloganeering), a symbolic protest through displaying play cards, instalment of banners and posters with messages or poetry couplets, and silence observance. During my fieldwork, I observed a similar case in the *nawroz mushaira* where the audience was asked to observe one minute of silence as a protest against the brutal killing of Mussawir Dawar, a young activist in Waziristan who had recently graduated from the University of Peshawar and was killed in a targeted attack in Waziristan two days earlier from the *mushaira*. I also observed that many students did

not know Mussawir Dawar. However, the *mushaira* serves as a platform to learn about the struggle and killing of Mussawir Dawar (Fieldnotes).

7.5.3 Organizing of Mushairay

Both the metropolitan and rural areas of Peshawar are home to *mushairay*. These *mushairay* are most of the time organized by literary societies. In some cases, nonliterary organizations such as government and NGOs also organize *mushairay*. In rural areas, *mushairay* are held in offices of literary societies, *hujray*, or open spaces such as lawns. It is worth noting that *hujra* is described as a men's guest house with many social and political functions (Ahmad & Muhammad, 2019). However, I observed that organizing *mushairay* and other literary gatherings are significant components of *hujra* and were ignored in the existing literature on *hujra* and its functions. Similarly, in urban areas, *mushairay* are held at community centers like Nishtar Hall and Press Club, offices of research organizations such as Mafkoora Research Center and Bacha Khan Research Center (Bacha Khan Markaz), in hotels, and halls or lawns of colleges and universities.

Further, invitations are crucial for the organization of the *mushaira*. It depends on the nature of the *mushaira*, i.e., there is no public invitation to *makhsos mushairay*. At the same time, there is a public invitation in *ulasi mushairay*, where posters are put on walls, boards, social media sites, and other places to invite the public. Furthermore, a formal invitation is given to guests, speakers, seniors, or famous poets through invitation cards or verbal invitations. While talking about the invitation for *ulasi mushairay*, poet and stage secretary at *nawroz mushaira*, Afsar Afghan (2022) narrated his couplet: "Mung ta da chitay sa zarorat nishta, Mung kho che khabar sho nu jo ra ba shu." ("We do not need an invitation card; if we are informed, we will come to participate."). He further added:

Ulas mushairay are organized in public spaces like lawns or halls and is open to all participants. Thus, by being informed, the public participates as they know about the nature of *mushaira*.

When I asked about invitations from senior poets, chief guests, and speakers, he explained:

Seasoned and well-known poets, speakers, and the chief guest must be invited. Competent administration is required when senior and renowned poets are invited.

Moreover, in some cases, when the *mushaira* is joined by a senior poet or intellectual uninvitedly, the organizers call them on stage. During *nawroz mushaira*, organized at Islamia College University Peshawar, poets and scholars from Afghanistan joined uninvitedly and were invited to the stage to narrate poetry and deliver speeches. Among others, Lal Bacha Azmoon, who is a professor at the Science Academy of Kabul, and renowned young poet Nasim Stori, the late poet Kabeer Stori's son, were given a warm welcome by the audience because of their literary and lyrical accomplishments (Field Notes). They both were also invited to narrate poetry and talk to the audience.

Moreover, *mushairay* follows a formal manner. *Makhsos mushairay* are primarily presided over by a senior poet of the literary society in which poets narrate their poetries one by one without any proper announcement. However, in *ulas mushairay*, there are poets, speakers, chief guests, and *sadar-i-mushaira* (president of the *mushaira*). The *mushaira* always starts with a recitation from the Quran. The stage secretary calls someone to recite a few verses from the holy Quran. Next, the stage secretary briefly overviews the *mushaira's* purpose and process. Next, the stage secretary, president, or any other member of the literary society or host of the *mushaira* greets the poets, speakers, guests, and audience and expresses gratitude to the organizers. Next, each poet is called one by one to the stage to narrate their poetry.

After poetry narration, speakers are invited to talk. At the end, the chief guest is asked to give a speech or lecture to conclude the *mushaira* (Fieldnotes).

During *mushaira*, it is always challenging for the hosts, poets, and speakers to engage with the audience. The *mushaira* loses its worth and is smooth when the procession is disrupted if the audience loses interest. Therefore, the stage secretary, poets, and speakers use various strategies to capture the audience's attention, such as mentioning someone from the audience while narrating poetry, telling a joke that makes the crowd laugh, or reciting poetry with humorous themes. In this context, the stage secretary must have the art of engaging the audience. During my fieldwork, I observed that certain poets have the art of entertaining people and are paid for hosting *ulasi mushairay*. During a *mushaira* hosted by Islami Jamiat Talba (IJT), a student organization associated with right-wing religious party Jamat-i-Islami on November 7, 2022, at Agriculture University Peshawar, I observed that the stage secretary Hussain Ahmad Sadiq, a renowned poet from district Mardan was reciting poetry couplets about pre- and post-marriage life, such as the necessity of marriage and frustration with issues encountered after marriage. The audience applauded his narration of poetry covering humorous themes (Field Notes). While talking about engaging an audience in a *mushaira*, poet and scholar Ali Bawar (2022) stated that “engaging audience during *mushaira* is an art and those poets who lack this art might not be listened to if even they are narrating quality poetry than others”.

Moreover, in *ulasi mushairay*, it is a common tradition to narrate the poetry of famous poets, particularly when it has attractive romantic or political themes. Most of the time, the poetry of other poets is sung by young singers without instruments in *mushaira*. However, a singer or poet can narrate only one or two pieces from other poets. Narrating or singing more than two pieces can disrupt the *mushaira* as the

audience chants to stop. During fieldwork, I observed the same thing in Ghani Khan's *mushaira*, organized by a student organization at Agriculture University Peshawar to mark Ghani Khan's death anniversary. In *mushaira* the stage secretary called a student named Husnain Haider to narrate a poem of Sahib Shah Sabir. He came and narrated a poem of Sahib Shah Sabir, followed by a ghazal by Rahmat Shah Sail, both well-known for their progressive and revolutionary poetry. The audience listened to both poetry pieces attentively. However, when the student began reading another piece that belongs to Ghani Khan, the audience began chanting, "*Da ba mung pa kitab ke owayo, Ta khpal kalam owaya*" (this is something we shall read in the book; you do have to read your poetry). After heavy changes, he stepped off the platform (Field Notes).

7.5.4 Funding of Mushairay

The funding of *mushaira* depends on its nature as it varies in size i.e., from small-scale to large-scale. Literary societies organize small-scale *mushairay* with their finances, which they collect monthly from members and office holders. These include *makhsoos mushairay*, *mushairay* organized on special days, or those organized for commendation or commemorating. However, organizing large-scale *mushairay* needs more funds for which literary society members collect funds from influential social or political figures. Individual *mushairay* organized for festivities such as marriages and engagements are funded by individuals who organize them. It is worth noting that organizing *mushaira* for marriages, engagements, and other such festivities has remained a popular tradition in the last 3 decades of the 20th century. However, the tradition declined due to increased militancy and extremism in the first decade of the 21st century. In recent years, it has been reviving as the security situation has improved, as added by a respondent (Wadan, 2022).

In several other instances, *mushairay* are funded by various non-literary groups, including political parties, student organizations, and government and NGOs. Among nonliterary groups, the student organizations are very active in organizing *mushairay*. During fieldwork, I observed various *mushairay* organized by student organizations at university campuses. These *mushairay* included *Pakhto mushaira*, which was organized by IJT at Agriculture University Peshawar, *mushairay* on the death anniversaries of Ghani Khan and Sahib Shah Sabir, and *mushairay* organized on the eve of *nawroz* and spring, organized by PSF.

Similarly, during fieldwork, I also attended and observed five *mushairay* held in Nishtar Hall and other educational institutions of Peshawar between mid-2021 to mid-2023. The culture or youth department of the provincial government funded them. I have also observed *mushairay* organized by NGOs. Among these, *Amn Mushaira* (*mushaira* on the theme of peace) was organized by *Khidmat-e-Khalq* Foundation, a local NGO at Nishtar Hall in November 2022, and *maozoati mushairay* were organized by IOM.

Further, I observed that some poets were unhappy with the government and NGOs' role in organizing *mushairay*. I was involved in discussions with several organizers, poets, speakers, and audiences during *mushairay* to get their take on *mushairay* organized by non-literary societies, particularly by government and NGOs. In this regard, I received various responses from the respondents. During the culture department's *mushaira* at Nishtar Hall on June 23, 2023, poetess Haseena Gul Tanha (2023) mentioned in an informal discussion, "The government allocates funds for the promotion of culture, some of which are used to organize *mushairay* and other cultural activities." She further anticipated:

Organizing and funding *mushairay* by both public and NGOs is a relatively new practice. We are aware of and understand that they use it for personal

gain. However, one thing made us happy: everyone now acknowledges the power of poetry.

However, some respondents believed government departments fund *mushairay* to discourage poets from writing poetry that criticizes government policies. The responses towards NGOs role in organizing *mushairay* were not that hard. The respondents believed that NGOs organize *mushairay* to address societal issues like environmental preservation, gender equality, and the fight against militancy by using poetic spaces such as *mushairay* (Fieldnotes).

7.6 Cultural Spaces for Poetry Consumption

The cultural spaces discussed previously work for the evaluation and dissemination of poetry. However, with the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics, increased literacy, and technological advancement, various cultural spaces were also developed to consume poetry. In these cultural spaces, poetry is consumed for many purposes, such as conveying political messages, awareness of people, and entertainment and catharsis. These cultural spaces include music, protests, and *jalsay*. The cultural spaces used for consuming poetry are discussed briefly in the following pages.

7.6.1 Consumption of Poetry through the Language of Music

Peshawar, the province's capital, has been a center of Pashto music for over a century due to its rich cultural heritage. It has served as a training ground for many generations of musicians who have studied and practiced music here in Peshawar. A significant factor that attracted singers and musicians from across the region was the Provincial Broadcasting Station (PBS) launch in 1935, which was renamed Pakistan Broadcasting Station after the partition (Shalmani, 2018). Singers and musicians

moved to Peshawar to further their musical careers. Establishing a regional headquarters for Pakistan Television in 1974 also had a positive impact (Shalmani, 2018). Many musicians and singers across the province moved to Peshawar seeking professional opportunities, attracted by the city's radio and television stations. These platforms exposed musicians and singers but also created a competitive environment that made it challenging for them to focus on learning and honing their musical skills. As a result, *Bala'khanay* (attics) of Qissa Khwani Bazar, a historical and famous bazaar of Peshawar city, Peshawar became a center for informal music schools and studios for decades (Ahmad, 2023).

Moreover, the independence movements that emerged in the first half of the 20th century also played a vital role in the revival and promotion of Pashto music. For instance, the use of drums by KKM for marching, dancing, and informing the people attracted people towards music (Marwat, 2012). Similarly, the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetic into socio-poetics introduced various genres into Pashto poetry, such as *Ghazal*, *nazam*, *Rubayi*, and *Tarana* also led to new experiences in Pashto music. Following Pashto poetry, Pashto music also started playing its role in sensitization of people towards social issues through its poetic contents. A new phase of Pashto music was spawned by the interaction of politics, music, and poetry that evolved into a language of resistance in the second half of the 20th century. Various singers rose to fame in the 1970s and 1980s for their renditions of revolutionary and nationalistic anthems (Dawn, 2018).

However, modernization and militancy have impacted Pashto music in the last two decades. Due to the war in Afghanistan in the previous four decades and a wave of militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the last two decades, Peshawar has experienced an unplanned population transfer from Afghanistan and Merged Districts of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa. Further, an unanticipated development took place in Peshawar at the same time. The unexpected event exacerbated the predicament. Rent patterns shifted because of modifications in the construction patterns where plazas were built. For this reason, informal music schools and studios shifted from Qissa Khwani Bazar to the Saddar Bazar supermarket in Peshawar (Shinwari, 2014). Super Market is home to five informal schools and nearly 10 studios where musicians study, rehearse, and record music. It is worth noting that many of the exiled Afghan artists and musicians who have their fan base in Peshawar and other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also live in Super Market (Ahmad, 2013; Baily, 2017)

The wave of militancy and unplanned development brought an unprecedented shift in Pashto music. Digital music took the place of the instrumental music. Additionally, computer recordings capture instrumental music instead of live performances. This shift impacted Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's musical tastes, composition styles, and choice of poetry. During fieldwork, I observed poets, academicians, cultural activists, and others debating how music has changed. Some people believe that music production needs to be done the old-fashioned way, which involves recording music with live instruments. They disapprove of the technological advancement in music in which vocals and instrument parts are recorded independently and then merged digitally by recording studios. At the same time, some others counter that artists ought to be receptive to new ideas.

However, in poetry, the poetic contents of both contemporary and traditional music revolve around themes of nonviolence, peace, condemnation of war, militancy and extremism, resilience, hope, identity construction, self-determination, and poetry about the environment. While talking about poetic content in Pashto music, poet and writer Shaheen Buneri (2022) added:

Society requires to compose poetic content in music that addresses societal issues and challenges. This is why we see socially conscious poetry in every album of Pashto music.

In the same line of debate, Bunerī further added that “singers who sing poetic content covering social issues tend to be more popular than other singers.”

Additionally, it has become a passion for a particular popular singer to compose and sing the poetry of a specific poet. Put another way, singers record albums of songs that are based on a single poet's poetry. Talking about the said trend, poet Irshad Pakhtun (2022) also added:

Over the past three decades, it has become commonplace for Pakhtun singers to perform one poet's poetry. Using the alias poets, the vocalists rose to fame. For instance, Sardar Ali Takkar sings the poetry of Ghani Khan, Naeem Turi sings Rahmat Shah Sayil's poetry, Karan Khan sings Sahib Shah Sabir's poetry, and Ijaz Ufaq sings Dervesh Durrani's.

Further, I have observed that the selection of poetry content in live music gatherings depends on venue and occasion. Poetry sung at shrines often has themes of Sufism, and poetry sung at political meetings and protests revolves around political themes. The themes of poetry sung during festivities are based on romanticism and separation. Nonetheless, the poetry sung in all the venues covers themes that talk about social issues in one way or another (Fieldnotes). The following pages discuss venues for music performances or playing.

7.6.1.1 Music at Shrines: Cultural Spaces for Poetry Consumption

Organizing music at shrines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has roots in Sindh, Punjab, and Indian shrines that have a centuries-old musical tradition known as *Samma*, a Sufi music gathering (Charran, Wang, & Yao, 2018). For 70 years, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has followed a similar pattern from a Sufi named Abdul Sattar Shah Bacha of the

Chishti School of Thought. James Caron (2015) writes that inspired by the Indian tradition of Qawwali, a musical genre and a form of Islamic devotional music that originated in the subcontinent, Hamza Shinwari first started writing Pashto Qawwali for All India Radio's Pashto Broadcast, for which he became well-known among the public. However, later, both Hamza Baba and Sattar Shah Bacha began organizing musical gatherings in the name of *Samma* at the shrines of Peshawar in the 1940s. In the beginning, it was limited to Qawwali. However, with time, other genres also entered these gatherings. While talking on the same line of debate, Mas Khan (2022), musician, and composer of music at Sattar Shah Bacha shrine, added:

Syed Sattar Shah Bacha was the first person to introduce the concept of samma at the shrines of Peshawar. Initially, he faced harsh criticism from religious clerics, but eventually, it became widely accepted. It is common practice to have music played at shrines throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in Peshawar.

Following the tradition of music gathering at shrines of Peshawar, the trend shifted into other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where music gatherings are organized to work in the dissemination of poetry. In Peshawar, the locale of this research, weekly music gatherings are held at the shrines of Begham Baba, Rahman Baba, and Sattar Shah Bacha. These music gatherings are held every Thursday evening following the Isha prayer at the shrine of Rahman Baba at Hazar Khwani and the shrine of Sattar Shah Bacha at the Dabgri Garden area of Peshawar. Similarly, a music gathering is organized at the Begham Baba shrine in Tehkal village of Peshawar every Wednesday evening following the Isha prayers.

In the last two decades, the threat of militancy and extremism has challenged the Sufi identity and practices. In the previous fifteen years, the Taliban have attacked several shrines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. One example of this is the 2009 bombing of the

Rahman Baba shrine, which caused severe damage to the building's structure (Weiss, 2020); (Imtiaz, 2010). The shrine was again constructed by the provincial government led by the ANP. In this scenario, the Sufism followers' struggle for the survival of their cultural identity transformed Sufi poetry into a nationalistic spirit. Sufi poets wrote verses denouncing radicalism and the rise of militancy. Many of the followers and cultural practitioners also believe that playing music at shrines is a way of defying those who think it is forbidden (haram) in Islam (Bacha, 2022; Weiss, 2020).

Poetry in music programs at the shrines typically has a Sufi flavor. For instance, most of Rahman Baba's poetry, which addresses themes of romanticism, ethics, and Sufism, is sung at the shrine of Rahman Baba. The poetry of Hamza Baba is recited at the shrine of Sattar Shah Bacha. However, due to common threats from militancy and extremism, Sufism and ethnic nationalism became natural allies, leading to the consumption of poetry addressing social concerns. Poetic content sung at the shrines encompasses themes of self-determination, condemnation of violence, peace, nonviolence, resilience, and hope that address social issues of society in one way or another. Folksinger, Rababist (*Rabab* Player) and poet Daud Jan Malang's couplet: "Ay Pukhtano bas de nur haram pregdai / Lor khor la maalono ke hesy warkaway" (*"O Pakhtuns! Enough of the haram (ill-gotten money) / Give your ladies their due share in the properties"*) sung at the shrine of Rahman Baba is one example (Fieldnotes). The couplet literally begs Pakhtuns to give women their fair share of the property, and not doing so is to eat *Haram* (forbidden) food. Conceptually, the couplet addresses women's issues and demands justice, contrasting with Pakhtun society's meta-discourses denying women their rightful claim to property.

Similarly, the concept of '*shar aw khair*' (peace and conflict) is evident in the poetry of Hamza Baba, which is sung at the shrine of Sattar Shah Bacha and the shrine of

Rahman Baba and Begham Baba. The concept first emerged in the poetry of Roshanite and Khushal Khan schools of thought that depict the Moghuls as “other.” In his poetry, Hamza Baba refers to Moghuls as ‘*shar*’ (conflict) and Pakhtuns as ‘*khair*’ (peace). The concept became popular in contemporary Pashto poetry, where it sees the Pakistani State as a Mughal legacy due to its stringent policies like Mughals and sung in the shrines (Bacha, 2022).



Figure 7.12. Photo of the music gathering at the Rahman Baba shrine. The gathering occurs outdoors during the summer, while it is held on the veranda in the winter. The walls display the poetry of Rahman Baba, which is very common in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the rest of the subcontinent. The man holding the *rabab* is Ghareeb Gul, who performs on the *rabab* every Thursday evening at the shrine and sings classical and modern poetry. Other musical instruments can also be seen in the photo.



Figure 7.13. Photo of the music gathering at the Sattar Shah Bacha shrine. In the photo, participants could be seen attentively listening to music. Further, music gathering in the Sattar Shah Bacha shrine takes place outdoors during the summer, while in the winter, it is held on the veranda. The photo was captured in April; thus, some of the people are sitting outside the veranda due to the expected weather. (Source: Author)



Figure 7.14. Photo of the music gathering from Sattar Shah Bacha shrine. Famous Pashto singers Hashmat Sahar (left) and Sadeeq Afridi (right) play Harmonium while Hashmat Sahar sings. *Rabab* and *Tabla* (musical instruments) can also be seen on the extreme left side of the photo. (Source: Author)

7.6.1.2 Music at Protests and Jalsay

In the second half of the 20th century, the interplay of poetry, politics, and music gave birth to the trend of playing live music at *jalsay* (plural of *jalsa*) of progressive and nationalist parties. Literarily, the word *Jalsa* (singular) comes from the Arabic word ‘*Jals*’ (to sit) or ‘*Jalus*’ (sitting), however, in a political context, *jalsa* refers to political gatherings where speeches are delivered. The genre of *Tarana* (anthem), an Indian music genre, was the most popular genre performed in these gatherings, along with the song genre. Poetry performed or sung during protests or political gatherings typically addresses political issues through poetic themes such as self-determination, revolution, class, and gender. Several anthems have been popularized in this era. They are still performed either in live or recorded music at *Jalsay*, such as “*Da Inqilab Tarana*” (“Anthem of Revolution”) written by Rahmat Shah Sayil in the 1970s²⁵. The anthem addresses various political questions, such as self-determination, violence, class, and gender, as well as solutions to these questions. During fieldwork, I asked a participant about the background of the aforementioned anthem playing in a gathering organized in memory of the Babara martyrs at Bacha Khan Markaz on the 12th of August 2022. The participant stated, “Over the past 40 years, millions of Pakhtuns have been drawn to this, their most well-known anthem” (Fieldnotes).

In the same way, another anthem, “*Ay Zama Watana*” (O My Beloved Homeland)²⁶, written by Ghani Khan, became popular in the same period and is still part of the political gatherings of progressive and nationalist parties. The themes of the anthem revolve around the themes of self-determination, bravery, honor, identity, and patriotism. The anthem is recognized as the national anthem of the Pakhtuns by ethnic

²⁵ See annexure 1 for complete anthem.

²⁶ See annexure 5 for complete anthem.

nationalist groups, especially the ANP. During fieldwork, on many occasions, I observed the anthem playing at the beginning of literary and political gatherings and music gatherings organized for festivities.

In political gatherings, poetry written on historical events is also sung, which works to construct the historical consciousness of the audience. On August 12, 2022, young singer Ijaz Ufaq sang the poem “*Margiya mh raza darzama*” (O Death! Don’t haste; I’m coming) at a gathering held in memory of the martyrs of the Babara, Charsadda²⁷. The poem, written by Abdul Malik Fida (1957), a Khudai Khidmatgar in 1948, reflects the Babara massacre. The singing of the poem serves to create an alternative discourse of history that is not taught in the Pakistani curriculum (Fieldnotes).

However, live music is occasionally featured during protests and *jalsay* (see Figure 7.15). However, over the last 20 years, recorded music has replaced live performances at political gatherings. Instead of live performances in protests and *jalsay*, recorded music is played by loudspeakers (Khan, 2018). Many respondents believed that the change is attributed to cost and time effectiveness as recorded music does not need extra time but plays from start to end of the political gatherings. In contrast, live music is performed at the end of the gathering (Fieldnotes).

Further, during fieldwork, I also observed that student and youth organizations hold annual musical nights at various locations in Peshawar during the winter season. The famous organizations for musical nights are the Pakhtun Student Federation, Peoples Student Federation, Marwat Students Society, Swabi Students Society, Waziristan Students Society, and Swat Students Society, among others. Some student organizations are affiliated with political parties, while others are independent based

²⁷ See annexure 6 for complete poem.

on tribal or regional identities. The poetic content sung in these gatherings covers various social issues popular in Pashto poetry. The following song is one example:

Kh Khattak kh Yousafzai yam /
Kh Momand kh Afriday yam /
Pakhktunkhwa zama watan /
Pakhtunkhwa, Pakhtunkhwa.

(*“Either I am Khattak or Yousafzai /
If I am Momand or Afridi /
Pakhtunkhwa is my homeland /
Pakhtunkhwa, Pakhtunkhwa”*).

The song is performed in the style of *attan*, a traditional Pakhtun dance. Its lyrics cover various themes, such as unity, self-determination, and patriotism. The song's themes show that despite the tribal identity-based organizations, the students still listen to music that celebrates their homeland's prosperity and the togetherness of their people, the Pakhtuns (Fieldnotes).

Moreover, the poetry produced on recent issues and socio-political conditions of Pakhtun society is also sung or played in political gatherings. Two such anthems are “*Pakhtun ta jwandun ghwaro*” (We want prosperity for the Pakhtuns) and “*Da sanga azadi da?*” (What kind of freedom is this?), which were written and sung in 2017 and 2018 (Sevea, 2021). The themes of these two anthems reflect the questions and goals of the political struggle of the Pakhtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), which means the Pakhtun Protection Movement. This nonviolent and non-parliamentary anti-war movement emerged in 2017 in Pakistan. The first anthem, “*Pakhtun ta jwandun ghwaro*”²⁸, raises concerns about the status of Pakhtuns in Pakistan and calls for a prosperous and peaceful life for them. While the second anthem, “*Da sanga azadi*

²⁸ See annexure 7 for complete anthem.

*da*²⁹,” addresses the hardships faced by Pakhtuns in Pakistan and questions the meaning and essence of freedom in the country as termed by a participant in a political gathering organized by PTM on ring road Peshawar. While talking about the origin of the anthems, a participant in a protest organized by PTM added:

The anthems gained popularity in 2017 when dozens of youngsters from Waziristan marched towards Peshawar and then to Islamabad, where they began a *dharna* (sit-in) and founded PTM. The anthems were played every day during the protest. Hence, PTM adopted these two anthems as official songs (Fieldnotes).

Since its inception, PTM has actively organized various protests and gatherings in various areas of Pakistan. The anthems are played at almost every protest organized by PTM, and participants see them as a voice for their rights (Shah, 2023).



Figure 7.15. A photo from the *sandareez ihtejaj* (melodic protest) held in front of the Peshawar Press Club on March 22, 2022, in response to a police raid on Afghan musician refugees in Peshawar. Musicians play their instruments in the photo while some participants are performing *attan*. Protesters are holding posters featuring poetry couplets, slogans, and demands. Amid the challenging circumstances faced by Afghan musicians following the fall of Kabul, the protesters called on the government to support these musicians rather than deport them back to Afghanistan.

²⁹ See annexure 8 for complete anthem.

7.6.1.3 Consumption of Poetry in Music Gathering in Rural and Urban Settings

Tang takor, or live music gathering in *hujra*, *bethak*, *jungara* (huts in the fields, mountains, or riverside), and such places remained an old tradition among Pakhtuns, a great source of poetry consumption and dissemination in Pakhtun society. Mostly at these places, only Rabab and *Mangay* are played, and various genres of poetry are sung with them (Ahmad, Wahab, & Rahman, 2017). These live music gatherings are sometimes arranged on specific occasions such as weddings, engagements, Eid, and other cultural gatherings. Sometimes, it is organized randomly in *hujra*, *bethak*, or *jungara* weekly, bimonthly, or monthly for entertainment, catharsis, and music practice.

During fieldwork, I attended various music gatherings organized in *hujray* or huts of the rural settings of Peshawar. In these music gatherings, poetry themes include romance, love, self-determination, condemnation of war, peace, and resilience, reflecting Pakhtuns' culture, history, and politics. Similarly, it also includes songs that cover the local context of culture and politics. The song "Zmung da shaara palosai ogoray / Korona ye dak de da baday ogoray" ("*Come and see our ruined Palosai (village) / Every house has an enmity*") is very famous in Palosai village and its surroundings. The song's theme reflects the ruined state of every home in the Palosai village, where almost every house is indulged in enmity. In conceptual meaning, that song condemns enmities by identifying its consequences (Fieldnotes). Similarly, a ghazal that says: "Der pa bad wakht ke raghlay der pa haye sorran ke raghlay / Akhtara raghlay kho da weeno pa baran ke raghlay". ("*You've come at a terrible timing, a time of lament and sorrow / O Eid! You've come at a time of rain of blood*") is sung during Eid days. The song reflects the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where people must endure bloodshed and tears. It conveys the message

that it is hard to celebrate Eid when there is so much suffering and violence around (Fieldnotes).



Figure 7.16. A photo of a musical gathering held at a *hujra* in the locale, where people listen attentively to the music. Music in a *hujra* often takes on various forms: while some listeners engage deeply with ghazals, many young people begin to dance when the musicians and singers perform a folk song. Men from various age groups are seated at the music gathering, which shows how poetry, expressed through the language of music, attracts and educates people across different generations.

7.6.2 Consumption of Poetry in Protests

The consumption of poetry in protests in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the product of the emergence of socio-poetics that has roots in the struggle against British colonialism in the first half of the 20th century (Marwat, 2021). Like other movements in the subcontinent, the KKK also began using culture and art to convey messages (Habibi, 2008). Inviting poets to narrate poetry in political gatherings known as ‘*Jalsay*’ became a common trend during the independence movement. In this regard, Mian Iftikhar (2022), central secretary general of ANP, shared a story during a *mushaira*

“*Da Sahib Shah Sabir makham*” (Sahib Shah Sabir’s evening) organized by PSF on November 27, 2022. The story goes as follows:

Once, a renowned poet from Malakand, Rahmat Shah Sayil, was invited to narrate poetry during a *jalsa* organized in the Malakand district. Rahmat Shah Sayil narrated a poem that depicted the country's political and economic situation. Bacha Khan was scheduled to deliver a speech after Rahmat Shah Sayil’s poetry narration. When Bacha Khan took the stage, he asked two questions from the audience of the *Jalsa*. He asked, ‘Did you all listen to the poetry of Rahmat Shah Sayil?’ and ‘Do you all understand what he has said through his poetry?’ The audience replied “Yes” to both questions. Bacha Khan said, “This is what I am supposed to convey to you through my speech.” Bacha Khan further stated that “poets can express in a poem what they may not be able to deliver in an hour-long speech” and then left the stage, saying, “Do follow the message in the poem narrated by Sayil.”

After narrating the story, Mian Iftikhar said poetry helps raise awareness. He further said that the story reflects the struggle of the KKM in bringing poetry and politics together. Many poets and experts narrated the same story during the fieldwork when asked about the roots of poetry consumption in political gatherings.

In the current landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it is a common practice among political leaders and workers to narrate poetry during political gatherings, corner meetings, protests, long marches, and *dharnas* (Shah, 2023). Moreover, poets are also invited to share their poetry in these gatherings. Narrating theme-based poetry at these events serves many purposes. During fieldwork, many respondents said poetry can communicate complex topics more effectively than speeches. It helps mobilization by simplifying issues, making it easier for the audience to understand.

Further, I have observed that poetry themes in protests and political gatherings often address roots, effects, and condemnation of militancy and extremism, peace, nonviolence, self-determination, questions of class and gender, and the environmental

problems and their solution. These poetic themes contribute to constructing alternative narratives in Pakhtun society by highlighting people's various concerns and difficulties. For example, the state-run media in Pakistan suggests that militancy is the result of a foreign plot against the country. However, themes of Pashto poetry suggest that the current surge of militancy has been driven by a struggle for resources (see chapter 8).

Similarly, on February 7, 2023, poet Gilaman Wazir from Waziristan was invited to narrate his poetry at a political gathering organized by PTM on Ring Road, Peshawar. He opened his speech with a couplet by Ghani Khan: "Zor hasi peghor she che himmat warsara mal nh she / Wrak hagma mashal sha che tyara we aw de bal nh she." (*"If efforts are not matched by power, then power turns into a taunt / What good is a torch that is unable to create light in the dark?"*). The couplet addresses cultural repertoires like honor and taunts that serve to inspire and urge participants to defend their rights. The participants gave him a warm response while listening to the poetry (Fieldnotes). The poet also narrated his poetry, receiving a warm response from the audience for one of his couplets: "Ay da Pukhtano qatila owaya / Qabar ta maraan darzi kh nh darzi." (*"O killer of Pakhtuns! Do tell / Do you see punishment in the grave?"*). When I inquired about the reason for participants' enthusiastic reaction to the poetry, a participant explained, "It is because the poet articulates their suffering in his poetry" (Fieldnotes). It is mentioned that the poet Gilaman Wazir was brutally attacked on the 6th of July 2024. He was hospitalized and died on the 10th of July 2024. Following his death, various protests were held in different cities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan (Bayankhail, 2024).

In addition, the poetry is also inscribed on various placards, banners, and charts during protests. One such protest occurred in response to a police raid on a musical

event while saying that the music gathering was a disgrace to *Shab-e-Baraat*, a reverend Islamic festival. The police apprehended famous vocalist Karan Khan and his band and broke their musical instruments. A protest was staged in front of the Peshawar Press Club on the following day following the incident. During the rally, the participants chanted against the police and displayed placards with poetry couplets written. The couplets condemned the police raid and demanded an inquiry against them (Fieldnotes).



Figure 7.17. The picture is from the protest organized by activists, poets, and musicians in front of the Peshawar Press Club on March 22, 2022, against the police raid on a musical program in Peshawar. The couplet on the placard says, “I don’t have a pistol; rather, a flute under my shirt.” It further says, “We are the people of dialogue.” The chart is in the hands of poet Amjad Shahzad, a well-known poet, singer, and musician from Thana village in the Malakand district. Famous folk singer Ahmad Gul sits beside Amjad Shahzad, and famous Sitar (traditional instruments) player Zain Ullah Ustaz reads the couplet on the placard.

7.7 Conclusion

The chapter makes the case that the transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics, the increase in literacy, and the advancements in communication and technology have given birth to various cultural spaces organized in formal and informal places. These cultural spaces include literary societies that work to evaluate and disseminate Pashto poetry through their literary meetings and gatherings. Similarly, various cultural spaces organized in formal spaces such as seminars, conferences, literature festivals, and study circles work to evaluate and critique Pashto poetry. These cultural spaces bring poets together to create alternative approaches and frameworks in socio-poetics themes of poetry through evaluation and work for dissemination and consumption of Pashto poetry. Moreover, cultural spaces such as *mushairay* work to promote, critique and disseminate Pashto poetry. Further, cultural spaces such as music gatherings, protests, and political gatherings work for the consumption of poetry for various purposes, such as entertainment, catharsis, and mobilization. Thus, it is argued that the socio-poetic themes in Pashto poetry passed through multiple stages. The evaluation, dissemination, and consumption of thematic poetry involve energies, finances, and planning for which cultural spaces are driven by a force that works in organizing literary people to work together.

CHAPTER 8

SOCIO-POETICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY'S PASHTO POETRY: SENSITIZING PEOPLE THROUGH POETRY

8.1. Introduction

The 21st century's poetry extensively deals with worldwide social, political, economic and environmental issues. The poets are frontrunners in social movements against the injustice and oppression of the people. The environment surrounding the poets led them to articulate the social problems in their poetry. The Pashto poetry and poets are no exemptions in this case. Pashto poetry in the 21st century articulates social, political, economic, and social structures in society through its poetries. The collected data shows that themes of Pashto poetry exhibit the social, cultural, political, financial, and environmental conditions of the Pakhtun society and sensitize people about existing structural issues in Pakhtun society and society's relation with the state. The themes include: 1. Militancy, 2. Self-determination, 3. Question of Marginalized, and 4. Poetry of Environment. In its opening, the chapter covers the issues of militancy. It analyzes how poetry themes counter violence and militancy by identifying the roots and effects of militancy and expressing themes such as condemnation of war, emphasis on peace, nonviolence, hope and resilience. Through such expression, the Pashto poetry constructs an alternative narrative to counter militancy. The chapter further analyzes how poetry themes revolve around self-determination and covers the questions of land ownership and the question of identity. The chapter also analyzes Pashto poetry's depiction of marginalized classes, including the question of gender and, in particular, women's rights and position in Pakhtun

society. Finally, this chapter analyzes the concerns and thoughts of Pashto poetry on the environment. It ponders over environmental changes unfolding in the last few decades in the Pakhtun region. It briefly analyzes how poetry themes identify the roots and effects of environmental changes and how Pashto poetry exhibits themes that sensitize people to the preservation of the environment.

8.2. Contextualising Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 21st Century

As discussed in previous chapters, the history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has gone through the worst of its kind in the form of oppression, wars, and resistance throughout pre- and post-colonial times. The 21st century witnessed the same where Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including Merged Districts, erstwhile FATA) has experienced militancy, violence, bomb blasts, military operations, refugees, internally displaced persons, enforced disappearances, unplanned development, socio-economic crisis, poverty, class and gender disparities, and environmental crisis. These issues visibly affect peoples' lives, society, economy, politics, culture and art (Hussain, 2013). Many scholars have studied the ongoing social issues and challenges in Pakhtun society. However, the problem with contemporary literature is that it is based on pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial literature in which less attention has been paid to investigating how Pakhtuns themselves see and analyze these social issues and challenges. In the continuity of the 20th century's social and political consciousness, Pakhtuns have been fighting through various ways to create an alternative narrative on what is happening in their region in the 21st century. Among other ways of expression, Pashto poetry remains a popular way of dealing with the issues and challenges of society. It has successfully responded to varied generalized opinions, discourses, and conceptualizations propagated in local and foreign scholarship. It has produced counter-narratives emphasizing peace, dignity, unity, and progressive ethos in

claiming Pakhtuns' egalitarian and community-centered values. It generates alternative narratives and practices with the sheer calling of oneness and presumed character of Pakhtun identity embedded in peace, dignity and egalitarian ethos or values. It counters the militant discourse where the issues and challenges are said to be the production of Pakhtun society. It also addresses the question of gender, class and environmental crisis through various themes. The following sections of this chapter discuss the prominent socio-poetic themes in Pashto poetry and how they address various social issues and challenges.

8.3. Pashto Poetry and Militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been engulfed in militancy and terrorism since Afghanistan was ravaged mainly by 'superpowers', the then Soviet Union (USSR) and the USA, and their allies or active partners (Haqqani, 2005). Several militant Jihadist groups were trained to fight the USSR on one hand and to adopt and propagate radical Wahabi Islam to counter Iranian influence on the other hand (Achar, 2004). Zia-Ul-Haq's military regime in Pakistan became a line partner of the U.S and their allies, mainly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to fight against the USSR and escalate sectarian violence to counter the Iranian regime's influence in the region (Khan, 2012); (Haqqani, 2005). As discussed in the previous section, the ongoing militancy has disturbed various aspects of people's lives. Among others, it has also affected Pashto poetry. In local and foreign scholarship, much has been academically produced on the effects of militancy on Pashto poetry (Khattak & Akhtar, 2014). For instance, research studies claim that militancy has affected Pashto poetry regarding vocabularies, expressions and genres. Having replaced metaphors of humanity, love, beauty, and nature with symbols of violence and extremism. The last few decades of conflict and violence have given birth to subjected terminologies like bombs, arms, killings, and

bloodshed in Pashto poetry. These effects turned Pashto poetry into *jang-zada shairi* (war-affected poetry), as literati call it (Mazhar, 2018; Rashid & Umar Akhtar, 2014). Similarly, academic work has been carried out over the last two decades, focusing on the compilation, genres, performance styles, and evolution of poetry, which carries themes that glorify Jihad— a proper campaign projected during the late 1990s and early 21st century. This poetry was disseminated throughout Afghanistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa via audio cassettes and CDs and was performed in mosques and other religious gatherings to mobilize people for Jihad. The first notable work in this area was conducted by ethnomusicologist John Baily (2001). Baily's research highlighted how the Taliban implemented music censorship and began performing and singing poetry without musical instruments that glorify Jihad. The poetry was primarily written in the genre of *Tarana*, which often glorified Jihad both before and after 9/11, targeting the USSR and then the U.S. Meanwhile, the genre of *Naat* (praise of the Prophet) also gained prominence during this period (Pelevin & Weinreich, 2012). Moreover, an anthology titled '*Poetry of the Taliban*' was published in 2012 (Linschoten, Kuehn, Stanikzai, & Rahmany, 2012). Initially, the anthology included poetry from classic and contemporary poets and poetry of Jihadist themes. Following critiques from various scholars, it was later revised to exclude poetry from classic period poets and poetry from contemporary poets with progressive ideologies. It is worth noting that during fieldwork, I listened to various respondents who claimed that poetry with Jihadist themes did not receive any support from literary societies, unlike poetry with anti-militancy and anti-war themes. This is because the latter has a century-old tradition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's culture and society, as informed by poet and scholar Khadim Hussain (2022).

However, less effort has been made to investigate how Pashto poetry responded to militancy and its narrative (Weiss, 2020). This section of the chapter analyzes Pashto's poetry about militancy. The collected data reveals that poetry themes identify militancy's roots, causes, and effects and create an alternative narrative to counter it.

8.3.1. Identifying Roots of Militancy

Pakhtun poets promptly predicted this militant Jihadi and sectarian project at once. During fieldwork, while conducting this research, Pakhtun poets insistently informed that 'we resisted the ongoing militancy and religiosity even from the time when everyone was supporting Afghan Jihad'. Themes of poetry suggest that militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is an imposed phenomenon and has roots in Afghan Jihad that was the product of war between the two powers, i.e., the then USSR and U.S. While calling Jihad an imposed war of others, stage secretary Nadeem Ali (2022) narrated a couplet of Sulaiman Laiq (1930-2020)³⁰, poet and founding member of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), in Ghani Khan *mushaira*:

“Jihad bazar sho da shno dolloro /
Da oor aw weeno da saodagaro /
Sar paki lar da sadagano /
Bret paki tao kral so zanawaro”.

(*“Jihad is the new market of dollars /
Here, traders of fire and blood roam /
The simple folk lost their lives /
While some brutish curled their moustaches.”*).

Conceptually, the couplet says that the war in Afghanistan is not a jihad but a US war, which kills the poor and enriches those who provide services in fueling it. After *mushaira*, when I asked about the meaning of the couplet, Ali (2022) expressed,

³⁰ Sulaiman Laiq lived in Charsadda district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a refugee for dozens of years.

“Pakhtun poets predicted very early that war in Afghanistan was not Jihad but war between super-powers”. While calling it as was of others, poetry called it an *‘tapali shwe jang’* (imposed war) on the Pakhtuns. Talking on ongoing militancy as imposed war, poet and lecturer Hayat Khan (2022), narrated couplets of Rahmat Shah Sayil (1950-alive) in this respect:

“Pa khpal watan ke jang ra pa sar de /
 Halta hum za mram dalta um za mram /
 Prady ashar de prady ghobal dey /
 Halta hum za mram dalta hum za mra”.
 (“*I’m faced with war on my own homeland /
 It’s there I die and here as well /
 It’s a foreign war and a foreign fight /
 It’s there I die and here as well.*”).

The couplet informs that the ongoing war (militancy) is a foreign conflict raging on us (Pakhtuns). The couplet refers to the ongoing militancy as *prady ashar* and *prady ghobal*, where *prady* means “other”, *ghobal* means threshing, and *ashar* refers to a task performed by a group of volunteers as relief for a community member/s. Thus, it suggests that the ongoing militancy is ‘other’s threshing’ where Pakhtuns are providing free services and being killed. Speaking on couplet, the respondent stated that it is a war of minds where others use Pakhtuns and their land. Referring to ongoing militancy as imposed war and taunting on Pakhtuns, the respondent further narrated a couplet: “Prady jang de pukhtana war makhki kegi / Bya ye tori zghari waghosti sari zi”. (“*A foreign war and Pakhtuns are on the frontline / They are getting dressed in black chain mails again.*”). The couplet is used as a *peghor* on Pakhtuns, who used to be part of militancy. When I asked to explain the couplet, the respondent expressed:

Our people were brainwashed through Madrassas and educational curricula and trained for Jihad. Now, wherever they want, they send our Pakhtuns, either it is Afghanistan or Kashmir or Iran.

Moreover, various respondents also informed that the Pashto poetry sees the ongoing militancy *fasad* (riots) and persuaded Pakhtuns not to be part of it. In this regard, poet and professor Abaseen Yousafzai (2022) shared his couplet:

Khudaya bach me kre Pakhtun la de fasada /
Hasi na che Pakhtunkhwa me she barbada /
Da Kabul da nizaro makhona tor shawl /
Da barodo logi kheji la haiwada.

*(“O God! Save my Pakhtuns from such decay /
Or my Pakhtunkhwa would perish /
The cherished beauty of Kabul turned ugly /
There is smoke of gunpowder everywhere.”).*

Yousafzai shared that the couplet was written in the context of 9/11, where it was closely expected that the war on terrorism would affect Pakhtunkhwa (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). The poet prays to God to make his fellow Pakhtuns safe from what he calls *fasad*, or it will destroy Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The couplet gives an example of damaged Kabul, saying that its scenic views look black and gunpowder smoke takes over the whole country.

Poetry also talks of reasons why Pakhtuns are inclined towards the Jihad Project. Among others, poetry calls unemployment one of the main reasons for Pakhtuns' inclination towards the Jihad project. Poetry suggests that it would not be easy to convince Pakhtuns of Jihad if they had employment or sort of occupation. Speaking to a gathering arranged on the third death anniversary of poet and writer Khaliq Ziyar at Bacha Khan Markaz, political activist and writer Mukarram Khan Saba (2022) shared a couplet of Khaliq Ziyar (1962-2016):

“Kh nh we khob me da Jannat ledali /
Pa de dunya ba dasi khwar nh way /
Sa me wo kar da jehadono sara /
Kh pa rozgar we za wazgar nh way”.

*(“If I hadn’t dreamt of the Heaven,
I would not have been so distressed in this world.
I would’ve had no concern of Jihad anymore,
Had I been employed somewhere and were not idle.”).*

The couplet relates the successfulness of the Jihadi project among Pakhtuns with their idleness. After formally ending the program, I asked the speaker to explain the couplet he narrated on stage; he laughed and then commented that “the couplet criticizes the nature of Pakhtun society where a father or the elder brother earns, and the rest of the family members eat”. His laugh indicated that every Pakhtun must work so that he/she has responsibility and so he/she may not be free to go for others’ wars in the name of Jihad (Saba, 2022).

Moreover, themes of poetry link militancy with Pakistani state policies and claim that it supports militancy by providing its ideological background and financial resources. Speaking on state patronage of religious groups, Shahab Qurban (2023) narrated couplet of Rashid Khattak: “Da bal kali da khan pa daad zmung da kali chanri / Os ghwari da da khairat pa zay qalang Subhan Allah”. (*“The students of our town, with the aid of neighboring Khan / Are now asking for levy instead of charity, O Praiseworthy Lord!”*). The couplet says that with the help and support of the Khans (powerful) of the other village, the *chanri* (*madrassa* student) now ask for *Qalang* (levy) instead of charity. However, in conceptual meaning, the couplet says that it is the state and state-sponsored chieftains (jihadi warlords) who supported the militants to collect levies (tax) by force for Jihad in Afghanistan and Kashmir. The couplet, on the one hand, identifies the problem of charity collecting while, on the other hand,

refers to state support for charity collectors. In rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, militants actively collect charities. Talking about collecting charity as a source of financing militancy, Qurban shared a story of his fellow poet from the Mardan district whom militants threatened because he stopped them from collecting charity in the local mosque of his village. The story says:

In May 2020, members of a Jihadi group came to the village mosque in the holy month of Ramadan (month of fasting) and asked for charity to fund Afghan Jihad. Soon after demanding charity, the young poet stood before them, asked them not to collect charity in the mosque, and asked them to leave. With the interference of the young poet, harsh comments were exchanged between the poet and the jihadist group members. Meanwhile, elders of the area came in between and compelled both to leave the mosque. A week after the incident, the poet started receiving threats from unknown phone numbers, and as a result, he left his village for his safety and remained away from his home for almost a year (Qurban, 2023).

The story shows that because of the fear, no one in the masses can stop militants from collecting charity. It is worth noting that Pakistan was put on a grey list in 2018 for not wholly meeting the FATF standards (The Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), 2019). The Pakistani state actively struggled to remove its name from the list. It passed the National Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism Authority Act and the Safer Charity Act to curb money laundering and terrorism financing. The Pakistani state also initiated a helpline to do the same. However, many of the respondents informed that members of the militant groups who came under the title of ‘good Taliban’ roam in rural areas and collect charities, and even the district administration could not stop them from collecting charity.

8.3.1.1. Identifying and Condemning the Usage of Religion in the Name of Jihad

Pashto poetry exposes and condemns those who have supported the ongoing militancy in any way and suggests that people be aware of these people. In this regard, Pashto poetry primarily criticizes religious clerics or, to say, *Mullahs* who actively promoted the narrative of militancy in the name of Jihad by providing ideological support. Poetry written during the early days of Jihad is still part of the *mushairay*, and literary gatherings and literary persons narrate it to aware people. A variety of poetry has been produced that held clerics to have equal contribution to the militancy while saying that these clerics have supported and promoted the Jihadi project in Afghanistan brought by the U.S. to counter the then USSR. Speaking on the role of religious clerics in the Afghan Jihad, senior poet and writer Shams Buner (2022) narrated poetry of Ghani Khan that is written in the early days of the Afghan Jihad:

“Kheta da dollaro daka las ke ye da zahro jam /
Mata wayi che pakhtun ror de ola da jihad de /
Speena pagrai loya geera pat paki khamaar dey /
Dagha star kafar la sar chaqool asli jihad dey”.

(*“Belly filled with dollars, a cup of poison in the hand /
Telling me, kill your brother, it’s Jihad indeed /
Wearing a white turban and long beard but having a serpent inside /
Crushing the head of such a pagan is Jihad in need”*).

The couplet is a critique of clerics who supported Afghan Jihad. It says that his (*Mullah’s*) belly is filled with Dollars and having a bowl of poison in his hand while telling me to kill my brother in the name of Jihad. It further says that a snake is hidden in his big white turban and long beard, so killing him (*Mullah*) is the actual jihad instead of killing his brother. The couplets were narrated to show how the poets predicted the role of *Mullah* and the U.S. in the Afghan Jihad.

Similarly, speaking in informal discussion on the role of clerics in the Afghan Jihad, a poet Tahir Buner (2022) in an informal discussion during Ghani Khan *mushaira* organized at University of Peshawar quoted his couplet: “Malgaro mh jaray Kabul pa jara nh joregy / Kabul sukoon ta warisan da peghambar nh pregdi” (“*O comrades! Do not weep, Kabul can’t be rebuilt by lamenting / The pseudo heirs of the Prophet don’t let Kabul in peace.*”). The couplet is written on the role of clerics in the Afghan Jihad. It says that crying is no solution to the problem as the heirs of the Prophet (S.A.W) are not letting peace in Kabul. The word heir for clerics is used on purpose to taunt them as they spread violence and hatred.

8.3.2. Jang Ghandana: Condemnation of Militancy through Identifying its

Effects

As discussed earlier in this chapter, militancy, terrorism, and the war on terrorism in the region have critically affected life in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. People have gone through varied forms of violence, terrorism and social disturbances. In response, Pashto poetry exhibits themes of *jang ghandana* (condemnation of war) that condemn and counter-militancy by identifying its effects on people and various strata of society. In its literal meaning, *jang ghandana* refers to the condemnation of war; however, in the context of Pashto poetry, it is used to condemn militancy. Through identifying the effects of militancy, terrorism and the war on terrorism, poets sensitize people to struggle to stop the ongoing militancy. The themes of *Jang Ghandana* and its sub-themes are discussed in the following pages.

8.3.2.1 Identifying Humanitarian Crisis to Condemn Militancy

In the last twenty years, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have witnessed a humanitarian crisis unfolding, spreading and unending. Threatening, kidnapping and

killing elders, political workers, artists, doctors, businesspeople, teachers, laborers, police officers and ordinary people became a routine. Themes of Pashto poetry talk about the damage brought by militancy to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly to the lives of humans. Speaking about the consequences of militancy, famous poet Aziz Manerwal (2022) narrated a couplet of Sahib Shah Sabir: “Da sro lambo da ghargharo da zora na di khabar / Daa sok che Jang ghwari da jang da zora na di khabar”. (*“Ignorant they are from the wrath of blazing fire / Those who cherish war, are ignorant of its power of obliteration.”*). This couplet of poetry speaks about the consequences, fatalities and devastation brought about by militancy and condemns the supporters and promoters of militancy. In the similar context, Aziz Manerwal also shared his couplet: “Jang qatil day, insanan wajalay kegi / Da cha wror, da chaa janan wajalay kegi”. (*“War is a killer, it kills humanity / It kills someone’s brother or beloved.”*). In the couplet, the poet condemns militancy and war as it causes fatalities. Talking about a humanitarian crisis, Manerwal (2022) further narrated couplets of Sahib Shah Sabir in the same context:

Pa chaman ke ka guloona ka azghi mri /
 Kho zama da kor khayast zma sparli mri /
 Daa me nura badbakhti na da nu sa da /
 Pah prady jang ke zama da kor zmari mree.

(*“Either flowers or thorns of my garden wither /
 My dwelling's beauty and spring is all that vanish /
 What else could it be if not for my adversity /
 The bravery of my house fell in a foreign clash.”*).

In the couplets, the poet describes militancy as others’ war that indiscriminately destroys everything. For the poet, the land's natural beauty, which includes flowers, gardens, and metamorphic youngsters, is important, but it is all but vanishing in foreign conflicts.

Pashto poetry calls the ongoing militancy a drama where Pakhtuns are killed, and those who struggle to end this drama are also killed. In this regard, a poet in FGD3 narrated his couplets:

“Khukali drama da kho dey yaw kirdar ye der khafa kram /
 Gora Pakhtun che paki wajni pa rikhtya ye wajni /
 Kh nan ye prehodo bawar okra saba ye wajni /
 Hagha da amn nom ahasti khamakha ye wajni”.

*(“A character of this beautiful play made me sad /
 Pakhtun is killed, but in reality, in this drama /
 If spared today, he will surely be killed tomorrow /
 His outcry for peace ought to be killed.”).*

The first couplet refers to militancy as a beautiful play. However, he points out that one character in the play saddens him most. Here, he refers to Pakhtuns being killed in the actual playground of this war theatre. While the second couplet narrates that those who are struggling for peace are killed because they expose this play of bloodshed.

Moreover, referring to violence in Peshawar, a poet and stage secretary, Afsar Afghan (2022) narrated a couplet in *nawroz mushaira*: “Taso khkara shai charta bya osho baran da weeno / Da ghwakhi boyeen razi karghaan pa Pekhawar taweegi”. (*“Look around, there is yet another rain of blood again / There is smell of burnt flesh, crows are encircling Peshawar again.”*). The couplet says they look around as rain of blood pours again, and crows hover and circle the smell of burnt flesh. Conceptually, the couplet appeals to the people to unite against the violence on their land. During an informal discussion after *mushaira*, when I asked to explain the couplet, he stated that “the couplet was meant to remember the martyrs of a bomb blast of the police line Peshawar”. The terrorist attack was carried out in a mosque situated in the police line, Peshawar, where more than a hundred policemen were martyred. Commenting on the

same incident, the respondent also narrated his couplet: “Zmung de khair de kh wo nh satalo / Khudaya pa khpal kor ke kho de paam kawa”. (“*Not a problem if we are not saved at all / O God! At least give your home a kind eye.*”) (Afghan, 2022). In the couplet, the poet is lamenting God that though not taking care of us, at least take care of your home (mosque). Metaphorically, the poet is pleading with God to intervene and put an end to the war and bloodshed. At the same time, conceptually, he is awakening the people to the harsh reality that even mosques, traditionally considered God's home, are not safe amid the ongoing wave of militancy.

8.3.2.2 Identifying Uncertainty and Fear Brought by Militancy and War Against Militancy

The wave of militancy has created a situation of fear and uncertainty in society. The wave of militancy and the state's military operations against militants have turned Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into a sort of war zone. Military barricades were created in towns and cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Referring to the fearful situation of the province, poet Amjad Shahzad (2022) narrated his couplet in *nawroz mushaira* organized: “Da de bazar pa har got’per walar da marg saodagar / Dalta da jwand tappi wayal dasi asan nh de”. (“*In this market, traders of death roam at every corner / It's not easy to sing the songs of life here.*”). Explaining this couplet during the informal discussion, the poet stated that normal life had been disturbed due to militants and state security personnel. Those who vouch for normalizing life through artistic activities are threatened both by militants and state security personnel. When I asked him, ‘How are state security personnel also a threat to artistic activities?’. The respondent replied:

Besides militants, the security personnel of the state departments are also influenced by religious extremism, and so they also do not let us organize art activities such as music gathering (Shahzad, 2022).

Further, many respondents said you could freely move in your village and nearby villages a few years back until late at night. Similarly, sitting in *hujra* till late evening for *gap shap* (gossip) was recently a routine activity in Peshawar valley. However, the wave of militancy brought unrest to the Pakhtun land, which also restricted sitting in *hujra* as people closed their doors early in the evening. Referring to this situation of fear in the Pakhtun society, poet and scholar Tariq Khan (2022) shared a couplet by professor and poet Rahmat Ullah Dard that is: “Raqeeb me her sho tarhagaro ta kheri kawama / Makham la nh we che zama da lali war pori we”. (*“My rival is out of my mind; I send curses on terrorists / It's not even dusk when my beloved has shut the doors.”*). In literary meaning, the poet says that my beloved has closed the door early in the evening, so I have forgotten my love rival (competitors) and cursing the terrorists/militants. Conceptually, the poet is expressing the effects of militancy on Pakhtun life, where people close their doors early in the evening because of fear of militancy, extremism/terrorism.

8.3.2.3 Identifying and Condemning Religious Extremism Brought by Militancy

The Pashto poetry not only exposes militants or military presence but also expresses concerns about religious extremism and its effects on the daily lives of the people. In the last 40 years, Jihad was glorified formally and informally through different means by state, non-state actors and international sponsors. The coming of the Islamist parties' alliance called Mutahida Majlis e Amal (MMA) into power in the then NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) in 2002-2007 further fueled the ongoing extremism (Khan, 2012). The MMA government banned music in local transport (buses and taxis),

banners, and flexes with images of women and closed the Nishtar Hall, a community hall for art and culture events. These provincial government acts provided an ideological background to the wave of militancy and extremism as it was a by-product. This wave of militancy and extremism has affected the ideological mindset of the people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and has negatively pushed people to support Jihad as a necessary obligation. Speaking on extremism, poet and scholar Sami Uddin Arman (2022) stated:

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains the ideological colony for Jihad in Afghanistan, where people were ideologically brainwashed in schools, *madrassas* and through media that, caused the spread of extremism among the general population.

Such radicalization has affected the youngsters in society. Along with sending children to formal education to schools or colleges, sending them to Madrassa (mercenary) to memorize the Quran the second time of the day is also a culture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The effect can be seen in their outlook, where beard culture has become routine, and people would taunt or advise those who would shave their beard. In this regard, poet and scholar Sami Uddin Arman (2022) added couplets of Khaliq Ziyar:

“Da shmara woti de sa yaw dwa nh de /
Saray ba kam kam ta jolay nesi /
Kha Pukhtana kha pa joban ke zalmi /
Gery pregdi imamatay nesy”.

(*“One or two, no, they are beyond count /
How to beseech everyone/
Good Pakhtuns and lively youths /
They grow beards and become Imams.”*).

The couplet says it is difficult to convince them as so many exist. They have become countless, grown beards, and spearheaded the role of clergy in Pakhtun society. Conceptually, the poet criticizes youngsters for becoming religious clerics. Moreover, the phenomenon of extremism has also affected people in such a way that people now judge everything in the strict framework of *Gunah* (sin) and *Sawab* (virtue), which in turn made people more conservative. Talking in the same line of debate, poet Mumtaz Aurakzai (2023) narrated his couplet that says: “Dasi sok nishta de khariya ke che yaw so khabari / Masara wakri da sawab aw da gunah na baghair”. (*“Is there nobody in this town to say a few words / Words that are beyond sin and reward.”*). The couplet means that there is no one in the city with whom one can talk other than conversations of *gunah* and *sawab*. Conceptually, the couplet is referring to a society where there is extremism abounds, and one cannot find a person to talk to who is not influenced by extremism. Explaining the couplet, the respondent stated that everyone in Pakhtun society deals with life in the context of religion, and you will not find a single person who will talk to you beyond the concept of sins or the reward of good deeds (Aurakzai, 2023).

8.2.3.4 Identifying and Condemning Effects of Militancy on Culture and Art

The project of radicalization and the spread of extremism as its by-product empowered religious classes that resulted in the suppression of art and artists in the Pakhtun society. From Afghan Jihad to post 9/11, an upsurge in militancy has openly discouraged art and artists. An environment of hate and disrespect for art and artists was created and normalized through a campaign by emitting stories about the fate of artists that were disseminated through religious people in the last forty years. Referring to this campaign, young poet Ammar Wadan (2022) stated:

Religious clerics circulate stories like painters and sculptures would be asked on Judgement Day to give life to art pieces they have crafted, melted iron would be poured into the ears of singers, and poets would be hanged from their tongues.

Due to this wave of radicalization and extremism as its by-product, the artists, particularly musicians, face harsh responses both from militants and society. This resulted in the censorship of art and threats to artists. Both in the peripheries and the mainstream districts like Peshawar, Mardan and Swabi, the militant groups were openly threatening people from enjoying and practicing varied forms of life activities, like producing music and creating theatrical festivities. Talking on the same, poet and scholar Khadim Hussain (2022) stated:

Such a radical wave of threatening and targeting poets, writers, artists, journalists, teachers and political workers led to the weakening of the province's sociocultural discourse.

Speaking on religiosity's effect in weakening socio-cultural discourse, poet Hamdard Yosafzai (2022) shared his couplet: "Pa dagha jang ke kh tawan shwe zama shwe de / Zama Jirga aw Badraga lara, Sandari laray". (*"I am the only one who lost every asset in this war / My council, my escort gone, my melodies vanished."*). In the couplet, the poet talks about the damage incurred by the ongoing militancy and violence. The poet indicates losses due to militancy and violence and mourns that only Pakhtuns have faced the wrath of militancy by losing *Jirga*, *Badraga* (escort) and folk songs. While talking on his couplet, the poet explained that the loss brought by militancy has affected the people's overall lives by weakening society's socio-cultural discourse. Talking on the same subject, Hamrdard Yousafzai (2022) shared another couplet of himself: "Charta che saaz nh we sandara nh we / Halta ke hes da jwand khabara nh we". (*"Where there is no music and no melody / Life there is no life but a tragedy."*). The couplet means that there is no life in the absence of songs. *Jwand* (life) in the

couplet signifies the overall picture and vibrancy of daily cultural activities in society. The poet conveys that banning music and songs in society is tantamount to taking away the ways of expression of life.

The weakening of sociocultural discourse resulted in the normalization of discouraging art and artists. During my fieldwork in Peshawar, I observed a similar incident on March 18th, 2022. According to the newspapers and social media reports, the popular singer Karan Khan was invited to a musical gathering in Nazir Abad, a Peshawar village, where police raided the gathering. According to the reports, a resident filed a complaint that since the day was *Shab-e-Barat*, a holy night in the Islamic Calendar, and certain Islamic schools of thought prohibit playing music on said day, such music gatherings must be stopped. The police stopped the musical program and smashed the instruments on the occasion (Sirur, 2022). News of the event went viral on social media, and people responded differently. Soon after the incident, various people, primarily social and political activists, started criticizing the raid of police. A protest was organized in front of the Peshawar Press Club against police raids on musical gatherings where dozens of poets, musicians and singers participated. During the protest, I observed various people who had written poetry couplets on placards, and some others also narrated poetry couplets in speeches. Most couplets written on placards or narrated in speeches were based on condemning militancy and extremism, promptly supporting artists, and identifying and signaling the message that poets stand with arts and artists. I engaged in several informal conversations with the participants of the protest. While talking on the event and narrating artists' life conditions, a participant in the protest narrated a couplet: "Ta ye da topak sara pa drem patak war prekhodi / Za ye pa wrombi patak rabab sara newali yam". ("You're allowed to cross three check posts while having a gun in hand / While

I was stopped with a Rabab on the first one.”) (Fieldnotes). The couplet says that roaming freely with a gun is normal, whereas musical instruments are stigmatized in society. The couplet is used as a taunt in the security situation where militants freely move while the artists are caught at checkpoints.

Similarly, referring to the event, another participant in the protest also narrated a couplet of young poet and writer Hafiz Hameem: “Be insafi da che sok qadar da hunar tre ghwari / Dh cha che tol tareekh la tori aw la zghari jor we”. (*“Unfair it is to expect from them to appraise art / Those with a history full of swords and shields.”*). The couplet responded to my question about his opinion on the incident. Conceptually, the couplet criticizes moral and state policing. Talking on couplet, the respondent stated that the wave of militancy resulted in the construction of hostile and violent attitudes of the people towards arts and artists (Fieldnotes).

8.3.3 Constructing Narrative of Peace for Countering Militancy and its Narrative

Along with identifying and condemning militancy, Pashto poetry also exhibits themes that work in constructing an alternative narrative of peace. These themes include peace, nonviolence, condemnation of war, hope and resilience and sub-themes such as coexistence, social cohesion, and interfaith harmony. This narrative, as I have observed in poetry and conversations, calls for peace, and it is the reason poetry carrying themes of peace or its sub-themes is titled ‘*Da Amn Shairi*’ (peace poetry). It further compels Pakhtuns to recognize forces, both local and foreign, whose interests are embedded in deforming Pakhtuns’ socio-cultural and political identities. While it mourns the hopeless situation where foreign, statecraft and local forces are all bent on terraforming social, cultural and religious mores of Pakhtuns into extremism, it calls for claiming Pakhtuns’ rightful stand where they are free and united. These themes are hereby discussed in the following pages.

8.3.3.1 *Da Amn Shairi (Peace Poetry): Promoting Narrative of Peace to Counter*

Militancy

The theme of peace and its subthemes remained popular in 21st-century Pashto poetry, while all other themes revolve around peace. The reason for the popularity is that peace has remained the most popular demand of the people throughout the last two decades in response to the wave of militancy. Speaking on the popularity of peace poetry in the 21st century, poet, scholar and professor of archaeology, Rafiullah Khan (2022), expressed in an informal discussion:

It was in the late-1990s when the theme of peace gained popularity in Pashto poetry. During this time, a poem written by Pir Gohar Shah entitled as “*amn*” (peace)³¹ got very popular. The poem calls for peace in Afghanistan, linking it to global peace. Due to its widespread popularity, the poet earned the title of “*Shair e Amn*” (poet of peace) for his focus on the theme of peace.

The theme of peace in Pashto poetry is rooted back to the emergence of the KKM, which used to mobilize people against the violence of Britishers. That is why poets link themselves with KKM in their poetry, constructing a peaceful and soft image of the Pakhtuns. The couplet of poet Amjad Shahzad (2022) best expresses this context, as he narrated:

“Zama da qaam bachi la har sari wasla warkari /
Yaw Bacha Khan warla da amn falsafa warkari /
Cha che hum da ulas da shar pa hawala yaad kre /
Ma da Khudai Khidmatgarano hawala warkari”.

*(“Everyone has handed over guns to my nation’s children /
It was only Bacha Khan who gave the philosophy of peace /
Those who called this folk as violent in the world /
I’ve given them the reference of Khudai Khidmatgars.”).*

³¹ See Annexure 9 for complete poem.

The couplet says that while others brought wars, only Bacha Khan practiced the philosophy of peace, harmony, stability and nonviolence. Elaborating this couplet further, Shahzad (2022) notes:

Academic scholarship and media over the decades have portrayed Pakhtuns as violent and warrior people. However, contrary to this claim regarding the violent nature of Pakhtuns, we have the reference of the KKM, which raised one hundred thousand (1 lac) nonviolent army and millions of members of nonviolent KKM.

While referring to the philosophy of peace of the KKM, poetess Haseena Gul Tanha (2022) also shared her couplet: “Amn me pa hara lara nostay dey / Ma da solay dasi kitab lostay dey”. (*“Peace is scattered across every path / I’ve read such a book of reconciliation.”*). In her couplet, the poetess states that the KKM’s influence is that Pakhtun poets talk about peace. Talking on her couplet, Tanha further expressed:

The KKM created a discourse of nonviolence, coexistence, and harmony in Pakhtun society. This, in turn, created space for themes like peace in the context current wave of militancy.

Moreover, in recent years, the ideology and way of the KKM are termed *Bacha Khani* (Bacha Khan’s way), and those who follow the way of the KKM are called *Bacha Khanyan* (plural) or *Bacha Khanay* (singular). In this context, the concept of *Bacha Khani* is used as a metaphor for peace, coexistence, harmony, etc. It is best expressed in the couplet of poet and stage secretary, Afsar Afghan (2022), that he narrated it at *mushaira*: “Munga pa jang ke hum da meeni palawyan pati u / Mung pa har wakht ke kha pakha Bacha Khanyan pati u”. (*“We have been companions of love even in the times of war / Bacha Khani is our only resolve in times good and bad.”*). While listening to the couplet, particularly the name of Bacha Khan, the audience started clapping and chanting, which shows their devotion to the couplet’s message (Fieldnotes). A similar theme is also exhibited in the couplet of Mumtaz Aurakzai

(2023): “Bacha Khanay yam mohazab yama la gardi narai/ Za pa taraf da maraki, qalam, kalam walar yam”. (*“Civilized than the whole world, I’m the partisan of Bacha Khan / I’m with the people of mediation, pen and debate.”*). The poet has personified himself as *Bacha Khanay* and declares himself a civilized human. In a literary and political sense, ‘*Bacha Khani*’ is used as a metaphor for dialogue, debate, pen, etc. While elaborating on his couplet, Aurakzai stated:

The poetry of peace supports and promotes certain societal practices that bring peace, such as art, literature, poetry, debate, and other pluralistic practices. On the other hand, it condemns practices that create violence in society, like religiosity, extremism, and militancy.

While speaking on the theme of ‘need for peace’ in Pashto poetry, poet, Afsar Afghan (2022), narrated his couplet in an informal discussion: “Amn ta da pondo pori tagi u / Janga sta na kholi poray raghali u”. (*“It’s a peace that we’re eager for / O war! We are fed up and tired of you”*). Explaining the couplet, the poet stated that “we, the Pakhtuns, are very tired of wars as each aspect of our life is now distorted and brutalized”. The couplet’s “*pondo pori tagay*” indicates the thirst and stress for peace, meaning “we want peace from the deep core of our hearts”. Talking on the same subject, a young poet, Shakhkar Muhammadzai (2022), shared a couplet of Laiq Aseer: “Da me da amn khwahawalo sumra loye sabot de / Pa de topak topak mahol ke hum Qalam ghwarama”. (*“Tremendous evidence this is of my pacifism / I’m looking for a pen where there are guns all around.”*). The couplet means that my search for a pen testifies to the fact that I love and seek peace while there is a war-like situation in my land. Conceptually, the couplet is meant to promote certain practices, such as education, to discourage violent practices, such as the open exhibition of weapons. This couplet depicts education as a source of peace in society. This couplet can often be seen on schools’ walls and other places to encourage peace and discourage

violence. During fieldwork, I listened to various respondents saying that peace-related themes in poetry mobilize people for unity and resilience to work for peace. In a similar context, poet and scholar Ali Bawar (2022) narrated couplets:

“Likam yaw dasey rang kalaam da aman /
Che warkawi hamesh peghaam da aman /
Pa sar da zmakay rakhwaro Pukhtano /
Pasai che wokro intezam da aman”.

*(“I’m writing such a poetry of peace /
Which always gives a message of peace /
O Pakhtuns! From every corner of the wide world /
Let’s unite and bring eternal peace to the land.”).*

The couplet shows the message of unity and resilience for achieving peace and tranquility, as attaining eternal peace demands intact struggle and Pakhtuns’ unity. While discussing the couplet, Bawar stated that the Pakhtun poets use their pen, thoughts, and energies to bring peace to their land.

The thematic analysis of the poetry also suggests that peace is a universal need for which humanity should strive. The themes of poetry consider peace as the first and foremost need of humans and encourage people to work for it. Referring to the absence of peace in the 21st century, Mumtaz Aurakzai (2023) shared his couplet: “Kh de perai har mushkil swal ta de jawab mondalay / Da amn swal ye wale prehod da jawab na baghair”. (*“If this century has found answers to all the questions / Why then the question of peace is left unsolved.”*). The couplet says that even though the modern world has witnessed many scientific inventions, they couldn’t succeed in bringing peace. Explaining the couplet, the respondent stated that the absence of peace is a global issue, not restricted to the Pakhtuns alone.



Figure 8.1. The picture shows the couplet narrated by poet Skhkar Muhammadzai on a wall of a school named “Al-Qalam Public School” in the outskirts of Peshawar. The writing of the couplet on the school wall shows how poetry and its themes work among the general masses in Pakhtun society. Source: Author

8.3.3.2 Poetry of Nonviolence: Countering Violence through Nonviolence

As discussed in the previous chapter, a lot has been produced to show Pakhtuns as violent people, both in colonial and post-colonial scholarship. However, contrary to this, themes of Pashto poetry call violence in Pakhtun society as the product of imposed wars and nonviolence as the product of Pakhtun society. In the 21st century, nonviolent poetry is used to combat and counter militancy, radicalization, and extremism. Various poetry on nonviolence and sub-themes of nonviolence has been produced to promote a narrative of nonviolence and counter-violence brought by militancy, radicalization and extremism. Poetry themes link the nonviolence with the KKM and Gandhara, which both preach nonviolence. Analysis of themes of Pashto poetry suggests that Pakhtuns have a history of peace and nonviolence rather than violence imposed by others’ wars. Linking the philosophy of nonviolence with the

Gandhara civilization, poet and activist Noor Ahmad Shah Kaimor (2022) narrated his couplet in an informal discussion:

“Zama da jwand da har yaw rang sara yari da /
Da adm e tashadud me da Buddha ferokari da /
Pa hagma Khudai mayan yam che da toli narrai Rab de /
Dh Rab ihsas kho meena da aw meena bandagi da”.

*(“I’m fond of each color of life /
Non-violence is to follow the footsteps of Buddha /
I’m in love with the Lord, Creator of the whole world /
To feel the Lord is love, and love is but humanity.”).*

In the couplet, the poet says that he loves all the colors of life while adding that his philosophy of nonviolence continues Buddha’s teachings. The couplet further reads that he is the follower of the one faithful Lord who is the Master of the universe, and his feelings of love are his servitude to his Lord. Conceptually, the poet negates propaganda about the violent nature of Pakhtuns by referencing the nonviolence philosophy in Pakhtun politics and the rich historical remains of Buddhism spread out in the Pakhtun region.

Similarly, poets trace the roots of nonviolence to the KKM that resisted the Britishers. Referring to the roots of nonviolence and how it gives hope and resilience, a young poet, Ali Khan Umeed (2022), narrated his couplet:

“Khpali zwanai na me khiraj kre dey /
Ma pa zulmono ihteaj kre dey /
Zama da adm e tashadud makhi ta /
Da lakhkarono saro baaj kre dey”.

*(“I’ve paid the levy of my youth /
I’ve derailed, but all brutality /
Before the philosophy of my non-violence /
Armies of men have paid tribute.”).*

While referring to the nonviolent resistance of the KKM, the couplet says that even militant armies cannot stand against him. Conceptually, the couplet shows that poetry of nonviolence aims to raise hope and generate resilience in youth and presses them to protest oppression. While expressing hope and resilience in the poetry of nonviolence, the respondent Ali Khan Umeed (2022) narrated another couplet: “Taso pa adm e tashadud walar ye / Tashadud zaka war khata walar dey”. (*“You’re along with the nonviolent / That’s why people of violence are panicked.”*). The couplet notes that forces of violence are panicked as people resist violence with non-violence. Conceptually, the couplet means that peoples’ beliefs and practices of non-violence can successfully alter and neutralize violent causes of the destructive forces. Talking in his couplet, the Umeed stated:

We follow nonviolence and believe it is more potent than violent or armed means. Since we believe in nonviolent resistance against state and militant oppression, the oppressors panic as they cannot strategize defeating Pakhtuns with violence.

Moreover, in the 21st century, nonviolence in Pashto poetry emerged with sensitizing people to peace, coexistence, cohesion, and harmony to counter militancy and terrorism. Referring to messages in nonviolent poetry, poet Amjad Shahzad (2022) narrated his couplet: “Razay che tol ulas yaw dasi jang ta mla wotaro / Che be baroodo, be topaka, be lakhkara kegi”. (*“Come, O people! Get ready for such a war / Which need not gun powder, weapons or an army.”*). The couplet calls on people to wage a nonviolent struggle, emphasizing that such struggle is free of guns, gunpowder and battalions. It argues that a resistance grounded in nonviolence will cause no harm and can bring about lasting peace. Furthermore, it condemns weapons and gunpowder, which only lead to destruction and bloodshed. In similar context, a young poet Nabeel Khan (2022) from Malakand also narrated a couplet of Khaliq Ziyar in an

informal discussion: “Nur pa khpalo ogo nh gdo da prado khalko topaki / Ziyara dagha lar da ghwara che sa osho hagha osho”. “*No more weapons of others are we putting on our shoulders / Let bygone be bygone, but this is the new way.*”). The poet stresses here that we will not hold others’ weapons on our shoulders as we can protect our people from future wars. The poet recalls that Pakhtuns have fought others’ wars but should now refrain from repeating them. The respondent's approach shows that they believe that to stop militancy in the region, it is necessary to change the violent attitudes of the people.

The Pakhtun poets consider nonviolence a strategy of resistance and struggle and a way of life, thinking processes and attitude. Poetry of nonviolence sensitizes people to follow nonviolence as their way of life. Referring to the role of poetry in sensitizing people to a changing way of life, poet and scholar Tariq Khan (2022) respondent shared a poem by Fazal Mabood Diyar:

“Da insan izat e nafs hum /
 Da insan da jwand na khog we /
 Kh da adm e tashadud sok /
 Perokar we nu malgaro /
 Da har qisma tashadud na /
 Zan zhghoral Bacha Khani da /
 Bas da adm e tashadud dey /
 Da dh amn falsafa da”.

(*“The self-respect of a man /
 Is dearer from human life /
 If someone is following /
 The philosophy of non-violence, my fellows /
 From all kinds of violence /
 Saving oneself is Bacha Khani /
 This is non-violence indeed /
 This is the philosophy of peace.”*).

Here, the poet prefers self-respect over life. He states that violence is disrespectful and that withdrawing from violence is wholesome is the way of Bacha Khan. The poet relates the abandonment of violence to *Bacha Khani* and declares it as the actual philosophy of peace and nonviolence. Similarly, another respondent shared Ikram Ullah Gran's poetry during a seminar and *mushaira* on the International Day of Nonviolence organized by a student organization. The couplet says:

“Hagha dehqan yam kh da logi mrama /
Baghair da gulo me bal kar nh lagi /
Kh sok me wajni las ye hum nh nesam /
Zama pa yaw halat ke shar nh lagi”.

*(“I’m that farmer if I die of hunger /
Other than flowers, nothing pleases me /
I don’t resist if someone tries to kill me.*

Literary, the poet means that I prefer sowing flowers even if I am dying of hunger. The couplet further notes that if someone kills me, I won't fight him because of my conviction of nonviolence. Conceptually, couplets describe the importance of nonviolence and stress complete nonviolence in behavior and attitude. (Fieldnotes).

8.3.3.3 Countering Militancy through Poetry of Hope and Resilience

Since 9/11, the term ‘apolitical’ has become a common thread in conversations and discussions. The trauma of war on terrorism, militancy and an uncertain political chart of the future dramatically affected peoples’ hopes and resilience in challenging the political upheavals. They became varied and lost confidence in the mainstream political parties and political struggles. People commonly declare themselves as “apolitical” in the political debates over Pakistan’s political dynamics and sensitivities. In such an oblique situation where people would remain idle and disinterested in politics, Pashto poetry magically raises hope and resilience among

people. Poetry of resilience not only helps the masses to identify varied forms of militancy but also to counter them with courage and confidence.

The varied forms of militancy are hopelessness, fear, terror, and the extermination of dreams. Rather than fueling such outcomes, Pashto poetry was a source of courage, hope, entertainment and awareness. In this context young poet Jalal Khalil (2022) also narrated his couplet: “Ay wakhta kh qatil da har arman me ye kho sa? / Bya hum pa wacho shondo me naghma da zindagai”. (*“O wicked time! What if you’re the killer of my dreams / Songs of life are there, on my dry lips.”*). Here, the poet laments time and space as killer forces of his dreams, but instead of losing hope, he celebrates life as embedded in enchanting songs. Speaking about the message in his couplet, the respondent stated that “poetry gives hope to the people, and it is because of poetry that people sing the songs of hope and resilience”. Jalal Khalil (2022) further added that in times of militancy and terrorism, singing about the beauty of life, hope, and love is natural. He supplemented his thoughts with another couplet of his poetry: “Ranra da takhayul ba me zyategi khamakha / Wajood che me tor tam de aw lamba da zindagi”. (*“The light of my imagination will indeed magnify / When life is ablaze, and my whole body is engulfed.”*). Here, the poet uses metaphors where the light of imagination means creativity and darkness as violence and insecurity in society. In other words, the poet compares his poetry to light in his life and social conditions to flames in which his poetry acts as a creative and conducive force against the depleted conditions of society. The couplet gives hope and resilience against the prevalent fears and terrors in Pakhtun society.

Poetry also uses cultural repertoires such as *nang*, *be’nangi* and *peghor* to spread hope and resilience. In the following couplets, poet Amjad Shahzad (2022) uses cultural

repertoires as stimulants to make people aware and urge them to work to bring peace.

It says:

“Pukhtana nast de da tot yakh sori ta kha pa aram /
Dwe khabar shwe da ooronon pa baran nh de.
Amjada sok che pa khpal qaam aw watan nang nh kawi /
Har sok che we kho zama ronra azizan nh de”.
*(“Pakhtuns are in the state of tranquillity/
Don’t they know fires are raging around?
Those who don’t honor their people and homeland /
They are not my kin, whoever they are.”).*

The couplet says that Pakhtun is resting under the shadows of the trees and unaware of the violent situation on their land. It further says that those who do not have the honour of their land are not my brothers and relatives. In his couplet, the poet narrates that “we do not own those who do not claim and own the collective cause”. The cultural repertoire, such as *nang* and *be’nangi*, as in the case of the mentioned couplet work, is a source of resilience and awareness in the context of militancy. In a similar context, poet Amjad Shahzad (2022) shared another couplet of him: “Da Pakhtun da ghwago woti da Khushal da tori shrang de / Tarana jalandari ke sabaq her trena da nang dey”. (*“Pakhtuns have forgotten the striking sound of Khushal’s sword / They’ve forgotten lesson of valor in the anthem of Jalandari.”*). In the couplet, *Jalandari’s* anthem (Pakistan’s national anthem written by Hafeez Jalandari) symbolizes the Pakistani curriculum, which is the cause that Pakhtuns have forgotten their history, i.e., the honour of Khushal Khan. In other words, the couplet taunts Pakhtuns for the unawareness of their history and honour caused by the Pakistani curriculum. Talking on couplet, the poet stated:

Pakhtuns are unaware of the roots and causes of their social issues. They aren’t aware of the honor and price of their land, which they have forgotten because of the recitation of the Jalandari anthem in schools.

The couplets revolving around themes of cultural repertoires are recited on various occasions to compel people to struggle to end violence and bring peace. During fieldwork, I was involved in informal discussions with people from various walks of life. On one occasion when, I was involved in a similar informal discussion, where students at the University of Peshawar were discussing blasts that occurred in a mosque in Police line Peshawar two days ago where more than a hundred policemen got martyred, and dozens of others got wounded. In the discussion, the students taunted others for not participating in the protest. A student among them narrated a couplet: “Che la nang aw la namoos khabardar nh ye / Moshada de wrukawa sa pakar nh ye”. (*“If you are not aware of honour and credit / Just shut your face you’re of no use.”*). The couplet says that one does not need society if he/she is not aware (and follows) the honour and principles of the society. After a few days, I observed that the second line of the “moshada de wrakawa sa pakar nh ye” became famous among certain circles who recited it on different occasions to taunt students who weren’t participating in protests organized for various purposes.

Moreover, themes of resilience also work as a stimulant of awareness and mobilization against proxy wars. The following couplet of Saiqa Gigyani, a young poetess from Peshawar, narrated by young poet Nadeem Khan (2022), is one example of poetry that carries themes of resilience:

“Ay da Hamza aw Ghani Khan bachiya /
Pasa rawekh sha da soor oor marr kra /
Dagha che sta pa sar tayar walar de /
Da narri’wal jang dagha sho rmarr krra /
Gora ka da zali ouda patay shwe /
Grana da bya kh rata ta patay she”.
(*“O the son of Hamza and Ghani Khan! /
Wake up and kill the ravaging fire /*

*That what is lurking on your head /
End this world war and the chaos /
Know if you didn't do anything to stop it /
You and the fellow beings will perish.”).*

Here, couplets point to proxy wars in the Pakhtun region and warn Pakhtuns to watch out and not indulge in the proxy. The message in the couplets also warns people that their survival is at stake, and if they fail this time, they will suffer and fall apart. The couplets show themes of resilience that work as stimulants in raising awareness and mobilizing people to resist militancy.

8.4 The Poetry of Self-determination in the 21st Century

Rooted in the anti-colonial and independence KKM, self-determination as a thought and political practice stretches to the post-colonial state of Pakistan, where decades of Pakhtun nationalist and progressive political struggles were inspired by its idealism. In the context of the 21st century, it took a new turn when the Pakhtun intelligentsia started linking the ongoing proxy wars, i.e., militancy, with the question of self-determination. This is why self-determination remained the core and foundational idea and a vital, though dynamic, political thought in the 21st century of Pakhtun ethnic nationalism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The intelligentsia claims that, like in the 20th century, the issues and challenges of the Pakhtuns in the 21st century are directly linked to self-determination. It claims that the state authorities, either military or hybrid military-civilian centric regimes, have deprived Pakhtuns of identity and from commanding authority over their land. Pakhtun nationalism in Pakistan, therefore, finds answers to questions of ownership of land and question of identity in the struggle for self-determination. The struggle for self-determination has produced abundant cultural knowledge, spanning art, language, literature, and academia.

Among varied forms of expression, poetry has remained prominent in featuring self-determination as informed by poet and scholar Khadim Hussain (2022). Poetry of self-determination discusses political questions and provides solutions. In this section of the chapter, I have analyzed themes of poetry that address two main issues of society: ownership of land and the question of identity.

8.4.1 Pashto Poetry and the Quest for Ownership of Land

Poetry based on themes of self-determination suggests that issues and challenges of Pakhtun society, such as militancy, extremism, unemployment, inflation and poverty, and environmental crisis are direct outcomes of Pakhtuns' inability to exercise authority over their land. Similarly, to overcome these issues and challenges, themes of self-determination sensitize people to realize and attain ownership of land to seek a prosperous, dignified and peaceful life. In this regard young poet Ghazal Momand (2022) added his couplet: "Pa de pohegi khalak dalta razi sa la razi? / Pa de ghrono ke Ghazala khazani rawozi". ("Do you understand why they come to our land? / It's because there are riches in our mountains."). The couplet expresses that the issues and challenges of the Pakhtuns' are connected to land ownership. Conceptually, the couplet says that outsiders are interested in Pakhtuns' land because it is rich in resources, and to control them, they create conflict. Explaining the couplet, Momand expressed:

The couplet means that people come here, create conflict by manipulating religion and culture and produce spaces for their control and domination. For such reason Pakhtuns don't have peaceful and prosperous life for decades.

The poetry of self-determination also suggests that people must rise and struggle against the outsiders who have created violence and conflict in their region to claim and achieve authority over the land. The theme of poetry in sensitizing people is best

expressed in the couplet of poet and activist Nangyal Yousafzai (2022): “Da lafa ba mu jam she da ouba ba mu sharab / Da har yaw khwand da para khpal ikhtyar khwand kawi”. (*“Our hands will turn into goblet, water will turn into wine / To taste every glee, authority is prudent.”*). The couplet expresses that ownership and authority over land are necessary to live a happy and prosperous life. In other words, self-determination is considered a foundational stone for creating and having a peaceful, stable, and happy life in society. Speaking on the situation of Pakhtuns where they are either laboring or living as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Nangyal Yousafzai (2022) also shared his couplet: “Dagha saray zamung pa rizaq nast dey / Aw mung hagha ta pa qataar ke nast u”. (*“A foreigner is sitting on our riches / And we are waiting in queue in front of him.”*). The couplet sheds light on the situation where Pakhtuns, because of their miserable condition, stand in queues to collect food packages in front of those who control Pakhtuns’ resources. While speaking on self-determination and linking Pakhtun issues and problems with it, a respondent Wakeel Khan (2022) in an informal discussion also stated:

If we have authority over land, we can survive even on Saag (edible vegetables) as our province can grow almost seventy (70) types of Saag.”.

Pashto poetry, while blaming others, taunts and questions the role of Pakhtuns, too. Questioning the Pakhtuns’ role in losing land and facing unrest, a respondent in a FGD added a couplet of Khan Zaman Kakar, that is: “Shta’mana khawra ye rakari da kho wo mu baila / Khudai de pa dasi nashukrano nur karam nh kawi”. (*It’s our motherland full of riches, which we lost / May God have no graceful eye on such ingrate people.”*) (FGD3). Here, the couplet says that God blessed us with land and rich resources, but we have lost all of them because of our incompetence. Talking about couplets, the respondent stated that one should not blame only outsiders or

influential people for our miseries as we are also responsible. While supporting his argument, another respondent in FGD3 shared couplets of Dr. Khaliq Ziyar:

“Haghwi saba nh lari nan nh lari /
Sok che ikhtyar da khpal watan nh lari /
Laka Pakhtun ba jihadona kawi /
Sok che hunar nh lari fan nh lari”.

*(“They don’t have today or tomorrow /
Those who don’t have authority over their land /
Like Pakhtuns, will they fight Jihads /
Those who have no skill and no art.”).*

The first couplet says that those who don’t have ownership of their land have neither present nor future and will suffer in life. At the same time, the second couplet says that art and skills are necessary for owning resources, and those who do not have skills and art will perish in Jihad. The couplet is critical of the Pakhtuns and sensitizes them about art and skills that can help them shape their future. While explaining the said couplet, the respondent stated that “the couplets taunt Pakhtuns for not having skills, and those who don’t have skills will have no future and will go for Jihad like Pakhtun do” (FGD3).

The poetry also questions and taunts those working in other countries and asks them to struggle for authority over their land rather than work as laborers in foreign countries. In this regard Ali Bawar (2022) also narrated a couplet of Azam Buner, that is: “Che da watan da sro aw speno dak de nu bya wale / Bya wale bahar shpay kawi raza kana kafira”. (*“When your homeland is rich with gold and silver / Then why are you living abroad, come home.”*). The couplet depicts Pakhtuns’ situation: rich in resources but powerless to exercise authority over their utility and lead lives as petty laborers in other countries or cities. Elaborating on the couplet, the respondent shared a short conversation between Bacha Khan and a *Mullah* of his village:

While travelling to Muree (a tourist place in Panjab) with a *Mullah* of his village, Bacha Khan inquired if he knew about the priest's happy life. Bacha Khan then explained to the *Mullah* that their nation was having a good life, and so were their priests (Bawar, 2022).

The conversation reveals that individual's prosperity directly depends on the nation's prosperity. The story is quoted as a lesson conveying the message of collective good over individuals' benefits. It moralizes the collective will of Pakhtuns to struggle for autonomy or strive for authority over land rather than indulging in personal material gains.

8.4.2 The Theme of Identity in Pashto Poetry

The roots of the theme of identity in Pashto poetry go back to the 20th century when both colonial and post-colonial states were marginalizing and suppressing local identities (Syed, 1980; Rahman, 1997). This colonial and post-colonial approach pushed the local populations to unite on the question of identity because it was easy for the local population to 'otherize' the British. This is why the question of identity remained dominant and popular in colonial and post-colonial periods. It can be seen through different lenses, including politics, art, and literature (Rahman, 2002). In 21st-century Pashto poetry, themes of identity deconstruct the colonial and post-colonial image by highlighting and promoting the soft and peaceful image of the Pakhtuns. It revisits the historical roots of the Pakhtuns' identity to construct an alternative narrative regarding the roots of the Pakhtuns' identity (Weiss, 2020). Further, Pashto poetry positions the Pakhtuns in regional and world politics by attaching them to political movements or struggles. Themes of identity in Pashto poetry and its purpose and functions are discussed in the following pages.

8.4.2.1 Deconstructing Colonial Image of the Pakhtuns through Poetry

Pakhtuns' struggle for identity politics throughout the 20th and 21st centuries is the collective effort of Pakhtun intelligentsia, artists, poets, writers and political, social and cultural activists. In their long and lasting struggle, they have tried to deconstruct the colonial and post-colonial image of the Pakhtuns by replacing it with soft, egalitarian, dignified, peaceful and civilized ones. In poetry, various identity-related themes have been produced to deconstruct the colonial and post-colonial image of the Pakhtuns (Weiss, 2020). The analysis of the themes of poetry suggests that the violent depiction of Pakhtuns by colonial and post-colonial literature is one of the leading causes of the violence in the Pakhtun region. Elaborating on constructing a violent and uncivilized image of the Pakhtuns, a respondent stated:

Throughout the colonial and post-colonial periods, the history and identity of the Pakhtuns have been constructed in a way that depicts them as violent and uncivilized. The purpose of such depictions was either to use them for wars or rule them (FGD1).

Speaking on the role of Pakistani academia in constructing a false image of Pakhtuns, the respondent narrated a couplet of Andesh Shams Ul Qamar (1933-2015): “Hagha sarri jughraftiya aw tareekh dwanra top kral / Hagha sarri da Bacha Khan aw Sardaryab sa nh we”. (*“That man passed with distinction both history and geography / Didn't he know anything about Bacha Khan and Sardaryab.”*). Explaining the couplet, the respondent stated:

The state has intentionally kept the younger generation unaware of their history, and hence, toppers in history and geography subjects do not know about their Indigenous history, people, and places (FGD1).

Pashto poetry rejects Pakhtuns' image construed by the colonial and post-colonial literature through print and electronic media, where Pakhtuns are portrayed as brave people. The couplet best expresses this: “Da bahaduri tamghi de kor ta yawsa / Zama

da har mary hisab de oshi”. (*“Take home your shields of bravery with you / Every death of my nation needs to be accounted for.”*) (FGD3). Here, the poet deconstructs the tribute of bravery given to Pakhtuns in pre- and post-colonial literature and asks for justice for his people who died in the war of and against militancy. Explaining the couplet, the respondent stated:

We do not need attributes of bravery and honor but peace. This is why we want justice for those who died rather than shields of bravery (FGD3).

Themes of Pashto poetry based on identity questions suggest that titles such as *bahaduri* (bravery) are meant to glorify and engrain violence in Pakhtuns’ consciousness. Such otherization pushes Pakhtuns into conflicts where they lose control and authority over not only their bodies and consciousness but also their land. Otherization of Pakhtuns as brave is therefore considered a dehumanizing factor in Pashto poetry. Pakhtuns’ status as a superior race constructed in the time of colonial India was later adopted by the post-colonial Pakistani state as brave and dedicated, selfless Muslim warriors of Islam. Pashto poetry, however, has deconstructed such entitlements. Themes of Pashto poetry argue that such entitlements were normalized in Pakhtuns’ consciousness to serve colonial and post-colonial interests. Speaking on violence brought by others to Pakhtuns in a Pashto conference organized by the Culture Department at Nishtar Hall, professor and writer Yaseen Iqbal Yousafzai (2023) stated:

The violence among Pakhtuns shows us the image of invaders. It shows what invaders have given to us. In response, we (Pakhtuns) preach nonviolence here and spread its message worldwide.

After 9/11, Pakhtun regions on both sides of the Pak-Afghan Durand Line were made the center of militancy, extremism, terrorism and the war on terror, where, again, a variety of literature has been produced to portray Pakhtuns as violent and warrior

people (Khan, 2012). Contrary to such depictions, Pakhtun poets struggle to promote peaceful aspects of Pakhtuns' life. In doing so, they are trying to dismantle Pakhtuns' negative image constructed by outsiders. As a result, their efforts have popularized the 'peace' narrative in the whole region. Talking on the same line of debate, poetess Haseena Gul Tanha (2022) narrated her couplets:

“Akhta u pa jangono ke balhaa mu bad'marghai de /
 Rawan ba da baba pa lar she kala Pukhtana /
 Dunya de da yawa khabara kha pa ghor wawri /
 Che nh de tarha'gar aw nh sang'dila Pukhtana”.

*(“What an immense bad luck that we're fighting wars /
 When would Pakhtuns follow the way of their great leader /
 Let the world listen to my solemn words carefully /
 That Pashuns are neither terrorists nor ruthless.”).*

Explaining the couplet, Haseena Gul expressed that “Pakhtuns have been kept away from their history, and this is because they are meant to be used as fodder in other's wars”. She further expressed that if the world wants us to be in peace, they must let us study the history of Bacha Khan and his nonviolent movement rather than teaching us those whose false history revolves around violence. While talking about constructing the peaceful identity of Pakhtuns through poetry, another poet, Dervesh Rokhan, (2023) narrated his couplet: “Sanga me dunya da dihshat'gard pa nama pejani / Amn me da zwe nom de da lor nom me sandara da”. (*“How come the whole world thinks of me as a terrorist / My kids got the names Amn (Peace) and Sandara (song).”*). Commenting on his couplet, Rokhan expressed that “I have named my son ‘amn’ (peace) and daughter ‘sandara’ to tell the world that we are eager for peace and want peace” (Rokhan, 2023). He further stated that I have named my kids with these names to deconstruct the violent image of the Pakhtuns portrayed by outsiders.

Various poets narrated similar couplets throughout my fieldwork that were produced to deconstruct the violent image and construct a soft and peaceful image of the Pakhtuns. While talking on poetry's response to violent construction of Pakhtuns' identity, a poet in FGD4 narrated a couplet of Khalid Hasrat: "Za sada Pakhtun pegham da amn aw da meeni yam / Tata me cha hasi charta wran tasweer jor kre de". (*"Modest Pakhtuns am I, the message of peace and love / It's not my face, someone has painted me wrong."*). In the couplet, the poet says that being a Pakhtun, I am the message of peace and love, but someone has wrongly portrayed me as a terrorist to the world. The said couplet has remained popular in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 9/11.

8.4.2.2 Constructing Historical Identity through Poetry

As discussed in the previous section, themes of Pashto poetry critically oppose the colonial and post-colonial scholarship on Pakhtuns' identity. Rejecting how colonial and post-colonial historicization depict Pakhtuns as violent, wild, unruly, religiously conservative and radical in customs and norms, Pashto poetry positions Pakhtuns' identity in the historical developments of the region and beyond. The collected data shows that Pashto poetry, through constructing the historical identity of the Pakhtuns, sensitizes people to unite and work for the prosperity of their land and people. Themes of Pashto poetry stretch Pakhtuns' historical identity to Bakhtar Ariana (Bactrian), Gandharan (Gandhara) and other ages of significance where Pakhtuns have remained a vital force in developing cultures and civilizations. In the context of Pakhtuns and Pashto poetry, such narrativization of historical processes that shaped Pakhtun identity, as poets and poetry think and propose, addresses the question of identity.

Pashto poetry anchors and connects Pakhtun identity to the archaeological remains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, expanding it beyond the textural spheres of colonial and post-

colonial constructs to encompass historical epochs, particularly the Gandharan civilization. British archaeologists rediscovered most of these archaeological remains of Gandhara in the second half of the 19th century. Following these rediscoveries, the Pakhtun poets and writers started claiming it in the second half of the 20th century (Khan, 1983). The ‘Bamyan’ poem³² of Ghani Khan carries the same themes where he roots out the history of Pakhtuns with giant Buddhas and Caves of Bamyan (Khan, 2011). The poem of Ghani Khan is meant to deconstruct the colonial image of the Pakhtuns, where they are depicted as violent people, and to replace it with a peaceful identity by highlighting historical roots.

During fieldwork, I encountered various couplets that carry themes of claiming and owning Gandhara civilization. Nangyal Yousafzai’s (2022) couplet best expresses it “Che da Buddha tasweer mu har zra ke trashalay nh we / Ajab daa’wa da khpalo goto da kamaal kawo”. (*“Till we haven’t carved the picture of Buddha in each heart / It’s strange to claim perfection in our art (poetry).”*). In the couplet, perfection is equated with focusing themes of historical identity in art, i.e., tracing the roots of the Pakhtuns. Further, themes of Pashto poetry claiming the Gandharan civilization not only constructs a historical identity but also deconstructs the narrative of militancy through its nonviolent philosophy. Themes of poetry suggest that the Pakhtun region is known for peace and nonviolence as it remained the center of Gandharan civilization, and outsiders brought violence. In the same line of debate, Noor Ahmad Shah Kaimor (2022) narrated his poetry piece in an informal discussion:

“De asaaro ke nh tegh shta aw nh tora /
Pre ter shwe da Budha da soch karwan dey /
Dh de seemi Tehzeeb dumra bashar dost dey /
Pa shno kanro ke trashali ye insane dey”.

³² See annexure 10 for complete poem.

*(“There is neither scabbard nor sword in these remains /
A caravan of people having Buddha’s thoughts once lived here /
Enormous was the humanity of this civilization /
Statues of men have they engraved in the rocks here.”.*

In literal meaning, the couplet says that there are no signs of violence in our heritage (referring to Buddhist remains) as the ideas of Buddha influenced it. The couplet adds that carving stone into human sculpture symbolizes love for humanity, a common practice of the Gandhara civilization. Conceptually, the couplet relates the roots of nonviolence in the region with the Gandhara Civilization.

The popularity of historical identity has sensitized Pakhtun poets to condemn the destruction of Gandharan remains. During the three four decades, militants ranging from Mujahideen to the Taliban have severely damaged the Gandharan remains in many places. The bombing of Buddha of Bamyán and firing on Buddha of Jihan Abad in Swat are explicit examples of causing damage. Pashto poetry, produced in this context, critically condemns all such acts that caused damage to the Gandharan remains. Discussing poetry’s response to such acts of extremism, scholar Abid Yousafzai (2022) narrated a couplet of Akbar Siyal: “Da Bamyano da Buddha Baba qatila / Ghrew newali de tol ghar darpasi garzi”. (*“O! Killer of the Buddha of Bamyán / The mountain is sinking and searching for you”*). Here, the poet traces his identity to the Buddha of Bamyán and condemns its bombing. Articulating couplet, the respondent stated that “almost all known Pakhtun poets condemn such acts where either the public or extremists desecrate Buddhist heritage”. Similarly, condemning bombings of the Buddha of Bamyán, poet and scholar Tariq Khan (2022) also narrated his couplets:

“Da Buddha mojasima da ghrew newali /
Lolakai jari da woyari pa chaman ke /
Zmung zrona ba la ghama akhír wochwe /

Da wahshat zaman qabiz sho pa watan ke”.

*(“The Statue of Buddha is grief-stricken /
The scared birds are crying in the garden /
Our hearts will sink with shock at last /
The sons of brutality have occupied the land.”).*

The couplet is written in response to the fall of Kabul in August 2021. The couplet says that the statue of Buddha and birds are scared as the Taliban have captured power in Kabul. When asked to explain the couplet, the poet, in distress, stated:

I am very anxious about the heritage of my land. No one can save the heritage from damage, as the Taliban do not accept anything that goes against their ideology.

When I ask why the Taliban are doing this so? He replied: The Taliban are tasked to demolish all those symbols to which people attach themselves culturally. The collected data shows that Pashto poetry considers Gandhara, Buddha, and Buddhist symbols of nonviolence and peace. Further, it claims Buddhism and Zoroastrianism as historical roots of Pakhtun identity to replace it with the colonial and post-colonial depiction of Pakhtuns.

8.5 Poetry of Marginalised

As discussed in Chapter 5, the emergence of socio-poetics in the 20th century created space for questions of class and gender. This is why, in today’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the debate over class and gender in political circles in general and among progressive and literary circles, in particular, is intact and thriving. Similarly, a lot of poetry is produced that revolve around class and gender. In this chapter section, I have analyzed poetry and narratives respondents regarding the themes of class and gender.

8.5.1. The Question of Class in 21st Century's Pashto Poetry

Throughout the 20th century, class questions in Pakhtun society remained limited to peasants and occupational classes who were conditionally downtrodden. This is because no industries nor large-scale factories were established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa till the end of the 1980s. In 1988, the Pakistan government, with the USAID program's help, started establishing an industrial zone named Gadoon Amazai Industrial Estate in the Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The purpose of establishing the industrial zone was to stop opium poppy cultivation (Nawaz, Azam, & Noor, 2015). A similar industrial zone was also established in Peshawar, which was called Hayat Abad Industrial Estate. Moreover, other small industries were also developed in various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This was the first time the industrial working class existed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This is why, contrary to 20th-century poetry, the 21st century Pashto poetry's themes also started addressing issues and problems of industrial workers. In this regard, poetry themes related to class questions identify the reasons and effects of class differences and sensitize people to class struggle. In a similar line of debate, poet and activist Nangyal Yousafzai (2022) narrated his poem '*Khwari 'Kakh*' (worker):

“Da zama zindagi sa da /
Da hindso zarab taqseem de /
Da Sahar na tar mahama /
Da khwari mehnat badal ke /
Hagha yaw separ jawab de.”

*(“I’m a hard worker /
What my life really is? /
It is counting the numerals /
From morning till evening /
In reward of my hard work /
The result is zero.”).*

The poem is about the life cycle of the laborers and peasants working every day from morning to evening. However, as a result, they get nothing but food to survive, as the respondent commented: “as a labor, our people receive only their daily wage; however, the profit go to the owners”. In similar context, the Nangyal Yousafzai (2022) also narrated another couplet of him: “Khudaya tar komi ba mu dasi tar pa tar barkha we / Shagi ba mung chanrao aw zar ba da zardaar barkha we”. (*“O God! Till when this will be our scattered share / It’ll be us who filter the sand, rich will have the gold.”*). In the couplet, the poet laments God on the unequal distribution of resources and asks how long we will live like this, where laborers continuously work without tangible life transformation, and the benefits are only reaped by the rich. During the interview, I asked him to explain the lament from God in the couplet, and he responded: “Lamenting God is just a way of catharsis; otherwise, we know that the unequal distribution is man-made”.

Moreover, because of unemployment, fewer opportunities, militancy and military operations, many of the people of the province in general and Peshawar in particular left for Europe and Gulf countries to other cities of Pakistan such as Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi, while many others became labor in mines to meet living expenses of their families. These new developments also turned the debate of class questions both in politics as well as in poetry. The 21st century’s Pashto poetry carries abundant themes that cover different aspects of the labor class of Pakhtun society who work in other provinces and countries. In this line of debate, scholar Abid Yousafzai (2022) narrated a couplet of Hasrat Musakhel: “Da shtaman watan nestman yama Panjaba / Darawan yam mazdori me da malgari”. (*“I’m the poor dweller of a rich land, O Punjab! / Here I come, to toil my friend.”*). The couplet says I am indigent of the rich land going to labor in Panjab. Conceptually, the poet taunts his people while

stressing the bitter truth that he is leaving for Panjab to labor despite hailing from a land full of rich resources. The respondent stated in a couplet that “until we have authority over our resources, we will work as a laborer in other cities and countries”. Further, an interesting side of the themes of class questions in Pashto poetry is that because of the strong tradition of the theme of identity and self-determination, the poets also relate class questions with Pakhtun ethnic questions, as addressed in the aforementioned couplet. While relating both class question and question of self-determination, the analysis of Pashto poetry suggests that Pakhtuns’ condition as laborers is because they lack authority over their resources. In this regard, scholar Abid Yousafzai (2022) stated:

You see, the mountains of Bajaur and Mohmand districts are full of minerals.
However, the people of Bajaur and Mohmand always work as laborers in the
cities or in other countries.

Contrary to 20th-century poetry about occupational classes, the themes of occupational class in society also took a new turn in the 21st century. Themes of Pashto poetry challenge and deconstruct the perception of the people who believe that people who belong to the occupational class in Pakhtun society are non-Pakhtuns. Themes focusing on occupational classes also respect these craftsmen and negate the negative image constructed over centuries in the memory of the common masses in Pakhtun society and academia. While talking in a similar debate, young poet Ali Khan Umeed (2022) stated:

Occupation is not an ethnic identity. Everyone can switch to it, and everyone
can switch from it. The issue is that both academia and the Pakhtuns’
consideration of occupational class as non-Pakhtuns has created
misconception among people and devalued our locally produced products.

In the similar line of debate, Ali Khan Umeed (2022) narrated his poem titled ‘*Qasabgar Yam*’ (I am a manual worker)³³, written in support of occupational classes. In the poem, while stressing the need for and importance of these occupations for the very survival of human beings in any society, Umeed identifies himself as a manual worker and names himself as a cobbler, barber, potter, musician, butcher, oilman, and weaver. Discussing his poem, Umeed stated:

The occupational people can play a vital role in developing local industries that can provide employment to people and serve the cause of peace and stability in the region. The problem is that they haven’t realized the importance of occupations for developing local industries.

Themes of Pashto poetry reject the social construction of the occupational class as non-Pakhtuns, so it carries themes claiming occupational identities. These themes of Pashto poetry suggest that owning the occupational class and their occupations is necessary to develop society. Similarly, elaborating the subject matter, scholar Abid Yousafzai (2022) narrated a couplet which reads as: “Da dholki’mar aw sornachi na warla kraka warzi / Che dwe la sanga pa dolki aw pa surna mayan de”. (*They feel disgusted for the drummer and the oboist / How is it that they love the drum and the oboe?*). The couplet criticizes the perception of Pakhtuns about the musicians and critically asks how they can fall in love with music and musical instruments while disgusting musicians. In the couplet, the respondent stated, “I wonder how the Pakhtun can live with it when they love music but disrespect its composers and players”.

³³ See Annexure 11 for complete poem.

8.5.2 Poetry of/for Women in the 21st Century's Pashto Poetry

As discussed in Chapter 6, the individual status in Pakhtun society is defined by *Pakhtunwali*, the Pakhtun code of conduct that is transmitted from one generation to another through various folk genres. The code defining individual status also causes the subjugation of women in society and makes their status inferior to that of men's status in society. While talking about women's status and rights in Pakhtun society, poetess and activist, Kalsoom Zaib (2022) also commented:

Women have more disparities than men. For example, no one has stopped a man from going to school; however, women face many hurdles in getting an education, particularly in higher education.

The transformation of Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics brought various themes that challenged the code of conduct and norms and values of Pakhtun society, which caused the oppression of women in society. The journey of transforming Pashto poetry from ethno-poetics into socio-poetics, influenced by the socio-economic conditions and regional and international political scenarios, addresses women's questions through various lenses. It has introduced various themes that identify the causes and effects of the low status of women in society that also cause their oppression. During fieldwork, various respondents stated that in the social structure of Pakhtun society, women hold a lower status than men. Poetry themes work to identify its causes and effects and suggest possible solutions for bringing equal status and rights to women. In this regard, while referring to the status of women in Pakhtun society, poetess, Haseena Gul Tanha (2022), narrated her poem titled 'Pukhtana' (Pakhtun woman):

“Hara gunah ba da tobi pa oubo /
Owenzama /
Paka ba she /
Kho yaw gunah dasi da /
Che ye wenzal aw pakawal /

Aw la bakhhal nh kegi /
 Hagha gunah me da dh /
 Che yaw khaza yam /
 Hagha hum Pukhtana badbakhta”.

*(“All my sins through repentance /
 Will be washed away /
 But the only sin is likely /
 That is never wiped or washed out /
 And could never be cleaned /
 That’s the sin of being me /
 That I’m a woman /
 Unfortunately, a Pakhtun woman.”).*

The poem talks about the status of Pakhtun women. It says Pakhtun women can cleanse all sins with penitence, but the sin of being born as Pakhtun women cannot be forgiven. Elaborating on her poem, Tanha (2022) stated:

Women's lives are more complex in Pakhtun than in other societies. For me, it is like sin because you must bear the punishment for all life for being born as a female in Pakhtun society.

Similarly, speaking on the status of women in Pakhtun society, poet Amjad Shahzad (2022) also narrated his couplets, which is a translation of Iranian revolutionary and sociologist Dr Ali Shariati's (1933-1977) quote: “I feel sorry for a girl when her reputation is ruined, for she can’t grow a beard to erase that image”. It says:

“Afsos rashi che mermano ta nazar kram /
 Pa tolana ke dwe sumra de aseeri /
 Da lamani daagh wenzalo lara gora /
 Pa makhono prehodali nh she geery.”.

*(“I feel sorrow for the women /
 They are powerless in society /
 For cleaning the blame of honor /
 They cannot grow beards like men.”).*

The couplet says women cannot grow a beard like men to erase their negative image. The couplet expresses women's status and shows society's inequalities and faces. While articulating the status of women in Pakhtun society, Amjad Shahzad (2022) narrated Bacha Khan's saying, "If you need to know how civilized a society is, see how their women are treated". He further narrated a couplet inspired by Bacha Khan's quote, "Pa hagma kali ke shwa nan yawa mashoma paida / Pa hagma kali ke shwa nan yaw hindara sewa". (*"A girl was born in that village today / A mirror has been added in that village today."*). The couplet says a woman is like a mirror for society as women reflect the peoples' lives in society. Talking on couplet, Amjad Shahzad (2022) narrated:

Women are like a mirror for society, and people can see their image in how they treat their women. If women's living conditions are good, society will develop in how it treats each other; otherwise, society will not yet develop.

Poets not only identify the issue of status and rights of women but also speak about the issues of matrimonial decisions influenced by the patriarchal structure of society. In Pakhtun society, youngsters do not have the right to choose their marriage partners as the decision rests with their parents and older family members. Chances of love marriage are very low in Pakhtun society, and in very few cases, the children are asked about their choice of partners. Young poet Ghazal Momand (2022), while describing women empowerment in Pakhtun society, narrated his couplet: "Pukhtano joni kam naseebi de la Khudaya zar sham / Gheg la da dasi sarri warshi che shaida ye nh we". (*"How unlucky are the Pakhtun girls, O Lord! / They're betrothed to those they don't love."*). Elaborating on the couplet, the poet stated:

We (poets) oppose the tradition of mate selection and want everyone to be free to choose a mate. We want equal rights for every member of society and believe that society cannot progress.

The themes of Pashto poetry identify the causes and effects of women's questions in Pakhtun society and suggest possible solutions to them. Themes of Pashto poetry criticize the patriarchal structure of society and suggest a society where every member has equal rights. Themes of Pashto poetry consider patriarchy and patriarchal structures as the death knell of women's talent in Pakhtun society. Elaborating on the role of patriarchal society in the oppression of women's talent and contribution, poet and scholar Tariq Khan (2022) narrated his poem title as 'Almiya' (*Oh! What a dilemma*):

“Da de sarrayo dh sarritob pa de krakjan jehan ke /
Nh Alif Jana bya paida shwa aw nh Bushra raghla /
La dh Tajo aw da Naseem watan Tyaro Newali /
Nh da ranra talab mumkin sho aw nh ranra raghla”.

*(“In this world of men, humanity is hatred /
Neither Alif Jana nor Bushra could be reborn /
The land of Tajo and Naseem is still in darkness /
Neither demand for light is possible, nor can light be ensured.”).*

Elaborating on the couplet, the respondent stated that it is because of society's patriarchal structure that women like Alif Jan Khattaka, Bushra Begum, Tajo Bibi, and Begum Naseem couldn't be reborn (all four women were political, literary, or poetic figures of the 20th century who worked with KKM and for its legacy).

Similarly, poetry themes suggest that women have the liberty to make choices for their selves and should have their agency and equal rights in society, which is key to prosperity. In this line of debate, poet Irshad Pakhtun (2022) narrated his couplet: “Har sok khpal khpal zoq da Jamal lari kho za ganram / Khaza che khpalwaka she khud'sara she nu khukali she”. (*There are varied aesthetics for everybody but for me/ A woman is beautiful when she is independent and self-sufficient.*). Elaborating on the couplet, the poet stated that women shouldn't be valued or judged on their beauty

but on their awareness, liberty, and empowerment. Speaking on the importance of poetry's stance on the question of women, the poet also stated:

I support the critique on poets and say that we all need to produce poetry on the rights and disparities of women instead of prioritizing their dresses and shawls (Pakhtun, 2022).

The couplet shows that poetry themes view women's beauty as not external but internal. They link the internal beauty with the independence and self-sufficiency of the women. Talking on couplet, the poet also narrated Bacha Khan's quote that is, "khaza aw saray da gaday dwa paayi de, aw che yaw um kharaba we nu gaday nh she tli" (men and women are like two wheels of a vehicle and without one the vehicle cannot run). The example is meant to show the necessity of equality for the smooth functioning of the society.

8.6 Environmental Poetry: Identifying Environmental Changes and

Solutions to it through Poetry

The relationship between humans and their ecology is as old as the history of human beings and their cultures. It is reflected in culture and art (Salzman & W. Attwood, 1998). Similar is the case with Pakhtun culture, where ecology objects are romanticized through various art forms, including poetry. From ethno-poetic to socio-poetic poetry, essential components of an ecosystem like flora (plants), fauna (animals) and habitat have been widely used in the Pashto poetry to contextualize love, beauty, peace and socialization; *Sarwa* (cypress tree) and *chinar* (maple tree) for praising height of the beloved and *Gul* (rose) for praising beauty of the beloved among the flora while personifying the *Chanchara* (Sparrow) as a beautiful young girl and use of pigeon as symbol of peace among the fauna are the cases in point. Similarly, the places of flora and fauna like *gudar* (ford or bank of river from where

water is pitched for daily use), *bagh* (garden), *cheena* (spring), snow-filled mountains, and streamside have also been associated with the themes of beauty, and love in Pashto poetry.

There are many reasons for the attachment of these objects, such as the beauty of *Gudar* attracts people and enables lovers to see and meet each other. *Gudar* is praised as a place of socialization between genders and a homo-socialization space for women where women interact with each other, and lovers wait for hours to catch a glimpse of the beloved. Describing the importance of *gudar* in Pashto poetry, poet and activist Zafar Ali Naaz (2022) narrated his couplet in an informal discussion: “Naza da kali pa khukala ke ba bya sa pati she / Ta tre Gudar, ta tre Chinaar, ta tre chena laray kra”. (*“O Naaz, what shall remain in the beauty of the village? /If you remove the Gudar, the Chinar, and the stream from the village?”*). While talking about the significance of the components of nature in Pakhtun culture, the respondent expressed that in Pakhtun culture, constituents of the village are *hadeera* (graveyard), *hujra*, *Jumat* (mosque) and *gudar*.

The emergence of ethnic-based movements and politics in pre- and post-colonial contexts has amplified the inter-relation of poetry and environment. Claiming authority over the land, the struggle for self-determination remained the central theme of Pashto poetry during the 20th century, particularly the second half. That is why literary societies are named after objects of nature, i.e., *Tatara Adabi Tolana* (*Tatara* literary society), a literary society at Peshawar University named after *Tatara* Mountain³⁴. Similarly, poets have pen names (pseudonyms) after the objects of the

³⁴ *Tatara* is name of a mountain situated in Khyber district in the south of district Peshawar. The *Tatara* Mountain enjoys its geographic importance both in pre and post Islamic history as it is situated on the Khyber Pass which carries both pre and post Islamic tangible and intangible heritage in the form of

ecology, such as Elum³⁵, *Ghar* (mountain), *Daryab* (river), *Samandar* (sea), Pameer (mountainous range), and *Bahar* (spring) etc. Not only pseudonyms but people are also naming their kids with names of different components of the ecology, i.e., *Pameer*, *Elam* (name of mountain), *Kaimor* (name of mountain), *Gul Panra* (leaf of flower), *Gul Sanga* (branch of flower), Balheka (ancient name of Balkh), and Parkha (dew) etc. Further, dozens of poetry and prose books are named after objects of ecology. Literary societies also organize *mushairay* to celebrate different aspects of ecology, i.e., *Da sharsham gul mushaira* (*mushaira* of mustard flower), *Da manri gul mushaira* (*mushaira* of apple flower), and *da sparli mushaira* (spring *mushaira*).

However, in the last two decades, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has witnessed rapid changes in the environment, such as untimely snowfall, frequent fires in the forests, flooding, shrinking underground water table, dying and drying up of the natural water resources, and abrupt changes in the weather pattern. These changes have triggered debate in the media (print, electronic and digital social networks) and formal and informal spaces where masses interact and socialize as termed by Hamid Hussain (2022). The changes in the environment have also brought a paradigm shift in themes of Pashto poetry, where new themes emerged that talk about changes in the environment, such as identifying the roots and effects of changes in the environment and suggesting solutions. Pashto poetry brings various cultural repertoires, knowledge repertoires, and poetry repertoires, as well as vocabulary that, on the one hand, expresses various environmental changes for the understanding of the masses. On the other hand, it introduces themes that help identify the issues of environmental crisis

Buddhist Stupas, hundreds of years old mosques and British fort., remains of British and Pakhtun fights, and folk stories of the Caravans pass.

³⁵ Elum is name after a famous mountain crossing between district Buner and district Swat famous for its scenic views and Buddhist heritage sites

and its solutions. For example, poetry uses the term *taodokhay* for heat waves, *maholiyati badloon* climate change and *narewala taodokha* for global warming. Similarly, it uses Pashto terms for expressing weather, such as *Chitar* (Spring season between March and April, name of month in Hindu lunar calendar), *Pashakal* (the rainy season of summers in India and Pakistan), *Jarray* (seasonal rains in winters) to remind the weather cycle to people and how it got disturbed. Similarly, it uses terms like *mahol-satana* / *mahol-zhghorana* (environment protection), objects of environment such as *nakhtar* (pine), *chinar*, *sarwa*, *gudar*, etc., and *zarghon* (greenery) and *cheeny* (plural of cheena) etc., to sensitize people for the protection of the environment. The following sections analyze how Pashto poetry identifies the roots and effects of environmental changes and solutions to them.

8.6.1. Identifying the Damage to Environment Through Poetry

Over the past two decades, militancy, the war economy, and foreign remittances have significantly altered urban infrastructure and transformed villages into small towns. Additionally, investments in housing and property have led to the clearing of mountains and agricultural land to build concrete houses. Other factors include road construction, mining stones, the establishment of crushing plants, and cementing open spaces on both government and private properties, which have also contributed to environmental changes (Dawn, 2007). As a result of these activities, many environmental changes have occurred. For instance, water no longer absorbs into the soil. However, it flows over cemented surfaces, leading to flooding in the area, harming the regional water table, disturbance in snowfall and rain cycle, and sudden fires in summer forests.

Pakhtun poets' view on environmental change is mainly based on their observations. There is no proper education for the poets to access scientific study or knowledge of

environmental changes. For this reason, they mainly discuss visible effects and possible causes of environmental changes (Wadan, 2022). Speaking about environmental changes and comparing the past and present culture, space, and ecology is very common among literati and other people. For example, naming birds and animals, once part of the ecology and now endangered or extinct is a common way to identify environmental changes. In this regard, Pashto's poetry carries themes that identify the roots, causes, and effects of environmental changes over the past two decades. These themes point out three possible causes: ongoing militancy, unplanned development, and misuse of the environment. During fieldwork, I observed that among the three, the poetry themes call unplanned development the primary cause of environmental change. Talking about environmental changes, poets often narrate couplets that identify the root causes of these changes and solutions to them. In this context, poet Aziz Manerwal (2022) cites a couplet by Sahib Shah Sabir: "Zama da ghrono da khaist da ghama har saodagar / Da krash machine aw faoladi speena araa rawari". (*"While seeing the beauty of my mountains/ Every trader has brought their crush machine and saw"*). The couplet refers to the ongoing situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where mountains are being crushed by machinery and forests are being cut down with woodcutting machines that cause deforestation and the destruction of mountains and rocks.

Similarly, while talking about poetry's critique of humans' approach towards the environment, poet and scholar Tariq Khan (2022) quotes a poem by Sahib Shah Sabir titled "Da samandar hawa badala shwala" (*"The Winds of the Sea Changed"*)³⁶. The poem critiques humans' approach to the environment and effectively addresses the root causes of environmental changes and their effects on human life. The poem

³⁶ See annexure 12 for complete poem.

relates environmental changes with the cutting of mountains and rocks, deforestation, construction on agricultural land, urban expansion, plazas and structures, tree cutting in urban areas, factory installations, and water contamination from factories and household waste. The effects described in the poem include disturbances in the rain cycle, reduced rainfall, drying up of streams, glacier melting, heat waves, and the decline of crops and trees. While discussing Sabir's poem, poet Tariq Khan concludes:

“In my view, this poem is one of the most well-written pieces in Pashto poetry to describe the root causes and effects of environmental changes”.

The respondent also shared another couplet supporting his argument: “Tera zalzala ke trena kanri khata shwe wo / Ghar ra khkata shwe dey Pukhtana da zangal kawi”. (*“A stone was misplaced during the previous earthquake / The mountain has descended to inquire about the forest”*). The couplet identifies the effects of deforestation on the environment and says that deforestation causes landsliding in the mountains. Talking on a similar subject, poet, scholar and professor of archaeology, Rafiullah Khan (2022) another respondent also narrated a mythical story from Buddhism that talks about the importance of stones for the preservation of the environment that lies in the ravine and riverbanks³⁷:

It is a famous mythical story in Buddhism that there was Apalala Naga (water-dwelling Naga in Buddhist mythology) at the birthplace of the Swat River at the time of Buddha. Every year, the Apalala Naga would flood the Swat in the summer season. During his visit to the region, people requested Buddha to ask the Apalala Naga not to flood their land. In response, Buddha requested that the Apalala Naga not flood the area. Apalala Naga, however, replied that while it would refrain from flooding every year, it would return with a flood every ten years, explaining that the stones at the banks of rivers and ravines belonged to it. It needed to remind the people of its presence.

³⁷ The respondent is a poet and professor of archaeology and the story he narrated isn't common among general population as informed by the respondent.

Referring to the story, the respondent explained that the stones and rocks along the riverbank and ravines are crucial in slowing down water flow and working as barriers to floods. However, in recent years, the locals have been taking away these stones for various purposes, mainly because many are mineral-rich. This practice is causing environmental damage, creating pathways for floods to occur more quickly.

Moreover, various poetry themes also called militancy as the significant reason for environmental changes. In this regard, Ali Khan Umeed (2022) stated: “Forest in our village mountain would catch fire many times at night due to shelling either from military or Taliban side”. Talking about incidents of fire in the mountains during military operations, Umeed (2022) narrated his couplet: “Kawaak kawaak che da khpal kali ghar ta orasedam / Chinaar shaheed wo aw zakhmi nakhtar ta orasedam”. (*“Exhausted, as I reached my village's mountain / Martyred was my poplar, pine deeply injured.”*). Explaining the couplet, respondent narrated a story:

After months of military operation, they (the military) declared that Swat was cleared of militants, and we (the people of the area) came back to our villages. One late evening, the sound of heavy firing and shelling was heard. Soon after the exchange of fire and shelling, the forest in the mountain of our village (sarsenrai- Kabal) caught fire. We could not visit the mountain at night due to the tense situation, but in the morning, my friends and I visited the mountain and found that the trees were burnt. It was challenging to see the trees and plants of the forest burnt in the fire. I found refuge in the couplets I wrote about that day.

Themes of environmental poetry talk about the effects of environmental changes on humans and other species, such as birds and animals. It suggests a peaceful environment is necessary for humans and everything in nature. Stressing the necessity of a peaceful environment, poet and activist Zafar Ali Naaz (2022) narrated his couplet: “Lambi che da wahshat tre da asmana pori kheji / Marghai ba Khudaya sanga

pa chinar ke pati kegi”. (*“The terrible flames are raging up to the sky / O Lord! How are the birds going to survive in Chinars?”*). In the couplet, the poet says that birds can reside in trees when flames of fear and terror touch the sky. Conceptually, the poet is situating an environmental crisis where trees are burnt, and the ecology has turned hostile for everyone, including wildlife.

Poetry themes not only identify the root causes and effects of environmental change but also raise awareness about the importance of environmental preservation. In the following pages, I have analyzed themes that foster a greater sensitivity to preserving the environment.

8.6.2 Preserving Nature through Poetry

There are norms regarding using forests, mountains, and rivers in Pakhtun society. Different folk genres transform these norms from generation to generation and help protect and sustain the environment. For instance, *Gwaty* or is customary law to collect woods for winter in the forest only in November, as explained by poet and activist Gohar Wazir (2022) during an informal discussion. These norms also ensure the distribution of water in a particular way. However, the wave of militancy, unplanned development and modernization have distorted, faded and disturbed the historical memory and indigenous knowledge of Pakhtuns as termed by Hayat Khan (2022). In this context, poetry plays a vital role in sensitizing people for the preservation of ecology. Field data shows that Pashto poetry condemns those who damage the environment and produces themes of hope and resilience to encourage people to protect and preserve the environment. It is worth mentioning that most of the poetry themes concerning the preservation of the environment revolve around the plantation of trees and plants. Through the plantation of trees and plants, themes of Pashto poetry discourage those acts that, in one way or another, damage the

environment. In the same line of debate, poet Tariq Zaman Chagharzai (2022) narrated a ghazal titled “Da wono boto kar kawa insana” (*“plant dense and thick trees”*)³⁸ written by his friend and fellow poet Zarif Khan. It says:

“Kh ghwari che saa wakhlama nu zar kawa insana /
Da goro goro wono boto kar kawa insana /
Balha khalak mra shwe de dh lmar da tap da lasa /
Gharmo ke zan la soray pa khpal sar kawa insana /
Pa sama aw pa ghar ke sa be’shmeera boti naal kraa /
Da qaam pa bacho daghasi nazar kawa insane”.

*(“O man! If you want to breathe, then haste,
Plant dense and thick trees.
Many have perished at the hands of the furious Sun,
Make some shady roof above your head in the noon.
Sow so many seeds in the plains and on the hills,
Thus, watch over the children of your nation”).*

Themes of the *ghazal* revolve around the message condemning deforestation, identifying its effects and sensitizing the preservation of plants and trees. It condemns those who cut trees for cheap benefits and asks people to stop those who cut trees. The poetry piece is a stimulant of resilience to press people so that they may rise on the issue of the environment and work to achieve a prosperous climate. Emphasizing the importance of peoples’ struggle for the preservation of the environment, the Chagharzai (2022) further shared his poem titled “Har yaw botay me zarghon dey” (*“every tree has turned green”*)³⁹. The poem revolves around a dialogue between ecology and humans in which the farmer questions the latter for environmental changes and their effect on life and further identifies the roots and causes of the

³⁸ See annexure 13 for complete *ghazal*.

³⁹ See annexure 14 for complete *ghazal*.

environmental changes. The poem also carries themes of hope and resilience that sensitizes humans for plantation drives to preserve nature, as first couplet of the poem says: “Sta nawee yam singar me kra qarar rawra laliya /Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinaar rawra laliya”. (*“I’m your bride, embellish me, soothe me my love / In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar”*). The couplet says the environment is like a bride that needs plants and trees in a dowry that embellishes it. A piece in the same poem also says:

“Ghamona ba de lari kram gulona ba der darkram /
 Sandara yama tappa ba sham sazona ba der darkam /
 Da jwand pa har parao nawee khyalona ba der darkram /
 Worbala me rang rang boti be’shmar rawra laliya /
 Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinara rawra laliya.”.

*(“I’ll remove your ailments and give you abundant flowers/
 I’m a melody and will become a folk song to give you music/
 On every station of life, I’ll give you new ideas.
 Bring colourful flowers for my locks, my love,
 In my dowry, bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar”*).

As stated earlier, the poet developed a dialogue between the environment and humans. This poem says the environment will take back humans’ sorrows and provide flowers, songs, and ideas; however, humans need to plant trees and plants. Similarly, talking about poetry’s role in protecting the environment, a poet in FGD1 expressed that “we (poets) are sensitive, and whenever the beauty of our land is harmed, it also affects our feelings and emotions, and so they write for protecting the environment”. When I ask the respondent whether these poetries have any effect on society? He replied: “It is the result of poetry that we see plantation drive and other steps for the preservation of the environment by masses”. While supporting his argument, he narrated a poem titled “Zay che tol boti naal kro nan” (“Let’s plant

plants today”)⁴⁰, written by Dedar Yousafzai for school-going kids. The poem talks about the positive role of plants and trees in preserving the environment; it benefits humans and other living beings and their importance for biodiversity. The primary themes of the poems revolve around hope and resilience, which sensitizes people about the plantation.

Moreover, Ali Khan Umeed’s (2022) poem also carries similar themes that urge people to work to preserve the environment. Talking about poetry’s role in preserving the environment, Umeed expressed that environmental changes belong to everyone, and everyone needs to work for it. He narrated his poem written on preservation of environment titled as “Bas da fitrat mahfoz krai” (“*So protect this nature*”)⁴¹. The poem carries the message that sensitizes people to preserve nature. A piece of the poem says:

“Da wono boto hifazat wakray /
Da zangalono balha khyal wosatay /
Zaka che da zangal da woni boti /
Ghrono sendona chamanona wara /
Da dh fitrat wajood dey /
Da dh qudrat wajood dey /
Mung tol da de na jor u /
Bas da fitrat mehfoz kre /
Zan la jannat mahfoz kre”.

(*“Preserve the plants and trees/
Take good care of the forests/
Because of these forests, these plants and trees/
These mountains, seas, grasslands and all/
Provide us air to breathe/
And health and tranquility/*

⁴⁰ See annexure 15 for complete poem.

⁴¹ See annexure 16 for complete poem.

*These provide us with life /
They're the lifeline of nature/
They're the exhibit of power/
We all are made of these/
So, protect this nature/
Protect the heaven for yourselves”)*

Poem's themes relate human life to different components of nature, including mountains, rivers, forests, gardens, plants, and trees. The poem says these components ensure life on Earth and protect every living being from thunder, floods, environmental changes, heat waves, etc.

8.7 Conclusion

The 21st-century socio-poetics in Pashto poetry introduced various themes that reflect the socioeconomic and political conditions of Pakhtun society. These themes identified issues and challenges society faces and suggested solutions based on hybrid knowledge of scientific discoveries and indigenous practices. The data showed that Pashto poetry addresses militancy, people's political will and lack of authority over land, misrepresentation of identity, socio-economic inequality, patriarchal structure, gender gap and environmental and climate change faced by society. Pashto poetry addressed and encountered on ideological as well as political levels the global and regional support for radicalization and normalization of violence under the petrodollar jihad in Afghanistan and religious militancy in Pakhtun areas in Pakistan to prepare foot soldiers for holy war in Afghanistan and other regional land and border disputes. Pashto poetry worked with progressive ideologies and strategies to identify the impetus of global and regional interests in regional wars. Pashto poetry identified the

root causes of radicalization and militancy and elaborated on the lasting effects of radical ideologies and militancy on people's behavior, culture and social structure.

With the continuation of progressive struggle through poetry, Pashto poetry constructed and promoted narratives of peace and non-violence by countering the patronized narrative of armed violence in any form and color. By countering militancy and radicalization, 21st-century poetry promoted the themes of condemnation of war, the poetry of peace, non-violence and hope and resilience. Further, it also promoted the ultimate rights of the people by emphasizing the theme of self-determination and quest for authority over their lands, resources, peace, identity, political and religious freedom for all and co-existence with diversity and inclusive society for all. Poetry of self-determination sensitized people about the importance and need for authority over the land and belonging of the people with standard practices for human dignity to earn and utilize natural resources and human potential for the well-being of society. This struggle for self-determination explicitly provides suggestions for the problems of Pakhtuns and marginalized segments of society, such as taking ownership of resources and narratives to decolonize the construed image of Pakhtun. By deconstructing the colonized image of Pakhtuns, Pashto poetry drew inspiration from the Buddhist civilization of Gandhara and the peaceful interpretation of cultural repertoires by KKM led by preachers of peace and non-violence like Bacha Khan. Moreover, the poetry of marginalized segments of society carries themes that discuss societal inequality based on class and gender. It talks about the class system in society and sensitizes people to develop a just society where everyone can live with peace and prosperity. Further, the poetry of environment suggests that peace and prosperity can come and take care of human

ecology and the land's natural environment, where forests and trees can save humans from the scorching heat of global warming and climate change.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This dissertation delves into the pivotal question: “*How does poetry, as a form of expression, contribute to the political and social consciousness in the broader struggle of the Pakhtuns?*” This central query and exploring how Pashto poetry reflects culture, history, and politics guided the research. The study aimed to understand how poetry sensitizes people about specific issues and challenges in Pakhtun society. To address these questions, various periods of Pashto poetry were examined within the framework of ethno-poetics and socio-poetics. The research employed an ethnographic method, anthropological tools, and data collection and analysis techniques. The data collection process involved participation as an observer, in-depth interviews, informal discussions, FGDs, and attending cultural spaces such as literary societies and their meetings and gatherings, seminars, conferences, literature festivals, *mushairay*, music gatherings, protests and political gatherings. The thematic analysis technique was used to analyze the data.

This research study reveals that Pashto poetry emerged as ethno-poetics in the mid-16th century with the advent of a religiopolitical movement called the Roshanite movement against Mughal rulers in India. The Roshanite movement, which emerged in Kaniguram (now in the tribal district of Waziristan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), played a significant role in developing Pashto poetry. It expanded into other Pakhtun-dominated areas, i.e., parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and Afghanistan, to spread the movement's message. The movement's significance lies in countering the privileged status of Persian court poetry during the Mughal rule and developing a prototype of Pashto poetry, prose, and identity of the Pakhtuns. This prototype revolved around cultural repertoires and used Pashto to communicate with the broader

society of Pakhtuns to mobilize people for the movement. This is the reason Pashto poetry, from its very emergence, became part of public discourse.

The earlier works of Roshanite poets laid the foundation for the poetry of the classic period. Individual poets emerged from the 17th to late 18th century, followed one by another. These poets produced poetries revolving around various themes that gave birth to various poetic schools of thought called *maktabona*. The prominent schools of thought are the *Khushal*, *Rahman* and *Hameed* schools of thought. These schools of thought of Pashto poetry have different orientations and styles and, at the same time, some commonalities and differences in the term of themes with the Roshanites and within each other. The prominent themes in the ethno-poetic period were Sufism, romanticism, and the critique of the governance of the Mughals and their representatives. They revolved around cultural repertoires such as *nang*, *ghairat*, *peghor* and *Pakhto*.

The commonalities of themes and cultural repertoires that emerged throughout its history laid down the foundation of a dichotomy between *khpal* (us) versus *prady* (them) or otherization (*khpal* and *prady*). Otherization is a socio-political concept that defines a group as ‘other’ or different from oneself. In the context of Pashto poetry, *khpal* represents the Pashto-speaking or the Pakhtuns, and *prady* represents the non-Pakhtuns, in this case, the Mughals, the rulers of Mughal India. Otherization, as depicted in Pashto poetry, is a tool for defining and reinforcing the ethnic identity of the Pakhtuns. *Khpal* is conceptualized to evoke the Pakhtuns’ pride in speaking and writing Pashto and following Pashto codes to create a unified force against invaders like the Mughals. In contrast, *prady* or Mughals are seen as brutal, usurpers and unjust towards Pakhtuns. This binary opposition led to the construction of self (ethnic

identity of Pakhtuns) as a resistance, in contrast with the dominant Persian language governance and rulership.

The 19th century brought calamities of continuous battles, frequent toppling of local rulers and mass control in the region. The Sikh empire was the last glimpse of the Indian traditional mechanism of governance. Still, British colonization was a very disoriented form of rulership and governance in India, including the valley of Peshawar. It dealt with the local population individually and collectively to disorient them with traditions and introduce an extractive form of governance to inflict hardship on individuals and collective or pass the responsibility onto the tribe or group. Therefore, the communal living and traditions of linear development were interrupted and gave birth to individual endeavors. With this orientation, folkloric traditions emerged within this period. The folkloric form of poetic expression demonstrates and articulates the prevailing confrontation of Pakhtun collectively and individually as an individual through the anonymous production of poetry as well as with their authorship. Therefore, the Pashto poetry production and generation accumulated public sentiments on a large scale, bringing societal norms and values and their understanding of self and primordial pride in history, culture and identity to new horizons.

The artistic creation of Pashto poetry was transformed into socio-poetics in the second quarter of the 20th century, influenced by socio-political conditions, independence movements, and increased literacy and communication. Social poets led the writing about themselves, their people, and society during this period. Many new themes emerged in Pashto poetry, with its transformation into socio-poetics revolving around the cultural repertoires used in ethno-poetics. The themes of socio-poetics, including independence, nonviolence, unity, self-determination, revolution, class and gender

equality, worked to unite people through political consciousness and social awareness. This unity and awareness inspired by socio-poetics serve as a testament to the power of poetry in shaping societal values and norms.

Moreover, the emergence of socio-poetics and increased literacy and communication also introduced various cultural spaces to evaluate, disseminate, and consume poetry to achieve larger goals through the participation of all members of society, given the external and internal threats to Pakhtuns. These cultural spaces helped reproduce new approaches and frameworks in Pashto poetry for understanding society through reimagining the past. They also helped in larger audience-ship by creating various avenues for disseminating and consuming poetry to educate people on numerous issues of society.

The socio-poetic themes in Pashto poetry have inspired not only a generation of poets, writers, social and political activists, academicians, and intellectuals but also the Pakhtun intelligentsia. In the 21st century, the Pakhtun intelligentsia has taken the lead within the broader framework, organizing cultural spaces in formal and informal settings to evaluate, disseminate, and consume poetry. Their influence and leadership have empowered them to shape the future of Pashto poetry and its impact on society, instilling a sense of hope for the continued evolution and influence of Pashto poetry. Significant themes in 21st-century Pashto poetry include militancy, extremism, peace, nonviolence, hope, resilience, self-determination, identity, gender, class, and environment. These themes reflect the contemporary sociopolitical landscape and the challenges faced by Pakhtun society. The major issues and challenges it addresses include militancy and extremism, the question of self-determination, class and gender, and environmental crisis.

In the context of militancy, themes of poetry deconstruct the literature produced in the context of militancy, extremism, terrorism and the so-called war on terror, where militancy is held to be the product of Pakhtun society. Themes of poetry identify the roots and effect of militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and suggest various possible solutions to its ending. The poetry produced in the 21st century carries themes that relate to the ongoing militancy with Afghan Jihad that was backed by the United States and its allies with the support of Pakistan to defeat the USSR. It also carries themes related to the ongoing militancy with controlling resources on the Pakhtun land across the borders. Additionally, it carries themes of peace, nonviolence, condemnation of war, hope, and resilience and deconstructs the narrative of militancy, terrorism and war on terror and work for peace and nonviolence.

Further, the theme of self-determination covers both the question of ownership of land and the question of identity. The analysis of the poetry themes reveals that Pakhtun poets relate various issues and challenges as the outcome of the Pakhtuns' inability to exercise authority over their land. Through its themes, Pashto poetry sees attaining authority over resources as a solution to various issues and challenges of society. Pashto poetry also carries themes that deconstruct enormous literature on constructing Pakhtun identity. The literature on Pakhtuns is traced back to the works of Mughal court historians that laid the foundation for further works on Pakhtuns in local and foreign scholarship in the context of colonialism and post-colonialism. Similarly, Pashto poetry carries various themes for constructing a positive Pakhtun identity. In this regard, poetry traces Pakhtun identity to Gandharan civilization and KKM to create a peaceful image of the Pakhtuns that is absent both in academia and print and electronic media.

Pashto poetry also addresses the questions of class and gender. It roots out the effect of inequality of class and gender on various strata of society and calls it a reason for multiple issues and problems in Pakhtun society. Pashto's poetry relates the class question to the question of self-determination, i.e., the inability to own land. Themes of Pashto poetry consider Pakhtuns living in other cities of Pakistan and other countries as a labor class and see self-determination as a solution. Similarly, themes of poetry also indicate the internal reasons that cause the creation of class differences in Pakhtun society. While in the context of women's question, Pashto poetry carries themes that question the existence of values and norms that define the status of women in society. Themes of poetry also talk of various hardships experienced by Pakhtun women and call it a reason for Pakhtun women's issues and problems. Moreover, it suggests the struggle for equal status for women and men and sees it as a reliable solution to society's problems.

Moreover, Pashto poetry also carries themes about the roots and effects of environmental crises and suggests various ways to overcome these crises. It identifies three leading causes of the ecological crisis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: unplanned development, militancy and misuse of the environment. It also identifies various calamities brought by environmental crises, including flooding, deforestation, changes in weather cycles, and loss of biodiversity, and their effects on human life and other species. Further, it sensitizes people through hope, resilience, self-determination and romanticizing flora and fauna to preserve ecology.

In the debate mentioned earlier, the themes of Pashto poetry reflect an alternative narrative on the history, culture, and politics of the Pakhtuns that contradicts the literature produced on Pakhtuns in foreign and local scholarship. The existing literature about Pakhtuns' history, culture, art, politics, and society is made under

certain circumstances influenced by war-like situations throughout history, i.e., the early work in Mughal history influenced later work during and after British colonialism. However, analysis based on ethno-poetics and socio-poetic lens shows Pashto poetry as Pakhtuns' production of creating an alternate discourse on self-construction that has long been missing in mainstream literature. Thus, the present studies, on the one hand, question the existing literature on Pakhtun culture, history, and politics. On the other hand, suggest alternative ways, i.e., ethno-poetic and socio-poetic approaches to poetry for studying the culture, history, and politics of certain ethnic groups or communities and the issues and challenges of society within the parameters of local understandings articulated through poetry.

Similarly, the existing literature on Pashto poetry cannot bring change to society. However, the present study suggests that poetries of ethnic groups need to be studied through ethno- and socio-poetic lenses rather than pure literary methodology to find more in poetry than stylistics, grammar, diction, etc. The current study also contributes to anthropological knowledge. It suggests that studies should be carried out using the framework of ethno- and socio-poetics to explore alternate understandings of culture, history, and politics, bringing the disciplines of history, political science and anthropology together to create a new alternative about people, their histories, culture, politics, literature, and other various art forms. The study also suggests that the ethno- and socio-poetics lens into poetry can create alternative narratives on identifying roots and effects of issues and challenges in societies and propose various solutions to these issues and challenges.

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List of In-depth Interviews

- Arman, S. U. (2022, November 12). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Aurakzai, M. (2023, March 17). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Bawar, A. (2022, June 17). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Buneri, S. (2022, August 17). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Buneri, S. (2022, February 24). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Hussain, K. (2022, February 20). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Izhar, I. U. (2022, March 25). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Khalil, J. (2022, January 8). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Khan, H. (2022, November 21). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Khan, N. (2022, July 23). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Khan, T. (2022, January 15). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Manerwal, A. (2022, August 18). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Masror, S. U. (2022, November 26). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Momand, G. (2022, November 26). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Muhammadzai, S. (2022, April 14). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Pakhtun, I. (2022, October 17). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Qurban, S. (2023, May 23). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Shahzad, A. (2022, April 17). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Tanha, H. G. (2022, March 14). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Umeed, A. K. (2022, May 25). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Wadan, A. (2022, September 19). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Yousafzai, A. (2022, February 19). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Yousafzai, A. (2022, November 24). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)
- Yousafzai, H. (2022, April 24). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Yousafzai, N. (2022, March 17). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Zaib, K. (2022, April 24). In-depth Interview. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

List of Informal Discussions, Speeches, Talks & Poetry Narration

Afghan, A. (2022, March 28). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Afghan, A. (2022, March 28). Poetry Narration. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Ali, N. (2022, March 10). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Ali, N. (2022, March 10). Poetry Narration. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Bacha, Y. A. (2022, June 24). Talk in Conference. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Badshah, A. (2022, November 17). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Buneri, S. (2022, March 10). Speech at Mushaira. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Buneri, T. (2022, March 10). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Chagharzai, T. Z. (2022, March 14). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Hussain, K. (2022, January 5). Talk in Condolence Gathering. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Iftikhar, M. (2022, November 27). Speech in Mushaira. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Kaimor, N. A. (2022, June 27). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Khalil, A. (2022, March 6). Informal Discussion. (Nadeem, Interviewer)

Khan, M. (2022, April 22). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Khan, N. (2022, January 5). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Khan, R. (2022, June 17). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Khan, W. (2022, 3 17). Informal Discussion. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer)

Khanzeeb, M. (2022, March 10). Speech at Mushaira. (N. Ahmad, Interviewer).

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APPENDIX

List of Glossary

Pashto

Adab

Adabi

Amn

Androon-Sheher

Anjuman Islah Ul Afaghina

Anujman

Apalala Naga

Ashar

Atal

Attan

Azad

Azad-Nazam

Azada Mushaira

Azadi

Bacha Khanay

Bacha Khani

Bacha Khanyan

English

Ethics / Literature

Literati/ Literary/ Ethicist

Peace

Inner City

Reformative Movement for Afghans

Organization

Water-Dwelling *Naga* in Buddhist mythology

Community service / A task performed by a group of volunteers as relief for a community member/s

Valiance

A traditional Pakhtun dance

Free

Free verse

A type of mushaira that is open in terms of themes and genres, allowing poets to recite poetry on any topic and in any genre

Freedom

Follower of Bacha Khan

Bacha Khan's way

Plural of *Bacha Khanay* / Followers of Bacha Khan

<i>Badal</i>	Revenge
<i>Badala</i>	Ballad
<i>Badalay</i>	Plural of Ballad / Ballads
<i>Badloon</i>	Change
<i>Badruga</i>	Escort
<i>Bagatay</i>	Genre of folksong that carries humorous themes
<i>Bagh</i>	Garden
<i>Bahaduri</i>	Bravery
<i>Bahar</i>	Spring
<i>Bala'khanay</i>	Attics
<i>Be'nangi</i>	Dishonor
<i>Be'Sharma</i>	Shameless
<i>Beltoon</i>	Separation
<i>Bethak</i>	Guest Room
<i>Chamyar</i>	Shoemaker
<i>Chanchara</i>	Sparrow
<i>Chanri</i>	<i>Madrassa</i> Student
<i>Chapli-Kabab</i>	Traditional Minced-Kabab
<i>Chappaties</i>	Breads
<i>Charbaita</i>	A long poem containing four lines as unit
<i>Charbaitay</i>	Plural of <i>Charbaita</i>
<i>Charkha</i>	Wheel/ Machine for making local clothes
<i>Charsadwaley-Saplay</i>	Charsada's-sandals
<i>Chasht Mushaira</i>	A <i>mushaira</i> held in the name of Chishti school of thought

<i>Cheena</i>	Spring
<i>Cheeny</i>	Plural of <i>cheena</i>
<i>Chilla</i>	Worship for forty days in seclusion
<i>Chinar</i>	Maple tree
<i>Chishtia-tareeqat</i>	Chisti's Path
<i>Chistiya-Silsila</i>	Chishti's sufi <i>order</i>
<i>Chitar</i>	The spring season between March and April, known as ' <i>Chaitra</i> ,' in the Hindu lunar calendar
<i>Da Amn Shairi</i>	Peace Poetry
<i>Da Gharmay Doday</i>	Launch
<i>Da Mazigar Chai</i>	Late afternoon tea
<i>Da Sahar Chaye</i>	Morning tea / breakfast
<i>Dala</i>	Pimp
<i>Darbari-shairi</i>	Court-poetry
<i>Daryab</i>	River
<i>Dastan</i>	Story/ Ballad
<i>Dervish</i>	Mystic
<i>Dh Mahustan Doday</i>	Dinner
<i>Dh Maiwand Ghaza</i>	War of Maiwand
<i>Dharna</i>	Sit-in
<i>Elam</i>	The name of mountain
<i>Fa'aal-tolana</i>	Functional Literary Society
<i>Fasad</i>	Riots/ Destruction
<i>Fiqah</i>	Jurispradence
<i>Gap-shap</i>	Gossip

<i>Ghairat</i>	Honor
<i>Ghar</i>	Mountain
<i>Gharay</i>	A kind of folksong
<i>Gharay</i>	<i>Genre of folksong</i>
<i>Ghazal</i>	A ghazal is a poem composed of couplets, each having the same rhythm
<i>Gher Rasmi Mushaira</i>	Informal <i>mushaira</i>
<i>Ghobal</i>	Thrashing
<i>Ghonda</i>	Gathering
<i>Ghonday</i>	Plural of <i>Ghonda</i>
<i>Ghulami</i>	Slavery
<i>Gudar</i>	Ford
<i>Gul-e-Dawoodee</i>	Chrysanthemum flower
<i>Gunah</i>	Sin
<i>Gwaty aw Kanri</i>	Customary law to collect woods for winter in the forest.
<i>Hadeera</i>	Graveyard
<i>Haiku</i>	3-line stanza
<i>Haiwad</i>	Country
<i>Haqeeqat</i>	Realization
<i>Haram</i>	Forbidden
<i>Hijrat</i>	Migration
<i>Hujra</i>	A traditional gathering place for men serving various purposes
<i>Ijlas</i>	Meeting

<i>Ijlasona</i>	Plural of Meeting/ Meetings
<i>Ilasi mushairay</i>	Inclusive poetry gatherings
<i>Ingoli</i>	Dish
<i>Ishq</i>	Compassion/ Passion
<i>Islahi-Jirgy</i>	Reformative Councils
<i>Iste'araay</i>	Metaphors
<i>Jalandari Tarana</i>	Pakistan's national anthem written by Hafeez Jalandari
<i>Jals' [arabic]</i>	To sit
<i>Jalsa</i>	Political gathering
<i>Jalsay</i>	Plural of Jalsa/ Political gatherings
<i>Jalus [arabic]</i>	Sitting
<i>Jang-ghandana</i>	Condemnation of war
<i>Jang-zada</i>	War affected
<i>Jarray</i>	Seasonal rains in winters
<i>Jehl</i>	Ignorance
<i>Jirga</i>	Council of elders
<i>Jola</i>	Traditional Cloth maker
<i>Jumat</i>	Mosque
<i>Jwand</i>	Life
<i>Kaimor</i>	Name of mountain
<i>Kalay</i>	Village
<i>Kaleezay</i>	Death anniversaries
<i>Kenaayi</i>	Metaphors
<i>Khaal</i>	Tattoo

<i>Khair</i>	Conflict
<i>Khamta</i>	Cotton cloth
<i>Khat</i>	Facial hair appear with fuberty
<i>Khel</i>	Sub-tribe
<i>Khelona</i>	Plural of <i>Khel</i>
<i>Khpal</i>	Own / Own self / Pashto speaking)
<i>khpalwaki</i>	Self-determination
<i>Khurasan</i>	Now Afghanistan
<i>Khwari 'Kakh'</i>	Worker
<i>Klak'stargi</i>	Rude
<i>Koranay</i>	Family
<i>Kulaal</i>	Potter
<i>Landay</i>	A genre of folksong
<i>Lashkar</i>	Battalion
<i>Leekwal</i>	Writer
<i>Lekwalan</i>	Plural of writers
<i>Loba</i>	<i>Genre of folksong</i>
<i>Lohar</i>	Blacksmith
<i>Lughaat</i>	<i>Genre of folksong</i>
<i>Maarifat</i>	Inner knowledge/ Secrets
<i>Madrassa</i>	Mercenary
<i>Madrassas</i>	Plural of <i>Madrassa</i>
<i>Mahol</i>	Envirnoment
<i>Mahol-satana</i>	Environment protection
<i>Mahol-zhghorana</i>	Environment protection

<i>Maholiyati</i>	Envirnomental
<i>Maholiyati-badloon</i>	Climate change
<i>Mailas</i>	<i>Gathering</i> / Folk music gathering
<i>Majazi-Shairi</i>	Figurative poetry
<i>Makhsoos Mushairay</i>	Exclusive poetry gatherings
<i>Maktab</i>	School of thought
<i>Maktabona</i>	Plural of <i>maktab</i> / Schools of thought
<i>Malaks</i>	Chieftain/ Officially recognized leaders
<i>Malang</i>	Ascetic
<i>Malgari</i>	Friends
<i>Mangay</i>	Water pitchers use as musical instrument
<i>Mansab</i>	Rank
<i>Maozoati ghonda</i>	Thematic gathering
<i>Maozoati mushaira</i>	Thematic <i>mushaira</i> poetry
<i>maozoati mushairay</i>	Plural of <i>maozoati mushaira</i> / Thematic
<i>mushairay</i>	
<i>Maozoati-ghonday</i>	Plural of <i>maozoati ghonda</i> / Thematic gatherings
<i>Maqsadi</i>	Purposive
<i>Maqsadi shairi</i>	Poetry with purpose
<i>Maqsadiat</i>	Purposiveness
<i>Maraka</i>	Gathering
<i>Masnawi</i>	Ballad
<i>Melmastia</i>	Hospitality
<i>Misra</i>	<i>Stanza</i> / Another name for <i>tappa</i>
<i>Moshagaf</i>	Delicate

<i>Moshagafi</i>	Elegant thinking / Delicacy
<i>Mubalighy</i>	Metaphors
<i>Mughalwala</i>	Being Mughal
<i>Mullah</i>	Cleric
<i>Na 'khaq nizam</i>	Illegitimate system
<i>Naara-baazi</i>	Sloganeering
<i>Naat</i>	Genre of poem written in praise of the Prophet
<i>Naayi</i>	Hairdressers who work as professional cooks in the festivities
<i>Nabz-shanas</i>	Pulse knower
<i>Nakhtar</i>	Pine
<i>Namoos</i>	Honour
<i>Nang</i>	Prestige
<i>Naray</i>	A kind of folksong
<i>Naray</i>	<i>Genre of folksong</i>
<i>Narewala-taodokha</i>	Global warming
<i>Nawroz</i>	Persian/ Central asian new year
<i>Nazam</i>	Poem
<i>Nazuk-Khyali</i>	<i>Delicate thought</i>
<i>Nemakai</i>	<i>Genre of folksong</i>
<i>Pakhto</i>	Way of life/ Commitment / Language
<i>Pameer</i>	Mountainous range
<i>Pardah</i>	Veil
<i>Parwoney</i>	Women's Shawl
<i>Pashakal</i>	Rainy season of summers in India and Pakistan

<i>Peghor</i>	Taunt
<i>Praday</i>	Others
<i>Purushapura</i>	Sanskrit term meaning ‘the city of flowers’
<i>Qahva</i>	Green tea
<i>Qalang</i>	Levy
<i>Qasabgar</i>	Manual workers
<i>Qaum</i>	Tribe
<i>Qawwali</i>	A musical genre and a form of Islamic devotional music that originated in the subcontinent
<i>Qita</i>	Four-line couplet
<i>Qurbat</i>	Nearness
<i>Rabab</i>	Musical instrument
<i>Rasmi mushaira</i>	Formal <i>mushaira</i>
<i>Rokhanyan</i>	Follwers of Pir Rokhan
<i>Rubayi</i>	A rubai is a four-line poem, typically focused on deep or philosophical thoughts
<i>Sadar-i-mushaira</i>	President of the <i>mushaira</i>
<i>Samandar</i>	Sea
<i>Samma</i>	Sufi music gathering
<i>Sandara</i>	Song
<i>Sandareez-ihtejaj</i>	Melodic protest
<i>Sarwa</i>	Cypress Tree
<i>Satana</i>	Protection
<i>Sawab</i>	Virtue

Shab-e-Baraat	15th Shaban (Month of Islamic Calender)/ Night of forgiveness and worship
<i>Shahadat</i>	Witnessers
<i>Shairi</i>	Poetry
<i>Shar</i>	Conflict
<i>Shariat</i>	Sharia
<i>Spaidar</i>	Populus ciliate
<i>Stayeny-ghonda</i>	Commendation gatherings
<i>Sukoonat</i>	Eternity
<i>Tabla</i>	Musical instrument
<i>Tandoor</i>	Clay oven
<i>Tang takor</i>	Live/ Folk music gathering
<i>Tanqeedi</i>	Critical
<i>Taodokhay</i>	Heat waves
<i>Tappa</i>	A two-line folksong in which the first line has nine syllables and the second line has thirteen syllables
<i>Tarana</i>	Anthem
<i>Tarboor</i>	Patrilineal cousin
<i>Tarburwali</i>	Agnatic rivalry
<i>Tareeqat</i>	Order
<i>Tarkaan</i>	Carpenter
<i>Tarkha</i>	<i>Tarkha</i> is a given poetic line on the basis of which poets then compose their poetry

<i>Tarkhi mushairay</i>	A type of <i>mushaira</i> where poets narrate poetry composed based on <i>Tarkha</i>
<i>Tashbeehat</i>	Metaphors
<i>Tauheed</i>	Unification
<i>Taziyati-ghonday</i>	Condolence Gatherings
<i>Tolana</i>	Society
<i>Ulas</i>	Common masses
<i>Ulas-i-Dawr</i>	Folkloric period
<i>Vyarana</i>	Appriciation
<i>Wahdat</i>	Unification
<i>Wahdat ul Shuhood</i>	Oneness of witnessing
<i>Wahdat-ul-Wajood</i>	The unity of existence
<i>Wak</i>	<i>Authority</i>
<i>Wasal</i>	Meeting
<i>Waslat</i>	Meeting
<i>Wreji</i>	Rice
<i>Zalmay</i>	Young
<i>Zareen Dawr</i>	Golden period
<i>Zarghon</i>	Greenry
<i>Zeem</i>	Pashto alphabet
<i>Zhghorana</i>	Protection
<i>Zmari</i>	Couragious

ANNEXURES

Annexure 1

“Da Inqilab Tarana”

“Rawakhlai bya da inqilab sra nishanona lewano zalmo /
Da khawra inqilab ghwari da azadani inqilab /
Che pa khanda she da jwandun mrawi gulona gulalo zalmo /
Da khawra inqilab ghwari da azaday inqilab.

Da daghi khawri da watan pa khatir, malgaro pasay baidari paida ke /
Da de tala wala gulshan pa khatir, malgaro pasai baidari paida ke /
Da sor sprali da de gulshan pa khatir, malgaro pasay baidari paida ke /
Shlawal ba ghwari zawlanay da zanzerona nangyalo zalmo /
Da khawra inqilab ghwari da azaday inqilab.

Toye pa watan ke da zalmyano weeni, zalmo pa taso bandi swal kawi /
Da khwaindo myando mashomano weeni, zalmo pa taso bandi swal kawi /
Da gharebano mazdorano weeni, zalmo pa taso bandi swal kawi /
Kh zan gatal ghwaray nu oshenday sarona gulalo zalmo /
Da khawra inqilab ghwari da azaday inqilab.

Yaw khwa pulao bal khwa saara anghari, malgaro dagha sa de da sa kegi /
Yaw khwa khanda bal khwa salgay khwara da, malgaro dagha sa de da sa kegi /
Da yaw watan da yaw adam zamano, malgaro dagha sa de da sa kegi /
Razay che wrak kro da halat da riwajona nangyalo zalmo /
Da khawra inqilab ghwari da azaday inqilab.

Zama watan da sro aw speeno na dak, za mazdoro pasi bahar garzama /
Za yaw Afghan khana badosh da watan, kadda pa sar aw dar pa dar garzama /
Za pa gunah aw sawab sa pohegam, pa jannati khawra nahar garzama /
Elaaj da logi da gunah nh sawabona, nangyalo zalmo /
Da khawra inqilab ghwari da azaday inqilab”.

Translation:

(“Anthem of Revolution”)

*(“O valiant youth! Pick up the tokens of red revolution /
This land needs revolution, a revolution of freedom /
So that the withered flowers of life bloom once more /
This land needs revolution, a revolution of freedom.*

*Rise and show courage for the sake of this homeland /
Rise and show courage for the sake of this looted land /
Rise and show courage for the sake of this garden’s spring /
O valiant youth! The fetter of slavery needs to be broken /
This land needs revolution, a revolution of freedom.*

*O brave men! The spilled blood of youth in this land is asking you /
The blood of sisters, mothers and children is asking you /
The blood of poor workers is asking you /
If you want to triumph then sacrifice yourselves O lovely young men! /
This land needs revolution, a revolution of freedom.*

*Some enjoy a feast while others sleep hungry, O friends! What’s going on /
Some are having fun while others sob, O friends! What’s going on /
Sons of Adam and one land, O friends! What’s going on /
Let’s waste these conditions and customs, O brave men! /
This land needs revolution, a revolution of freedom.*

*My land is full of gold and silver while I wander abroad for labor /
I’m an Afghan nomad of the land, wandering here and there /
What do I know of sin and reward, I’m hungry in this heavenly land /
Cure of hunger is neither rewards nor sins, O brave men! /
This land needs revolution, a revolution of freedom.”).*

Annexure 2-A

Poetry piece (*ghazal*) narrated by Rafiq Ullah Rafiq on first *tarkha* in *tarkhi mushaira* organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “Kh wrorwali mu pa watan ke raghla”.

“Kh sa narmi pa kabarjan ke raghla /

Sola de wakhli nan pa nan ke raghla /

Spogmai ta tli sham da cha kam kho nh yam /

Kho wrorwali mu kh watan ke raghla /

Topak de wrak she za pre poha yam kho /

Da mafkora me pa wakman ke raghla /

Lor ye maktab ta pa khanda tlali wa /

Pa weeno sra tre pa kafan ke raghla.”.

Translation:

Tarkha: (“*If brotherhood enshrined in our land*”)

(“If the proud finished ego away /

Peace will prevail on our land no later /

I can conquer moon as I dare to /

If brotherhood enshrined in our community /

Say no to gun as I know its consequences /

I got this philosophy in authority /

The daughter went to school in laughing /

And brought back wrapped in coffin”).

Annexure 2-B

Poetry piece (*ghazal*) narrated by Amin Wazir on first *tarkha* of *tarkhi mushaira* organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “Kh wrorwali mu pa watan ke raghla”

“Khob me ledi sola watan ke raghla /
Da khwahai sreeka me badan ke raghla /
La janga tlali mohajara marghai /
Bairta da amn pa Gulshan ke raghla /
Hasi kh meena wakro sang aba we /
Hasi khabara me pa man ke raghla”.

Translation:

Tarkha: (“*If brotherhood enshrined in our land*”)

*(“I dreamt of peace on the homeland /
A joy made me ached in love of land /
Like a bird migrated during war /
And came back to garden in haste /
How if fall in love in such lovely peace? /
I thought of love in my inner soul.”).*

Annexure 3-A

Poetry piece (ghazal) narrated by Dr. Kaleem Shinwari from Khyber district on second *tarkha* in *tarkhi mushaira* organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “Jangona pakar nh de, Fasadona pakar nh de”

“Bayad che pa de poh sho che jangona pakar nh de /

Jangona pakar nh de fasadona pakar nh de /

Yaw’wali yagangi kh mazhabi ham’ahangi da /

Da har sa de pakar kho nafratona pakar nh de /

Che sumra tashadud de da dh shkharo nateeja da /

Da shkhkari ba hawari kro zulmona pakar nh de /

Tolana ba pa meena aw pa zgham bandi khaista kro /

Che nh lari da dwanra hagha zrona pakar nh de /

Pa yaw insaniat bandi mayan wosa Kaleema /

Da khalko byal byal shakal aw rangona pakar nh de”.

Translation:

Tarkha: (“*War need not be there; riots need not be there*”).

(“*It must be understood; war need not be there /*

War need not be there, riots need not be there /

Be it unity or interfaith harmony /

All but hatred need not be there /

All this violence is the result of conflicts /

We will resolve these conflicts, but cruelty need not be there /

We will make this world beautiful with love and tolerance /

Hearts that don’t have these two need not be there /

Keep on loving one humanity Kaleem! /

Different guises need not be there.”)

Annexure 3-B

Poetry piece (ghazal) narrated by Dilber Khan Shakhkar on second *tarkha* in *tarkhi* mushaira organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “Jangona pakar nh de, fasadona pakar nh de”

“Jangona pakar nh de fasadona pakar nh de /

Insana nur de zan wala damona pakar nh de /

Da meeni na che jor de da adam da zra taroona /

Jangona pakar nh de fasadona pakar nh de /

Pa khair aw khair’khwahai ke dh insan da wadi kar dey /

Che dagha paki nh we kitabona pakar nh de /

Waghiza nur de bas kra da zra takay de nan wakhla /

Pa dagha zamana ke nur waghzona pakar nh de /

Safa safa ye way ache pa zra de pati nh she /

Ahona pakar nh de aw chupona pakar nh de”.

Translation:

Tarkha: (“War need not be there; riots need not be there /

(“War need not be there; riots need not be there /

O human! More traps need not be there /

Adam’s heart is made of love strings /

War need not be there, riots need not be there /

Human progress is in kindness and benevolence /

Books that don’t teach them need not be there /

O Preacher enough! Take back your clichéd words today /

More of your preaching in this age need not be there /

Say it all so that nothing stays in your heart /

Sighs need not be there, chuff need not be there”).

Annexure 3-C

Poetry piece (ghazal) narrated by Waseem Akram Mumtahir on second *tarkha* in *tarkhi mushaira* organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “Jangona pakar nh de fasadona pakar nh de”

“Jangona pakar nh de fasadona pakar nh de /

Da amn shami rawrai zulmatona pakar nh de /

Razai che sara yaw sho aw yaw nawi jwand tashkeel kro /

Da amna shammi rawrai zulmatona pakar nh de /

Hindu dey kh muslim dey aw arab dey kha jam /

Da wara yaw insan de tawperona pakar nh de /

Rokhana mowashera che jorawi nu lar ye da dh /

Che bya da tashadud da kaglechona pakar nh de /

Da deri aqeedi kho guldasta da dh gulono /

Sparli warla pakar de khazanona pakar nh de”.

Translation:

Tarkha: (“*War need not be there; riots need not be there*”)

(“*War need not be there; riots need not be there /*

Bring the candles of peace, darkness need not be there /

Let us be united and start a new life /

We will find it on love, hatred need not be there /

Be it Hindu, Muslim, Arab or Ajam /

All are one human; discrimination need not be there /

The way of building an enlightened society is this /

More reasons for violence need not be there /

Diverse beliefs are a bouquet of flowers /

Spring is needed, autumn need not be there”).

Annexure 4-A

Poetry piece (ghazal) narrated by Zahid Ullah Qane on third *tarkha* in *tarkhi mushaira* organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “*Amn yaw maslak dey ma pre klak emaan rawaray dey*”

“Ta kh pa barood kro da watan andam andam zakhmi /

Ma warta da amn taraqai darman rawaray dey /

Cha kh pa de khwara da nafrat tyari hakemi kre /

Ma warta bilal da sabawon azan rawaray dey /

De sawee watan ta th sparli da muska rawala /

Ma warta sro stargo ke de nam baran rawaray dey /

Ma warta bya hum da muhabbat gulab newalay dey /

Dh rata lastonri ke khanjar penhaan rawaray dey /

Da che ranra’gani da shuoor pa ghazawano dey /

Naawee da shafaq pa shondo sor pezwani rawaray dey /

Khudai de ye qaani zama pa jwand bandi tar’sara kre /

Sola da watan me zra ke loye arman rawaray dey.”

Translation:

Tarkha: (“*Peace is a faith; I strongly believe in it*”).

(“*You deserted homeland by bomb powders /*

Wherever as I brought remedy of peace & prosperity /

Those who spread darkness of hatred on this land /

I like Bilal, gave the call of Dawn on this land /

Spread the smile of spring on each face of land /

I've brought rain's water in my red eyes /

I'm presenting him the flower of love /

Though he has hidden a sword in his sleeve /

As the lights of wisdom are being spread /

The Dawn's bride has brought golden ring on her lips /

May God bring peace in Qani's life /

Peace has brought a great desire in heart my country”).

Annexure 4-B

Poetry piece (ghazal) narrated by Zahib Wazir on third *tarkha*. in *tarkhi mushaira* organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “Amn yaw maslak dey ma pe klak eman rawaray dey”

“Dagha hum Manama che insan safeer da amn dey /

Da ba hum manic he fasad hum insan rawaray dey /

Cha hum da kitab aw da Qalam dalai ra nh kraal /

Mung ta har sari dalta da jang saman rawaray dey /

Sa shwala da amn speera naway sok ra’wekha kre /

Ma zahib wazeer warta da sro pezwan rawaray dey”.

Translation:

Tarkha: (“Peace is a faith; I firmly believe in it”)

(“It’s admitted, man is ambassador of peace /

It’s also admitted, man has brought miseries to the world /

No one presented me book & pen /

All brought stuff of war to our land /

Where is the bride of peace, awake her /

Zahid Wazir wants to present her golden nose ring”).

Annexure 4-C

Poetry piece (ghazal) narrated by Naeem Khan Adil on second *tarkha* in *tarkhi mushaira* organized by CRA-N in Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar.

Tarkha: “Amn yaw maslak dey ma pe klak eman rawaray dey”

“Amn yaw maslak dey ma pe klak eman rawaray dey /

Nuro Pukhtano kh pa topak eman rawaray dey /

Za kho palawi gora da adm e tashadud yama /

Ta kre zulam zor ta pa kotak eman rawaray dey /

Ta sirf paisa warta khkara kra bya ye ogora /

De bandi kho masher aw malik eman rawaray dey”.

Translation:

Tarkha: (“Peace is a faith; I firmly believe in it”)

(“Peace is a faith; I firmly believe in it /

The rest Pakhtuns if some believe in guns /

I'm the follower of Bacha khan's non-violence /

You believe in power to suppress the people /

You just show them money & look then /

Every elder and Malak believe in penny”).

Annexure 5

“Ay zama watana”

“Ay zama watana da lalono khazani zama /
Sata hara dara ke de da toro nikhani zama.

Stargi me logi sha sta da para da korono na /
Aqal me eery sha sta da para da fikrona na /
Zar shama, qurban sham sta da ghrono da sindona na /
Sta hara dara ke de da toro nikhani zama /
Ay zama watana da lalono khazani zama.

Za yam sta da khawro ta zama da meeni jor ye /
Ta me da ghairat aw da Pukhto rangeeni jor ye /
Sta zra ke prati de toli tali zamani zama /
Ay zama watana da lalono khazani zama.

Sta izzat che nh we za ba nom aw izzat sa krama /
Ta che khwar o zar ye za ba khob aw rahat sa krama /
Sta sar che we tet nu za ba shan aw shaukat sa krama /
Masta ba de khawra kram pa weeni mastani zama /
Ay zama watana da lalono khazani zama.

Ya ba de za siyal krama watana da jehan /
Ya ba sta pa khpo ke tori khawri krama zan /
Za ba dari wari sham kho ta ba kram wadan /
Nar yama Pakhtun yam tata yadi afsani zama /
Ay zama watana da lalono khazani zama.”.

Translation:

(“O my beloved homeland!”)

*(“O my beloved homeland! My treasures of ruby /
There are signs of my swords in your every valley.*

Let my eyes be sacrificed on your houses of soil /

*Let my intellect be sacrificed upon the thought of yours /
Let I be sacrificed on your mountains and your oceans /
There are signs of my swords in your every valley /
O my beloved homeland! My treasures of ruby.*

*I'm made of your soil and you're made of my love /
You're made of colors of my honor and my pride /
Your chest is filled with the essence of my bygone times /
O my beloved homeland! My treasures of ruby.*

*There's no use of my status and honor without your honor /
How can I rest and repose when you're ruined /
What use is there for my splendor when you're disgraced /
I'll revel your soil with my intoxicated blood /
O my beloved homeland! My treasures of ruby.*

*Either I'll elevate you in this world my homeland /
Or I'll perish myself at your feet /
I'll be broken to pieces but will make you prosperous /
I'm a man and Pakhtun, you remember my tales /
O my beloved homeland! My treasures of ruby.”).*

Annexure 6

“Margiya mh raza darzama”

“Kafan pa trakh ke da siyalai maidan la zama /
Margiya mh raza darzama /
Sar pa tali ke da Allah darbar la zama /
Margiya mh raza darzama.

Pa charsadda ke karbala da /
Da ghadarano pa salah da /
Pa sarfarosho wawaila da /
Za da khpal qaam sara pa marg siyali kawama /
Margiya mh raza darzama.

Bya da watan pa khwara janga de /
Khukali maidan da nam o nang de /
Mori warzama zra me tang de /
Pa khpala khawra khpali weeni toyawoma /
Margiya mh raza darzama.

Sre jami raka zama mori /
Sar rala ghwar ka stargi tori /
Nom da Pakhtun de pa ma pori /
Pa Pukhtana khawra khpal sar qurbanawoma /
Margiya mh raza darzama.

Yaw khwa ta topi masheenona /
Da hukoomat wara faozona /
Bal khwa ta qaam khali lasona /
Muqabily ta me katal hairanedama /
Margiya mh raza darzama.

Da khwaindo gheg ke mashoman /
Pa sar newali qo quran /
Awaz ye da wo pa maidan /
Fakhr e Afghana ta gatam pa khpala mrama /
Margiya mh raza darzama.

Tala ye kral zmung korona /
 Bya ye war pori kral oorona /
 Zmung pe nh rasi zorona /
 La dasi jwanda rala marg kha de beghama /
 Margiya mh raza darzama.

 Pa akhirat che Rab qazi she /
 Pa shafa'at Rasool razi she /
 War da shaheed aw da ghazi she /
 Za ba ghalbeel seena da Khudai pa makhki gdama /
 Margiya mh raza darzama".

Translation:

("O death! Don't haste, here I come")

("Shroud in my arms, I haste to the battleground /

O death! Don't haste, here I come /

I give my life happily for Allah's sake /

O death! Don't haste, here I come.

There's a massacre in Charsadda /

Traitors are council upon it /

I honor my people with my life /

O death! Don't haste, here I come.

There's battle again in the homeland /

The stage for honor and fame is set /

Let me go O mother! My heart yearns /

Let me shed my blood for my land /

O death! Don't haste, here I come.

Give me red clothes, O dear mother! /

Anoint my hair and darken my eyes /

I carry the reputation of Pakhtun /

Let me sacrifice myself over Pakhtun land /

O death! Don't haste, here I come.

There are cannons and guns on one side /

*And all the forces of the tyrant /
A people empty handed on another side /
I wondered while watching the confrontation /
O death! Don't haste, here I come.*

*Children in sister's lap /
Carrying Qur'an above their heads /
Calling on the battleground /
O pride of Pakhtuns! I give my life to win your honor /
O death! Don't haste, here I come.*

*Our homes were plundered /
And then set ablaze /
We are powerless /
Death is far better than such a life /
O death! Don't haste, here I come.*

*When God is the Judge on judgment day /
And the Prophet is our mediator /
When there's the turn of martyr and veteran /
I'll present my sieved chest in front of God /
O death! Don't haste, here I come /
O death! Don't haste, here I come").*

Annexure 7

“Pakhtun ta jwandun ghwaro”

“Taqdeer kh we hum bas de pa khpal las ye badloon ghwaro /
Da khpal watan pa gheg ke zindagi aw sukoon ghwaro /
Pakhtun ta jwandun ghwaro, Pakhtun ta jwandun ghwaro.

Yaw khalk u yaw jaba la yaw bal sara odrego /
Pa daang kala byalego /
Ra gora che nan sanga yaw la bal sara zarego /
Yaw zay ba porta kego /
La masta abaseena tar amu pewaston ghwaro.

Da khalko sa pe gorai khaq ghohtalo la ashar de /
Da lar de kh da bar de/
Pukhtun che be’gunah wajni hum dagha tarhagar de /
Tarhgar aw landaghar de.
Che zulam bekhi khatm she yaw dasi pasoon ghwaro”.

Translation:

(“We Want Life for Pakhtun”)

*(“If it’s destiny, let’s alter it with our own hands /
We want life and peace in our homeland /
We want life for Pakhtun, we want life for Pakhtun.

We are one people, united we stand with each other /
We are not afraid of violence /
Watch and see how we sacrifice ourselves for each other /
We will rise united /
We want unity from the raging Indus to Amu.

What do people care if this is a fight for our rights /
Whether it’s higher land or lower (Afghanistan or Pakhtunkhwa) /
Those who kill innocent Pakhtuns are the terrorists /
Those are terrorists and vagabond /
When tyranny is uprooted, we want such an uprising”).*

Annexure 8

“Da sanga azadi da?”

“Zwanan mu qatal kegi, da sanga azadi da /

Korona mu wranegy, da sanga azadi da /

Pakhtun paki gharqegy, da sanga azadi da /

Da jwand bera mateegy, da sanga azadi da.

Che nh rakawi mung ta khuqooq da insaniat /

Pakar che bayad wokro spezali baghawat /

Malali mu boreegy, da sanga azadi da /

Satrona mu mateegy, da sanga azadi da.

Da amn marghai jari, pa de bando panjaro ke /

Bachi zmunga khwar shwal da staso pa qiso ke /

Zanzeer rana taweeegy, da sanga azadi da /

Awaz mu nh raseegy, da sanga azadi da?

Ta wayi che ghadar yam, kho za da khaq pasoon yam /

Da jabbar las de maat sho mani ba me Pakhtun yam /

Bamona de drazegy, da sanga azadi da /

Wahshat de la khwaregy, da sanga azadi de?”

Translation:

(“What kind of freedom is this?”)

(“Our youth is being slain; what kind of freedom is this?

Our homes are destroyed, what kind of freedom is this?

Pakhtun is being submerged, what kind of freedom is this?

Shackles of life are shattered; what kind of freedom is this?

If we cannot get our birth rights/

It’s compulsory for us to wage pure rebellion/

Our ladies are losing their children, what kind of freedom is this? /

Their honor is being compromised; what kind of freedom is this?

The bird of peace is being suffocated in these cages/

Our children become wretched in your unworthy decisions/

We’re being imprisoned; what kind of freedom is this? /

We're becoming voiceless, what kind of freedom is this?

You declare me a traitor while I'm a cry for my rights/

Your acts of oppression are destined to doom as I'm a Pakhtun/

There are bombs everywhere, what kind of freedom is this? /

Terror is being dispersed; what kind of freedom is this?").

Annexure 9

“Amn”

“Za ghwaram pa amn la azgho da asia laman /
Nh ghwaram che swazi pa lambo da asia laman /
Daka de we tal pa gulo sro da asia laman /
Stayama shair pa Pukhto da Asia laman /
Bas pa khaq Insaf de pa rikhtya khabara speena she /
Ghwarama che tola dunya meena meena meena she.

Nh de sok da bal pa khaq na’khaqa bloedal kawi /
Nh de banyadam da banyadam ghwakhi khwaral kawi /
Nh de sok mazlom na’twan insan pori khandal kawi /
Nh de sok ougo bandi Hamesh da bal mazal kawi /
Tol khalak da de narai de tao da yaw ayena she /
Ghwarama che tola dunya meena meena meena she.

Da dh ba’shuoro narai ghwaram che abada we /
Wrak de she bamona aw jangona mulk barbadawi /
Amn amn amn bas pa amn de tal banada she /
Da zango da amn de rikhtya pa amn yada she /
Zaar de America la roosa (Russia) aw roos de zaar la china she /
Ghwarama che tola dunya meena meena meena she”.

Translation:

(“Peace”)

*(“I wish the plains of Asia safe from thorns /
I don’t want the plains of Asia set ablaze /
Let there be flowers all around in the plains of Asia /
I praise in Pashto poetry the plains of Asia /
Let there be equal rights and justice for all /
Let the whole world embrace philosophy of love.

Let no one trample anybody’s rights /
Let no human give pain to another human /
Let no one mock an oppressed and weak /*

*Let no one be a lifelong burden to others /
Let all the people of the world unite on one constitution /
Let the whole world embrace philosophy of love.

I wish this world of aware people be prosperous /
Let bombs and wars doom, the destroyers of land /
Peace and only peace should be the ultimate resolve /
Let this cradle of peace be remembered truly by peace /
Let America entreat Russia and Russia China /
Let the whole world embrace philosophy of love”).*

Annexure 10

“Bamyan”

“Yaw khwa da qudrat jamal /

Bal khwa da insan kamal /

Za ye lewani krama /

Char chapera noor de /

Nh de bamyan nh de da /

Da kho koh e toor de.

Dalta da fitrat kamal /

Dalta da adam junoon /

Dwanra pa zed shwe wo /

Jor ye kro tre sa afson.

Har khwa che de lar nazar /

Ghrona nh gulona de /

Har ghar de daryab da rang /

Yaw nh pa zargono de /

Bal khwa da adam da jwand /

Meeni aw emaan qisa /

Har ghaar ke naghmi da ishq /

Har khwa da janan qisa /

Har yaw ghaar ke prot khamosh /

Saaz yaw da norono de /

Da wrak aw wejar jehan /

Kor mu da nekono de /

De tala jehan pasi /

De da pakhtun shaan pasi /

De tabah dawrana pasi /

De shaheed janan pasi /

De sawee gulshan pasi /
De wrak gulistan pasi /
Za da zra pa sro weeno jarama jaregama /
Za che warta gorama sra lamba swazegama”.

Translation:

(“Bamyan”).

(“It's the Lord's glory at one side /
And the man's perfection at the other /
It makes me mad /
There's light all around /
No, it's not Bamyan /
It's the mount Toor /
Here's the perfection of nature /
And there's the obsession of Adam /
Both are in competition /
Look! What a story they've carved of it /
Wherever your sight wanders /
There are not mountains but flowers /
Every mountain is an ocean of colors /
It's not one but are in multitudes /
On the other hand, there's the tale of Adam's life /
About his love and his belief /
There are melodies of love in every cave /
There are tales of the beloved everywhere /
There's a hidden gem in every cave /
The silent melody of light /
This wasted and wild world /
Has been a home of my ancestors /

In the memory of this robbed world /
After the place of the Pashtun /
After this destroyed past /
After this martyred beloved /
After this scorched orchard /
After this doomed garden of roses /
I'm crying the tears of blood /
I'm ablaze when I see it.”).

Annexure 11

“Qasabgar yam”

“Za Mochi yam qasabgar yam /
Za naayi yam qasabgar yam /
Za kulaal yam qasabgar yam /
Ahangar yam qasabgar yam /
Qasabi yam qasabgar yam /
Za chamyar yam qasabgar yam /
Za teeli yam qasabgar yam /
Sarkha’maar yam qasabgar yam /
Za Jola yam qasabgar yam /
Paracha yam qasabgar yam /
Za Pakhtun yam qasabgar yam /
Za insan yam qasabgar yam /
Kasab, Hasab nasab nh dey /
Da kasboona de rozgar dey /
Da hajat de zarorat dey /
Da mayaar da spak drond nh dey /
Da naami da asal nh de /
Da naami da nasal nh de /
Kasabgar dranawal ghwari /
Hunarmand dranawal ghwari /
Da nazar khpalawal ghwari /
Dagha raaz da wrorwai de /
Dagha raaz da taraqay de”.

Translation:

(“I am from Occupational”)

*(“I’m a cobbler, a craftsman /
I’m a barber, a craftsman /*

*I'm a blacksmith, a craftsman /
I'm an ironsmith, a craftsman /
I'm a butcher, a craftsman /
I'm a shoe mender, a craftsman /
I'm a cook, a craftsman /
I'm a cloth maker, a craftsman /
I'm a Paracha, a craftsman /
I'm a Pakhtun, a craftsman /
I'm a human, a craftsman /
Craft isn't from race /
The crafts are to earn /
It's a need for livelihood /
It's not standard of good or bad /
These aren't names of originality /
These aren't names of racism /
Craftsmen are to be honored /
Skilled persons are to be respected /
We should look at them with respect /
This is the secret of brotherhood /
This is the secret of progress.").*

Annexure 12

“Da samandar hawa badala shwala”

“Da samandar hawa badala shwala /
Mung sara hes da yarai dod nh kawi /
Pa samandar ke ghorzangona wahi /
Pa mung da saski oubou sod nh kawi.

Pa mung chitar pashakaal nh warawi /
Mung da cheeno ranro oubou pasi mro /
Zmung na teri qisy hery shwali /
Munga da jami pa jarro pasi mro /
Mung la sokro la taawa wrak lewani /
Hagha pa bala waryaz worry wareegy /
Mung pasi der makh pa qabla owato /
Hagha zmung na pa sang zi wareegy.

Da samandar hawa ba nh badleda? /
Mung da jwand koma tabahi wanakra /
Mung pa de khpala zmaka sa wanakra /
Pa mung de bal sok wali zra oseezi /
Mung che da khpal zan sara kha wo nh kra /
Munga da ghrono woni oseezali /
Mung khpal seendona da khazalo dak kral /
Munga da kar zmaka pa kor wonewa /
Da wono sori mu da sara wrak kral.

Zmung da zmaki pa makh nh alwazi /
Zmung da barkhi asman nh brekhawi /
Zmung da zrono cheeni nh tandawi /
Pa mung da meeni baran nh warawi.

Zmung da ghrono wawri weeli shwali /
Zmung da kanro na khwali owati /
Zmung da ghrono wono oor ahasti /
Da shno nakhtaro na lambi owati.

Zmung tanki faslona wo'dored /
 Zmung da barkhi ouba wo'swazedy.
 Pa munga lmar yawa neza ra'khkata /
 Zmung sa weeni toye sa wo'swazedy /
 Zmung tanko gulono saa warkrala /
 Zmung tankai mumanri wo'dore /
 Zmung marghai la tandi wo'swazedy /
 Zmung da wano panri wo'dore /
 Zmung la oora eery nh arawi /
 Zmung da stargo logi nh pakawi /
 Zmung pa zrono deiri nh arawi.

 Munga da kalio kosi tangi krali /
 Mung da kharono intizam wo nh kro /
 Munga har sa pakhpala kha rawastal /
 Munga da hes sara nakaam wo nh kro /
 Munga da ghrono woni wo wahali /
 Munga pa khaar ke karkhani jori kre /
 Mung da gulono dukanona wran kral /
 Munga har zai mestry khani jori kre /
 Mung da kabalo jar'ree wo'westali /
 Mung pa baghono ke bangli jori kre /
 Munga pa khaar ke khali zay pre nh khod /
 Munga pa har zay ke plazi jori kre /
 Munga da krash pa machine wo'seerali /
 Da khpalo ghrono da banrono seeni /
 Pa baldozaro mu zari zari kre /
 Da sro gulono da takhono seeni.

 Mung da hawa pa makhki sa prekhi de /
 Da gaado tor logi aw khara hawa /
 Zmunga tola dunya tola dunya /
 Da abadai da zora stari fizza /
 Che mung da khpal tawaan shuoor nh laro /
 Che mung da khpal zan sara kha nh kawal /

Da samandar hawa zmunga sa wa /
Da samandar hawa pa mung sa kawal.

Translation:

(“The mood of sea wind has shifted”)

*(“The sea wind has shifted/
It doesn’t exercise the custom of friendship with us/
It leaps about in sea/
But doesn’t comfort us with a drop of rain.*

*We don’t see rain even in monsoon/
We’re dying for spring’s crystal water/
We’ve forgotten the past tales/
We’re dying for the winter’s rain/
We’re doomed by the drought/
It carries away clouds to make it rain elsewhere/
We’ve been dying for it/
It evades us and rain.*

*Why wouldn’t the mood of sea wind change/
What is left there to destroy of life/
What we haven’t brought upon our land/
Why should someone else pity us/
When we haven’t done any good to ourselves/
We’ve burnt down the mountain’s trees/
We’ve filled our seas with garbage/
We’ve built houses on agricultural land/
We’ve lost the shades of trees completely.*

*The sea wind doesn’t blow on our land/
It doesn’t light the sky above our heads/
It doesn’t refresh our hearts’ springs/
It doesn’t shower the rain of affection over us.)*

Our glaciers are melting/

*Our rocks are sweating/
Our mountains' trees are ablaze/
The green pines are set on fire.
Our virgin crops have been blighted/
Our share's water has been spoiled/
The sun is a spear lower on our heads/
Our blood is either spilled or burnt/
Our tender flowers have died/
Our virgin buds have withered/
Our birds have been scorched of thirst/
Our trees have shed their leaves.
The sea wind doesn't turn away ashes of our fire/
It doesn't clear our eyes' smoke/
It doesn't settle in our hearts/

We've narrowed our villages' streets/
We haven't planned our cities/
We've brought everything on ourselves/
We haven't disappointed anything/
We've cut down the forests/
We've built factories in the cities/
We've devastated the flowers' shops/
We've built workshops everywhere/
We've uprooted our lawns/
We've built mansions in our gardens/
We haven't left a space in the city/
We've built plazas everywhere/
We tore down by crush machines/
The orchards of our mountains/
We've shattered them by bulldozers /
The meadows of red flowers.

What have we left in front of the air/
The black smoke of cars and polluted air/
Our whole belongings whole world/*

*A space exhausted of the construction/
Why were we unaware of our own loss/
Why didn't we act good to ourselves/
What relation was there between sea wind and us/
Why'd the sea wind care for us").*

Annexure 13

“Da wono boto kar kawa Insana”

“Kh ghwari che saa wakhlama nu zar kawa insana /
Da goro goro wono boto kar kawa insana /
Balha khalak mra shwe de dh lmar da tap da lasa /
Gharmo ke zan la soray pa khpal sar kawa insana /
Pa sama aw pa ghar ke sa be’shmeera boti naal kraa /
Da qaam pa bacho daghasi nazar kawa insana /
Aaraa darna tana da woni pre nh kre zan poh kra /
Tal dagha hifazat da khpal nakhtar kawa insana /
Da gargo saodagar pa khwaga khola goray khpal nh kre /
Da wono qatilan de tre khatar kawa insana /
Da tabar makh da dagha wono boto na panah kra /
Wala warta ramata! Ouba’khwat kawa insana /
Bas dagha har gozar pa wona ta bandi gozar dey /
Der khyal pa dagha pat panah khanjar kawa insana /
Nasapa afatono na pre zan bach kra zarifa /
Sailab ta bya da wono gor lakhkar kawa insana.”

Translation

(“Plant dense and thick trees”)

*(“O man! If you want to breathe then haste /
Plant dense and thick trees /
Many have perished by the hands of the furious Sun /
Make some shady roof above your head in the noon /
Sow so many seeds in the plains and on the hills /
Thus, watch over the children of your nation /
Let it be known that no tree should be cut down /
O man! Always guard your pine trees /*

Don't be deceived by the silver-tongued lumber merchant /

O man! Beware, they're the killers of plants /

Let the trees not see the face of the axe /

Straighten up the rivulet and water them /

Every blow to the tree is a blow to yourself /

O man! Beware of this hidden digger /

Save yourself by it from the unseen calamities, O Zareef! /

O man! Plant dense trees in the way of flood").

Annexure 14

“Har yaw boty me zarghon dey”

“Sta nawee yam singar me kra qarar rawra laliya /

Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinaar rawra laliya.

Ghamona ba de lari kram gulona ba der darkram /

Sandara yama tappa ba sham sazona ba der darkam /

Da jwand pa har parao nawee khyalona ba der darkram /

Worbal la me rang rang boti be’shmar rawra laliya /

Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinara rawra laliya.

Khabar ye grana sta sara zama sumra wafa da /

Qadam pa qadam tata khwara kre me khukala da /

Ta yaw waar charta owayal che da zama laila da? /

Za meena yama jwand yama izhar rawra laliya /

Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinara rawra laliya.

Badloon pa mousamono ke raghali sta da lasa /

Khwara de gandagi kra pa seena zama la pasa /

Nestee ba de she wraka nawe jwand la nur rapasa /

Saroor rawra masti rawra khumar rawra laliya /

Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinara rawra laliya.

Cheeni yakhi ouba aw baranona charta laral /

Taza yakha hawa aw absharona charta laral /

Marghai khwari wari shwe aw baghona charta laral /

Marai la me da sro gulono khaar rawra laliya /

Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinaar rawra laliya.

Da dangi dangi woni zama saaz zama naghma da /

Talona paki wachawa hum dagha sta dama da /

Da mh waha insana da zama da tan jama da /

Wada rasara wokra aw qarar rawra laliya /

Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinara rawra laliya.

Zama ghaiga ke meena har yaw boti me zarghon dey /

Ta jwand kawee zama sara zama aw sta taroon dey /

Tariq rasara meena kre Tariq zama janoon de /
Nur meena meena meena sha bahar rawra laliya /
Pa mahar ke nakhtar sarwee chinar rawra laliya”.

Translation:

(“Every tree has turned green”)

*(“I’m your bride, embellish me, soothe me my love /
In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar.
I’ll remove your ailments and give you abundant flowers /
I’m a melody and will become a folk song to give you music /
On every station of life, I’ll give you new ideas /
Bring colorful flowers for my locks my love /
In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar.
Are you aware dear how much I’m loyal to you /
At every step I’ve laid down my comeliness for you /
Have you ever uttered once that this is my beloved.? /
I’m love, I’m life, come forward with expression /
In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar.
The transformation in the weather is because of you /
You’ve scattered garbage above my chest /
Your dearth will vanish, rise to your new life /
Bring joy, bring amusement and intoxication my love /
In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar.
Where have gone the cold springs, water and rains /
What happened to the fresh, cold air and waterfalls /
Birds have scattered, where does the orchards vanish /
Bring the necklace of red flowers for my neck my love /
In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar.
These high trees are my music and my melodies/
Install swings in these, it’s your resting place/
Don’t cut them down, O man! These are my clothing /
Promise me and bring me confession my love /*

In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar.

There's affection in my bosom, every tree has turned green /

You live with me; you and I are in agreement /

Tariq loves me, Tariq is my beloved /

Be full of love, spread love and bring spring with you /

In my dowry bring me trees of pine, cypress, and poplar”).

Annexure 15

“Zay che tol boti naal kro nan”

“Zay che tol boti naal kro nan /

Zay che tol boti naal kro nan.

Da shenki shenki boti /

Da rangi rangi boti /

Woni ba saba la we /

Da tanki tanki boti.

Dey zmung dawlat woni /

Ghwari muhabbat woni /

Kre ba chapairchal zmung /

Sam laka jannat woni.

She ba sam aw ghar khukalay /

Har yaw raw gudar khukaly /

Sheen sadar ba waghondi /

Dalta har yaw dar khukalay.

Kre ba shni mairee mung la /

Nesy ba meewi mung la /

Da ba pa khpal gor syoree /

Yakhi kre gharmi mung la.

She ba da hawa safa /

Akhlo ba mung saa safa /

Da safa mahol ba kre /

Jwand zama aw sta safa”.

Translation

(“Let's plant plants today”)

(“Let's plant plants today/

Let's plant plants today.

These green and unripe plants/

These colorful and pretty plants/

They'll become trees tomorrow

These young and rookie plants.
It's our wealth, these trees /
They need a lot of love and care.
They'll transform our environment /
Just as heaven, these trees /

It will beautify our plains and mountains /
And every stream where lovers meet /
There'll be greenery everywhere /
And everything will become beautiful.

It'll turn our barren lands into greenery /
It'll give us fruits.
It'll turn into chill our hot noon's /
With their dense shade /

The air will become clean /
And we'll breathe in clean air /
This clean environment will make clean /
The lives of yours and mine.

Annexure 16

“Bas da fitrat mehfoz krai”

“Da wono boto hifazat wakray /
Da zangalono balha khyal wosatay /
Zaka che da zangal da woni boti /
Ghrono sendona chamanona wara.

Mung ta saagani bakhi /
Sehat sukoon rabakhi /
Mung ta jwandun rabakhi.

Mung da tofan na sati /
Munga da zyan na sati /
Da har nuqsan na sati.

Zmung pa sar syoree de /
Mung ta dami rakawi /
Mung ta meewei rakawi.

Da zinda saro kor dey /
Margho kontaro kor dey /
Da zanawro kor dey.

Mung la baran rawali /
Zmaka ke twaan rawali /
Samsor dawran rawali.

Da dh taodokhi khilaf /
Da mousamono bad badloon pa khilaf /
Da musbat rol lobawi.

Da dh fitrat wajood dey /
Da dh qudrat wajood dey /
Mung tol da de na jor u.

Bas da fitrat mehfoz kre /
Zan la jannat mahfoz kre”.

Translation:

(“So, protect this nature”)

*(“Preserve the plants and trees /
Take good care of the forests /
Because these forests, these plants and trees /
These mountains, seas, grasslands and all.*

*Provide us air to breath /
And health and tranquility /
These provide us life.*

*They protect us from storms /
And protect us from termination /
And every kind of ruination.*

*They give us shade above our heads /
They give us a place for resting /
And give us abundant fruits.*

*They are the home of the living /
Home of birds and pigeons /
And that of animals.*

*They bring us the rain /
Which keeps the land alive /
And bring a thriving circulation.*

*They're the barriers against the heat /
Against the bad changes in weather /
They play a positive role.*

*They're the lifeline of nature /
They're the exhibit of power /
We all are made of these.*

*So, protect this nature /
Protect the heaven for yourselves”).*