AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Institute for Educational Development

DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN STUDENTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BALTISTAN

By

ZAKIR HUSSAIN ZAKIR

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Members of the Thesis Evaluation Committee appointed to examine the thesis of

ZAKIR HUSSAIN ZAKIR

find it satisfactory and recommended that it be accepted

_____________________________
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The editorial assistance provided to me has in no way added to the substance of my thesis which is the product of my own research endeavours.

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October 16, 2015
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Abstract

Schools as important sites of socialization play a key role in nurturing, enculturation and/or acculturation of children and shape their present and future identities. Numerous research studies (Foster, 1999; Matthews & Jenkins, 1999; Tse, 2007; Bass, 2008) show that schooling as an important mode of formal education has been used as a powerful instrument for both cultural and national identity formation of children. Under the multiple internal and external pressures from family, peer groups, society, religion, schooling (formal education) and media, a student internalizes certain behaviors and ways of life that form his/her cultural identity. This is the social dimension of one’s personal identity which is a compound of past experiences, present circumstances, future aspirations and preferences of the individual.

This study explores the role of schooling in the development of students’ cultural identity in order to observe and understand the influence of school processes on identity formation. The study focused on the cultural identities of ethnic communities, in this case the ‘Balti cultural identity’ among secondary school students. Here, Balti represents the native speakers of the Balti language residing in Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan, and Ladakh, Kargil, and Nobra parts of India.

The study used ethnographic approach of qualitative investigation with the critical lens. Data has been analyzed by using critical discourse analysis (CDA) techniques. The research participants included students of secondary classes (both boys and girls) and teachers of two government secondary schools in Baltistan. Interviews of teachers and head teachers, focus group discussions with students, and school observation were used to generate and collect relevant data. Four specific cultural identifiers: language, religion, music and ceremonies were focused on.

The findings reflect that school processes have major emphasis on the inculcation of national and religious identities. Local language and music have no place in the schools except in the form of religious poetry or national songs. Further, the nature of all the school ceremonies and celebrations is either religious or national. Consequently, the local language and cultural identity is marginalized to a great extent.
Dedication

I dedicate my research study to my late maternal uncle and father-in-law Muhammad Ibrahim who being a teacher and guardian educated me and to my mother-in-law Khusni. They were beacons of hope and encouragement in human relations. Their dreams and faith in me enabled me to become a PhD scholar. Both of them departed before they could see their dreams come true but their dreams are the driving force and a source of inspiration for me. May Allah bless their souls eternally!
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# Table of Content

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1  INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview and Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Context</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling and Identity Formation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2  CULTURE, IDENTITY AND THE ROLE OF SCHOOLING: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Overview</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Identity</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Bases</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation Strategies</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Diversity and its Significance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Self’ and the ‘I-am-ness’ (philosophical)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego Identity --- the Psychological Dimension</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sociological Dimension of Identity the ‘me’</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological and Ecological Approach</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Formation Stages</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Identity Formation Process</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Patterns and Modes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identity Status ........................................................................................................................................... 35
Scope of Identity Studies .......................................................................................................................... 36
**Cultural Identity** .................................................................................................................................. 38
Cultural Identity as a Social Construct ..................................................................................................... 38
Cultural Identity Development Model ..................................................................................................... 41
Language and Cultural Identity ................................................................................................................ 42
**Role of Schooling in Identity Formation** ............................................................................................ 44
Schooling for Preserving and Promoting Cultural Identity ...................................................................... 45
Schooling for Coercing ‘National’ Identities ............................................................................................ 47
**The Conceptual Framework** ................................................................................................................. 51
Schooling and Cultural Identity ............................................................................................................... 53
Role of Education in Power Dynamics ..................................................................................................... 54
**CHAPTER 3 BALTISTAN: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT** ....................................................................... 60
The Research Context ............................................................................................................................... 60
**Baltistan Background** .......................................................................................................................... 60
Cultural Heritage ...................................................................................................................................... 61
Socio-political Identity of Gilgit-Baltistan .................................................................................................... 64
The sense of uncertainty .............................................................................................................................. 66
The Endangered Balti-Culture ................................................................................................................. 67
Language and Linguistic Heritage ............................................................................................................ 68
Religious Harmony ................................................................................................................................... 70
Schooling in Baltistan ............................................................................................................................... 72
Present Status of School Education .......................................................................................................... 74
The Curriculum Issue in GB ...................................................................................................................... 77
**CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY** ................................................................................. 79
Chapter Overview ...................................................................................................................................... 79
**The Methodology** ................................................................................................................................ 79
**Relativistic Epistemology** .................................................................................................................... 81
**Ethnographic Approach to Study** ........................................................................................................ 84
Research Question ...................................................................................................................................... 88
Scope of the Study ...................................................................................................................................... 88
*Purpose* .................................................................................................................................................. 89
Study Site/Context ...................................................................................................................................... 90
Selection of Research Participants ............................................................................................................ 90
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Strategies ................................................. 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Cultural Identity Parameters .................................. 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Management ................................................................. 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription of Audio Data ................................................... 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis ........................................................................ 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse Analysis .................................................................. 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning Making ....................................................................... 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Model ..................................................................... 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Sources ........................................................................... 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Coding Themes (Neutral themes) .......................................... 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Consideration ............................................................. 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological Issues and Challenges ......................................... 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5 LANGUAGE AND MUSIC ............................................ 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Overview ..................................................................... 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language(s) Used in Schools ....................................................... 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language as a Marker and Maker of Culture .................................... 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentimental Expression ................................................................ 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Languages in School ...................................................... 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium of Instruction .................................................................. 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Language Policy ............................................................... 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for the Unwritten Policy ............................................... 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dilemma of Using Local Language .......................................... 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Competency in Multilingual Environment ......................... 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of not using Local Language(s) .................................... 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Opportunities of using Local Language .................................... 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Effects of Ban on L1 ............................................... 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion .................................................................................. 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, the Melody of Soul ............................................................ 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Background Perspective of Balti Music ........................................ 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Perceptions about Music ................................................ 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Perceptions about Music ............................................... 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Severity of Perceptions ........................................................ 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6 SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND RELIGION ....................... 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals and Ceremonies ............................................................... 146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1 Stages of Identity Formation...........................................................................30
Table 2 Construction of Collective Identity...................................................................34
Table 3 Construction of Collective Identity...................................................................40
Table 4 Summary of Schools in GB ..............................................................................74
Table 5 District wise and gender wise schools in GB ...................................................74
Table 6 Total Enrolment status in GB ............................................................................75
Table 7 Primary to Secondary Gross Enrolment Ratio in Baltistan .........................76
Table 8 Data Sources ..................................................................................................104
Table 9 The Analytical Grid ........................................................................................105
Table 10 Coding Scheme ..............................................................................................106
Table 11 Gendered Access to Co-curricular Activities .............................................177
Table 12 School Displays .............................................................................................180

List of Figures

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of identity construction ...........................................52
Figure 2 Analytical Framework ....................................................................................97
Figure 3 The CDA Model of Fairclough ....................................................................101
Figure 4 CDA Process ...............................................................................................103
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIGP</td>
<td>Assistant Inspector General Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDE</td>
<td>Deputy Director Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>Gilgit-Baltistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGP</td>
<td>Inspector General Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language (the language in which one learn words for objects/concepts for the first time, the mother tongue Balti in this study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language (the language next to L1 in which learning and communication takes place with broader community, the basic schema of L1 are translated, the national language Urdu in this study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>Practical Training Instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I believe that marks of individual and group cultural identity generate an inner strength which is conducive to peaceful relations. I also believe in the power of plurality, without which there is no possibility of exchange. In my view, this idea is integral to the very definition of genuine quality of life” (The Aga Khan, Nov 16, 2008).

Introduction

This chapter briefly introduces the research topic, the key words, the background of the study, the research context with its brief historical and cultural background, the conceptual framework, and the research questions. It also presents the research approach, the critical perspective, study participants and tools and instruments. The chapter ends with the overall format and organization of the thesis chapters for a quick reference of the reader.

With the exponentially advancing technology, fast moving and rapidly changing lifestyles, and spread of digital media, conserving the diversity of cultural heritage has become a prime need for human civilization. Resultantly, conservation of cultures has now become one of UNESCO's top priorities.

Schools as institutions of socialization are expected to shape and guide children’s understanding of self and their aspirations in their given socio-cultural contexts. This study explored the cultural practices and preferences in the school processes that consequently shape and influence students ‘cultural identity’ through their participation in these processes. It aims to unpack the role of mainstream schooling in the development of ‘cultural identity’ among the secondary students in Baltistan.

Overview and Background

Identity studies have become one of the major foci of postmodern anthropological studies (Semaan, 2007, Cerulo, 1997), especially the studies about the indigenous communities, minority ethnic/cultural groups and mostly underrepresented and politically marginalized peoples of any part of the world (Yun, 2007; Bangsbo, 2008; Matthews & Jenkins, 2009; Bass, 2008; Tse, 2007). In the light of Erikson’s Psychosocial Development
Theory (1968, 1970), this study aims to explore the role and dynamics of schooling in the development of local ‘cultural identity’ among secondary students. ‘Cultural Identity’ is taken “as a shared culture, a sort of collective ‘oneself’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (Hall, 1990 cited in Dryland & Syed, 2011, p.46). The cultural identity of individuals is perceived as the dynamic set of one’s learned behavior, attitude and personality traits with which one considers oneself as a member of a certain community. This ‘learned’ and socially constructed identity is established, nurtured, developed and matured through the socialization process of living with the commonalities and observing the different cultural traditions and practices. School is a major institution of planned socialization with predetermined and set objectives, policies and learning experiences that shapes student identities as it desires. This study explored the development of cultural identity by adolescents through the schooling processes in Baltistan.

Research Context

Baltistan, also known as the ‘Western Tibet’ or ‘Little Tibet’, is a region with its unique history, culture, language and geography of strategic importance. Baltistan is the northern most part of Pakistan bordering with India, and China situated in the lap of the great Karakoram and Himalayan mountain ranges. Currently the Pakistani part of Baltistan is a division of Gilgit-Baltistan province like administrative unit. The major Indian parts of Baltistan are Laddakh, Kargil and Turtuk. Historically and culturally Baltistan has it lineage with Tibet and Laddakh.

In 2009, the formerly Northern Areas were renamed as Gilgit-Baltistan and a province like status was granted, however internationally it remains a disputed region like Kashmir. With its disputed political status, the question of democratic citizenship and political rights, identity and liberty are naturally disturbing this region. Culturally, Baltistan has been linked with Tibet and Laddakh. At present being distanced from Laddakh and Tibet due to the international border (with China) and the line of control (LOC-between Pakistan and India) after partition of the sub-continent, the questions of conservation and promotion of cultural heritage, language and identity have become key concerns on both sides of the border. The current of modernization and consumerist culture has already become a threat to the diversity of indigenous cultures of the ‘Laddakhi/Balti culture’ which strives to remain distinct from cultures of other parts of the country (Norberg-Hodge, 2002a).
Education, being a key factor of socialization, plays a major role in transmission, preservation and promotion of culture through enculturation and acculturation. The term ‘enculturation’, broadly defined, “encompasses the process of learning about and adapting to one’s ethnic culture, potentially leading to the adoption of beliefs, values, behaviors, and language of that culture and to one’s ethnic identity” (Roosa, Dumka, Gonzales, & Knight, 2002 cited in Park, 2007, p.403). Enculturation is thus nurturing according to the culture-of-origin, whereas “acculturation deals with adaptation to the host culture” (Park, 2007, p.403) by the immigrants. According to Berry (1997) cited in Robinson (2009, p.444) “in practice acculturation tends to induce more change in the immigrant group”. In context of this study the native Balti people have become more receptive to changes due to the influence of a dominant Pakistani culture. In this context, acculturation means inducing the dominant culture through schooling which is an effort of assimilation by the immigrants.

In Baltistan too, education and specifically schooling is one of the major channels of socialization and enculturation/acculturation. The main education provider is the government education department followed by private schools run by different Non-Government Organizations (NOGs). So far in all schools the national curriculum of Pakistan is followed, though after the 18th Amendment in the constitution of Pakistan curriculum has become a subject of provincial governments. Gilgit-Baltistan, having a non-constitutional province like status, has not yet been able to develop its own curriculum. In these schools, the mediums of instruction are Urdu and English which are the second and third languages for more than 90% population of students who speak Balti as their first language (L1). The curriculum does not offer students any opportunity of learning the first language(s) at school level in Gilgit-Baltistan and only uses the centrally prepared national curriculum which lacks contextual relevance.

There are several factors such as globalization, postcolonial effects, centralized national curriculum, non-contextual syllabi and politically driven educational policies that blur the indigenous ‘cultural identities’ of minority ethnic and linguistic groups all around the world (McMillan, 2008). The case of Baltistan is not different in this regard.

Schooling and Identity Formation

Schooling as a system of planned learning site and opportunity with a set of defined curriculum and processes plays a key role in socialization and identity formation of
children. After the informal learning at home, a child is prepared by school for a desirable citizenship; however, this apparently simple process is much more complex. This is because schooling and curriculum are used as powerful tools to govern and control patterns of society and ‘mentalities’ of the individuals or simply for ‘domestication’ (Freire, 1972; Apple, 1996; Popkwitz, 1997). Schools direct students how to see ‘the world-at-large’ and ‘the self’ in that world; in other words, schooling is the process through which students situate themselves in their context. However, the context, the text and the whole process of schooling is set and defined by an ‘education system’ that serves the interest of those who design and/or govern the system.

Although ‘transfer of cultural heritage to the future generations’ has been stated as an educational objective in Pakistan’s our earlier education policies, however, this objective has been rephrased in the Education Policy 2009, with more emphasis on preservation of Pakistan ideology, national cohesion through respect of diversity and promotion of social and cultural harmony (objectives number 2 to 5, p.10). This objective strives to construct cultural identities by appreciating ‘national’ and ‘multi-national’ kinds of identities.

In such a scenario, the beauty and colors of diversity of cultures is fading into a black-and-white kind of culture that suggests only either ‘useful’ or ‘useless’ in a reductionist way. The huge variety of human options in terms of cultural, aesthetic, emotional, sentimental, moral, existential and spiritual values are overlooked. The hasty ‘useful’, ‘useless’, ‘profit’, ‘loss’, ‘income’, ‘expenditure’, and ‘yes’, ‘no’ kinds of bipolar options are becoming popular even in education. This is what Paulo Freire has coined as the ‘banking concept of education’. The students are like bank accounts where bulk of knowledge and may be skills, are deposited for the purpose of the depositor in future. In the banking concept of education, the question “what we have” becomes more important than the question “who we are”.

This study is, in fact, about the fundamental question of ‘who we are’, or ‘who am I’. As an educator, first I have to affirm my own ‘existence’, my ‘self’, my ‘personality’, my ‘being’. Once the self becomes clear, I can then be interested in other questions such as ‘what I can…’, ‘what is this or that’, ‘what do I have’, ‘what can I have’ and ‘what I should have’ etc. In fact the ‘who am I’ is the ontological question, and then comes the epistemological questions of ‘what I can…’, ‘what is this or that’. The other questions could be axiological in nature such as ‘what I ought to do’ and ‘what we should have’.
Ideally ‘basic education’ should evolve from the cultural context of the students, so that they can proceed from the known to the unknown in a logical sequence as a principle of learning. But the situation is different in Baltistan. Baltistan follows the ‘centrally designed national curriculum’ at all levels of schooling. The government schools, known as FG (Federal Government) schools, use the national curriculum and the textbooks that have very little culturally and contextually relevant content. The national education policies have overlooked the importance of cultural diversity in the curriculum. The major emphasis of the national curriculum is on developing students’ ‘national’ and ‘religious’ identities. This marginalization of the local cultures in the curriculum have resulted in the forms of local political movements demanding political rights such as in Balochistan, Sindh, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. In fact, these movements are cultural voices demanding recognition of the neglected indigenous cultural identities.

Identity studies have got momentum during the last two decades in the West (Semaan, 2007) but in the context of Southern countries, it is somehow understudied. In the repository of doctoral thesis collected by the Higher Education Commission, I could find only one PhD thesis with a title containing ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ keywords from Pakistan (Safur Rehman-Ullah, 1972) which was presented in the Punjab University, Lahore. About the focus of Pakistani national curriculum, textbooks and schooling regarding identity formation ‘The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan’, by Nayyar and Salim (2002) is a more relevant study. Similarly the study of Rosser (2003) on ‘Curriculum as Destiny: Forging National Identity in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh’, is another relevant study.

Regarding Balti cultural identity, Dryland and Syed (2011) explored issues of cultural identity of the people of Baltistan and the challenges they face in the nation state of Pakistan. MacDonald’s (2006) study on ‘Memories of Tibet’, describes much of the ground situation and the concerns of Balti people over the erosion of cultural identity. MacDonald’s (2006) terms the growing incipient ethnic movements in Baltistan as an attempt to reshape identity.

Research Question

The research question of this study is:
How does the mainstream schooling of Pakistan develop ‘cultural identity’ among the secondary school students in Baltistan?

The subsidiary practical questions are:

What are the cultural practices and preferences of secondary schools of Baltistan about language, music, ceremonies and religion?

What perceptions do teachers and students have about the current cultural practices of the schools?

What roles do teachers and students play in enforcing the current cultural practices in the schools?

Scope of the study

Among many cultural identifiers or culture makers, four aspects have been focused which are observable and practiced in schools. These cultural identifiers/makers are language, rituals/ceremonies, music and religion. These cultural themes have been selected with the help of literature and contextual relevance. The data is focused on but not limited to these themes only, as several other themes have also emerged. The local language ‘Balti’, forms of local music, songs, school rituals and celebrations, and religion were considered as the major modes of cultural practices and expressions in school setting.

In the research question, ‘cultural identity’ means ‘Balti cultural identity’ which they share for centuries. It is assumed that about 90% of the population belongs to the ‘indigenous peoples of Baltistan’ with Balti as their mother tongue/first language.

In order to address the ‘how’ question, the study engages itself with discourses about policies, meanings, notions, symbols and symbolic manifestations of school processes used to allow or disallow the cultural expressions in different ways.

Using the ethnographic approach of ‘watching what happens’ in the school events through observations, ‘listening to what is said’ in formal, informal discussions and interviews, and ‘asking questions’ to explore meanings (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, p.1), I will try to address the research questions.

In order to understand the formation of ‘cultural identity’ (specifically local, indigenous, Balti cultural identity), the space and importance of culture related activities
in school rituals, ceremonies, teaching-learning processes and the school ethos (including hidden curriculum) have been critically examined.

The level of encouragement and facilitation of cultural events by the schools, students’ participation in cultural events and their level of participation (as performer, audience, managers etc.) and overall perceptions of students and teachers towards local culture have been explored.

Methodology

Methodologically this study is a ‘qualitative critical ethnographic study’. It is ‘ethnographic’ because of the cultural focus (Wolcott, 1999; Lecompte & Schensul, 1999) and ‘critical’ as it explores the cultural identity as a product of complex relationships of socio-political factors and forces. Observations of school processes, interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with the secondary (Grade-VIII) students, and documents, artifacts analysis were used to collect data from two government high schools selected as per recommendation of the Director of Education Baltistan who is the highest authority (gate-keeper) of these schools at the regional level.

‘Critical Discourse Analysis’ model of Fairlough (2009) was used to analyze the data, as cultural dimensions are reflected in discourses and are determined through the dominant discourses. On one hand, the types of discourses depict the nature of dominant socio-cultural ideologies, and on the other hand, the modes of production, access, utilization and consumption of discourses show the power dynamics, social relations and cultural politics.

Regarding format and presentation of data, the APA style has been followed. At times in order to save the essence of expressive meaning the original Urdu phrases and sentences are also written in Urdu script with English translation. The contextual meanings in the sequence of discussion are given in parenthesis; for pronoun in the citation of transcript, the referenced noun is written in parenthesis. Where I felt the need to introduce my own understanding or explanation within verbatim transcription citations, I have put my words in braces [ ].Where my words were part of the discussion as interviewer that is put in parenthesis with (Z: ...).
Along with the observation data, interview and ‘focus group discussions’ (FGD) findings, analysis of some documents and artifacts are also used as data sources.

Apart from the four major cultural identifiers of language, rituals/ceremonies, music and religion, the other cultural themes that emerged from data have been put under the general heading of ‘other cultural themes’. These themes are significant as they reflect the overall cultural milieu in terms of preferences, priorities and cultural knowledge base of the participants. Terms such as *parda*\(^1\) and *Hijab*\(^2\) show both the gender and religious perspectives. Focus on the observable material, cultural heritage of historical building/architecture and ecological sites showing lesser knowledge base information of intangible culture.

In the finding chapters, a series of actual excerpts have been given first that shows the consistency, differences, emphasis and significance of emerging themes or codes. Then analysis and discussions part of each chapter is given with references of preceding citations of respective themes. The discussion part first explains the immediate context i.e. put the text in context and then place it in the wider socio-political and cultural context and then meaning is drawn through interpretation by using discourse analysis model. Modes of discourse production, access, and consumption are then discussed to reach conclusions that how such and such discourses guide the cultural orientation of students and the public at large. Schools are sites of discourse production of certain kinds which are guided and directed by the curriculum, educational policies and the school practices and processes in the given socio-cultural contexts.

**Conceptual Framework**

For this study I have adopted the conceptual framework of Zhu (2007) which considers construction of students’ cultural identity as a combined result of the school context with all the learning opportunities offered in and through schools, and the community context carrying the perspectives of local people and the broader socio-political context of the state. For data analysis I have used the Critical Discourse Analysis model of Fairclough (2009)

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\(^1\)Islamic religious dress code

\(^2\)Islamic dress code for women that covers the whole body except face and hands
which interprets any text in the immediate context of discourse production situated in the broader socio-cultural context shaped by the ideological and political factors.

Chapters Organization

This thesis has been organized into eight chapters. The First Chapter introduces the study briefly with major themes, and the format of the thesis. This part of the chapter briefly presents the organization and content of chapters.

The Second Chapter presents literature review that unpacks the key notions of ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ and describes the processes of enculturation, acculturation and assimilation strategies. Under the notion of identity, the philosophical, psychological and sociological dimensions of personal identity ‘self’, ‘ego’, the ‘I-am-ness’ ‘the me’ are discussed. The identity part also includes literature review about the identity formation stages, process modes and patterns and scope of identity studies. This section presents ‘cultural identity’ as a social construct and presents a ‘cultural identity development model’. The third part of this chapter is about the role of schooling in identity formation as schools serve for both enculturation and acculturation of children.

As the possible roles of schooling for assimilative purposes are discussed under the critical perspectives, therefore, a brief description of the critical perspective with the role of education in power dynamics is discussed. The Third Chapter is about the research site and context ‘Baltistan’, its historical and cultural background and lineage, its present socio-political identity, the endangered status of Balti language and its linguistic cultural heritage. Followed by this background, the present status of education especially school education and schooling in Baltistan is presented.

Chapter Four discusses ‘methodology’ with emphasis on the philosophical stance and underpinnings of this study. As this study is an ethnographic qualitative study so some salient features of ethnographic study are presented to explain how it guided the research. The research questions, purpose of the study, selection of research participants, instruments used for data collection, selection of parameters of cultural identity are discussed in this chapter. All this is followed by the data gathering process, data management, transcription, and data analysis process. ‘Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)’ is used as the analytical tool to analyze data, therefore the CDA analytical model is briefly discussed with the
discourse types and the data coding themes. The methodology chapter concludes with the ethical considerations and the methodological issues and challenges faced during the study.

Findings of the study are presented and discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven with titles of the four major cultural themes of ‘language(s) and music’, ‘school ritual and ceremonies’, ‘religion and other cultural themes’. The findings about the cultural themes in form of actual data (interview/ discussion verbatim and observation notes) have been placed under headings and subheadings which are followed by discussion and analysis part as the last segment of each chapter.

In Chapter 6 on language(s) and music, the respective place and importance given in the school processes to the local language Balti (which is the first language), the national language Urdu (medium of instruction for several subjects) and the international language English (which is the medium of instruction for several other subjects) have been explored. The ‘discussions and analysis’ part of ‘language’ theme has been further put under subheadings of ‘The Gaps and Ban’, ‘The Sense of Loss’, and the ‘Pedagogical Implications’. In the same format the cultural theme of ‘Music’ is presented in this chapter as language and music are closely linked and at times overlapped when the poetry, folk lore and songs aspects of any language are discussed.

Chapter 6 is about the ‘Rituals and Ceremonies’, Religion and other significant cultural themes emerging from data. The school ceremonies comprise of the daily morning assembly, weekly Bazm-e-Adab\(^3\), religious days and national days observed and/or celebrated in the school, the sports events and other co-curricular activities and festivals. The content of this chapter is mainly based on the observation records of school rituals and events supported by the interview and focus group discussion responses. The data about ‘religion’ and other cultural themes have been mainly obtained from the school environment in form of the official wall chalking and displays inside school. Data was also obtained from observing the dominant religiosity element in all aspects of the school processes from morning assembly, ceremonies, dress code and informal discussions and the school permitted time for the religious rites. Interview responses confirm the observation findings.

\(^3\) A weekly school event or whole school assembly which is a regular co-curricular activity in many of the schools
The other emerging cultural themes though minor are yet very relevant and interesting for analysis. The discussion and analysis part of this chapter presents the overall picture about school rituals and ceremonies, significance of national songs in school rituals and events, the element of religiosity, the conformity pedagogy, gender based co-curricular activities and the ideological state apparatus as themes of the subheading. The trend of schooling regarding religious culture which seems to be replacing the local indigenous culture and cultural identity is also part of the discussion.

Chapter 7, consolidates the literature review and findings. It especially highlights the discussion and analysis of the chapters on findings and also the focused cultural themes which are in fact the makers and identifiers of the cultural identity. The overall summary of the trends and the intensity of the acculturation/enculturation processes through schooling are briefly discussed followed by the recommendations for policy guidance and further research.
CHAPTER 2

CULTURE, IDENTITY AND THE ROLE OF SCHOOLING: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a review of literature around the key concepts such as ‘culture’, ‘identity’, ‘cultural identity’, the role of education and specifically schooling in the development of cultural identity. The findings of several empirical studies on the topic have been analyzed and discussed to situate the current study in the body of knowledge around schooling and cultural identity. This has been done by presenting a critical perspective of viewing schooling with diverse lenses. Efforts have been made to bridge the existing knowledge gap through this study.

The sequence flows from definitions of the notions of ‘culture’, ‘identity’ and brief descriptions of the processes of enculturation, acculturation and assimilation strategies for identity construction. Under the notion of identity, the philosophical, psychological and sociological dimensions of personal identity ‘self’, ‘ego’, the ‘I-am-ness’, ‘the me’ are discussed. The identity part also includes literature review about the identity formation stages, processes modes and patterns and scope of identity studies. This section presents ‘cultural identity’ as a social construct and also presents a ‘cultural identity development model’. The third part of this chapter is about the role of schooling in identity formation as schools serve for both enculturation and acculturation of children. The possible roles of schooling for assimilative purposes are discussed under the critical perspectives. A brief description of the critical perspective with the role of education in power dynamics is discussed that makes the ground for my study.

Culture and Identity

“Culture must be one of the foundations for world understanding.”

(Einstein, 2002, p.163)

The socio-cultural and political scenarios across the world are in a state of transformation. Cultural politics has become a key player in this transformative process. In a way a struggle for survival among cultures is seen everywhere in the world. As a result
‘a noticeable interest in understanding of cultural identity development’ is being observed (Hale and de Abreu, 2010). As Mercer (1990, p.43) puts it: “Just now everybody wants to talk about ‘identity’.

“In the past 20 years or so, socio-cultural approaches to learning have started to emphasize the close relationship between processes of learning and identity development” (Hale &de Abreu, 2010, p.295). The studies of identity have acquired a central place in the modern sociological discourse (Cerulo, 1997), and education is the major endeavor of planned socialization and identity formation. This part presents the multiple dimensions, shades of meanings and the modes of formation of cultural identity.

Culture

The word ‘culture’ is one of the key but all-encompassing terms used in sociology, anthropology, history and other disciplines with different dimensions to include all human actions and behaviors in certain physical (ecological) and social environment. According to the New Encyclopedia Britannica: Knowledge in Depth (1995), The World Book Encyclopedia (1994), The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1987) and Encarta Encyclopedia (2009, DVD) culture means ‘the way of life’, the patterns of ‘learned behavior’ and thinking or ‘ideas in the mind’, ‘a psychic defense mechanism’ and ‘an abstraction from behavior’ that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Culture in its broadest sense, as a way of life, behavior, thinking and interaction of people in a certain society with its unique historical, linguistic, ecological, and religious background, is always in flux. The learned ways of acting, thinking, behavior, attitudes, responses, priorities and preferences, affiliations and appreciations for any kind of social phenomena or artifact could be termed as culture (Tylor, 1871 & Biesanz & Biesanz, 1869 cited in Rehman-Ullah, 1972). Culture consists of the integrated pattern of human knowledge that includes values, ideals, beliefs, languages, ideas, morals, laws, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, inventions, technology, tradition techniques, works of arts, rituals, ceremonies, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by human beings as members of society.

After citing several definitions Keesing & Stranthern (1998) take culture as an ideational system as they argue:
Culture in this sense comprises a system of shared ideas, systems of concepts and rules and meanings that underlie human life and are expressed in different ways that humans live. Culture so defined refers to what humans learn, not what they do and make. The term ‘culture’ has been used differently by different people depending on their focus of interest or field of study (p.16).

According to Goodenough (1961), and others cited in Keesing, & Stranthern (1998, p.16) anthropologist have defined culture in two ways.

First, culture has been used to refer to ‘pattern of life within a community—the regularly recurring activities and material and social arrangements characteristic of a particular human group. Second culture has been used to refer to the organized system of knowledge and belief whereby people structure their experience and perceptions, formulate acts and choose between alternatives. This sense of culture refers to the realm of ideas.

Hence culture is used to refer to both the product and process of shared human activities and ideational systems. According to Herskovits (1955) and Kroeber Kluckhohn (1952) cited in Keesing and Stranthern (1998, p.15), culture is “The man-made part of the environment” and the “Patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts” is called culture. Freire (1998, 2005) is in agreement with Herskovits’ definition and is of the opinion that culture is the outcome of human action; when nature is acted upon, the changed outcome or product is culture. For example, a piece of stone lying outside is part of nature; when it is used by human beings in a wall as block, it is culture. Similarly, a grown tree in a jungle is nature, the wood obtained from that tree and all the wooden tools and items made from this is ‘culture’. Frere’s definition of culture here can be used to divide culture into ‘material culture’ and ‘intangible culture’. The architecture, housing, dresses, foods, and technological tools are all material culture. The intangible culture consists of all soft aspects of human life such as language, music, and the ideational dimensions.

Importantly, UNESCO’s definition of ‘intangible culture’ below provides an elaborate and encompassing view:

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize
as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003, Article 2).

In addition to the ‘human action’ aspect, Goodenough (1957) adds another basic dimension of human learning and knowledge in its widest sense (cited in Riley 2007, p.40) to the concept of culture. According to this view, learning and knowledge are the determiners of culture, and ‘knowledge’ includes all ideological notions, faith components, skills, perceptions and attitudes based on such perceptions. In the words of Riley (2007, p.40), it can be concluded that “Culture is the sum total of the information, beliefs, values, skills one needs to share and apply in the society and situations in which the individual lives.”

**Cultural Bases**

Culture is based on several foundations such as ecological, social, biological, and philosophical or ideological factors. The ecological factors such as, the climatic conditions and the geographical location of a community affect many dimensions of the material culture made up of buildings, clothing/dress codes, food, crops, and the related cultural events, responses, preferences, meanings, ideas and knowledge.

The purely social kind of culture is based on the patterns of interactions and shared meaning of symbols and expressions in language or literary work. The socially constructed culture is based upon the common history and economic well-being that may have a direct effect upon the social life, its harmony and conflicts etc. Social culture can then further be categorized under themes of aesthetics such as literature, poetry, music, painting, dance etc which are known in Urdu as *funun-e-latifa*—(the sublimated skills). Similarly, traditions, mythologies, customs, social chores, the periodic and occasion-specific rituals such as religious practices, birth and death rituals and services, seasonal rites and chores, rituals and responses on occasions of fortune or natural events (disasters) are all forms of social culture.
Ideologies or philosophies are the third kind of culture that becomes authentic reference of community through a long time sustained historical process. This type of determiner of cultural codes and patterns is different from the social one in the sense that this may not necessarily be present in or reflect the ongoing flux of social life but can serve as seeds or roots to nurture new social life any time. Yet another factor, according to the theory of ‘cultural materialism’, argues that primary forces of shaping local/traditional cultures are based on biological imperatives for survival in an ecosystem.

All the spheres of culture (ecology, biology or material, social and ideological) are interdependent, interconnected and perhaps overlapping. Culture is being formed and evolved as a result of interaction among all spheres of social life.

Holliday (1999, p.237) views culture in two paradigms: (1) large culture that “refers to prescribed ethnic, national and international entities” and (2) small culture that “signifies any cohesive social grouping” with cohesive behavior.

“Small’ is therefore not just a matter of size, but of the degree of imposition on reality. Whereas the large culture nation imposes a picture of the social world which is divided into ‘hard’ essentially different ethnic, national or international cultures, the small culture notion leaves the picture open, finding ‘softer cultures’ in all types of social grouping, which may or may not have significant ethnic, national or international qualities” (Holliday, 1999, p. 240).

Holliday (1999) views large cultures as essential features of ethnic, national or international groups. Small (sub) cultures are contained within and subordinate to large cultures through onion-skin relationships.

**Acculturation Strategies**

Besides many developmental and contextual factors, different acculturation and/or enculturation strategies effectively contribute to identity construction (Marcia, 1966). Normally the enculturation process takes place naturally as part of normal societal life, however acculturation strategies are purposefully planned, maneuvered, manipulated and engineered in certain ways as ‘essential processes required’ by institutions of socialization such as schools, media, religious institutions etc. Whether overtly or covertly there is always the possibility of an element of soft or hard coercion in acculturation strategies. Enculturation equips an individual for better adaptation in the local context and community
while acculturation attempts to prepare the individual to serve purposes of someone else’s beyond the local context and community.

Berry (1990) cited in Robinson (2009, p.444), states, “While acculturation is a neutral term in principle (i.e. change may take place in either or both groups), in practice acculturation tends to induce more change in the immigrant group”. This aspect of ‘inducing change’ makes acculturation a more assimilative process.


**Separation**: the rejection of the majority or mainstream culture and identification with the ethnic group only;

**Assimilation**: the rejection of the ethnic culture and identification exclusively with the majority group;

**Integration**: identification with both the ethnic and majority groups; and

**Marginalisation**: the rejection of both groups.

Out of these four options, Phinney et al (2001, p.495) note that “an individual who retains a strong ethnic identity while also identifying with the new society is considered to have an integrated (or bicultural) identity” and has comparatively sound or stronger identity that leads to better psycho-social well-being and a more confident personality.

**Cultural Diversity and its Significance**

If we see the biological, ecological, sociological and even ideological makers of a culture, it is evident and natural that there would be ‘diverse cultures’. As Dawa (2007, p.433) states, “Diversity is the law of nature, and accepting diversity assures peace in the world”. In other words, ‘cultural diversity’ is just natural like the colors of different flowers in a garden that have to be protected, and appreciated.

Cultural diversity is linked, on the one hand, with bio-diversity and on the other with socio-diversity. In fact, it is the bridge that can help balance the encountering factors of natural processes and human interventions to make development more sustainable.
The recent literature also supports ‘cultural diversity’ as a base for ‘sustainable development’. The ‘human rights’ and ‘sustainable development’ approaches are, to a greater extent, ‘human centered’ development approaches. The pluralist approach of cultural diversity embraces these two approaches along with its added beauties.

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002) Article 3 states: “Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.” This article of the declaration concisely covers all aspects and dimensions of development. Therefore ‘enlarging choices’ stated above which widens the range of options’, ‘a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence’ of human life covers the whole agenda of social development.

**Culture as Heritage of Humanity**

The very word ‘culture’ (*saqafat* in Urdu) is close to civilization as in Urdu *tehzeeb* and *saqafat* are used that reflect human evolution above wild instinctual behavior. Hence, when culture is used in societal terms, it does not show traditions of selfish desires rather it means the sublimated behavior pattern that transcends the material gratifications. Cultural diversity could be a threat to the consumerist mono-culture. People may prefer and place high value to sentimental aspects rather than instrumental or utilitarian values.

The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity’ (2002) affirms that “… respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best guarantees of international peace and security, [and] Aspiring to greater solidarity on the basis of recognition of cultural diversity, of awareness of the unity of humankind” (Preamble). The Article 1 of this declaration highlights “cultural diversity as the common heritage of humanity” stating that:

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.
In the light of this declaration this study is a humble effort of contributing knowledge generation in the domain of cultural identity and diversity as the common heritages of humanity.

The Article 4 of this Declaration sees human rights as guarantees of cultural diversity. “The defense of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms…” In other words this study could be seen as an effort in fulfilling the ethical imperative. In this Declaration cultural rights are considered as integral part of human rights (Article 5).

Cultural diversity on its ethical, social and ecological grounds supporting biodiversity can serve as the framework for sustainable development. If cultural identities are respected and protected, cultural diversity will be preserved. If cultural diversity is conserved, it can conserve the biodiversity as well, consequently contributing to sustainable development.

Hence it can be concluded that the approach to cultural diversity and pluralism would be a more sustainable and desirable way to address human aspects than market aspects including human rights, freedom, social justice, the peace issues, and hence, will reduce major threats of extremism and militancy or military-solution-seeking approaches and short cuts. Preservation and promotion of diverse ethnic, cultural identities serve the purpose of peaceful coexistence and sustainable development in a better way than silencing the diversities in an effort to expand uniformity through coercive means.

Identity Defined

The word ‘Identity’ is used in different connotations in philosophy, psychology and sociology. Identity is derived from the Latin word *idem* meaning sameness or continuity. It is the set of properties or traits that make connection between community and individual (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology). The self, the real me, ‘the I’, ego, *khudi* are all words used for identity in one or the other way.

According to the lexical (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2006, Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Microsoft Encarta, 2009) meaning, ‘identity’ is the collective aspect and the essential or generic set of characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a
member of a group. The essential self, or the set of characteristics that somebody recognizes as belonging uniquely to himself or herself and constituting his or her individual personality for life, the fact or condition of being the same, the sameness of essential or generic character and the distinguishing character or personality of an individual both collectively forms one’s identity.

Moshman (1998) states that an agreed definition of identity would be very difficult to derive due to the varying views of theorists (of different disciplines). However, theorists suggest more inclusive, tentative definitions. According to Moshman’s (1989) own definition, “An identity is an explicit theory of oneself as a person” because theorists of identity universally agree that identity has some relation to ‘the self’, may it be the philosophical self or ego, the psychological self-concept or the sociological self-image. Anyhow identity refers to the response of the core question of “Who am I?” (Woolfolk, 2006). Any possible answer to this question in normal social context may refer to ‘social or cultural identity’ that reflects a set of cultural parameters under any broader category. Terms such as ‘ethnic identity’, ‘social identity’ and ‘personal identity’ are also used with slightly different meanings and connotations to represent the ‘cultural self’ of an individual.

If we look into the philosophical and religious traditions, the terms of ‘self’ as ego, (the Arabic/Persian words nafs and khudi) is used to refer to the set of traits and properties that make the biological and psychosocial personhood.

“Know thyself” is a famous proverb ascribed to Socrates. According to a Hadith (saying of the Holy Prophet of Islam) “من عرف نفسه فقد عرف رب” (the one who knows one’s own ‘self’ knows the Lord” (cited by Khomeini, 2007; Noorbakhsh, 2005). We can say that knowing oneself is the core of human essence that makes her/him a person, an individual, a member of a society, and most interestingly, a unique individual among the billions of people in the world both in biological and psychosocial terms. According to the Holy Quran the characteristics with which we group people together and distinguish them from each other is, “We created you people in tribes and clans so that you can identify each other, however, the dearest to Allah are those who are pious. Verily Allah is All-knowing, All-aware” (Al-Hujrat-13).

The characteristics with which people are grouped together in tribes, clans, nations, and other social groups and distinguish themselves from others are equally based upon the
commonalities and the differences. However, as human beings, all are equal in rights and the dearer to Allah are those who have sublime characters.

There are two aspects of identity the ‘commonalities’ and the ‘differences’. It can be said that commonalities form identity but differences sharpen it and distinguish one from others. Both contrasting aspects are equally important to maintain identity of a person. Among the commonalities that make a group’s identity are the set of shared cultural space, characteristics, practices, rituals, shared language, music, celebrations, beliefs, customs, tradition and food etc. In other words differences are as important as commonalities are, and vice versa. When someone is identified, the identification is made equally with both commonalities and differences.

The term ‘identity’ in common language is used as the identification makers of a person. However, in literature this term has philosophical, psychological and sociological roots and meanings. It would be more appropriate to say that there are overlapping, distinguishing, contrasting, matching, and fluctuating shades of meanings in all three domains. Any attempt to isolate or compartmentalize these domains (philosophical, psychological and social) from each other would give an incomplete and probably lopsided picture of the whole notion. Being cognizant of these issues, I have tried to introduce the different dimensions, shades and hues of the ‘identity theme’ and then focus to the ‘psychosocial aspects’ specifically the ‘cultural aspect of identity’. ‘Cultural identity’ being one of the significant dimensions of a person’s or a people’s identity out of other multiple possible identities, is the focus of this study.

The ‘Self’ and the ‘I-am-ness’

Philosophically speaking, according to the famous statement of Rene Descartes ‘cogito ergo sum’, ‘I think therefore I am’, the existence of one’s self is perceived as a ‘thinking being’. In this sense the human identity “is a purely mental entity, the sole certainty in a universe of doubts. And it is a universe of which ‘I’, my Ego is the center, not God or nature” (Riley, 2007, p.72). This statement of Cartesian ego has very interesting implications for defining identity of human beings as ‘thinking beings’. First implication is that the faculty of thought processes has made ‘Homo Sapien’ a human being. Secondly, a person’s identity is formed by his/her thoughts. It is also true that a person’s identity is reflected in his/her thoughts as well, so a person’s thoughts are indicators of his/her identity. Thirdly, the sense of existence as a unique being the ‘I-am-ness’ with the faculty of ‘will’
to assert one’s own existence, is the key to identity. In the words of Iqbal (1986, p.45) “Only that truly exists which can say ‘I am’. It is the degree of the intuition of ‘I-amness’ that determines the place of a thing in the scale of being”.

Moshman (1998) defines identity as an explicit ‘theory of oneself’ as a person. According to Berzonsky (1993) cited in Moshman (1998) identity is a conceptual structure composed of postulates, assumptions, and constructs relevant to the self-interacting in the world. Moshman (1998) elaborates ‘identity as a theory and as an explicit theory that construes the self as rational agent having some degree of unity and some degree of continuity across time’. According to this view rationality, unity, and continuity are three characteristics of identity as personhood. However, this idea seems more ideal than practical and functional while the nature of identity is closer to dynamic functionality. Riley (2007, p.70) also supports the notion of continuity as “identity means something like the continuing existence of an entity”.

Hegel (1975) refers to Kant’s notion in saying that the primary identity of the 'I' in thought is the 'transcendental unity of self-consciousness'. This ‘unity of self-consciousness’ or the ‘I’ is in fact the faculty of perception of multiplicity or miscellany of elements under two aspects, namely space and time, which, being the forms, that is to say form the universal type of perception. Similarly in Iqbal’s (1986, p.79) view:

The ego, therefore is not space-bound in the sense in which the body is space-bound. Again mental and physical events are both in time, but the time-span of ego is fundamentally different to the time-span of the physical events…Another important characteristic of the unity of the ego is its essential privacy which reveals the uniqueness of every ego”.

The data received through physical and mental events become sensation and perception. And in the words of Hegel (1975) “sensation and perception, however, must be reduced to an identity or primary synthesis. To accomplish this, the 'I' brings it in relation to itself and unites it there in one consciousness which Kant calls 'pure apperception'. The specific modes in which the Ego refers to itself the multiplicity of sense are the pure concepts of the understanding, the Categories” (p.42). Moshman (1998) who presented a comprehensive literature review of identity literature sees identity as a rational construction constrained but not determined by inner and outer realities.
This study is situated in Pakistan’s broader cultural context that is inspired by the thoughts of Iqbal as the national poet and philosopher. Iqbal’s poetry is commonly found in the school curriculum; hence a special reference to Iqbal’s thoughts will make the discussion more relevant to the cultural context. In most government school, a prayer-poem of Iqbal is recited daily in the morning assembly. Iqbal’s theory of khudi as the theory of ego, self, human nature and identity has huge impact on the thoughts of Muslim in Asian countries. Hence a brief description of khudi will help to situate the identity discussion in contextual philosophical thoughts.

Iqbal’s notion of khudi (خودی) refers to the complex entity of ‘ego or self’ that maintains the unity of ego as a unique distinguishable (stand-alone) entity that makes an individual’s personality with the ‘essential privacy that reveals the uniqueness of every ego’. Kant’s ‘pure reason’ or ‘pure perception’ makes ‘ego’ a state of self-consciousness or awareness in terms of cognition. However, Iqbal’s notion of khudi is not limited to mere self-consciousness as a state of being. khudi is a dynamic notion of ‘perpetual becoming with directive attitude’. Human personality or identity is the dynamic process of becoming along with the product of experiences. Khudi being the very core essence of personality also guides and directs personality formation or identity construction. Iqbal (1986, Pp. 82-83) says:

Thus my real personality is not a thing; it is an act. My experience is only a series of acts, mutually referring to one another, and held together by the unity of a directive purpose. My whole reality lies in my directive attitude. You cannot perceive me like a thing in space, or a set of experiences in temporal order; you must interpret, understand, and appreciate me in my judgments, in my will-attitudes, aims and aspiration.

This supra-ego characteristic or aspect of khudi in terms of the will-attitude, aims and aspiration is uniquely found in Iqbal’s thoughts only. However, Iqbal himself claims that he has derived these ideas from the visionary thoughts of Sufi saints. In the oriental context Iqbal’s notion of khudi (ego identity) has been famous and popular after his Persian book Asrar-e-khudi was translated with the title of ‘The Secrets of Self’ by Professor R.A. Nicholson an eminent Enlish orientalist during the early 1900’s.

In a letter to Dr. Nicholson, the translator of Asrar-i-khudi, Iqbal (2003), writes “I claim that the philosophy of the Asrar is a direct development out of the experiences and
speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers. Even Bergson’s idea of time is not quite foreign to our Sufis” (p. 205).

In a note “An exposition of the Self” Iqbal (2003, p. 207) explained his theory of Khudi (ego) in these words:

The teaching of the Asrar-i-Khudi rests on two points:

(a) That personality is the central fact of the universe. The Old Testament describes this ultimate fact as the great ‘I am’. The Quran, however, describes the ultimate personality in much grander terms…the ego is the root of all existence.

(b) That the personality, ‘I am’ is the central fact the constitution of man.

Explaining the meaning and use of the word khudi Iqbal (2003) writes, “Thus metaphysically the word ‘خودی’ is used in the sense of that indescribable feeling of ‘I’ which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual” (p.211).

Iqbal (2003) also highlights the axiological aspects of ego by saying that, “Ethically the word ‘خودی’ means (as used by me) self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence, self-preservation; even self-assertion when such things are necessary in the interest of life and the power to stick to the cause of truth, justice, duty, etc., etc., even in the face of death” (p.212). In fact as a social reformist thinker, Iqbal’s emphasis is more on the ethical aspects and meanings of khudi.

According to Kroger (2000, p.8), “Erik Erikson (1956) has generally been credited with first focusing both popular and scientific attention on the meaning of identity”, however in the Asian context and subcontinent Iqbal’s notion of khudi (ego identity) has been famous and popular since the early 1900 and before Erikson. It is interesting to see similarities of Erikson’s description of ‘ego identity’ and Iqbal’s notion of khudi. In fact, at times Erikson’s view appears like an extension of Iqbal’s philosophy of khudi. Though, the approaches of both the scholars were different, Iqbal appeared like a reformist with an intention to promote spiritual evolution of self, while Erikson’s seemed to be a psychologist and social scientist interested in social development of human beings.

Erikson used the term identity “to refer to that which results from the ‘silent doings of ego synthesis’ as well as that sense of inner solidarity with the ideals and values of a significant social group. He further described identity as a configuration gradually
integrating constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal need, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles” (Erikson 1969b, p.116, cited in Kroger, 2000, p.9).

In Iqbal’s (1986, p.80) words “My pleasures, pains, and desires are exclusively mine, forming a part and parcel of my private ego alone. My feelings, hates and loves, judgments and resolutions, are exclusively mine”. This is what Erikson says as the ‘silent doings of ego-synthesis’. The notions of ‘judgments and resolution’ are key to Erikson’s theory of identity formation. The notions of ‘successful sublimation and consistent roles’ mentioned by Erikson seem to echo the ethical characteristic of *khudi* presented by Iqbal.

In psychological terms “The ego reveals itself as a unity of what we call mental states. Mental states do not exist in mutual isolation. They mean and involve one another. They exist as phases of a complex whole, called mind” (Iqbal, 1986, p.79). When we say ‘mind’, somehow a contested notion but key word in psychology, we refer to the mental processes and products in terms of cognitive processes and memory contents. Ego as the ‘unity of mental states’ reflect the knowledge and thoughts dimension of ‘self’.

Among these mental states, processes and products, memory is another important notion in psychology. The ‘memory’ part of mind or mental capability is assumed to be the custodian of records of all human experiences into organized retrievable catalogues, and the content of the experiences itself becomes a maker of identity.

Riley (2007, p.71) refers to Locke’s argument of considering memory as the crucial factor of identity ‘You are what you know’. “In this perspective the individual is seen as a site for knowledge, which is stored in memory and which underlies the competence which determines and is determined by participation in social activity”. Riley notes that Locke was careful to distinguish between ‘memory of facts’ and memory of experiences’.

“The appeal to memory as the crucial criterion for constitution of personal identity has been extremely influential over a wide range of social sciences and sociopolitical agenda: a stock of common memories is fundamental to the rationale of almost any kind of minority rights or identity politics movement” (Riley, 2007, p.71). However, this argument is challenged as there could be false memories and mistaken memories as well.

These thoughts and ideas are efforts of situating and placing the metaphysical notion of ego and self into functional, psychological and practical domains of human life,
that is to say they bridge the philosophy of existence with that of psychology and bring about a marriage of ontology and psychology giving birth to ‘identity’.

**Ego Identity --- the Psychological Dimension**

In psychological terms “Identity refers to the organization of the individual’s drives, abilities, beliefs, and history into a consistent image of self. Identity involves deliberate choices and decisions particularly about work, values, ideology, and commitments to people and ideas” (Marcia, 1987; Penuiesl & Wertsch, 1995 cited in Woolfolk 2006, p.102). Individuals may have multiple identities reflecting their social, ethnic and cultural origins.

In view of Kroger (2000, p. 7) “Self, ego, identity, I, and me are all terms that have been used by psychologists interested in identity. Many writers have given fine distinctions in meaning of these terms, and these same terms are often used in different ways by various scholars of human development”. Kroger (2000) refers to Lapsley and Power (1988) who use the terms self, ego, and identity interchangeably.

According to James Marcia, who extended the identity part of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, “Identity refers to an existential position, to an inner organization of needs, abilities, and self-perceptions as well as to a sociopolitical stance” (Marcia, 1980, p.159). Marcia (1980, p.159) views identity structure as follows:

An internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history…Identity has been called a "sense." an "attitude." a "resolution." and so on. I would like to propose another way of construing identity: as a self-structure - an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history.

As a psychological process, ‘identity formation’ and reformation is a continuous process and one can form new identities and reform the existing ones through experiences in the course of time through ‘accommodation’, ‘assimilation’ and ‘internalization’ in Piaget’s terminology. Stating the continuously changing nature of self, or ego or the personal identity or the ‘I’, to conclude, Iqbal (1986, p.22) cites Bergson “there is nothing static in my inner life; all is a constant mobility, an unceasing flux of states, a perpetual flow in which there is no halt or resting place”. Iqbal is of the view that the nature of ‘self-identity’ is variable and relational. “Whatever may be our view of self-feeling, self-identity,
soul, will – it can be examined only by the canons of thought which in their nature are relational, and all ‘relations involve contradictions’ (Iqbal, 1986, p.41). Here each phrase requires a detailed discussion; however, our focus is only social/cultural identity which is a wholesome product of all past experiences because “no people can afford to reject their past entirely, for it is their past that has made their personal identity” (Iqbal, 1986, p.69). William James (1902) cited in Iqbal (1986) calls it as the ‘chain of particular memories’ that forms one’s identity.

The Sociological Dimension of Identity--the ‘me’

According to Cerulo (1997, p.385) the study of identity forms a critical corner stone within the modern sociological thought. “Sociologists focused primarily on the formation of the “me,” exploring the ways in which interpersonal interaction mold an individual’s sense of self”. Mead (1913) distinguishes the “I,” and the “me” as the subjective and objective consciousness or dimension of self. “The “I” of introspection is the self which enters into social relations with other selves… And the “me” of introspection is the same “me” that is the object of the social conduct of others (Mead, 1913, p.376).

Cerulo (1997) suggests that “the sociology of identity can fully elucidate the intricate links between the social and cultural domains” (p.402). This study aimed at probing into this very link to explore how the social domain factors are influencing the cultural domain and the cultural identities of adolescent in schools.

Sociologically speaking identity is neither a genetic disposition nor a metaphysical or purely philosophical notion. It is not even constructed by only subjective experiences or mental states and processes as ‘identity’ of any person is jointly constructed by the individual and the sociocultural factors and forces within his/her environment or context. The language, traditions, education, socio-economic forces, ecological factors, political forces and social trends all contribute to the identity formation of a child. Mead (1934) cited in Kroger (2000, p.6-7) “defines the self as basically a social structure, emerging through social experiences and activity; the unity of one’s total self is a reflection of the unity in one’s social experience”.

Kroger (2000, p.20) cites Cote (1996) as saying that: “For many sociologists there is no identity without society. In this context, society steers identity formation while individuals attempt to navigate the passage”. Mead and many contemporary writers
“continued to view identity as the result of cultural possibilities and limitations available to the individual within a given context” (Kroger, 2000, p.20). In a given context the child internalizes the “values, attitudes, narratives and social roles of one’s ‘significant others’” (Merry 2005, p.483), such as parents, care givers, teachers and peers and hence “an individual’s identity is the product of the surrounding social context and people” (Kroger, 2000, p.20).

Many factors and forces like language(s) used, social values, attitudes, customs, narratives, relationships etc. make up a social context. To add to the complexity of the matter, these societal factors and forces could be quite diverse in nature and influence an individual in divergent ways.

Korger (2000) also presents the narrative, psychosocial and socio-cultural approaches to identity. According to the narrative approach language is a text out of which identities are constructed, justified and maintained and “One’s identity is primarily a product of social discourse, a change in feedback about oneself from important others will precipitate a change in one’s own sense of identity”(p.21). The I and the me are discussed in the narrative study of identity where the I is the process of creating a self through the experience of narrating, whereas the me is defined as the product that the I constructs. Identity resides in the binding together of the I and the me (Kroger,2000).

Biological and Ecological Approach

From birth onward, every individual experiences the dynamics of defining themselves, and many factors help one to develop their sense of identity or who they perceive themselves to be. Ryan and Deci (2003), suggest, ”When human beings emerge into the world, they have no identity,” but over time, they acquire identities (p. 253). As everyone has a unique DNA makeup, each individual will have a unique set of potentialities or capabilities that makes more likelihood of personality development and identity formation along certain lines. Even there are researchers who claim that a person’s future under normal conditions can be predicted according to the genetic codes. Hence, identity can be determined in biological, hereditary and physiological terms as well. Citing several studies Moshman (1999, p. 67) suggests that as development progresses, ”individuals are increasingly likely to define themselves with respect to personality, ideology, and other such abstract characteristics”. Moshman (1999, p. 67) is of the view that “For adolescents,
identity is both a matter of determining who one is and a matter of deciding who one will be.”

Yet another important approach is the organic and/or ‘ecological approach’. A human child is born in a certain physical environment or ecology with already available ecological resources and factors, such as climatic conditions, geographical location, and the basic life resources in terms of certain foods, shelter and facilities. Within that physical or ecological environment the child develops basic life and survival skills, immunity and other biological mechanisms matching the needs of the environmental/ecological factors that become essential parts of one’s personality and identity. In other words, the child is tuned to the ecology of the place of birth and early childhood environment. Any kind of drastic change or radical shift in physical environment (material culture) will need to retune those skills and mechanisms. Such changes would be easy only if the growth and development pattern has been flexible and diverse and the changes are being introduced with a support system or in accordance with the wherewithal of the persons. The basic motor skills such as climbing, balancing, running, (in all kinds of kinesthetic abilities) and hence in overall physical health and stamina the child’s growth and development will be different for different ecologies. And, hence, a person’s identity in terms of such adjustment-skills is determined by the ecology and ecological needs. Similarly the normal behavior of a child towards the natural resources such as wild-life, bio-diversity, and pet animals will be different from the behavior of other children reared in different ecological settings. Similarly, the dress, eating, sleeping, waking, and other habits of a child can be affected by the ecological and organic (biological) factors along with the social factors.

Identity Formation Stages

The work of Erik Erikson (1902-1994), American psychoanalyst, has been a key reference in identity studies and psychosocial development of child. Erikson’s first book Childhood and Society (1950) became a classic in the field; another book on this topic is Identity (1968). In his works Erikson (1970, online) presented eight age specific stages of psychosocial development model of human life:
In Erikson’s eight stages of life cycle scheme of development, each stage requires identity resolution at different stages. Identity versus Role Confusion is the central task of adolescence that “builds on resolution of preceding stages and serves as a building block for that which will be encountered throughout the years of adult life” (Kroger, 2000, p.10).

Erikson described identity as "a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image" (Erikson, 1970, online). It is a sense of self or individuality in the context of life. “Role Confusion is the negative perspective - an absence of identity - meaning that the person cannot see clearly or at all who they are and how they can relate positively with their environment.” (ibid). Erikson later replaced the term 'Role Confusion' with 'Identity Diffusion'.

The balance found between Identity Versus Role Confusion during adolescence indeed sets the quality of resolution that is possible for subsequent psychosocial stages of Intimacy versus Isolation, Generativity Versus Stagnation, and Integrity Versus Despair to be found through the years of young, middle, and later adulthood, respectively (Kroger, 2000, p.11).

### Table 1 Stages of Identity Formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Basic Conflict/ resolution, Important event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral- Sensory</td>
<td>0-18 mos.</td>
<td>Trust vs. Mistrust Feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscular – Anal</td>
<td>18 months-3yrs</td>
<td>Autonomy vs Toilet training Shame/Doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locomotors</td>
<td>3 - 6 yrs.</td>
<td>Initiative vs Guilt Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latency</td>
<td>6 -12 yrs.</td>
<td>Industry vs School Inferiority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>12 -18 yrs.</td>
<td><strong>Identity</strong> vs <strong>Peer relationships Role confusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adulthood</td>
<td>19 - 40 yrs.</td>
<td>Intimacy vs Love relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle adulthood</td>
<td>40 - 65 yrs.</td>
<td>Generativity vs Parenting Stagnation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>65 - death</td>
<td>Ego integrity vs Reflection on and acceptance Despair of one's life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Erikson’s scheme of personality development emphasizes the interdependence of all stages and provides a helpful model for understanding the relationship of identity to other psychosocial tasks pressing for resolution at different stages of the life cycle” (Kroger, 2000, p.11).

**The Identity Formation Process**

Penuel and Vertsch (1995, p.84) state that the “sociocultural approach to identity formation views the poles of sociocultural processes on the one hand and individual functioning on the other as existing in a dynamic, irreducible tension”. In their view also the sociocultural approach to identity formation is dynamic and interconnected rather than as static processes that exist in isolation from one another. In view of Penuel and Vertsch (1995, p.85), “Identity formation must be viewed as shaped by and shaping forms of action, involving a complex interplay among cultural tools employed in the action, the sociocultural and institutional context of the action, and the purposes embedded in the action.” Kroger (2000) also mentions arguments of Shotter and Gergen (1989) and Gergen (1991) that identity is not only formed but is delimited and constrained within ongoing relationships and social context. In their view, identity is ascribed by cultural demands.

In terms of the dynamic nature of identity, views of Penuel and Vertsch (1995) are similar to those of Iqbal and other thinkers who consider identity formation as a dynamic and fluid process. They argue that nature of human activity, the ‘moment in action’ may also “change from activity to activity, depending on the way, in each activity, the purpose, form, cultural tools, and contexts are coordinated” (Penuel & Vertsch, 1995, p.85).

Moreover, Vygotsky (1960) claims that individual mental functioning has sociocultural origins and human action is mediated by tools and signs. Vygostky (1960) states that there are two lines of identity development: the dynamic organic change which is the natural line of development and the cultural line which is "superimposed on the processes of growth, maturation, and the organic development of the whole" (p. 47).

Cote (1997) suggests an ‘identity capital’ model to identity formation that integrates psychological and sociological understandings of identity.

According to the identity capital model, identity capital resources vary in degree of tangibility–intangibility. More tangible resources tend to be manifested in the behaviors of individuals, while more intangible ones tend to constitute personality attributes that need
to be abstracted or inferred if we are to study them. Identity capital acquisition, on the other hand, refers to an individual’s net assets at a given point in time in terms of ‘who they are’ (p.578).

With reference to the modern hi-tech and digital age, and in the society of cyberspace the formation of identity is more complex and rapid. "The problem of identity is more salient today than at any time in history" (Ryan & Deci, 2003, p. 253). The range of possible identities is larger than ever before, and having multiple identities is becoming more acceptable. The identity formation process is made more complex by media and Web-based communications, complicating the process of adopting identities. "Many of today's youth are facing an even greater risk of failing to negotiate the not-so-clear pathways to the adult roles, responsibilities, and relationships that secure identities afford" (Ryan & Deci, 2003, p. 254).

Erikson (1968, p.159) also devoted considerable attention to the identity formation process. He described its evolution, beginning in childhood and continuing its development course throughout the life cycle but coming to the fore as a central task of adolescence. “If we consider introjections, identification and identity formation to be the steps by which the ego grows in ever more mature interplay with the available models, the following psychosocial schedule suggests itself” (cited in Kroger, 2000, p.11). Initially the infant begins to establish a sense of self through introjection—literally the incorporation of another’s image based on the (hopefully satisfactory) experience of mutuality in early relationships”(Kroger, 2000, p.11-12). “Through later identifications, the child becomes like those significant others with characteristics or features that are admired. Identity formation, however, can begin only when the process of seeking identifications as the basis of one identity ends.

Identity formation, finally, begins where the usefulness of identification ends. It arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identification and their absorption in a new configuration, which, in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society (often through sub societies) identifies by young individual, recognizing him as somebody who had to become the way he is and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted (Erikson, 1968, cited in Kroger, 2000, p.12).

Identity formation, then involves the emergence of a new, intrapsychic structure. This new structure is more than the sum of previous childhood identifications; rather, it is a
configuration that now enables the holder to mediate rather than be mediated by these earlier identifications of childhood (Kroger, 2000, p.12).

As a result of the new configuration as Kroger (2000) puts in the way, “what I am” becomes “what I have” at the next more mature stage of meaning construction.

After a comprehensive literature review on identity formation, Moshman (1998) sees the conception of identity as an explicit theory of oneself as a person which is neither discovered nor freely created. It is constructed as a product of both intra-psychic and social factors.

**Identity Patterns and Modes**

Findings of Cote (1996), provides more detailed insights about the ways and meanings in which the term identity has been used in different studies. According to Cote (1996) the terms has been used to emphasize different facets of human self-definition. In social structure and personality perspective:

(1) that the term **social identity** designates the individual’s position(s) in a social structure; (2) that the concept of **personal identity** denotes the more concrete aspects of individual experience rooted in interactions (and institutions); and

(3) that the notion of **ego identity** refers to the more fundamental subjective sense of continuity which is characteristic of the personality. Thus, these terms need not to be in competition with each other. Rather, they can be seen as attempts to map out different facets of the interdisciplinary terrain (p.420).

Hannum and Kelly (2007) see identity formation as a combination of three broad components: **given identity**, **chosen identity**, and **core identity**. We have no choice about the **given identity** such as birth place, parents, genetic make-up etc. **Chosen identity**, the characteristics that we can choose such as occupation, hobbies, political affiliation, place of residence etc. **Core identity**, the attributes that we think make us unique as an individual, the aspirations, practices and preferences. It may include traits, behaviors, beliefs, values, and skills.

So far our discussion has focused upon identity as a unique representative feature of an individual; however, identity is also seen as a collective construct or ‘collective identity’. In fact, the set of commonalities of individual identity makes the ‘collective
identity’ with almost similar, common personality characteristics, traits and collective aspirations. Cerulo (1997, p. 386-387) presents three trends regarding theories of identity and identity construction:

Social and nationalist movements focus on group identity as political action. Notions of Durkheim’s “collective conscience”, Marx’s “class consciousness” the notion of “we-ness” instead of “I-ness” “stressing the similarities or shared attributes around which group members coalesce… A Collective’s members were believed to internalize these qualities, suggesting a unified, singular social experience, a single canvas against which social actors constructed a sense of self.

Templeman (1999, p.19) presents the three types of collective identities and their constituent features in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Construction of Collective Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primordial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias of membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision of outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of exclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My focus in this study has been on the ‘cultural identity’ as a set of ‘cultural’ behaviors, attitudes and responses of an individual acquired and constructed through ongoing experiences in a certain social context and through interactions with others. Secondly, the study will focus on ‘cultural identity’ as a collective construct that represents a group of community with shared interests, values, ideologies, preferences, and patterns of social life. This kind of collective identity is, in fact, collectively constructed by all the members and the stakeholders of the society. The partners or participants may contribute
in construction of this ‘collective identity’ through their routine life activities and/or through deliberate efforts with an intention to guide, redirect, change, conserve cultural traditions and modes in selective ways. Here the power relations and struggles over interests come into play that create situations of inclusion, exclusion, dominance, subordination, oppression, and emancipation.

**Identity Status**

James Marcia in her ego identity study of 1966 which was an extension of Erikson’s work, “used measures and criteria congruent with Erikson's formulation of the identity crisis as a *psychosocial* task” (Marcia, 1966, p.551). Through semi structured interviews and an incomplete-sentences blank Marcia (1966, p.551) “determined an individual's specific identity status; that is, which of four concentration points along a continuum of ego-identity achievement best characterized” the person. "Identity achievement" and "identity diffusion" were taken as polar alternatives of status inherent in Erikson's theory.

“Two themes dominate these studies: a variability-stability dimension of self-concept, and an overall adjustment… In general, subjects who have achieved ego identity seem less confused in self-definition and are freer from anxiety” (Marcia, 1966, p.552).

Marcia’s study of ego-identity and identity status has been significant in identity studies and has been quoted and used by many later researchers.

According to Marcia (1980; 161), “The identity statuses are four modes of dealing with the identity issue characteristic of late adolescents:

- Identity Achievement
- Foreclosure
- Identity Diffusion
- Moratorium

Those classified by these modes are defined in terms of the presence or absence of a decision-making period (crisis) and the extent of personal investment (commitment) in two areas: occupation and ideology.”

“In conclusion, the main contribution of this study lies in the development, measurement, and partial validation of the identity statuses as individual styles of coping with the psychosocial task of forming an ego identity”(Marcia, 1966, p.553). These four
identity statuses have been used in many of the later identity studies in various cultural and research contexts for a variety of purposes. Many of the studies have found correlation between identity status and other factors of psychological well-being.

**Scope of Identity Studies**

Marcia (1980) identifies several studies which found that psychological wellbeing and positive characteristics of personality are associated with high identity. Self-esteem, moral reasoning and autonomy are high for higher identity (identity achievements and moratoriums) while anxiety and endorsing authoritarianism are associated with low identity (foreclosure and identity diffusion).

Development of moral reasoning seems to accompany the development of identity.

Individuals high in identity (Identity Achievements and Moratoriums) tend to be functioning at post conventional levels of moral reasoning, while subjects lower in identity (Foreclosures and Identity Diffusions) are found to tie at pre-conventional and conventional levels (Podd. 1972; Poppen. 1974).… Hogan (1973) found that high-identity individuals were more highly ethical, empathetic, and socialized than were low-identity persons (Marcia, 1980, p.163-164).


Psychologically speaking, a gradually accruing ego-identity is the only safeguard against the anarchy of drives as well as the autocracy of conscience. An increasing sense of identity, on the other hand, is experienced pre-consciously as a sense of psychological well-being. It most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one’s own body, a sense of “knowing where one is going” and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count. Such a sense of identity however is never gained nor maintained once and for all.

Similarly Phinney et al (2001, p.502) summarize findings of several researchers and scholars (Liebkind, 1996; Nesdale et al, 1997; Phinney et el 1997) that “both social psychological and developmental perspectives suggest that a strong, secure ethnic identity makes a positive contribution to psychological well-being. Research provides support of this view; maintenance of a strong ethnic identity is generally related to psychological well-being among members of acculturating groups”.

36
The study in four countries by Phinney et el (2001, p.502) revealed that “immigrant youngsters with integrated identities scored significantly higher than all other groups on measures of psychological adjustment. Adolescents classified as having marginalized identities exhibited the lowest levels of psychological adaptation”. The same study further found that “a bicultural or integrated identity is generally associated with higher levels of overall well-being than are other identity categories…Pressure to assimilate and give up one’s sense of ethnicity may result in anger, depression, and in some cases, violence” (ibid, p. 505).

Basak and Ghosh (2008) in their study conducted on college students selected from different districts of West Bengal analyzed correlation between self-esteem and different types of identity statuses. Their study revealed that “Those having high identity achievement status have high self-esteem, especially in the areas of occupation and ideological belief for religion. On the other hand, adolescents who are in crisis and have not made any commitment have low self-esteem” (p.337).

The findings of the study of Basak and Ghosh (2008) showed that “Adolescents with identity achievement status have higher self-esteem whereas identity moratorium, identity foreclosure and identity diffused adolescents have lower self-esteem. It may, therefore, be concluded from this study that ego-identity status enhances one’s positive self-image”(p.343).

Many other similar studies show high identity achievement contributing to individual’s wellbeing and performance. In their study Franklin, James & Watson (1996, p.40) note that “Cultural identity development has serious implications for the academic achievement and psychological well-being of culturally diverse and linguistically diverse learners”.

The worth of this study is, hence, justified on the basis of all the above mentioned studies showing strong relationship between cultural/ ethnic identity and:

- Psychological well-being
- Self-esteem
- School adjustment
- Adaptation
- Academic performance
The question of interest is: ‘To what extent do schools foster clear, strong, integrated personal, ethnic and cultural identities among students?’ From an academic research perspective, schools may have significant and serious influences on the holistic development of students.

Ryan and Johnson (2009, p. 247) refer to contemporary approaches of identity formation that “student identities or subjectivities are constructed through their engagement in discourse with worlds both inside and outside of school. The ongoing and dynamic processes of subjectification which shape these identities are woven from both social and individual spheres, each informing and sometimes contradicting the other.”

A student’s identity is socially constructed and individually experienced during the continuous interplay between self and the ideologies of society (Ryan and Johnson, 2009). School is the site where this continuous interplay of self with ideologies of the society takes place and, hence, schooling influences identity formation that consequently has effects on the academic performance and achievements of students.

Cultural Identity

Without cultural identity, social cohesion gradually dissolves and human groups lose their necessary point of reference to relate with each other, and with other groups.

(His Highness the Aga Khan, 2002)

Cultural Identity as a Social Construct

Researchers agree that cultural identity is a social construct and is a product of multiple identities such as one’s personal, ethnic, social and national identities. Templeman (1999), considers ‘cultural identity’ as a product of ongoing processes of social construction. “This construction involves the – more or less intentional – drawing of boundaries that demarcate the collective entity and that determine who and what belongs inside and who and what belongs outside. In other words, the demarcation of cultural identity inevitably entails processes of inclusion and exclusion” (p.17). It can be said that the distinctness of one’s ‘Cultural Identity’ can be defined as ‘the degree and extent of one’s association, affiliation, deliberate choices and decisions about cultural life reflected in claims and in practices’ that qualifies an individual as a member or non-member of the cultural community.
Hale and de Abreu (2010, p.396) who studied ‘development of cultural identities through uses of symbolic resources’, are of the view that although there is no single agreed upon definition of ‘cultural identity’ however, working definitions of the concept “have drawn on Tajfel’s (1981) notion of social identity, which he defined as an ‘aspect of the individual self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.”

By giving a more comprehensive account, Hall (1990) mentions two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity': first, in terms of commonalities or shared culture and the second, in terms of differences and uniqueness. He goes on to say:

The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history (Hall, 1990, p.223).

In Hall’s (1990, p.225) view the second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has intervened - 'what we have become'…Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power.

According to Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (nd, p.12 ) “What people say about their cultural identity should be read as the image they wish to project at a particular time rather than as evidence of an essentialist national culture”.

39
Robinson (2009), reports the findings of the research project that examined and compared ‘the acculturation attitudes and cultural identity of Indian and Pakistani second-generation adolescents in Britain’. According to Robinson (2009, p.442), “Cultural identity is a term used to include both ethnic and national identities”.

Templeman (1999) distinguishes different types of cultural identity. The first type of collective identity is primordial identity or primordiality, “which is based on features that cannot be changed or questioned as they appear to be given by nature” (p.18). These features may include family, birth place, biological outlook and mother tongue. “The second type is the civic construction of collective identity. Here, the core of collective identity is not ‘natural’, but is seen as a historically developed complex of rules, routines, and institutional arrangements. This complex is in a continuous flux, although some parts are more robust than others” (ibid). Examples of civic identity are the socially learned but elective or optional kinds of behaviors, choices such as religion, political affiliation, literary and professional interest. “The third mode of constructing collective identity is the universal mode. The integrative tie that holds the Universalist community together is not dependent on natural ties or tradition, but is unquestionably ‘given’ as Sacred” (ibid). The entire humanitarian ties, respecting human rights, following ethical norms and to some extent religious beliefs when once a religion is opted for are examples of this type of cultural identity.

Templeman (1999, p.19) presents these three types of collective identities and their constituent features in below table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primordial</th>
<th>Civic</th>
<th>Universal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core of identity</td>
<td>(quasi-)natural features</td>
<td>Fuzzy routines and traditions</td>
<td>Transcendental beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of membership</td>
<td>Sharing features</td>
<td>Implicit familiarity</td>
<td>Enlightenment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision of outsiders</td>
<td>Absolutely different</td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Mistaken, guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External relations</td>
<td>Separation, mutual hostility</td>
<td>Overlap, interaction</td>
<td>Missionary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In new researches the complexity is addressed by proposing “multiple cultural identities, where national identity coexists with a separate and distinct cultural identity” (Gunew, 1998 cited in Campbell, 2000, p.31). Similarly other identities such as religious and political identities can also coexist with national and cultural identities.

The case studies of Campbell (2000) confirming findings of several other studies suggest that multiple identities contribute to global citizenship with enhanced skills and knowledge of several (two or more) cultures and languages. Individuals with sound multiple (diverse) identities are more equipped with and hence responsive toward cultural demands in different cultural contexts.

Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (nd, p.17) are also of the view, “We are all individual members of a vast number of different cultural groups and hence have multiplicity of identities... We are in fact all unique in our cultural identities”.

Regarding the educational practices affecting the positive potential of cultural identities, Campbell (2000, p.38) states:

The benefits of having individuals who have multiple cultural identities will be lost if educational policies encourage assimilation and if a bicultural background is regarded as a liability rather than an advantage. As the above case studies show, having multiple cultural identities is a natural response to living in a culturally complex cultural environment, and developing the ability to adapt to different cultural contexts may be one of the key learning areas of the curriculum of the future.

Cultural Identity Development Model


“Individuals' attitudes are believed to be an integral part of their identity, which influences how they view (a) themselves, (b) those within their own culture, (c) those of another
minority culture, and (d) those in the majority culture” (Franklin et al, 1996, p.48). After discussion of the five stages, Franklin et al (1996, p.51) found that these five stages “seem to be responsive to a wider range of educational resources, including diverse personnel”.

Based on their model and findings Franklin et al (1996) suggested practical strategies for cultural responsive classroom instruction that include: Selection of Multicultural Materials, Cooperative Learning, Peer or Cross-Age Grouping, Divergent Thinking, Verve, Observational Learning, Bilingual Instruction and Freedom of Movement.

The authors found that teacher attitudes, values, and intra- and interpersonal styles influence the learning environment which in turn, affects students' behavior and academic achievement. As culture influences both the teacher's and students' interactions, teachers need “to understand the dynamics of culture in general and cultural identity development in particular. In addition, teachers must become culturally competent and culturally responsive” (Franklin, 1996, p.55).

Language and Cultural Identity

As a social construct, ‘cultural identity’ is shaped through social interactions normally via the medium of language. Language is the maker and marker of cultural identity as identity is negotiated through language.

A simple and powerful indication of the close relationships between culture, language and identity is to be found in the cultural makers, where culture is directly encoded or lexicalized. Of course, it can be argued that, since a language is itself a cultural system, all words are cultural – but some more cultural than other. These cultural makers are, as it were, the lexical tip of the cultural iceberg (Riley, 2007, p.41).

‘All words are cultural but some words are more cultural than others’. The same is true for languages: the native or first language could be more cultural to a native speaker, than the second or third languages.

A child’s first language or mother tongue or native language is the one that informs the child about the world around in words, notions and concepts. If the medium of instruction at school is not the first language of the learner then not only the formation of cultural identity is affected but the quality of learning and level of conceptual understanding are also affected. According to Franklin, James & Watson (2012, p.43)
When the way language is used in the students' home and community is incompatible with the way it is used in their school, these students are forced to learn at a disadvantage. Discontinuity in the use of language at home and in school often leads to culturally and linguistically different students being misunderstood when applying familiar language patterns to classroom activities.

The authors are of the view that “Teachers and students bring to schools beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and expectations that reflect their cultural identities” (ibid, p.45). The beliefs, feelings and thoughts are expressed and shared in language and the choice of language matters. Fuller (2007) confirms that “language choice is shown to be a mechanism for constructing social identity” (p.105). In his study Fuller (2007, p.125) found that “a complex pattern of language choices…[and] code-switching can be used to negotiate identity”.

Regarding the importance of choice of language as medium of instruction in school, Ball (2010, p.5) cites UNESCO (2001a) as saying “It is increasingly obvious that the language of instruction at the beginning of one’s education which is a crucial moment for future learning should be the mother tongue.”

UNESCO recognizes that acquiring a language involves learning the culture that is expressed through the language. Using a home language preserves cultural identity, while acquiring additional languages promotes intercultural communication and understanding. In situations where a community is struggling to maintain or revive a threatened minority or indigenous language, meaningful and effective education in this language can have very positive linguistic and psychological effects (Ball 2010, p.54).

Fuller (2007), in his study of Mexican-American children, found that the quantity of their first (L1) and second language (L2) use, and the functions they fulfill with each language, are linked to their positioning of themselves as social beings allowing for dynamic and variable construction of identity. In context of this study the first language (L1) is Balti while Urdu and English are second languages (L2). The respective importance given to these languages and the choice of certain languages for specific expressive opportunities in schools of Baltistan are discussed in the finding chapters.
Role of Schooling in Identity Formation

“Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression.” (Freire, 1972, p.47).

Schooling is a system of planned learning site with a set of defined curriculum and processes, that shape and fashion ‘identities’ of the learners. Schooling and curriculum have been used as tools of governing patterns of society and ‘mentalities’ of the individual or simply for ‘domestication’ (Freire, 1985; Apple, 1996; Popkwitz, 1997). Popkwitz (1997) argues, “Schooling is strategies and technologies to direct how students reason about the world-at-large and the self in that world” (p.144) along with learning other applied subjects. Schooling direct students how to see ‘the world-at-large’ and ‘the self’ in that world; in other words schooling is the process through which the students situate themselves in the context. However, the context, the text and the whole process is pre-defined in terms of curriculum or education policies because “School practices are politically sanctioned ways for individuals to organize their views of self” (Meyer 1987 cite in Popkwitz, 1997, p.144). It is the curriculum and the school policies (hidden or documented) that define ‘what is worthwhile knowledge’ and select information from a host of possibilities for curriculum and then the “The selection of curriculum shapes and fashions how social and personal events are organized for reflection and practice” (Popkwitz, 1997, p.144; Apple, 1996).

The Chinese Complementary Schools in England, as studied by Francis, Archer and Mau (2009), complementary schools in Brittan studied by Li Wie (2006) and the Tibetan community schools for nomadic herding in China by the Buddhist lamas (Bangsbo, 2008) are examples of preserving, and perpetuating minority cultural identity through schooling under dominant cultures. While the cases of coercing Pakeha identity in Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand presented by Matthews and Jenkins (1999), the content and intent of history textbooks in America (Foster, 1999) are examples of forging identities through schooling in the West. Similarly the remaking of Chinese identity in Hong Kong as presented by Tse (2007) and in Tibet through primary curriculum as presented by Bass (2008), The Tibetan Neidi schools in China studied by Zhu (2007) are examples of using schools as the coercive instrument for molding and or tempering local/indigenous/minority ethnic cultural identities in Asian context.
Research studies both in the developed and the developing countries (Davidson, 1996; Zou and Trueba, 1998; Zhu, 2007; Norberg-Hodge, 2009) show that education and schooling have been used as powerful instruments for identity formation. Through education and schooling cultural identities have been preserved, perpetuated, formed, deformed, framed, molded, remolded, forged and sometimes distorted and blurred. Schooling is seen and is being used as an instrument to train children to serve the interest of dominant culture. For example, referring to the American conservative ideology Giroux and Simon (1989) noted that “they view schools as a particular way of life organized to produce and legitimate either the economic and political interests of business elites or the privileged cultural capital of ruling-class groups” (p.220).

Popkewitz (1997) gives examples of Protestant Reformation, German Reform, Islamic Madrasa, and Jewish Yeshiva, who use education, more specifically curriculum and schooling (in modern terms), for building social relations, regulate and discipline individuals according to and in line with their respective ideologies.

It is normal that in a democratic country the ruling or dominant party/class (being representative of the majority public) has the right to frame policies that support its ideologies. The implications of such a practice would be reflected in certain specific curricula and schooling processes. It would be desirable to know more about the dominant ideologies; however, using education as a coercive tool for assimilative purposes cannot be regarded as an educational goal. The ethical questions (about human rights) arise when deliberate measures are taken to silence the voices and forge the identities of subordinate communities for the sake of the interest of the ruling/dominant class/party. Some examples of empirical studies that reflect how schooling has been useful in integrative efforts encouraging and promoting cultural identities, and how it has been used for assimilative purpose by the dominant culture are presented below.

**Schooling for Preserving and Promoting Cultural Identity**

In a study of six Chinese Complementary Schools in England, the researchers Francis, Archer and Mau (2009) find that these schools serve for promoting the mother tongue, transmission of Chinese language and culture and provide additional sources of learning. Francis, Archer and Mau (2009, p.535) conclude, “the purpose of Chinese complementary schools appears to be to maintain connection and perpetuate a discursive construction of ‘real’ Chinese language and culture.”
Most of the respondent students were emotively motivated while some of them highlighted the practical application of learning Chinese language for job purposes and social adjustment. Most of the respondents linked their learning with family especially parents and grandparents showing a strong family bonding, one of the strong aspects of Asian culture. ‘Language’ has been considered as the prime signifier of Chinese identity with emotionally charged words used by the respondents. According to this study, one of the basic functions of school is to provide a social-cultural space so that immigrant minority students can have an opportunity for their cultural expressions and practices outside their home and family.

Similarly the community schools for the nomadic Tibetan children in Qinghai and Sichuan provinces of China studied by Bangsbo (2008) are examples of efforts by the Tibetan Buddhist lamas for cultural survival through schooling. These schools are ‘obliged to follow the national educational policies’ and curriculum. Schools are ‘permitted to localize as much as 20% of the curriculum of their regional schools.; They are striving to promote their local culture within this provision in order to maintain their cultural identity. Parents do not prefer sending their children to the public schools with heavily nationalist agenda and approaches that have little relevance and limited reference to Tibetan culture. Bangsbo (2008, p.76) mentions examples to justify this on the basis of which Tibetan parents are hesitant ‘to enroll their children in public school system’ for being ‘too divorced from Tibetan culture’.

With the 20% provision of localized curriculum, the pedagogical differences and school ethos are more important. In these community schools there are no practices of raising the national flag daily and singing the national anthem, which is a compulsory practice in the public schools. In place of the wall displays of communist leaders in public schools the community schools have “portraits of famous historical figures who made great contribution to scientific knowledge or art such as Einstein, Edison and Beethoven” (Bangsbo, 2008, p75-76) as wall displays.

In this way, the presence of small primary community schools in the rural herding areas allows these children to attend school in a domestic sphere and thereby thoroughly experience their own ethnicity and ethnic cultural values. Thus, the important contact with the traditional cultural environment is maintained during childhood, providing children
with a cultural education that complements their institutional schooling (Bangsbo, 2008, p.80).

The findings of these studies confirm that schooling is an effective means to preserve, perpetuate and promote cultural identities of students especially in cases of cultural minorities. The language of instruction, provision given to local culture in the curriculum and the school policies/ethos all contribute in the positive development of self-image and cultural identity of the students. The socializing function of school can be used for desired ends in social development of the learners; such a practice depends upon how the schools are envisioned and schooling is guided.

**Schooling for Coering ‘National’ Identities**

Being an effective means of socialization, schooling has also been used to teach children what the dominant social groups want them to learn. When we see history of education, most of the political, socio-economic and cultural movements have been introduced and penetrated among young generations through schooling. Mentioning the case of Ladakh, Norberg-Hodge (2002, p.25) noted that “In many countries, schooling was the prime coercive instrument for tampering with ‘underlying core values’ and proved to be a highly effective means of destroying self-esteem, fostering new ‘needs’, creating dissatisfactions, and generally disrupting traditional cultures”. Woodrum (2009, p.1) cites findings of Mike Corbett’ (2009) study that suggests “formal education has been and continues to be… a key institution of ‘disembedding’, loosening ties to particular locales and promoting out-migration from rural places.”

Different studies have explored how different aspects of schooling have been used for construction of cultural identity. According to these studies (Nieto, 1992; Grosvenor, 1999; Foster 1999, Matthews and Jenkins, 1999; Zhu 2007, Bass 2008), the curriculum, textbooks, medium of instruction, school policies, school ethos and its environment, teachers and teachers’ education and especially the hidden curriculum play crucial roles in identity formation. The teacher-students and student-students relationships, the school preferences, aspirations, expectations and the whole social structure of schooling affect the formation of students’ identities. Few examples from these studies showing how these aspects of schooling were used for identity formation are discussed here.
In the context of American schools, Grosvenor (1999, p. 248) found that it was the hidden curriculum “which has been critical in excluding black and Asian pupils from school life.” Grosvenor (1999) also points out that the routines and the rituals, the symbolic events of everyday schooling, drill and other exercises, the classroom walls displays, the display of reproduction paintings, the symbols printed on exercise books, even the scientific equipment, school magazines, badges and uniforms, images on shields, cups, medals all regulate behavior in certain directions as desired by the schools. The school ethos plays the vital role in acculturating students in certain ‘desired’ ways.

In a study of history textbooks, Foster (1999) sees textbooks as gatekeepers of ideas, values and knowledge and hence curriculum and text books have been used as primary sources and instruments to promote the dominant culture and to discourage the minority cultures. Textbooks, especially history textbooks, have been instrumentally used for stereotyping of ethnic minorities. For the most part history textbooks were never intended to promote or to celebrate cultural diversity (Foster, 1999).

Matthews and Jenkins (1999) in their six-year research about the Maori girls’ schooling in Aotearoa, New Zealand looked into identity formation among the Maori (native) girls under a Pakeha dominant culture. Regarding use of curriculum, the authors found that the “shaping of collective awareness through the stereotypic image of what constituted ‘ideal’ Maori citizenship is an example of the use of curriculum to perpetuate social control. The curriculum became the means of demonstrating political authority” (Matthews and Jenkins, 1999, p. 342). Similarly citing several researchers Zhu (2007, p. 1) also concludes, “In the context of schooling, the problem of ethnic identity is closely connected to the knowledge, culture, and values that are selected and transmitted through school curriculum.”

In their study Matthews and Jenkins (1999, p. 340) found that, “Schooling was to be used as a mechanism for bringing about the assimilation of Maori. Education policies for Maori were to reflect settler views about what non-European populations should be taught in order to better bring them in line with accepted European societal norms.”

Describing the strategies of dominant culture, Matthews and Jenkins (1999, p. 341) cite Ranginui (1991) as saying “assimilation could be more quickly realized through actively discouraging Maori language, belief systems and culture and actively promoting Pakeha belief systems and culture”. Full-time boarding away from the cultural context has
been an effective tool to dissociate the children from their native cultures in the cases of Maori and the Tibetan Neidi schools. In Tibetan Neidi schools, the boarding conditions for children were so strict that “They cannot visit their parents or any relatives during the first four years of middle school education” (Zhu, 2007, p.3).

In both cases of Tibet and Maori, the authors have highlighted using local language (mother tongue of learners) as medium of instruction as more effective implementation of hegemonic agenda. In both Maori and Tibet, curriculum is framed to support the ‘nation building’ project.

Nieto (1992) presented ten case studies of high school students in America with ages ranging 13 to 19. In this study, the schooling experiences of students from diverse backgrounds and ethnic groups have been discussed. On the basis of the findings of her case studies Nieto (1992, p.74) is of the view that curriculum “is never neutral but represents what is thought to be the important and necessary knowledge by those who are dominant in a society”. In words of Apple (1996), the national curriculum offers the ‘official knowledge’ and, “Curriculum thus serves as one primary means of social control” (Nieto, 1992, p.74; Popkewitz, 1997). Nieto (1992) also refers to a comprehensive analysis of 300 textbooks which revealed that many of those books perpetuated negative stereotypes of minority groups. Dominating the story lines, limited role of women and people of color, very little coverage of contemporary race relations, little coverage of issues of women and people of color in textbooks, are other examples of this analysis.

Next to curriculum and textbooks, the state education policies are the major factors that directly affect schooling. Describing the Chinese educational policy Bass (2008, p.40) cites the Communist Party Secretary Chen Kuiyuan (1994) as follows:

The success of our education does not lie in the number of diplomas issued […] It lies, in the final analysis, in whether our graduating students are opposed to or turn their hearts to the Dalai Lama clique and in whether they are loyal to or do not care about our great motherland and the great socialist cause.

In this statement success of education has been evaluated in terms of its power to make people assimilate. Chen (1997) cited in Bass (2008) has clearly presented Tibetan

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4 Dalai Lama, the Peace Noble Laureate, is the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader and sitting head of the Tibetan government in exile at Dharmshala who fled into exile after the Chinese occupation. Since 1959 about 140,000 indigenous Tibetan people have fled into exile and are living diasporas (Phuntsog, 1998).
culture as a threat to the national unity just because its richness may attract the world toward its conservation.

Almost the same policies of homogenization are used in case of Hong Kong as well. “To address a problem of perceived fragmentation of a collective identity (Hongkongese instead of Chinese), school education is used ideologically as an apparatus to regulate and normalize Hong Kong people” (Tse, 2007, p.232).

Presently “Fostering a sense of national identity among students has been listed as a central goal in school education and is also an established policy of several Government departments” of China (Tse 2007, p. 239). Curriculum reforms and revision of school syllabus have been undertaken along the same line.

Although the role and effects of state policies in schooling are evident, the role of schools, students and communities in countering hegemonic cultural invasion has also been observed. The following passage of Davidson’s (1996, p. 214) study precisely summarizes the whole situation:

In the course of this exploration, three general factors emerged as particularly relevant to the construction of identities. These include disciplinary technologies, which divide and thereby marginalize, bureaucratized relationships and practices, which silence and thereby disempower, and speech acts, which serve to label groups positively or negatively. Thus, schools as institutions play powerful roles in shaping certain parts of student identities.

In real life situation “student identities or subjectivities are constructed through their engagement in discourse worlds both inside and outside school” (Ryan and Johnson, 2009, p. 247). A student’s identity is socially constructed and individually experienced during the continuous interplay between self and the ideologies of society (Ryan and Johnson, 2009).

It is interesting to note that different types of ethnic minorities (the original natives known as aboriginal, immigrant and refugee) all have different kinds of experiences in different contexts. Be it of schooling, settlement/contact periods, being at home or otherwise, the ancestral roots and the present socio-political and legal status/relationships (routes) (Mosselson, 2006). However, the studies of Tibetan and Maori aboriginals of New Zealand (Bass, 2008; Matthews and Jenkins, 1999), immigrant ethnic minorities in US (Neito, 1992) and the case of Bosnian refugees in mainstream American schools (Mosselson, 2006) have one thing in common: in all cases the mainstream schooling (in
the form of curriculum, textbook, school culture and pedagogies) has an element of silencing the minority voices. In fact, apathy towards the diverse cultures, minorities and people of color is found in the mainstream schooling. A sense of voicelessness is experienced by the students. Describing the experiences of refugee Bosnian adolescent female students Mosselson (2006) states that the refugee students felt frustrated as they were silenced in classrooms, their experiences were not valued and they were not allowed to share. “All the refugees talked about how their ethnicities were not valued and could not understand this as they see it as a form of "cultural capital" from which everyone could benefit” (Mosselson, 2006, p.28).

Using Davidson’s (1996) findings it can be concluded that schools as institutions play powerful roles in shaping certain parts of student identities. There is a continuous interplay of the students’ preexisting ideologies (acquired from family) with the school environment. Schools cannot simply be said to reproduce social categories. Rather, student ideologies and school context exert a reciprocal influence on one another. However, the schooling has dominant influence when considered places of ‘authentic knowledge’ to be acquired from. Hence, it can be said that the school processes and the school culture (over all social and physical environment) plays a significant role in (re)formation/ (re)construction of a learner’s cultural identity.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented by Zhu (2007, p.11) resembles my study, so it is adapted here.
The assigned and the asserted identities seem to have a combined effect of the three contexts. The state policy is channelized through the school context. The school processes, the co-curricular activities and the hidden curriculum and cultural representation have combined effects. In this study the local community context has been made submissive, receptive and appreciative of the school context through state apparatuses.
Schooling and Cultural Identity

“I want, once and for all, not to know many things. Wisdom sets limits to knowledge too.”

“One fears the danger of a new slavery the moment the word "authority" is even spoken out loud.” (Nietzsche, 1895)

In educational philosophy the critical stance tries to address the basic questions of power dynamics in domains of education, culture, economy and politics. Regarding schooling and education, the critical stance poses fundamental questions about the educative (schooling) process and education (type, kind, and quality) itself. In the words of Apple (1973, 1992, 2003), the Spenserian question of ‘what knowledge is official knowledge?’ His own question ‘whose knowledge is official knowledge?’ and the most important question that emerges from the whole literature of critical paradigm would be ‘why one’s knowledge is official and/or authentic and why others is not? remains fundamental questions to ask.

Who defines ‘the authentic or official knowledge’? What are the implications of the notions such as official, authentic, legitimate, standardized, uniform, etc? Whose purpose is served through these hegemonic terminologies? ‘Whose knowledge is made available?’ Or in words of Freire how the oppressors manipulate knowledge and education and how the oppressed internalize the oppressors’ definitions as ‘the correct or standard’. How are identities formed in a relatively free social environment and how are identities forged or (de)formed under social control and power relations? How the identities formed under social control of the oppressors or the dominant cultures are more likely to become individuals’ ‘own identity’? Whether they possess any kind of their ‘own identity’ and/or are they aware of who they are? What responses and accomplishments in life can be expected from the people having or not having their own distinct cultural identities? These kinds of questions reflect the critical stance better rather than any possible answers to these questions. To what extent does one see the causes behind any apparent cause(s) of any event? The ability to question (not simply ask questions) and problematizing situations are the key features of critical stance.

Culture is evolved through the process of recreation and reconstructions. However, such evolutionary changes are possible if any culture is allowed to progress without interruption of any dominant external forces. Practically no culture in its process of change
(evolution or demolition) is ever free from external influences. Mostly the external factors become more intrusive when some deliberate political agenda operates and backs such factors/forces from behind the apparent scene. Research helps us understand how such change processes occur, how such changes are viewed and perceived by people both from within and from without the culture in discussion. How it ‘is’ and how it ‘could be’ guided for helping or hampering in identity formation/development.

**Role of Education in Power Dynamics**

Regarding the cultural politics and role pedagogy Giroux (2000, p.342) presents Stuart Hall’s work who is of the view that “culture is central to understanding struggles over meaning, identity and power.” Citing Hall and other theorists, Giroux (2000, p.342) state, “culture is a strategic pedagogical and political terrain whose force is a ‘crucial site and weapon of power in the modern world’”. According to Hall cited in Giroux (2000) pedagogy is central to the theory and practice of cultural politics. He emphasizes the need of “understanding pedagogy as a mode of cultural criticism that is essential for questioning the conditions under which knowledge is produced and subject positions are put into place, negotiated, taken up, or refused” (Giroux, 2000, p.342).

Education in both content and pedagogy, and specifically schooling (with predetermined sets of objectives, policies, rules, and curriculum) being an institution of socialization is used as a powerful tool for acculturation, power dynamics and soft control over the future generations. The efforts of assimilation sometimes known as nation building (projects) campaigns through education are, in fact, the strategy of hardest soft control. Michael Apple has given many such examples in the American context. The situation is not different in our part of the world from that of the early 20th century American education.

Bourdieu and Passeron (2000, p.5) have highlighted the process aspect or the pedagogic part of schooling, they are of the view that “All pedagogic action (PA) is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power”. Bourdieu and Passeron (2000, p.8) further add:

PA is objectively, symbolic violence in a second sense insofar as the delimitation objectively entailed by the fact of imposing and inculcating certain meanings, treated by

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5 Soft control means control through ideas, knowledge and technology, but at times this soft control is harder than the hardest control tools such as weapons.
selection and by the corresponding exclusion as worthy of being reproduced by PA, reproduc

 Ellwood Cubberly, one of the foremost voices in American education in the early 20th century, asserted that the public schooling’s paramount mission was “to assimilate and amalgamate these people as a part of our American race, and to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government” (cited in Cato Policy Report, 2008, p.11). The studies of Tse (2007), Bass (2008), Matthews and Jenkins (1999), reflections of Apple (1992 and 2003) and Friere (2005a, 2005b) all suggest that in different parts of the world, whether in Asia or in the West, the actual strategy of the dominant culture or simply the culture in power has been the same as Cubberly has explicitly stated in the American context. Similar explicitly assimilative policies are prevalent in China as Bass (2008) cited Chen and elsewhere in Britain, New Zealand and Pakistan. The nation states strive to promote national identity of every subordinate culture even at the cost of deforming and demolishing minority cultural identities.

 In words of Giroux and Simon (1989, p.1) it can be summarized “Schools produce and authorize particular form of meaning and implement teaching practices consistent with the ideological principles of the dominant society”. Therefore, the educators need to support a ‘pedagogical rethinking’ or critical pedagogy.

 With reference to Pakistani context it seems that the assimilative policies were more obvious and explicit in the colonial period and in countries where real democracy was lacking. In the post-colonial era the situation is more subtle but more dangerous as one cannot easily sniff the agenda and the programme behind. Apple (2003, p. 115) interestingly points out “The invisibility of Whiteness, and its effects on education and on market forces, allows race to function as an absent (at least for some people) presence in our societies.”

 Even if the documented policies and plans seem nicely presented in a meritorious, humanitarian way, the implications of implementing such plans ultimately serve the purpose of dominant groups only. Apple (2003) mentions Freire as saying that “formal education served to perpetuate dominance” (p.111). Friere (1975, p.30) further articulates features of such education as
Pedagogy which begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors (an egoism cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism) and makes of the oppressed the objects of its humanitarianism, itself maintains and embodies oppression. It is an instrument of dehumanization.

This kind of cloaking of hidden motives of oppression under beautiful terms of welfare, humanitarian and democratic development, are the real challenges for educators because they are responsible to uncover the cloaks and show the reality within to the learners.

In such a situation Apple (2003) citing Friere agrees that as educators and change agents we must follow a permanent critical approach to reality in order to discover deceiving aspects of oppression and dehumanising structures.

The present day schooling, on one hand, is used as a hegemonic tool to enforce modern culture even at the cost of losing indigenous local culture and, on the other hand, it practically promotes the consumerist culture. The promoters of modern schooling do not mind uprooting the local cultural identities, as long as consumerist monoculture is developed. Giroux (1999, p.140) rightly identified the intention of corporate culture, that the “advocates of corporate culture no longer view public education in terms of its civic function. Instead, they view education primarily as a commercial venture in which the only form of citizenship offered to young people is consumerism.”

The ‘civic function of education’ is, in fact, the aspired role but the practical role is different. Apple (2003) tries to distinguish the aspired and the in-place roles of education as ‘education as an instrument of liberation’ and ‘education as domination’. Giroux (1999, p140-141) further laments:

The forces of corporate culture have adopted a more radical agenda for public education. Central to this agenda is the attempt to transform public education from a public good, benefiting all students, to a private good designed to expand the profits of investors, educate students as consumers, and train young people for the low-paying jobs of the new global marketplace…The culture they present overwhelms any defense of public education as a non commodified public sphere, a repository for nourishing the primacy of civic over corporate values, or a public entitlement essential for the well-being of children and the future of democracy.
Using Friere’s term the ‘banking concept of education’ is not only pedagogically inculcation and depositing of bulk of information not necessary for holistic development, but the very concept of banking reflects the monetary profitability as the ultimate aim.

It can be concluded that as “culture is central to understanding struggles over meaning, identity and power” (Giroux, 2000, p.342) and schools as the planned institutions of socializations, make and remake culture and cultural identities of the children. Literature confirms that well-developed (cultural, ethnic, local) identities contribute to the overall wellbeing, performance, confidence, adaptation and self-esteem of students. Thus, individuals with unclear identities are more likely to remain underachievers in academic and socio-economic performance.

Generally schools inculcate the culture of dominant groups or the groups in power. The local cultures, identities and voices are neglected if not marginalized and silenced purposefully and forcefully. On the one hand, there are instances that schooling has been used to preserve, protect and promote local cultures; on the other hand, there are examples of using schooling to undermine, marginalize and silence culture and voices of local, indigenous and minority communities. The situation is mostly common among immigrants, native minorities, aboriginals, and politically underprivileged communities.

When schooling is seen through the critical lens “It is seen as a form of social control or, perhaps, as the embodiment of cultural dangers, institutions whose curricula and teaching practices threaten the moral universe of the students who attend them” (Apple, 1992, p.4).

Evan Illich (1970, p.4), in his typical style summarizes the function of schooling:

The pupil is thereby "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work.

All these are done through the school curricula, the hidden curriculum, the text and the discourses produced in school processes. Regarding the school curricula and text Apple (1992, p.4) raises the following critical questions:
Whose knowledge in the text?” whose version of social reality is taken as reality or taught as reality? Whose culture is taught-the textbook “texts are not simply "delivery systems" of "facts." They are the simultaneous results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles, and compromises. They are conceived, designed, and authored by real people with real interests.

Referring to the Pakistani context, Nayyar and Salim (2002, p.v) found that “Children’s identities and value systems are strongly shaped by the national curricula and textbooks in Social Studies, English, Urdu and Civics from Class I to Class XII.” And about the national curricula, the Education Reform in Pakistan (2014, p.3) cites findings of several studies that it is deeply-flawed:

That promotes xenophobia and religious intolerance, clearly violating Pakistan’s international obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which it has ratified. Reflecting the centralised state’s ideology, the curriculum also over-emphasises national cohesion at the expense of regional diversity.

This report further unpacks and states:

An over-emphasis in textbooks on Islamic interpretations, not just in religion classes but also in history, literature and the sciences, has been used to create a discourse on national identity that validates the politically dominant military’s domestic and foreign policy agendas. Control over the curriculum by military and military backed governments has been used” (Education Reform in Pakistan, 2014, p.3).

In view of the research studies and literature shared in this chapter, this study aims to explore and examine the role of schooling in developing indigenous cultural identity among the students of Baltistan. The people of Baltistan on both sides of the Pakistan-India border with their ancient linguistic and historical heritage have their distinct Balti cultural identity. Similar to other parts of the world mentioned above the indigenous cultural traditions of Baltistan are also under pressure of the global and national policies and power struggles. Therefore, the critical stance is the appropriate approach to explore the present and the potential role of schooling in preservation, promotion, and/or deformation of the Balti cultural identity. This study not only explores the possible hegemonic practices in school processes but also looks for policy guidelines for an emancipatory pedagogy. As Friere (2005a, p.130) suggests “Educators need to know what happens in the world of the children with whom they work. They need to know the universe of their dreams, the
language with which they skillfully defend themselves from the aggressiveness of their world, what they know independently of the school, and how they know it”.

The next chapter presents the research context that gives an in depth understanding of the rationale of the study.
CHAPTER 3

BALTISTAN: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

“Baltis are a mild people, quite incapable of any sort of violence [...] [with a] natural sense of modesty and respect”.

(Filippo, 1912, cited in Dryland and Syed, 2011, p.46)

The Research Context

This chapter presents a brief overview of the geographical, historical, cultural and to some extent the socio-political background of the research context ‘Baltistan’. The glimpses of cultural and political history, the present political status of Gilgit-Baltistan, the nature of its annexing with Pakistan, the strategic location of the region and the well-known tourism sites of its geography. Further, the currents of modernization and the latest political reforms and measures, the response and reaction of local people towards such reforms---all make the background and context of this study. However, here only the cultural aspects are mainly focused, the political aspects are just indicated and mentioned as they have socio-cultural implications.

Baltistan’s Background

‘Baltistan’ refers to the geographical region surrounded by the Karakoram and Himalayan mountains in the northern part of Pakistan bordering with India and China. Currently, the Pakistani part of Baltistan consists of two districts Skardu and Gangchhe while the major Indian part of Baltistan is Laddakh, Kargil and Turtuk.

The Pakistani Baltistan of today is an administrative unit of the internationally disputed region of Gilgit-Baltistan. It is headed by a senior civil bureaucrat known as commissioner and consists of two districts making a division. With the ‘Self-Empowerment Order 2009 of the government of Pakistan’, the previously known Northern Areas have been renamed as Gilgit-Baltistan and a province-like status has been granted to the region. People in this region across the Indo-Pak border speak the same language, Balti, with minor differences of the dialect. Using a single language, all Baltis share the same unique cultural
traditions inherited and transmitted through Balti language. Through the sharing of the vernacular the whole intellectual wealth and heritage like poetry, the folk lore, the local stories, historical facts, and ways of local life are preserved and shared by all speakers of the language.

In the words of Arora (1940, p.194), “The country on the north-west of Ladakh extending about 150 miles either side of Indus is Baltistan”. Historically, the present day Baltistan is known as Baltiyul, Western Tibet, the Little Tibet or Tibet-i-Khurd in Persian Belore and Palow (Affridi, 1988, Hussainabadi, 1984, Dani, 2007). Afridi (1954, p. 9), cites Cunningham (1854) “Balti, or Balti-Yul, is called Palolo, or Belor, by the Dards, and Nang-kod [small home i.e. little Tibet] by the Tibetans. Balti is the most common name and perhaps the oldest, as it is preserved by Ptolemy in Byltae.” About the origin of the word Balti-homeland Afridi (1954, p.9) cites Vigne (1884):

the word Tibet (there is no h), or Tibut, as it is pronounced in Baltistan and Kashmir, is called simply Bod, in the language of Ladak. A Tibetan is called Bod-pa at Ladak whence also comes the names of Butan, as is sometimes called in the plains. Little Tibet is called in Kashmir, suri-Butan or apricot Tibet, from the quantity of that fruit it produces.

Balti people are known as bod-pa or bot-pa, sometimes as botis known to be offshoot of Mongolian by ethnic origin and blood. Drew cited in Afridi (1988) is of the view that Baltis are of the Tibetan clique. Arora (1940, p.194) also supports this view “The Baltis are almost Tibetan origin”. That is why “The country known as Baltistan has been called ‘Little Tibet’ in earlier history” (Hashmatullah, 1939, p. 4).

Geographically Baltistan is the land of largest glacial ranges after the poles and highest peaks including Godwin Austen Chhogori or K-2. “Baltistan is composed of enormous mountains – chains or masses of mountains… As to heights while 18,000 to 20,000 feet is common, there are in the north eastern parts, peaks of 25,000 and 26,000 and one above 28,000 feet” (Drew cited in Dani, 2007, p.27).

Cultural Heritage

Historically Baltistan is known to be the land of gods and the home of the earliest human civilization. It has been part of the Tibetan civilization and known as the Little Tibet. The oldest historical and religious traditions of Somalek, Kesarism, Bonism, and Buddhism originated in this region (Lobsang, 1997). The Bon religion is the pre-Buddhist religion
and it was preached in Balti language that is why there are huge linguistic traces of Bonism in Balti. Lobsang (1997) has described many of the terminologies of Bonism or Bon-Chhos⁶. Afridi (1988) cites Cunningham (1954) that previous to the occupation of Tibet by Khri-Tsampo [the Eagle Guy] in about 250 B.C. the people were of Bon or Pon religion.

Bonism came into being during the Tibetan/Chinese Zhang Zhung dynasty and then the teachings were translated in Tibetan language during the reign of Tonpa Shenrab Mewacha, the ruler of Zhang Zhung. According to Kvaerne (1972, p.27), “Our bon-po sources claim that the doctrine of the Buddha (gŠen-rab) was firmly established in Tibet when čhos appeared”. Tonpa Shenrab was born in Olmo Chhuring (Sanai, 2012). The information available on the internet about the Zhang Zhung history and language confirms the claims of Sanai. The Balti Agay is in fact Zhang Zhong language script with minor modification. All the names of rulers from that period (250 BC) were Balti names.

Regarding the spread of Buddhist religion Afridi (1988, p.23) presents Cunningham’s view that, “in A.D. 400, the people of Tibet and Baltistan professed Buddhist religion.” The archeological monument of the Buddha rock in Manthal Skardu alongside the Hergisa-nala is one of the greatest signs of Buddhist faith and Balti script Agay. The rock has a sitting Buddha surrounded by 20 smaller sitting Buddhas and two standing figures on left and right. According to experts interpretation Fosco Maraini, 1961, cited in Afridi (1988, p.24) writes “One of the standing figure portrays Maitreya, and the central one Buddha Sakyamuni; the twenty smaller and identical figures represent previous incarnations of Buddha Sakyamuni”. The inscription on this rock below the Buddha figure is in Agay readable even now. The text is a description of the Mandala (Buddhist terminology) or the Medallion.

According to research of Sanai (2012), the rock carving of Manthul is not Buddha rock, it is ‘Tonpa- Rock’, which is pre-Buddhist. Similar carvings are present in Shigar valley as well. Tonpa was the messenger of Bonism. They were three brothers; the one standing on right is known as Rdudpa, the central is Tonpa, and the one standing on left is Khchespa. Sanai (2012) further describes the details of roles of all these three brothers who, as messengers of Bon went to Shang HlaOdkar (The God of gods) who designated the three with different responsibilities. Khchespa would be the last Buddha who is the yet awaited messiah according to Bonism teachings. One of the twenty small Buddhas surrounding

⁶Chhos in Balti language means religion, tradition, style or way of doing something, also used for adoration.
Tonpa was the predicted Buddha Siddhartha Gautama and the central one was the ‘fire Buddha’ Tonpa Shesrab Mewacha. However, other available books by local historian do not mention such details as their sources are mainly local literature. Sanai claims to have access to literature on ancient histories (Tibri, Alberoni etc.), some Tibetan, Chinese and western literature as well and the whole story fits consistently and logically. If this be the correct interpretation of the inscriptions, as he claims, than pre-Buddhist presence of an organized religion (Bon) and language (Bod-Skat) with script (Agay) is confirmed. Some authors think that the inscriptions of the Agay on Buddha/Tonpa rock describing the engravings of medallion Tonpa/Buddha are from a later age. However, this claim can be proved or disproved through hi-tech scientific means such as carbon dating, if possible, in case of rock carving other along with archeological tools of age detection.

There are many other rock carvings in Gilgit-Baltistan. Dani (2007) categorizes them into four chronological periods. These rock engravings and carvings are present in all valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan from Chilas to Yasin in the north, Hunza in the east and Skardu in the north. According to Dani (2007, p.100) “They may be dated prior to second millennium B.C. and may go back to sixth or fifth millennium B.C.” Dani (2007, p.100) notes the presence of a smaller boulder near the Buddha rock in Manthal.

At Manthal near Sadpara Lake, nor far from Skardu, there is a single boulder to the west of the tall boulder having Buddhist carvings. This small boulder has engravings of various periods.

Arif (2001) supports Dani’s estimation as he traces the ancient Bronze-Age-culture and even back to the Epi-Palaelithic and pre-historic cultures in the petroglyphs and rock engravings in Northern Areas in his doctoral studies on archeological sites of Gilgit-Baltistan. “Northern Areas of Pakistan are, therefore, like Ladakh and Zanskar fully related or at least connected to the cultures of steppic Bronze-Age. Rock carvings with extremely strong patination and styles were discovered” (p.53).The evidences of rock carving and petroglyphs, in different regions of Baltistan, the greatest one in Skardu, show the existence of an organized religion and evolved scriptures of about 1000 BC (Afridi 1988). Other historical sources confirm presence of a great civilization for centuries.

The Balti language written in the Tibetan script known as agay (written from left to right) is an evolved form of the Pre-Buddhist Zhang Zhung language. Although the presence of Zhang Zhung script and language is found only in archeological sites of Tibet.
(such as Chang Thang), clear traces of similarities are present in the form of Balti language. According to Thsering (2002) Balti is an archaic dialect of the Tibetan language and in present day Baltistan or Baltiyul, approximately 93 per cent of the population considers Balti as their mother tongue. The rest 7% population comprising the high lander villages such as in Gultari tehsil and villages near Gilgit speak both Shina as their mother tongue but they also speak Balti as first language.

**Socio-political Identity of Gilgit-Baltistan**

Although the people of Gilgit-Baltistan hold Pakistani national identity cards and passports but constitutionally they are deprived from the citizenship and democratic rights of representation in the Parliament of Pakistan (the National Assembly and the Senate). “Today, the Gilgit-Baltistan area, together totaling approximately 72,500 square kilometres and with an estimated population of one million, continue to be a disputed territory” (Dryland and Syed, 2011, p.43-44).

According to Ali (2010, p.739) “Due to the territorial and religious anxieties that the Northern Areas pose to the Pakistan state, it has been placed under direct federal administration, and denied even the basic constitutional rights such as the right to vote in national elections.” Political marginalization is translated in deprivation of other basic rights such as judicial rights. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan do not have judicial rights of appealing to the apex court (the Supreme Court) of the country. The region is marked as disputed territory on the international map and according to Weisnn (1994), cited in Ali (2010), this region comprises 86 percent of the disputed territory of Kashmir that is governed by Pakistan (Weiss, 1994). Thsering (2004) points out that the constitution of Pakistan makes no reference to Gilgit-Baltistan. Hence for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan the national identity as ‘Pakistani’, is yet a question in the real sense.

Dryland and Syed (2011, p.41) cite several studies that suggest, “The breakup or re-emergence of old identities and the forging of new, hybrid identities are frequently seen not only as defining features of postcolonial societies but also as among the driving forces of change, … in various nation states.”

Identity discourses become important when it is in crisis (Mercer, 1990). The political struggle and voices of different ethnic communities in Pakistan are, in fact, a reaction of their identity crisis when they feel their cultural identities being destabilized by
the nation states which are according to Dryland and Syed (2011, p.42) similar to the situation of “the Balti people in the nation state of Pakistan”. After the end of the British rule in the South Asian subcontinent in 1947, “the treatment of the people of Baltistan in the post-1947 nation state of Pakistan is tantamount to a continued state of their colonisation albeit with some differences in the form and nature of colonisation” (ibid).

As Savarese (2006) said, “issues of naming are issues of power”; having an appropriate name reflects their identity for the sake of economic and /or social reinsertion and adjustment, but this region has been represented as ‘Northern Areas’ used as a proper noun. Only recently in 2009, the region has been officially renamed as Gilgit-Baltistan with a province-like administrative set-up, so to say the geographical identity accepted. The name Northern Areas used for decades has been perceived as a way of not recognizing and confusing their identity. That is why the demand of renaming the region has been accepted to comfort the people. However, even this composite name serves only administrative purposes. It does not appear in any of the constitutional documents of the country.

This way the people of Gilgit-Baltistan stand nowhere in terms of recognition of their historical and cultural heritage (identity) or the Pakistani national identity. The people are in a situation of ‘national identity’ not granted and ‘cultural identity’ not protected and at risk.

Baltistan (the Pakistani part) and Ladakh (the Indian part) separated during partition on political and religious grounds, share the same language and culture. According to Thsering (2004, ¶6), the people of Baltistan want to conserve this shared cultural identity. The Baltis are striving to preserve their ethnic and cultural color, and identify strongly with the people of Ladakh. The rich folklore and literary heritage of the Baltis; their poetry, proverbs, myths, epics, sagas, folk dances, wedding rituals, songs, festivals like Losar and Mephang, sports like polo and daphang (archery), costumes, cuisine and architecture are evidence of the Ladakhi identity.

It is to be noted that the Ladakhi culture itself is in serious need of preservation as the study by Helena Norberg-Hodge shows.

The desire to conserve and promote the shared cultural identity is translated into various cultural movements. MacDonald’s (2006) study on ‘memories of Tibet’, describes much of the ground situation. He states, “Over the past ten years, an incipient movement,
centered on a concern with the erosion of cultural identity, has grown in the urban centers of Baltistan” (p.191). MacDonald’s (2006) considers the efforts as an attempt to reshape identity.

**The Sense of Uncertainty**

Exclusion of the Gilgit-Baltistan region from the mainstream ‘national’ constitution and constitutional forums, platforms such as the parliament, the apex court and National Finance Commission (NFC) for financial inclusion etc, has given the region a status of ‘colony’ and the people though highly loyal to the federation, feel colonized in a functional way. Surprisingly, a flourishing pluralist society with people proud of their origins and cultures is perceived as a potential threat by the regimes. The religious and Pakistani national ideology taught, preached and propagated through school, curriculum and by the religious scholars have been the only binding force so far. However, this very foundation being laid on sentimental affiliations not on rational grounds seems too shallow and fake if the states of affairs remain the same in the immediate future.

Though in the international reports and on maps Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has been mentioned and marked as a disputed region, in local national media the disputed status was not publically declared. However, after the ‘The Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order 2009’ and the absence of any mention of Gilgit-Baltistan in the 18th and 19th constitutional amendments of Pakistan, the GB’s disputed status has been officially confirmed and publically declared that has raised political uncertainty in the region.

In March and May 2012, dozens of innocent passengers were identified and killed by terrorist elements in two tragic incidents at Kohistan and Chilas. The unsatisfactory post-event management by the government and its inability to protect passengers’ lives have increased the uncertainties and raised many apprehensions among the people of Gilgit-Baltistan about their political identity. There are too many questions regarding the political identity of Gilgit-Baltistan, the struggles of different stakeholders and interest groups, the role of Pakistani government and various departments, the local nationalist forces, the political role of religious clergy and the involvement of international influence in this region. In such an uncertain political situation the protection and promotion of indigenous cultural identities have almost been forgotten.
The Endangered Balti-Culture

When we talk about Baltistan and Balti culture, we frequently refer to Tibet and Ladakh. Tibet in China, Ladakh in India, and Baltistan in Pakistan belong to the same ethno-linguistic cultural origin. The situation of cultural invasion from the dominant cultures of respective countries, the language and educational policies of governments, the overall questions about identity and need of cultural preservation are same with small differences of intensity or degree of the need to preserve this legacy of real oriental culture. In the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (nd) “Today Tibet, with its unique cultural heritage which incorporates Buddhist spirituality, is truly facing the threat of extinction. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, some kind of cultural genocide is taking place.”

Same was the situation in Ladakh when Norberg-Hodge (2002) terms it as ‘the march of mono-culture’. Norberg-Hodge (2002, p.26) states situation of cultural erosion in Ladakh, “In recent years, though, external forces have caused massive and rapid disruption in Ladakh. Contact with the modern world has debilitated and demoralized a once – proud and self-sufficient people, who today are suffering from what can best be described as a cultural inferiority complex.” There are research/literature evidences that the local language is being deformed, historical heritage not preserved, and local identity not encouraged.

According to Dryland and Syed (2011, p.47) “Today, in the interests of its own religio-political expansion, Pakistan is in the process of “Urdu-izing” the Northern Areas”. These authors further argue that Pakistan covertly discourages the attempts of revival of the indigenous script Agay or Yigay.

In words of Thsering (2003) the invasion of nonlocal elements distorted the local languages through ‘Urdufication and Persianization’. The “Tibetan script had to face the persistent insecurity of threat of extinction with the change of royalty or submission to non-Tibetan regimes”(Thsering, 2002). According to a UNESCO report on endangered languages “Half of the 6,700 languages spoken today are in danger of disappearing before the century ends, a process that can be slowed only if urgent action is taken by governments and speaker communities.” Among the 27 such languages spoken in Pakistan, Balti is the second endangered language.

In Tibet education and the primary curriculum and textbooks have been used to mould Tibetan identity conforming to a unified Chinese socialist model at times ridiculing
the rich cultural customs, rituals, and Tibetan heroes (Bass, 2008). Misrepresentation of the heritage is one of the tactics. The China’s nation-building project “has essentially been presented as one of remoulding the cultures of China’s 55 designated minorities into a unitary modern socialist culture” (Bass, 2008, p.39).

Similarly the customs (living style, buildings, and artifacts) that support their indigenous lives are vanishing. The same thing is happening in Ladakh as found by Norberg-Hodge.

In the past the situation in Baltistan was similar to Ladakh where “In traditional Ladakhi culture, all basic needs – food, clothing and shelter, were provided without money. All labour needed and given was free of charge, part of an intricate and long-established web of human relationships.” As indicated by Norberg-Hodge, now the situation is worsening. “The breaking of local cultural, economic and political ties isolates people from their locality and from each other. At the same time, life speeds up and mobility increases – making even familiar relationships more superficial and brief” (Norberg-Hodge, 2002, p.27). Same is the case in Baltistan. The situation of Ladakh has been studied and documented to a greater extent. But the situation of Baltistan’s cultural deformation is an area understudied if not unstudied, where the socio-political context is different. The situation of cultural erosion is same but immediate causes are different.

It seems that the new wave of modernization spawning through schooling is the major cause of cultural erosion in Baltistan. So this study is justified as it tries to explore the extent to which our schooling has played this role of creating alienation among young people towards their indigenous culture.

The study is justified as it touches upon a sensitive topic which is worthy of research in the unique geographic and socio-political context of Baltistan. Conscious and aware people understand the need of cultural preservation. I believe, my study can contribute in knowledge generation for the cultural conservation discourse about Baltistan.

**Language and Linguistic Heritage**

‘Culture’ is manifested in two forms: ‘the physical culture’ such as architecture, food, dress, housing etc and ‘the intangible culture’ such as music, poetry, folk lore,
traditions, ceremonies, proverbs, ideologies, faith elements and myths etc. The second form owes it transmission from one generation to another through the use of language. When we take ‘culture’ in aesthetic and literary terms, language becomes the site of ‘literary culture’ with all its beauties, dimensions, diversity and potential of human thoughts. In simple words language holds, preserves, perpetuates, nurture, carries and allows ways of expression and communication of human thought.

Language, as the principal means of human communication, holds all the shared cultural aspects and values. It is also the very tool of human thought processes. Linguistic philosophers are of the view that we think in language and then communicate those thoughts in it. As Leibniz puts it that “Languages are the best mirror of the human mind” (cited by Chomsky, 1986, p.1), language reflects thoughts and thoughts are being coded (verbalized) in language.

As mentioned earlier the Baltis were also known as Bod or Botis, hence their language was also known as Bod-Skat (skat means language). In informal speech the word Bod resembles the word Buddh(ism). Hence, several Muslim preachers from outside of Baltistan considered Bod-Skat as an emblem for Buddhism. They discouraged the use of original Balti script, Agay, being taken as the major carrier of Buddhist faith, although that was not the case. The Balti Script Agay, still used in Skum, Tibet and Laddakh, was being used in Baltistan more than five hundred years ago. After religious conversion of Buddhist population of Baltistan to Islam, Arabic and Persian languages were introduced here and the Tibetan Script was gradually abandoned considering it the symbol of Buddhism (Hussainababdi, 1984). There have been several efforts to revive the Agay script. Phacho Iqbal’s (2003) book on Agay is perhaps the most comprehensive handbook of learning Balti script Agay with new linguistic innovations to accommodate modern needs of inclusion of alien sounds of other languages already being absorbed by Balti language in speaking dialect.

Initially in Balti all the poetic expressions were called “khulu” which were categorized under four major types: Rgiyang Khulu, Zrdrong Khulu, Bodh Khulu and Khulu. Rgiyang Khulu was assumed to be the top literary masterpieces. After Islam, the religious poetry became dominant with Persian name (Hussainabadi, 1984, 2009; Kazmi, 1985).
Similar to poetry, Balti music is also placed in four major categories of Balti Music: *Hareeb, lumkar or lamna (lamsna), Hrtsekar, Staqara* and *Khulu-kar* (Kazmi, 1985; Nazeer, 1998; Hussainabadi, 1984.) The suffix ‘kar’ stands for the tone or rhythm. According to Hussainabadi (1984) and Wazir Himayat Hussain (2011) there are 60 (subtypes of) *hareeb*. It is interesting to note that dancing music is different from listening music. *Hrtse-kar* is typical dancing music without lyrics which has 19 kinds: all 19 kinds support 19 types of dances meant for different occasions and different purposes (Hasrat, 2007, Nazeer, 1998, Hussainabadi, 1984).

**Religious Harmony**

According to Lobsang (1997), before tenth century Baltistan was culturally, linguistically, politically and racially a part of great Tibet. Later due to the internal conflict between Bon-Chhos and Bod-Chhos (Bonism and Buddhism) the great Tibet disintegrated and Baltistan seceded from Tibet. However, “the racial and linguistic relations are still intact” (p.11).


Most of the historians are of the view that the first Muslim preacher was Syed Ali Hamdani. It seems partially true as the majority of the population converted to Islam during Hamdani’s time. However, as far as introduction of Islam in the region is concerned, other sources show that Islam was introduced in the region earlier by other scholars and saints, but could not become that popular. One of the significant names of pre-Hamdani scholars/saints is Hazrat Bulbul Shah. These saints spread the Sufi tradition of Islam in Baltistan.

Followed by these Sufi saints other Muslim scholars strengthened Islam along the lines of various schools of thought and jurisprudence of distinct sects of Shiism, Sunnism, Ahl-Hadis and Ismailism. Because of this religious history, the present Baltistan owns a rich cultural blend of Bonism, Buddhism, Islamic Sufism and other Islamic schools of
thought with Shi'iism being the dominant one. The religious harmony in Baltistan is exemplary as compared to other parts of the country and the neighboring cities.

Although the religious traces of Buddhism and Bonism have been deliberately forgotten, suppressed and undermined mostly by the orthodox clergy, however, the deep rooted traces in language and local traditions of Bonism and Buddhism are still present. Many of the Balti religious terminologies still used are of Bonism origin. Sanai (2012) is of the view that all the preserved terminologies of Bonism are in pure Balti language.

Reflecting on the religious harmony, Dryland and Syed (2011, p.45) state, “The Baltis adopted a blend of Islam that included aspects of Noorbakhshi Sufism (a Sufi-oriented order found only in Iran and Baltistan) and Buddhism, a form of Islam vastly different from an Iranian-dominated version of Islam currently visible in Baltistan today”.

The architectural monuments the Khanqas, tombs and forts are self-explanatory evidences of the rich cultural endowments and heritage of the region. It is interesting to note that many of these monuments including khanqahs and forts, have woodcarvings of swastika, the religious sacred symbol of Bon (anticlockwise swastika) and Buddhism (clockwise swastika). The oldest mosques in Shigar, the UNESCO award winner mosque Masjid-e-Amborik and another mosque Masjid-e-Chabrunji both founded by Syed Ali Hamdani in 1370s AD have both clockwise and anticlockwise swastika woodcarvings which show the respect for both Bon and Buddhist religions.

The Sufi Islam having respect and tolerance for all other religions and religious beliefs and being nearer to the Buddhist teachings of non-violence, tolerance and compassion has made this region one of the most peaceful areas not only of the country but of the world.

Dr. Ahmet Yurar Professor of Ethnomusicology Halcellepe University, Ankara is of the view, “The Balti phenomenon could be advertised throughout the world as an epitome of India as an integrated society based on tolerance” (Yurar’s foreword in Rizvi, 1993, p.viii). Many other scholars (Rizvi, 1993, Afridi, 1988, Norberg-Hodge 1998) also commend the tolerant society of Baltistan (including Kargil-Laddkah), the other part of Baltistan across the border.

who stated that Baltis are “are a mild [...] people, quite incapable of any sort of violence [...] [with a] natural sense of modesty and respect [...] they seem to be naturally polite, respectful and orderly.” The authors also indicate the developments and transformation being noticed during recent years in terms of the changing of an inoffensive and secular Balti society into more religiously conservative society.

Before the current of modernization and urbanization during the last few decades, the whole Baltistan was a self-reliant agrarian society with minimal rates of crimes. One of the signs of this self-reliance can be observed in Skardu city where one will not find a single beggar unlike the flocks of beggars in big cities of the country. Even now in 2012, the crime is minimal and minor in nature. There are police stations where no serious crime reports have been registered since the establishment of these police stations. However, it is unfortunate that the competitive market economy and consumerist culture is causing tensions and conflicts among people. This economic dissatisfaction created by the consumerist culture is manifested in many ways including religious tension.

In the words of Dryland and Syed (2011, p.52) that despite having a rich cultural heritage and history and huge potentials in terms of cultural and natural resources, “The critical issues of cultural pluralism, full constitutional citizenship, and the basic human rights of the Balti people have been ignored throughout the 63 years since Partition”.

Schooling in Baltistan

In Baltistan the main education provider is the government education system. There are further three types of government schools at primary level: Federal Government (FG) schools, Social Action Program (SAP) schools, and schools of National Education Foundation (NEF).

In Gilgit-Baltistan the public (government) schooling is practically administered by the secretary of education, directors, deputy directors, inspector schools and their staff. Though there is a provincial minister of education, however, the minister is supposed to deal with policy issues only and the administrative head of the department is the secretary of education. Of the two divisions, Gilgit and Baltistan, the directors of education head the divisional team and deputy directors head the district team as the direct supervisors of all schools. So far in Gilgit-Baltistan the national curriculum is followed and the textbooks of Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore are used for primary to higher secondary levels in all
government schools, with few exceptions. Till the date of my data collection the medium of instruction was both Urdu and English, however, the official medium of instruction will be completely English in coming years.

There are several non-government organizations (NGOs) and private school systems striving to provide quality education. Among these NGOs the schools of Uswa Education System assisted by the Jabir Bin Hayan Trust, Tameer-e-Millat Schools, Al-Mustafa Schools, the community schools established by the Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan (AKES,P), Schools sponsored by the Marafie Foundation, schools of Central Asia Institute and army controlled public schools have presence in both districts. There are many other localized schools run by local community based organizations (CBOs). In Skardu district the Cadet College, the Public School and College Skardu and Army Public School are semi-government autonomous institutions while the Jinnah Public School, Khubaib College, Career Guidance Public School, Baltistan Higher Secondary School are offering primary to secondary education in private sector. Uswa School System is the biggest in private (NGO) sector with two higher secondary (Boys, Girls) and one secondary school in the Skardu town.

Generally the NGOs and private schools use English and the government schools use Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) as the medium of instruction. All the schools follow the national curriculum centrally designed by the Federal Ministry of Education.

Local languages and the first language (L1) of about more than 90% population are not given any place in the curriculum. In Baltistan only one textbook of social studies at primary level is found to have preliminary information about local geography and history. This textbook was followed by a few schools offering Urdu medium education. However, even that textbook of social studies has been taken off the curriculum now. Another reason for removing the textbook was the unavailability of it in the market as publication of the book was not continued. The nationally designed textbooks are followed with minimal or no contextual content. In language learning both Urdu and English are compulsory in all schools. In this way a child is supposed to learn three languages: two second languages (L2) at school with first language at home. Because of having no place for the first language (L1) in curriculum in school and almost no utility in the job market, some of the literate families in towns use Urdu as their first language at homes, at times discouraging the use
of Balti. This whole situation makes the case of this study more interesting when we see language as a carrier of cultural heritage.

There are several factors (reasons) such as globalization, postcolonial effects, centralized national curriculum, non-contextual syllabus and politically driven educational policies that blur the indigenous ‘cultural identities’ of minority ethnic and linguistic groups all around the world (McMillan, 2008). The case of Baltistan is not different in this regard.

**Present Status of School Education**

According to the statistics of, the Directorate of Education Gilgit-Baltistan (official website) there are three main education providers: the federal government school and the mosque schools run under government, the NEF (National Education Foundation) schools and the private schools.

The overall summary of schools and enrolment as reported in the Gilgit Baltistan Education Statistics 2011-12 are given in Tables below:

**Table 4 Summary of Schools in GB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Co-Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEF</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>2189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5 District wise and gender wise schools in GB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/ District</th>
<th>Primary Schools</th>
<th>Middle Schools</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6 Total Enrolment Status in GB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>81975</td>
<td>51300</td>
<td>133275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEF</td>
<td>17759</td>
<td>22412</td>
<td>40171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>37631</td>
<td>30761</td>
<td>68392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>137365</td>
<td>104473</td>
<td>241838</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the present two districts of Baltistan the grade level wise Gross Enrolment Ratios are given below:
Table 7 Primary to Secondary Gross Enrolment Ratio in Baltistan

Primary Gross Enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/District</th>
<th>Enrolment Kachi-Class-V</th>
<th>Population (4-9 Years) for Primary Gross Enrolment</th>
<th>GER at Primary (K-V) Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltistan Region</td>
<td>Boys 36886   Girls 28347 Total 65233</td>
<td>Boys 42243   Girls 38155 Total 80398</td>
<td>Boys 87% Girls 74% Overall 81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skardu</td>
<td>Boys 24864   Girls 17338 Total 42202</td>
<td>Boys 30653   Girls 27170 Total 57823</td>
<td>Boys 81% Girls 64% Overall 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanche</td>
<td>Boys 12022   Girls 11009 Total 23031</td>
<td>Boys 11589   Girls 10985 Total 22575</td>
<td>Boys 104% Girls 100% Overall 102%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Middle Gross Enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/District</th>
<th>Enrolment 6th to 8th class</th>
<th>Population (10-12 Years)</th>
<th>GER at Middle (6 to 8th) Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltistan Region</td>
<td>Boys 9530   Girls 5794 Total 15324</td>
<td>Boys 17378   Girls 15463 Total 32841</td>
<td>Boys 55% Girls 37% Overall 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skardu</td>
<td>Boys 6660   Girls 3131 Total 9791</td>
<td>Boys 12415   Girls 11109 Total 23524</td>
<td>Boys 54% Girls 28% Overall 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanche</td>
<td>Boys 2870   Girls 2663 Total 5533</td>
<td>Boys 4962   Girls 4354 Total 9317</td>
<td>Boys 58% Girls 61% Overall 59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary Gross Enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/District</th>
<th>Enrolment Class 9-10th</th>
<th>Population (13-14 Years)</th>
<th>GER at High (Class 9-10th) Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltistan Region</td>
<td>Boys 4249   Girls 2476 Total 6725</td>
<td>Boys 8461   Girls 7511 Total 15972</td>
<td>Boys 50% Girls 33% Overall 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skardu</td>
<td>Boys 2966   Girls 1541 Total 4507</td>
<td>Boys 5967   Girls 5575 Total 11542</td>
<td>Boys 50% Girls 28% Overall 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanche</td>
<td>Boys 1283   Girls 935 Total 2218</td>
<td>Boys 2493   Girls 1937 Total 4430</td>
<td>Boys 51% Girls 48% Overall 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76
From the above statistics several things are revealed. For example, if we see the gross enrolment ratio (GER) overall, the gender disparity is not as huge as compared to the disparity in several other parts of the country. However, within Baltistan if we see the district wise boys/girls enrolment, the GER disparity of district Skardu is higher than that of Gangchhe at all levels of primary, middle and secondary education. This difference and gap can be interpreted in different terms. One interpretation is that, being more remote from the urbanization effects, Gangchhe district still conserves the rural indigenous Balti culture which is more open and has better gender equity. Secondly, the demographic composition of rural dwellings and faith affiliations could be reasons of gender balance. Dryland and Syed (2011) have pointed out that in rural areas of Baltistan females enjoy more mobility and openness as compared to the town populations. These enrolment ratios also reveal the standing of GB in terms of the EFA and MDG goals which are not encouraging.

The Curriculum Issue in GB

In Gilgit-Baltistan the old Pakistani national curriculum which was used before the 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010) is still used. About a decade ago there emerged serious conflicts in GB over the issue of curriculum. Regarding the effects of national curriculum and public schooling in GB, Ali (2010) in her study of sectarian imaginaries in Gilgit, has explored few core issues in the context of Gilgit. Ali (2010) states the situation as “Even more troubling is the fact that the arena of secular education – often proposed as the panacea for sectarianism in local and supra-local discourse – is deeply implicated in the production of sectarian tension and distrust” (p.741).

There were controversies and sectarian conflicts in Gilgit during the first five years of 2000. “This ‘textbook controversy’ – as it came to be called – turned into a full-blown sectarian conflict between 2004 and 2005, when almost 100 people lost their lives, educational institutions were closed for half the year, and a constant curfew paralyzed daily life in Gilgit”(Ali, 2010, p.748). Ali mentions several stories that revealed the power struggle among different stakeholders during this strife. Baltistan, however, remained safe far from such intense controversies and sectarian conflicts and credit may be ascribed to the open and moderate Balti culture. If seen in terms of demographic composition and
interventions of stakeholders, the situation would have been very similar to that of Gilgit. Now the main concern of the educated people of Baltistan is: how to protect their culture of tolerance, endurance and compassion, from polluting elements of extremism, intolerance and impatience?
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

“All thinking is research, and all research is native, original, with him who carries it on, even if everybody else in the world already is sure of what he is still looking for.”


Chapter Overview

This chapter starts with a brief philosophical and epistemological discussion of methodological approaches of this study. This is followed by details of research process, the research question, the qualitative ethnographic approach of the study, the critical perspective for the study design, the process of selection of research participants, the analytical framework and data analysis. A major part of the chapter is about discourse and ‘critical discourse analysis’ which is the analytical tool used for this study.

The Methodology

The methodology of any study is in fact the philosophical approach of dealing with the focus of an inquiry. Interaction of methodology with ontological and epistemological dimensions of a study is explained by Hitchcock and Hughes cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005, p.3) that, “Ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these, in turn, give rise to methodological consideration; and these in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection”.

The study with its focus follows a ‘critical ethnographic qualitative inquiry’. It is ‘ethnographic’ due to its focus on ‘culture’ and ‘critical’ due to its approach to discover and explore the power relations in development of cultural identity. Among the three lenses, as termed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005), this study falls under the lens of ‘methodologies from critical theory’. The framework of ‘relativism’ is used as the study aims to critically explore aspects of ‘cultural diversity’ given way or blocked by the schooling process. The study accepts diversity and relativity as essential features of ‘social reality’, and that ‘social reality’ is situated in a socio-political context governed by ideologies and is interpreted by human beings with their own unique experiences. In
addition with the purposes to understand situations and the phenomenon of ‘schooling and identity formation’, this study also aspires to highlight ‘emancipation’ by conscientization of public on discourses of voice, power, ideology, legitimacy, equality, participation, inclusion, exclusion and similar issues: therefore the critical stance or lens is suitable (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2005; Freire, 2003).

The belief that human beings “exercise free-will and make judgments which alter the courses of their lives” (May, 1993, p.8) or in words of Iqbal:

اپنا زمانہ آپ بناتے بیں ابل دل
بم وہ نہیں بیں جن کو زمانہ بنانگا

(transaltion: The people of heart, make their own time (life); we are not those who are made by time).

Iqbal calls for deeper realization of human consciousness as active agents of change who challenges absolutism of positivists. It also disagrees with the realists’ state of affairs of considering human behavior being determined by natural forces. This approach also differs from the interpretive paradigms of epistemology i.e. ‘knowledge as exploration and interpretation or description of the given’, as ‘the given’ itself is questioned.

In social sciences, the relativists hold that there are diverse and multiple relative realities. In physical sciences there has been a huge resistance by the realists and determinists in challenging the notions of positivists’ ‘objective reality’. This is partly because it was difficult for them to think differently from their habitual patterns of thought, and partly because of the determinist classical mechanics. Most importantly, they resisted because it challenged their domination and thus they refuted the significance of ‘free-will and judgment power’ as agents of change. The whole debate was, in fact, a power game also.

The critical approach supports ‘diversity’, both in terms of theoretical perspective (cultural diversity) and methodological approach which best fits in the social constructivist and relativist paradigm. An assertion that there are multiple realities implies that there are many ways of addressing an issue or question. As the social reality is multifaceted and multidimensional, borrowing Einstein’s term, a social reality (or construct) will be relatively truer or more real for the observers in one frame of reference as compared to the
observers in other frames of reference. As May (1993, p.27) states that critical theory approaches question by “not assuming that there is a truth that we can reach as researchers by simply focusing on techniques of social research (as with positivism and empiricism)”.

While clarifying the position of social criticalists or the critical theorists, Carspecken (1996) differentiates between the ‘truth claims’ and ‘validity claims’. According to Carspecken (1996, p.57), “Critical epistemology focuses on validity more than truth, although criticalists tend to agree on the existence of a single objective reality that can only be represented in language and symbol systems mediated by power relation.” Criticalists also agree in some set of universal human interest. ‘Truth’ is the terms having absolute sense, while validity has more pragmatic sense of matching the claim with real life situation. If we aim to find any truth which is lying behind the filters or curtains of language and symbols, how can our claim be precise and exact? If such claims be valid, any absolute reality, if it exists, can only be revealed through subjective mystic experience. Otherwise what we know from others through mediation of any communication means would be the content of symbols or language as presented by the mediator or communicator.

The real nature of meaning, intent, and experience of the mediator may not necessarily match with what we perceive or get out of the message. That is why focus on ‘validity claim’ would be more practical in epistemological terms. In simple words, we can know what people can express and we can claim to a greater extent (if not hundred percent) that our drawn meaning matches with what was being communicated.

Therefore, a relative approach and flexible design of the study would be salient features of such a study which is based on ‘diversity’ and ‘relativity’ as ‘social realities’ (not absolute realities).

Relativist Epistemology

The epistemological belief of naturalists, well reflects in the famous saying of the Greek philosopher Protagoras (420 to 490 BCE), “[hu]man is the measure of all things”. This position also becomes the foundation proposition of both constructivists and relativist approaches. Knowledge is human made (constructed by people) and can be viewed/perceived differently by different people with different perspectives. Using Einstein’s terms observers in different frames of reference will see things/phenomena (even
physical) differently with respect to the observer’s position relative to the object/phenomena observed (Einstein, Encarta DVD 2008). In light of the highly complex and to some extent the ever changing (evolving) nature of human beings, the knowledge constructed by them may not be absolute or perfect at any point of time. The following passage of Eisner (1992, p.13) comprehensively reflects my stance of relativist epistemology:

> With Dewey, Piaget, Goodman, and others, I believe we are better served by recognizing that whatever it is we think we know is a function of a *transaction* between the qualities of the world we cannot know in their pure, non-mediated form, and the frames of reference, personal skills, and individual histories we bring to them. These histories are, of course, a contribution of the culture in which we live, both the social culture and our more narrowly defined personal culture.

It seems that the hardline positivists and realists ignored the subjective aspect of the knower; they were fascinated by the partially and relatively known external world only. The Quranic epistemology also gives equal importance to both *anfus* (self, subjectivity or human aspect) and *afaq* (the universe, external to human physical world) as sources of knowledge. It is the *nafs*\(^7\) (self or *khudi* in words of Iqbal) that gives words, names things, relates objects, actions and phenomena. According to the Holy Quran the superiority of *Hazrat Adam* over the angels was because he was given the knowledge of naming things, the skill of word making for objects and socio-psychological states of affairs. The level of cognition or degree of certainty of knowledge varies with respect to the states of self (*nafs* lesser or more sublimated *nafs*).

Following Eisner (1992, p.11) is of the view that, “Perception of the world is perception influenced by skill, point of view, focus, language, and framework”. In Eisner’s line of thinking, Norberg-Hodge (2009) documented interesting stories of Ladakh residents by highlighting the way their world view and perceptions of knowledge and definitions of terms used in social sciences were different from that of the mainstream West. For example, in early seventies the word ‘poor’ was almost an alien word to Ladakhis. According to observations of Norberg-Hodge (2009), they were self-sufficient and satisfied in their own world with what they had. But now even the comparatively increased wealth, has increased the sense of poverty among them. Such change of perceptions and meaning is because of the changed socio-economic and cultural context.

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\(^7\) Here *nafs* means the emotive cognitive self, the product of personal culture in words of Eisner.
Highlighting the nature of cognitive and psychosocial context known as ‘framework’ (which can be taken in a similar connotation as ‘frame of reference’ in special theory relativity) Eisner (1992, p.12) further adds, “we secure frameworks through socialization, professional and otherwise. What we come to see depends upon what we seek, and what we seek depends upon what we know how to say.” Hence it can be concluded that knowledge is relative, tentative, and interpretive in nature and refers to continuous process of meaning making (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005). This construction of meaning is social engagement by the individuals, groups and communities.

These views also describe the dynamic nature of knowledge that changes with the changing human consciousness and the amount and degree of evidences. Einstein’s theories of relativity can be seen as the culmination of not only the scientific theories but also a ground of epistemological relativism in social sciences.

Not only in social sciences but in natural sciences too the relativity of truth holds true. Collins (1981) refers to five studies in physical and biological sciences that support epistemological relativism in sciences as well. He (ibid) makes further reference to Harvey’s notion of plausibility to explain how the pre-existing cultural constraints allow scientists to make such assumptions with confidence. The selectivity of experimental results is yet another aspect (rejecting absolutism).

With philosophical and ontological perspectives, the theory of relativity questions the singularity of truth, validity and reality of current universals in physics. This theory has shaken the hard positivist empiricist notions of absolutism even in physics. The dual nature of Light (wave particle) found by de Broglie and other scientists, Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle about position and momentum of a particle are established scientific principles confirming the reality of ‘relative truths’ not ‘the absolute truth’.

Albert Einstein (2002, p.233) goes to the extreme by saying, “As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain, and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality”. If the laws of mathematics, considered to be universal, are not ‘certain’ or absolute, how can the theories of social sciences be universal and absolute, in view of the nature of the human nature which is so diverse. Theories of all sciences (both social and physical) are a better (may be the best) explanation of any phenomenon in its time and context, with the specific frame of mind or frame-of-reference (in relativistic terms) of the theorist.
As Eisner (1992) describes, our knowledge is a joint product of ‘the world-out-there’ and the world within and what we bring to it “is in the transaction between objective conditions and personal frames of reference that we make sense. The sense we make is what constitutes experience” (p.13). The knower part of the world is socially/culturally constructed and is influenced. Hence the multiplicity and diversity of the social realities affecting the knower’s self and consequently shaping experiences cannot be overlooked in social research.

While referring to social sciences and especially cultural studies, Saukko (2003) acknowledges the existence of diverse and multiple social realities and multiple validities. Ideally the research methodology should be conforming to the ontological and epistemological framework and beliefs of the researcher.

This research study is guided by this relativist and pluralist framework which in words of Eisner (1992, p.14) can be summarized as:

The relativity of my views pertains to the belief that knowledge is always constructed relative to a framework, to a form of representation, to a cultural code, and to a personal biography. My pluralism relates to the belief that there is no single, legitimate way to make sense of the world. Different ways of seeing give us different worlds. Different ways of saying allow us to represent different worlds.

The social implications of this framework would allow a more flexible, inclusive, dynamic, non-dogmatic way of thinking, behaving, acting and seeing things in non-bipolar terms leading towards a more peaceful pluralist and diverse human society. People believing in ‘relativity of knowledge’, could be more open, receptive, adaptive and cognizant of any type of possible changes/variations in knowledge. It should be accepted it as part of the philosophy they believe in light of human nature and the nature of social sciences.

Ethnographic Approach to Study

The research approach of this study, by purpose has been ethnographic because of the cultural aspect of the study. Gee and Green (1998, p.126) suggest:

One way to approach the study of cultural models is through the use of an ethnographic perspective to guide a discourse analysis. While this approach is not the same as doing ethnography, Green and Bloome (1983, 1997) argue that the cultural perspective guiding
ethnography can be productively used in discourse studies (hence the term ethnographic perspective).

Gee and Green (1998, p.126) are of the view that “an ethnographic perspective provides a conceptual approach for analyzing discourse data (oral or written) from anemic (insider’s) perspective and for examining how discourse shapes both what is available to be learned and what is, in fact, learned.”

Ethnography literally means ‘a portrait of a people’ (Fetterman, 1998), it also means ‘writing about a group of people’. The Encyclopedia Britannica (2006, DVD) defines ethnography as “descriptive study of a particular human society or the process of making such a study”.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), ethnography is the way of exploring things/phenomena ‘as they are’, the way of finding the meaning as the people ‘really mean’, the habit of seeing and looking at things/phenomena ‘as they happen’ in their original natural setting or habitat. Therefore, ethnographic perspective can serve better to explore the deeper meaning of cultural phenomena. Through interviews, observations, and focus group discussion, perceptions of teachers and students towards the learning opportunities, cultural changes and their identities can be explored. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, p.6) are of the view:

As far as possible, the social world should be studied in its ‘natural’ state, undisturbed by the researcher. Hence, ‘natural ‘ not ‘artificial’ settings... the primary aim should be to describe what happens in the setting, how the people involved see their own actions and those of others, and the context in which the action takes place. (p.6)

The process of acquiring data from field through listening to narratives, folklores, observing and participating in feasts, celebrations, activities, social dialogues, enjoying and observing ‘people enjoying’ with their religious practices, music, expressions of love and belonging, through tears and smiles, through dances and lonely hymn, gives the ‘real meaning’ and ‘original knowledge’. Ethnographic approach, thus suited the purpose of this study as it is rooted in the field of anthropology and sociology.

Lecompte and Schensul’s (1999, p.9) six characteristics of ethnography also includes presentation of an accurate reflection of participants’ perspective and behaviors,
use of inductive, interactive and recursive or interpretive data analysis strategies, and use
of the concept of culture as a lens through which to interpret results. Without an emphasis
on culture, according to Wolcott (1999), a study cannot be an ethnography. Hence, it is
implied that ethnography is the type of research by focus, not only by method, tools or type
of data. It is an approach, a method, a product, ‘a way of seeing’ and ‘a way of looking’
(Wolcott, 1999) and it is ‘particular method or set of methods’ (Hammersley and Atkinson,
1983). It is naturalistic, comparative, realistic, interpretive and critical which allows study
of research phenomenon such as, that the content of ethnography can address some or all
of the following:

Belief; attitudes; perceptions; emotions; verbal and nonverbal means of communication;
social networks; behavior of the group of individuals with friends, family, associates,
fellow workers, and colleagues; use of tools technology and manufacture of materials and
artifacts; and patterned use of space and time. (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999, p.4)

In case of cultural/ethnographic studies knowledge generation would be
constructing and revealing, unpacking ‘the real meaning’ by the target communities or
research population in their own cultural settings and social contexts. A careful analysis of
discourses and discursive formations (Foucault, 1969) and intertextuality (Fairclough,
1992) of the original native discourses (not necessarily in native language only) can help
unveil the meaning that they mean.

In order to elicit the participants’ voices and meanings, the researcher’s job would
be to give words (known and understandable to broader audience) to these meanings.
However, for that purpose the researcher, especially an outsider needs to become ‘an
insider’ first, so that she or he may have a feeling of the cultural meaning which may not
possibly be communicated in words (in a language known to readers or even the
researcher). Because of these reasons a deeper understanding and knowledge of the
language of research population is highly recommended because language “both encodes
and stores culture-as-knowledge and provides the means for its distribution and
transmission” (Riley, 2007, Pp 53-54). The connotations and denotations of words and
discussions and expressions, the semantics, the semiotics and the hermeneutics of
discussions, discourses and communications could be captured. This resonates well Freire’s
(2003) view that in the world of culture there are implicit themes in expression and
discussion that touch upon other aspects of reality involving many other themes.
The nonverbal means of communication, the symbols, the rituals and the untold stories reveal many narratives if the researcher is ‘immersed’ in the culture. That is why most of the ethnographic studies reveal inside stories only after long time of immersion of the researcher. After peeling several layers of understanding, one can reach the inner core of a community’s cultural meaning (Norberg-Hodge, 2009; Behar, 2003). The time required for acquaintance to the culture and language would be reduced if the researcher is already an insider native, with some cultural knowledge and background experience of the context. In my case I am an insider who needed to take a position of an outsider to make familiar unfamiliar so that I could examine research phenomenon with a greater depth and sense of neutrality. I have the understanding of Balti language (the first language of my population) as it is my mother tongue and am familiar with the cultural background of the people, whom I intended to study. So for my study, the communication gap between the researcher and the researched was minimal and so were the chances of missing meanings. However, the danger of the researcher not being impartial remained there which I attempted to control by being reflexive. An insider’s familiarity may also lead to ignore many ‘usual’ events that can be meaningful for the readers. For an attempt to make ‘the familiar unfamiliar’, I immersed myself in the studies which focused culture and were conducted elsewhere. For instance, Norberg-Hodge’s (2009) ethnographic study in Ladakh with similar cultural context to that of my own research site Baltistan provided important lens for the study. There were instances when the participants used to say ‘as you know’ and I have to say ‘tell me please’.

As a native person I am supposed to know things better as compared to any outsider. It is also assumed that the responses of my research participants to my inquiry would be more natural in their context. However, some of the participants may try to provide an answer what a government official normally wants to know and listen to (an ‘everything is OK’ report). Being an insider researcher, the degree of disturbance or sense of alienness (alienation) was lesser and teachers used to share the inside stories such as stories of corruption in teachers’ appointment, their transfer etc. freely and openly.

Above all the ‘tacit knowledge’ of the dedicated, involved and informed researcher adds to the meaning (knowledge) construction giving them words and expressions, ‘making the invisible visible’, bridging the islands of knowledge through examples, metaphors and expressions which are reader friendly and they provide meaning to ‘others’ as well.
With my personal experiences of working with communities and unknowingly being involved in ethnographic activities (that I realize now), I can say that ethnographic approach resonated with the objectives of my study.

**Research Question**

The main research question of this study is:

How does the mainstream schooling of Pakistan develop ‘cultural identity’ among the secondary school students in Baltistan?

The subsidiary practical questions are:

What are the cultural practices and preferences of secondary schools of Baltistan about language, music, ceremonies and religion?

What perceptions do teachers and students have about the current cultural practices in the school?

What roles do teachers and students perform in enforcing the current cultural practices of the school?

The main research question focuses on the ‘how’ that discusses the school processes in terms of policies, practices, ethos, ceremonies, rituals and hidden curriculum. Data has been gathered through observations of classrooms, school routines, analysis of documents and artifacts, interviews with participant teachers and focus group discussions with students. Informal discussions with teachers and staff have also been a valuable source of data confirmation. The responses of respondents revealed the aspects of practices, preferences, motivation and participation in the cultural practices and during the teaching-learning processes.

**Scope of the study**

Among the many cultural identifiers or culture makers, four aspects of culture which are more likely observable and come into practice in schools, have been focused. These cultural identifiers/makers are **language**, **rituals/ceremonies**, **music** and **religion**. These cultural themes have been selected with the help of literature and contextual relevance. The data is focused on, but not limited to, these themes only, as several other themes have also emerged. The local language ‘Balti’, forms of local music, songs, school
rituals and celebrations, and religion were considered potentially the major modes of cultural practices and expressions in school setting.

The expressions, meanings, notions, symbols and symbolic manifestations of school processes that work to give way or to block the cultural expressions in different ways have been critically observed.

In order to understand the formation (or otherwise) of ‘cultural identity’ (specifically local, indigenous, Balti cultural identity), the place of culture related activities in school programmes, the teaching approaches, school ethos, and co-curricular activities were the main areas of observation. The level of encouragement and facilitation of schools, students’ participation in cultural events and their level of participation (as performer, audience, managers etc.) and overall perception of students and teachers towards local culture were explored through interviews, focus group discussions and observations.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to explore the school processes that directly or indirectly affect formation and development of students’ cultural identities and to see how their cultural identities are nurtured through schooling. To see the modes/ways of socialization (enculturation) and/or acculturation (assimilation) of children through schooling, two aspects of the process were studied:

a) The school processes (school ethos, policies, hidden curriculum, ceremonies) and the national curriculum (both in document and operational forms)

b) Perceptions of teachers and students; teachers responding to the question ‘how do they (school) perceive and practice cultural dimensions in their teaching and learning. Similarly perceptions of students in response to the basic questions: ‘who am I?’ and ‘who do I want to be?’, as their self-theory helped to explore the general perception and trends of students about their own identity. The aspired identity (in terms of cultural preferences, priorities) is then matched with the existing practices (as observed or self-reported) to see the emerging patterns and gaps between the ‘asserted’ and ‘assigned’ cultural identities of students.
Study Site

Skardu district, the capital of Baltistan, is the Pakistani region of Baltiyul (the Little Tibet) and is situated in the remotest Northern Areas of Pakistan bordering with China and India. Two high schools in town, one for boys and one for girls, were chosen as participant schools. As it is assumed that the town (urban) schools are relatively more exposed to the modern ways of life, media and other currents of modernization, therefore, change in the local culture is supposedly more visible. Change is also visible in terms of language, and other aspects of indigenous culture like work habits, food and other ways of life.

The secondary class students and the teachers of secondary schools (see table III chapter 3) of Baltistan were the population of the study. In the context of Pakistani school system, students of secondary classes (Grade-VIII, to X) normally fall in the age group of adolescents (13-16 years), which is the identity development stage of Erikson’s psychosocial development theory discussed earlier.

Selection of Research Participants

For this study two government secondary (high) schools (one boys and one girls) of the semi-urban town area of Skardu were selected as research sites. Both the schools follow the national curriculum and the textbooks of Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore. Official medium of instruction in both the schools from KG-I to Grade-VIII is English; however, Grade-IX and X is taught in Urdu at present, which will be English when the English medium Grade-VIII students will get promoted. Previously the schools were Urdu medium.

The participant schools were selected with the consent and permission of the Director of Education (DE) Baltistan region and the concerned Deputy Director Education (DDE Skardu district. With the permission of the Director, and consent of the head teachers (principal) of the respective schools, participant teachers were gathered for participation.

To engage students in the focus group discussion (FGD), I sought consent of the principal and parents/guardians, as the students of Grade-VIII are adolescents not adults. The request letter and form were distributed to students who volunteered for participation in the discussions. Participants of focus group discussion were those who got the consent forms signed from their guardians.
Data Collection Strategies

Ethnographic approach to study required use of observation to understand, in the words of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), to watch ‘what happens and what is there’, and interviews and focus group discussions were needed to listen to what is said. Thus, the data was gathered through interviews, observations, focus group discussions and document/artifact analysis. According to Maxwell (2005, p.94), “observation often provides a direct and powerful way of learning about people’s behavior and the context in which this occurs”. Interviews provide description about events “that took place in the past to which one cannot gain observational access”. In my case observation provided direct data of school environment, rituals, ceremonies and the routine teaching-learning processes of the schools in the temporal and socio-political context. Interviews provided data about both general practices and the participants’ own perceptions and preferences.

Culture being a vast area of social studies, has many more aspects, it is not possible to cover it under a small focus study. Therefore, as guided by literature and in the light of contextual relevance, only four aspects and dimensions of culture were selected as makers or identifiers of ‘cultural identity’. These four elements of culture are in fact the ‘culture makers’ as well.

- **Language** is one of the most important aspect of culture which allow cultural expression and communication. It is also the major reservoir of intangible or soft culture.
- **Religion** and religious practices are essential part of culture with faith, devotion and emotional attachments.
- **Music** shows the aesthetic taste, inclination and maturation of a culture.
- **Ceremonies** reflect the societal values and the ethical aspects. Ceremonies, celebrations and festivities show ‘what people value and what people enjoy’.

The other aspects such as social relations, architecture, dress, and food patterns mostly reflect preferences on grounds of indigenous ecology and environmental conditions. These aspects although discussed during interviews, were not the main focus of discussion because the study was limited to cultural practices/maker prominently found in school.

For this study, language, religion, music and ceremonies/celebrations were taken as major cultural identifiers and ‘culture makers’ as these aspects are more likely observed in
schools. The research tools, the interview guide (Annex#1), the FGD guide (Annex#2) and the observation guide (Annex#3) were designed according to these four aspects.

**Selection of Cultural Identity Parameters**

As the four makers of ‘cultural identity’, were basically selected on the basis of literature and contextual relevance. These ‘identity makers’ are common in the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) of Phinney (1992), the American Identity Measure (AIM) by Schwartz et al (2012) and many other identity measurement tools as compiled by Taras (2008) as the frequently used indicators or factors of ethnic/cultural identity maker.

MEIM of Phinney (1992) has subsequently been used in dozens of studies and has consistently shown good reliability, typically with alphas above 0.80 across a wide range of ethnic groups and ages. On the basis of recent work, including a factor analysis of a large sample of adolescents, it appears that the measure can best be thought of as comprising two factors, ethnic identity search. Similarly Taras’ (2008) collection consists of more than 60 ‘Instruments for Measuring Acculturation’. The language and music aspects are the most common cultural modifiers in these instruments.

Language is the principal means of human communication, the tool of human thought processes; language reflects thoughts and thoughts are being coded (verbalized) in language. That is why it is said that “The science of language does not differ from the science of thought” (quoted in Chomsky, 1986, p.1). The set of our thoughts shape our attitude and behavior that consequently forms and determine our personality and identity. Carli et al (2003) see ‘Mother tongue’ as a constituent element of the ‘mentality’ or ‘character’ of a ‘nation’.

If we see identity with respect to different aspects of life, language being the expressive tool of all aspects of life (social, political, religious and other forms of self-expression) becomes the root of one’s identity. According to Bourdieu’s theory of “Cultural Capital”, language and its subtleties such as accent, grammar, spelling and style all are part of cultural capital (Weininger, and Lareau, nd). When we see the history of development of nation states, we find that the ideology of ‘one nation, one language’ has been prevalent in European history (Carli et al 2003). The nation states are defined in terms of their (national) languages they speak such as Chinese, Arabic, German, Japanese etc. According to Corson (1993, p.1) “All kinds of power are directed, mediated, or resisted through language...Language is the vehicle for identifying, manipulating and changing power
relations between people”. Hence language has been selected as the first culture maker in this critical study.

Next to language, ‘music’ is the major identifier of intangible culture and in case of Baltistan, as discussed in the previous chapter; music has been very significant in its cultural history. In a free cultural society people’s minds are tuned to some sort of music which they like for life and become an essential identifier of one’s cultural identity.

Mostly ceremonies are ‘special occasions’ to celebrate, to observe some kind of special social happening to make it memorable, or to recall, refresh and reemphasize any historical memories. Through these ceremonies cultural practices, myths and traditions are kept alive. In view of Bernstein, Elvin and Peters (1966, p.429):

A school can be considered to transmit two cultures: an instrumental one and an expressive one. The instrumental culture consists of those activities, procedures and judgements involved in the acquisition of specific skills, especially those that are vocationally important. The expressive culture consists of those activities, procedures and judgements involved in the transmission of values and their derived norms…The expressive culture of the school can be considered as the source of its shared values and is therefore cohesive in function.

As Kapferer (1981, p.261) states

the significance of ritual in mobilizing individual attitudes to group objectives lies in the fact that ritual and ceremonial practice provides a mode of collective communication of group objectives, thereby ensuring the transmission and reception of a more concentrated, less ambivalent, and less diffuse message than that which is communicated through the routine activities of the everyday world of the classroom. In ritual, the project of the school is formally spelled out, articulated and elaborated within a bounded, non-everyday context, a "special occasion" constituting a finite province of meaning set apart from the paramount reality of everyday life.

McLaren (1988, p.164) who studied school-based ritual and their implicit relationship within the wider cultural system is of the view “that the culture of the classroom is fundamentally formed by interrelated rituals, ritual system, and ritual performances”.

Keeping in view this level of significance of ‘school ceremonies/ritual’ in the school processes, ‘ceremonies/ritual’ was selected as ‘cultural identity maker’ specifically in school context.

The fourth parameter ‘religion’ which is part of many identity instruments (MEIM, AIM) has special significance in context of Pakistan assumed to be founded on religious
ideology. In Baltistan particularly, with 100% Muslim population, huge efforts are made to transform the local culture into religious culture.

Language, religion in terms of beliefs, music, ceremonies and other customs and aspects of enculturation/acculturation are common in many of the identity instruments. Several of these instruments aim to assess the practices and preferences as I did in my study. In fact practices and preferences show the possible gaps between the aspired and acquired identities.

Data Management

The effective management of data, especially of the audio data on one hand ensures security of the data and on the other hand provides quick accessibility to the required segment of data for swift reference and validation. I managed data by assigning code file names to both the audio and transcribed text files. In this way anonymity of participants and even the schools was maintained with reference code (file name) showing the reference. All the interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded. I used PSA for the Participant School A and PSB for the Participant School B. School A was the girls’ school and school B was the boys’ school. Teachers were identified according to the subjects, they teach to Grade-VIII (the focus class). For example, PSA (Eng) is the file name of the English teacher of the participant school A. Similarly PSB (Isl) will show interview file of the Islamiat teacher of the participant school B. The files of school A and B were placed in two different folders then both were kept in one folder. Both the audio and transcriptions files and the interview citations in the finding chapters are given the same file name. Back-up copies of the folders were saved on my office desktop, my personal laptop (both secured with password) and on a CD.

Transcription of Audio Data

Transcription is an important and sensitive methodological step in qualitative inquiry. It is the bridge between the field data and the stage of analysis or the analytical process. Transcription can powerfully affect the way participants are understood, the information they shared and the conclusion drawn (Oliver, Serovich and Mason, 2005). Transcription is the data carrier and the transcript is itself the real data as well. It is the reflection-in-action (in SchÖn’s words), for me transcription is a “recall-reflective process” showing me the face of my own past in the mirror of recording. Therefore, it is strongly
suggested to researchers that they should do transcription themselves as this will give them a wonderful opportunity of ‘reflection-in-action’.

Although transcription is a very time-consuming, tiresome, technical and technological process but at the same time it is a very interesting, amusing and rewarding episode of data processing. According to Fairclough (2009), “Depending on the system of transcription used, it can take anything from six to twenty hours or more to transcribe one hour of recorded speech” (p. 229). For me it was an average of 45 minutes for 5 minutes recorded speech (that makes around 9 hours for one hour audio) verbatim. The verbatim transcription of audio files of interviews and FGD discussions alone became a pile of about 342 typed pages of A4 size with normal font in Urdu Inpage (software).

Transcription is fundamentally a social discursive exercise in which one mode of communication i.e. oral is usually turned into the other which is the written mode. “There are a variety of transcription systems available … [but] no system could conceivably show everything, and it is always a matter of judgment, given the nature of the project and the research question, what sorts of features to show, and in how much detail” (Fairclough, 2009, p.229). I used Urdu InPage for text typing and VLC for audio play. For Urdu-English bi-lingual talk I followed the source language script, there were fewer trilingual code switching (Balti) of different source scripts. Such instances of code switching to Balti were recorded in Urdu roman with different font so that it is recognized as words different from the general source language.

Transcription practices are in between two dominant modes: naturalism, in which every utterance is transcribed in as much detail as possible, and denaturalizm, in which idiosyncratic elements of speech (e.g, stutters, pauses, non-verbal involuntary vocalizations) are removed. The choice of transcription has somehow been a subjective decision based on contextual requirements of the data. These both approaches have their respective strengths and limitations. In real practice, transcription was a mixture of the both swinging from one end to the other.

Among other important considerations are the timing of transcription i.e. immediately after the interview or after sometime; both ways have strengths and limitations. Similarly ‘overlapping’ of speeches, ‘pauses’, ‘interruptions’ and ‘longer breaks’ have to be taken very carefully as there can be quite different meanings of such instances on different occasions depending upon the context of preceding discussion or the
social situation of near past being under discussion. In case of interruption we have to see who is interrupting whom, for what reasons and on what occasions i.e. to keep-on-track, to block or negate something to silence unnecessary bluffing etc.

Among other factors to be considered are the respondents’ comfort, confidence, interest, communication, language skills which are clearly reflected in recordings that have implications in analysis especially in case of students. Using indefinite pronouns with presumed reference (to any noun in their minds) sometimes create confusions as to what they refer to. In such cases the transcriber needs to give words of contextual meaning for pronouns ‘this’, ‘that’.

In my case I used Critical Discourse Analysis to explore the school processes of formation of cultural identity. “The focus of critical discourse analysis is on the "ideological dimensions" of speech, that is, the embodied discourses (Cameron 2001: 123). Interviews, and then the transcripts, are methodological tools used to capture these discourses” (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005 p.1277).

Fairclough (2001) suggested that if researchers wanted to examine real practices of power they must analyze real text. Hence in order to explore and understand real practices of power, the transcript text were analyzed. For example, during my interviews with teachers the headteacher interrupted the interviewee by adding her own comments at times when the interviews were held in her office. On one occasion the principal of one school, concluded the interview on arrival of the DDE. “In that the maneuverings of power are often captured in the content of the interview rather than in the mechanics of the conversation, denaturalized transcription is typically the chosen method” (Oliver, Serovich and Mason, 2005, p.1278). But I feel that complete denaturalization will not serve the purpose.

Data Analysis

“All manifest discourse is secretly based on an 'already-said'; and that this 'already said' is not merely a phrase that has already been spoken, or a text that has already been written, but a 'never-said', an incorporeal discourse, a voice as silent as a breath, a writing that is merely the hollow of its own mark.” (Foucault, 2010, p.27-28).

For data collection, coding and analysis, analytical framework below has been used:
Figure 2 Analytical Framework

**Ethnographic data**
- **Observations**: classroom, school, ceremonies and rituals
- **Interviews**: Teachers Focus Group discussion: students
- **Artifact/Documents Analysis**: Displays, wall chalking, textbooks, school logbook, question papers

**Neutral Codes/themes**
- School processes: Practices
- Policies
- Preferences
- Perceptions
- **Cultural Themes**: Language, Music, Celebrations, Religion

**Critical lens, CDA**
- [In]consistencies
- Contradictions,
- Discourse types
- Modes of discourse
- Discourse production (text/context) and dissemination,
- Access to discourses,
- Dominant discourses

**Power Relations**
- Emancipation or Domestication,
- Liberation or Domination,
- Promotion or Suppression,
- Hegemony, Symbolic violence, ISA/RSA
Discourse Analysis

For the analysis of qualitative data, under the broader framework of Foucauldian discourse analysis in combination with Fairclough (2006) model of Discourse Analysis has been used. Foucauldian approaches consider discourses as systems of power/knowledge which are socially and culturally located and which construct subjects and their worlds (Gubrium and Holstein, 2000). In approaches such as ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, discourse is concerned with the more linguistic concerns of the structure of talk and the processes used by speakers to construct their worlds (Schwandt, 2001).

As social beings we construct our world in language, but language is not mere words. Although linguistic expressions say a lot, yet language does not necessarily express everything. In the words of Foucault (2010), ‘the manifest discourse’ is only one dimension that may or may not reflect ‘the already said’ or ‘the not said’ aspects of discourse which are as important as ‘what is said’. There is a huge array of layers or filters through which any external stimuli is perceived. These filters are mostly subjective in nature and based on previous experiences or the history of the subject her/himself. Even the seemingly obvious natural observations are selective. As Eisner (1992, p.12) points out “What we come to see depends upon what we seek, and what we seek depends upon what we know how to say”. Eisner’s point is more philosophical; however, we try to be simpler and do not try to determine that complete correspondence of ‘actual meaning’ with ‘what is said’. Discourse is a compound of both discursive and non-discursive events.

‘Meaning’ is not confined only to words or conversations; it is embedded in the whole text and the context and the way we define context also affects meaning-making. In real life many of the phrases/statements are ironically used to give quite the opposite meaning of the ‘text’. Undoubtedly, we try to seek meaning in the context or within the whole text and in between the lines. Similarly the body languages, the time frame, the positioning, and all kinds of environmental and social factors make-up the context. As Hopf, (2004, p.31) points out:

The meaning of any conversation … depends on the contexts in which a particular text is being performed. Not only is meaning dependent on the particular text in which a practice
is located, but also on the relationship of that text to others. DA therefore assumes intertextuality, the relationship among texts.

Discourse Analysis was hence used as the analytical tool to explore the power politics and daily social practices, a social text (Hopf, 2004). Content analysis (CA) is also partially used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence in an objective manner. To conduct a content analysis on a text, the text is coded, or broken down, into manageable categories on a variety of levels--word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme--and then examined using one of content analysis' basic methods: conceptual analysis or relational analysis (Palmquist, 1980).

**Meaning Making**

Some critics believe that any kind of analysis will pollute the original data and its essence of ‘real meaning’ with the researcher’s own perspective or terminologies. However, pragmatically speaking, without analysis, the difficulty of understandable communication would be very hard if not impossible for readers to make sense out of it. Hence, along with the interpretative and analytical tools the ‘actual responses’ of participants need to be conserved in their original meaning (Korobov, 2001).

In fact, preserving participants’ actual responses/words guarantee objectivity, while intrusion of analytical tools pollutes it by introducing researcher’s frame of mind (yet another question whether it is possible to understand or describe participants’ frame of mind). Philosophizing a participant’s native voice means clothing the body of actual knowledge with fancy garments of dominant academia that might have captivated the researcher’s mind too. Different types of clothing can hide the actual body in different ways and degrees. However, clothing is required to ‘protect or preserve the actual body’; therefore, there has to be a meta-analysis after analysis (decoding after coding) as the final stage to reach ‘the generated knowledge’. The importance of the stage of analysis cannot be denied for pragmatic reasons not for epistemological reasons. Analytical frameworks and tools serve as a common-to-all platform from where people out-of-context of the participants can easily develop understanding about the participants and their context.

The epistemological question is that whether this kind of shared or sharable understanding through interpretive and analytical processes is desirable or presentation of
‘the actual point of view’ without any external frame is preferable. Which one possesses more ‘truth’ or which one can be termed ‘more valid’? The only challenge of the actual ‘unpolluted’ discursive formations may be the difficulty of understanding it by culturally alien people or the people from outside the context. If the interpretive/analytical tools are extensively used, in view of CA the deformed picture and meanings could be no more (re)presenting the ‘native voice’ or understanding of participants’ views in ‘their own terms’. It seems that in real life ‘compromises’ rule everywhere. However doing DA, the interpretation reveals the meaning of a text produced in certain context. Without context simple isolated text can not disclose social structures and power politics. Therefore DA is essential because, “DA is always about power and politics because it examines the conditions of possibility for practices, linguistic and otherwise. As such, it exposes the ideological labour that goes into producing meaning and the ideological effects of particular structures of meaning-in-use” (Laffey and Weldes, 2004, p.30).

Eisner (1992, p.11) cites Popper (1959) and others who have pointed out the dilemma of truth claims.

Indeed, Popper's view is that we can never verify the truth of a claim, we can only refute it; and even refutation, Popper claims, cannot be certain….Perception of the world is perception influenced by skill, point of view, focus, language, and framework. The eye, after all, is not only a part of the brain, it is a part of tradition.

Therefore as Carspecken (1996) suggests criticalists have to focus on ‘validity’ rather than on ‘truth’ or objective reality.

**Analytical Model**

For the discourse analysis of my qualitative data, I have used Fairclough’s (2006) model and analysis which is done in terms of ‘the text’, ‘the modes of discursive practices’ and the ‘context’.

100
Discourse analysis focuses on ‘language’ as a social practice in its own right and is concerned with how individuals use language in specific social contexts governed by ideologies and power relations. The discursive practices (production of meaning through language) enabled me to gain an understanding of how individuals use language to construct themselves and the world around them. It also guided why individuals use certain words and phrases that help to understand the ideological effects of the individual’s constructions. I analysed discursive practices such as slogans, welcoming words, sentimental phrases used under certain context and symbolic representations such as wall displays, prize shield etc.

Discourse analysis can be carried on both at the micro and the macro levels of social context. Analysis of discourse can be used for both ‘reflection of meaning’ and ‘construction of meaning’ (Alvesson and Karreman 2002).

Marchal (1994) points out that unit of analysis is language and not the individual. Hence, parts of text or language segments are seen in relation to each other in order to draw meanings. For example, citing some quotation by a student in a written speech would have a different meaning (intensity) if the same quotation is cited by the school principal or the director in their speech depending on the intent.
Doing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

“One of the crucial tasks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to account for the relationship between discourse and social power” (van Djik, 1996, 84). In CDA the process of use of power, its reproduction and legitimization by the text and talk of groups is analysed (van Djik, 1996). The speeches of chief guests on Pakistan Day are examples of exercising power through discourse production. The institutionalization of ‘social power’ through exercise of control over the other in one’s own interest leads to dominance and inequality. These kinds of social relations are created through opportunities of access to discourse. For example, the order/request of chief guest to raise certain slogans in celebration of National Days was an example of dominance through access to opportunities of access to discourse. In words of Van Djik, “One major element in discursive reproduction of power and dominance is the very access to discourse and communicative events” (1996, p.85).

In a school context, a closer observation of how and to what extent the students, teachers and staff are allowed to what kinds of discursive practices when and on what topics, revealed the ‘persuasive and manipulative tools’ as manifestation of social power relation. This, consequently, has great impact upon the performance and liberty of the thoughts and practices of the stakeholders, the students and teachers in case of this study. “Who may speak or write to whom, about what, when, and in what context, or who may participate in such communicative events in various recipient roles, for instance as addressees, audience, bystanders and overhearers” (van Djik, 1996, p. 86). Opportunities of participation in certain events at certain occasions to only chosen students are examples of such practices.

In critical discourse analysis (CDA) the focus of analysis is on:

- Force/power
- Context
- Hegemonic Struggle (when different ideologies compete for dominance)
Discourse is analyzed under the following three dimensional framework (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000):

- Discourse-as-text (linguistic features, vocabulary, grammar, cohesion text structure)
- Discourse-as-discursive practice (production, distribution, circulation, consumption of specific text types)
- Discourse-as-social-practice (ideological effects and hegemonic processes, access to discourse)

The large scale hegemonic processes such as democratization, commodification, technologization (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000) are seen as the broader perspectives or macro contexts. When we see schools as context, the hegemonic processes are visible if we focus on the question “What Are Schools for and Why?” (White, 2007 cited in Young, 2009, p.12) which is similar to the question raised by Freire (1972) that whether schools serve for liberation or for domestication? Young (2009) uses the words of emancipation and domination for liberation and domestication. Through my own analytical grid (below) I have tried to probe this dimension of schooling.

CDA unpacks the discourse patterns, relations, and models (in the form of power relations, ideological effects, and so forth). Being a critical researcher, it is not enough to consider only the social dimensions of language use, she or he has to have an intensio of empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilizing people to remedy social wrongs (Blommaert, and Bulcaen, 2000). CDA
advocates interventionism in the social practices it critically investigates. Toolan (1997) even opts for a prescriptive stance that CDA should make proposals for change and suggest corrections to particular discourses. CDA, thus, openly professes strong commitments to change, empowerment, and practice-orientedness (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000).

Data Sources

I gathered data from three sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact/Document Analysis</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Interviews, focus group discussions (Transcripts of audio records)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School log books, exam question papers, wall-chalking and wall display in classroom, corridors and inside the boundary wall.</td>
<td>School environment, classrooms, proceedings of school events, ceremonies, staff meeting, routine school practices such as assembly, tea-break</td>
<td>Interviews with headteachers, subject teachers and focus group discussions with students. For background understanding I had informal discussions with local intellectuals, authors and media persons as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content analysis is mostly applied to written texts such as documents, displays etc., as we are not aware of the context in which such texts were produced. Discourse analysis and intertextuality techniques are used for observations of events, interviews and other vocal communications of which I as researcher was a witness or participant. In this case, the immediate and the broader social contexts are known to a great extent.

To conduct a content analysis on a text, I coded the text, or broke it down, into manageable categories on a variety of levels—word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme—and then examined it using one of content analysis’ basic methods: conceptual analysis or relational analysis. “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that
symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.” (Saldana, 2009, p.3).

O’Regon (2006) explains how ‘text as object’ can be analyzed. According to him ‘text as object’ can be interpreted through descriptive, representative, social and deconstructive interpretations. The representative interpretation deals with image, vocabulary, grammar, and genre. The social interpretation deals with the social frameworks such as politics, gender, clan, family, class, geography. In view of the scope and the nature of the study, my analysis of discourse is more focused on the representative and social interpretations.

In my study, a combination of interpretative approaches has been used. For my own understanding I developed the following analytical grid.

**Table 9 The Analytical Grid**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In light of the context, modes and text, in a formal school environment how:</th>
<th>Shape, affect:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferences</td>
<td>Celebrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To form the manifested and the aspired cultural identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How schools work</th>
<th>To determine the power relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School as tool of:</td>
<td>• Active and passive (speaker, listeners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development (holistic: in all dimensions)</td>
<td>• Signifier and the significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nationalization</td>
<td>• Domination and the dominated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modernization</td>
<td>• Oppressor and the oppressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural alienation</td>
<td>• Instrumental and sentimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market place or learning space</td>
<td>• Liberation or domestication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others …………..</td>
<td>• Emancipation or domination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Coding Themes (Neutral themes)

In the beginning I performed a direct kind of analysis, and then on guidance and instruction of my supervisor I searched for ‘neutral themes or codes’. When I looked for neutral themes, quite a new perspective emerged. This time I was just looking for the state of affairs and things going on as they were. For example, what do participants think? What do they do? What are the set norms, rules and policy? With this lens I came up with neutral themes or codes such as perceptions, practices, preferences, sentiments, values, voices, traditions, politics and religion(ous). These themes were envisaged for coding; however when coding was done I realized that themes were overlapping; so I reduced them to a few major themes only.

Irrespective of the frequency, some of these codes stood out as significant in nature i.e. in terms of revealing new dimensions of knowledge. Several themes coincided and overlapped at times. The responses and data about the four markers and makers of cultural identity (language, religion, ceremonies and music) have been seen in terms of the above codes. On one hand, the themes may be merged and categorized under fewer broader themes/codes; while on the other hand, out of the above themes the following may be divided into further sub-types.

Table 10 Coding Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/ code</th>
<th>Sub-types, / descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Values may be aesthetic, moral, religious, sentimental, instrumental, utilitarian, cultural or normative in nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>Classroom, social (family, society), personal (private, self), professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Stereotype, parents’ interest/participation, students’ motivation, competence, colleague response, institutional community response; what created such perceptions school or media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferences</td>
<td>What values are basis of preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>What are the bases of practices? Are they based on voluntary freewill or based on any kind of compulsion such as policy, duty, norm or tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discourse Types:**

**Discourses** (mostly comprising discursive formations i.e. verbal and written texts in any language) can be categorized under following types:

- **Descriptive**: impartial, neutral
- **Analytic**: logical in nature, explaining cause and effect relations
- **Emotive**: showing deeper association, sentimental or emotional content, relation affection or dissatisfaction
- **Critical**: expressing dissatisfaction, showing resistance, raising voice

Questions about the order of discourse production, access, and utilization/consumption:

1. Who can (is allowed to) produce what kind of discourse for whom and how such types of discourses affect the social identity of receptors/consumers e.g. lesson/lecture produced by teacher and consumed or received by students or the principal’s speech received by the staff and students etc?
2. What are the essence or ingredient values of such discourses or discursive formations/practices (such as on occasions of celebration of national days) if seen with the critical lens?
3. To what extent the discourses are created at the freewill of producers and received by the consumers (such as exam papers, assessment practices)?
4. What do the normal school interactions and discourses reflect? (teacher-teacher, teacher-student, student-student, headteacher-staff, headteacher-guest/parents, school wall writings(messages), displays and wall chalking (officially chalked out), notice boards, classroom displays, charts etc.
5. Protocols and patterns of school ceremonies, key messages (more consistent and divergent if any) dominant discourse producers and types of discursive and non-discursive events.
The above modes and the order of discourse production, access, and utilization/consumption, helped me to analyze the discourses in their actual context in terms of occasion, producer(s), audience and consumers.

**Ethical Consideration**

All the standard ethical principles including informed consent, no harm to participants, anonymity of participant, due acknowledgement of all data sources are observed strictly (Burns 1997; Kumar 1999). The contextually situated ethics, including cultural sensitivities and privacy matters were dealt with due care in accordance with local norms. For me, a careful consideration of the situated ethics was more important than the rules prescribed by the authors of different contexts. For example, the dress code in the girls school was *gamees-shalwar*⁸ and was perceived as preferable over other dress codes. It just reflected a sense of being local and hence lesser alienated. Hence, I complied with that unstated norm all the time as a personal choice and without any remark or suggestion of anyone else.

During interviews, I bypassed any direct discussion on music and explored the views of interviewees through some indirect questions when I realized that discussion on music was not appreciated by them. Keeping in view the cultural gender sensitivity I conducted interviews of the female teachers in the principal’s office which provided safe and spacious official place. The environment was more comfortable for teachers; however; at times the interview was distracted by an unexpected arrival of some guests or parents in the office. Similarly, there were several instances when I made the most appropriate and acceptable decisions according to situational ethics. However, I could not comply with some of the desires of the research participants due to professional requirements. For example, some of the teachers were willing to mention them by their original names in the report. Some of the teachers and students requested me to have a lecture or workshop to which I regretted humbly saying that during the process of data collection I was not supposed to; however, I appreciated their interest in further learning.

**Methodological Issues and Challenges**

The major issue in qualitative research is the insider/outsider dilemma. Being a native of the research context and site and hence an insider, the subjectivity and objectivity

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⁸ Pakistani national dress
issues remained sensitive for me. Giampapa (2011) cites Cameron et al. (1992) stating that being socially located person, researchers bring their biographies and subjectivities to every stage of the research process and this influences the process at all stages. However, “the subjectivity of the observer should not be seen as a regrettable disturbance but as one element in the human interactions that comprises our object of study” (p.132). The researcher being a member of the cultural community cannot be ‘a fly on the wall’ (Ashraf, 2010) and quite indifferent from the ongoing practices in the school. However, I felt that like a blinking light, fluid transition between researcher role as an insider and outsider was facilitative to ‘make the familiar unfamiliar’ and to see things more objectively when needed. Ultimately, a high degree of reflexivity and continued reflection, both from an insider’s and outsider’s perspective, helped make the meaning of data (Ashraf, 2010).

A study by Giampapa and Lamoureux (2011) explored issues of identity, language, power, and positionality by and of the researcher in multilingual fields in several countries. The authors found that researcher identities and issues of positionality are part of the process of the discourse production and practices. Giampapa (2011) points out the complexity of the researcher-participant relationship across space and time. He says, “Negotiating researcher identities across the diverse spaces of the field and the impact that this has on not only accessing field sites but also in terms of the data produced together with participants is key” (p.132-133). The selection of specific school has been the decision of the gatekeepers of the education department, hence was not a planned choice of the researcher however, selection of the broader site (region and district) was a decision of the researcher.

Another similar issue is the question of ‘validity’. Citing Miles and Huberman (1994) and Shweder, 1980), Maxwell (2005, p.108) points out,

The threats to the validity of qualitative conclusions are the selection of data that fit the researcher’s existing theory or preconceptions and the selection of data that ‘stand out’ to the researcher. Both of these involve the subjectivity of the researcher, a term that most qualitative researchers prefer to ‘bias.’

Yet another problem I faced is indicated in qualitative studies is the ‘reactivity’. In qualitative studies “eliminating the actual influence of the researcher is impossible (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), and the goal in a qualitative study is to eliminate this
influence, but to understand it and to use it productively” (Maxwell, 2005, p.108-109).

Hammersley and Atkinson (cited in Maxwell, 2005, p.109) use ‘reflexivity’, for the term ‘reactivity’ which means that the “researcher is part of the world he or she studies— [this] is a powerful and inescapable influence; what the informant says is always influenced by the interviewer and the interview situation” (p.109). Therefore, exclusion of the researcher in qualitative enquiry is not an ideal as could be in quantitative studies. “Qualitative research is not primarily concerned with eliminating variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researcher’s values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusion of the study” (Maxwell, 2005, p.108).

After all, being aware and cognizant of all these methodological issues and a sincere effort to address them could make the balance.

Among the operational challenges, as envisaged in the proposal sever climatic conditions of below freezing point temperature during winter, local holidays (too many), cultural sensitivities, limitations of resources and difficulties of communication were the major challenges during field work.

Based on the relativist epistemology and the critical theory, the methodology of this study used ethnographic approaches and tools for data collection. In order to study the structural as well as the default school processes, critical ethnographic description combined with Critical Discourse Analysis were used. Through a series of observations of schools and classroom for about 9 months, two rounds of in-depth interviews and becoming a participant observer of school processes specifically the events and ceremonies, a huge bulk of qualitative data was obtained. This data was analyzed as presented in the Analytical Framework.
CHAPTER 5

LANGUAGE AND MUSIC

Chapter Overview

The ‘findings and discussion’ section of this study has been divided into two chapters. This chapter presents the data analysis, findings and discussion on the two major cultural themes of ‘language’ and ‘music’. Language being the communicative tool, the mode of teaching-learning, and the medium of instruction becomes the major identifier of cultural identity. Status of languages and its relative importance, practices, opportunities, perceptions and policies associated with the use of certain languages in school, are themes that have been analyzed and discussed in this chapter.

Music, another identifier of the intangible commonly associated with poetry and hence language, has been placed here after the discussion on language. The school practices, teachers’ and students’ perceptions, historical background and present day trends about music are presented and discussed in this chapter.

Language(s) used in schools

According to the research participants:

“I prefer Balti because Balti is our qomi (ethnic) identity” [PSB (eng)].

Children have right to everything. They have right to learn any language. If they are stopped, then they will be stopped and will learn nothing” [PSA (SSt)].

Language is the fundamental mode, medium and form of human communication and thought processes. Irrespective of the debate on whether we formulate our thoughts in language or we use language only as a tool to express our thoughts, the undeniable fact is that most human thoughts are communicated through language. Through language, we acquire and apply knowledge and conserve a major portion of our intangible culture.

Language(s) is/are the major maker(s) and marker(s) of cultural identity. The place and practice of certain language(s) in school processes determine how particular modes of schooling are supportive or counter supportive for the development of cultural identities. As my reference is the Balti language which is the native language of Baltistan and Balti
people and the mother tongue of over 90% of the research participants, I have primarily tried to explore the place/space, modes and opportunities of practices of this local language in school processes. For this purpose, the observations of schools, classrooms, rituals and ceremonies, documents, artifacts and the perceptions of teachers and students reported in interviews and focus group discussions, have been used as data sources. Initially, data was coded under neutral themes of perceptions, practices, policies, preferences and background knowledge about the native language and its use in school processes. The interpretations and findings have been drawn through analysis of consistencies vs inconsistencies, agreements vs disagreements, odd, stray and repeated responses and logical gaps in them.

Using Critical Discourse Analysis, the social meanings and power relations are explored by situating the discourses and the discursive formations in the context and by determining the modes of discourse production, dissemination, intended consumers and effects to see relative power relations.

Here is the language profile of research participants to situate them in the context of this theme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>First language or mother tongue L1</th>
<th>Second language (national language) L2</th>
<th>Third language official &amp; medium of instruction L3</th>
<th>Preferred language for Interview/ Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers =14 (7 male; 7 female including 2 HMs)</td>
<td>Balti=12 Punjabi=2</td>
<td>All Urdu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>All Urdu (responses Urdu English mixed, rare instances of Balti code switching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students = 23 (13 girls, 10 boys)</td>
<td>Balti= 21 Shina=2 (both girls)</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual estimate of school population in terms of linguistic identity is almost in the same proportion with overall population.
Language as a Marker and Maker of Culture

The data analysis reveals a consensus among participants about the place of language in their culture. Analysis suggests that language makes up more than 50% of the culture for the participants. Some of the responses were as follows:

“It will be fifty percent (50%)” [PSA(Eng)].
Role of language in culture “will be 99%” [PSA(HM)].
“If you say in culture, I will give 90% to language” [PSB(GSc)].
“As far I feel, language makes the 70% to 80% of culture” [PSB(Urdu)].

Teacher participants feel that language is the major component or maker of a culture. In quantitative terms, language would form 50% to 99% of culture depending on localized perceptions and definitions of culture. The relative importance given to language shows its core significance as a maker of cultural identity. Hall (2003, p.369) suggests “Among many symbolic resources available for the cultural production of identity, language is the most flexible and pervasive.”

With reference to the conceptual framework of Zhu (2007) adapted for this study, students’ cultural identity construction in the schooling context depends upon three factors: ‘the state policy context’, ‘the local community context’ and ‘the school context’. With respect to the state policy, the medium of instruction are English and Urdu. No local language is allowed as official medium of instruction. The national curriculum is followed in all schools and there is no subject or chapters in any subject on local languages and music. Hence, this study exemplifies, at policy level, that there is no room for Balti language and music in the national curriculum or policy. This study explored the perspectives of local community in terms of the teachers’ and students’ perceptions and preferences through interviews that revealed their views. The school context comprising the explicit processes, hidden curriculum and cultural representations was observed. The informal and personal communications are considered in local community context while the official communications are considered in the school context in this study. Both local community and school contexts also seem as faithful replicas of the national context taken as the authentic and legitimate context. Below are the findings of the school and local community contexts in terms of practices and choices of language and music that contribute to the construction of students’ cultural identity.
Language Practices in School

When the instances of choice of language by teachers and students were observed, it was seen that for more intimate and informal talk, they use the mother tongue. For example, during classroom observation when students asked for something from their peers in lower voices (sometimes whispering), they spoke Balti. When the teachers speak on telephone with family members, they use Balti. However, it was also observed that none of the participants used Balti for longer discussion within school. A spontaneous articulation in Balti was observed on the occasions of sentimental or intimate expressions. Although options were given but practically none of the participants chose Balti for interview discussion. All interviews were conducted in the school premises and Urdu was the preferred language. This shows that their preference was official and thus in compliance with the set language norm within the school. It was also noted that mixing English with Urdu is more common than mixing Balti with Urdu when conversing. However, I observed that Balti words and phrases were used on occasions of exclamatory and optative sentences. It was also used at times to express some deeper cultural sentiments as reported in interviews such as for condolence, prayers and to express high respect in family.

Sentimental Expression

Analysis of the data shows that in social life out of school, majority of the respondents use their first language or mother tongue for sentimental expressions of devotion, love, respect, intimacy, dua (prays/ supplications), for condolence and to offer congratulations. When asked about possible language choice with relation to the audience, most of the respondents said that they use or prefer Balti to communicate with their parents or elders, and Urdu with colleagues, peers and younger people. Urdu and English as second (L2) and third (L3) languages are mainly used as instrumental languages. In school, students and teachers use L2 and L3 to be more professional than to be cultural. Below are some responses of the teachers:

“I use Balti at home. ‘Privately I use Balti with parents and family, Urdu with friends. If friends are Balti, I use Balti.” [PSB(Eng)]

“Use Balti for sentimental expression such as condolence, congrats, depends upon audience.” [PSA(Eng)]
“At home, I use Balti with my family. Elder women do not understand Urdu. Offer supplications in Balti.” [PSB(Math)]

“In anger, I use Urdu and English, with elders and relatives [use] Balti. We find such decency (شرافت) in Balti that we wonder. Pray in Urdu as I feel that I have more competence in Urdu meaning. I feel more comfortable in Urdu. Use Balti for congratulations and condolence talks.” [PSA(SS)]

“Mostly Balti is used for sentimental purposes. Supplication in both Balti and Urdu. In anger, I do not know but my family members complain that I speak English” [PSA(Math)].

“I speak in Urdu with my children at home but when there is any problem I use Balti for instructions and advices. For ordinary chores (چھوٹا موٹا کام) we use Urdu. Prayers in Arabic then Balti. At home nazr-o-niaz (charity events) prayers in Balti. Few decades back, the sermon of Friday prayers was delivered in Balti. Now due to the mixed population of guests from other parts serving here, Urdu is used to include them. Sentimental expressions such as condolence are said in Balti after prayers in Arabic. [PSB(Is)]

“[we] Use first Balti then Urdu for sentimental expression. In classroom Balti is used only for explanation when needed” [PSA(Is)].

From these responses, it can be inferred that Balti remains the major mode of cultural communication and expression in social life. However, in school, this ‘cultural’ mode of communication is not encouraged. In addition, the school premises are also seen as the ‘official environment’ intended to promote the ‘official knowledge’ only.

The linguistic practices and preferences of students are almost similar to that of the teachers. During classroom observations, it was observed that students choose mother tongue for private or personal talks. However, they use Urdu when conversing with teachers and other colleagues. During break time when teachers are not around, their spontaneous talks were Urdu-Balti mixed. It was also observed that during the first round of FGD, students seemed hesitant to use Balti. However, in the second round, they used few phrases and words in Balti. When language practices are analyzed with reference to the immediate response contexts, it is clear that to be more professional participants use more instrumental languages and expressions, hence lesser opportunities for cultural expression. In other
words, cultural expressions are limited through the higher demands of instrumental proficiency. Only sentimental and emotional expressions can get way through limited spontaneous responses.

Use of the first language for sentimental expressions seems natural, because the first impressions and experiences are normally expressed in the first language. In other words, the inner spiritual value based feelings are generally better expressed in native language(s).

It can be concluded from the data that the emotional aspects of devotion, love, affection and intimacy are better expressed in first language. The informal nascent learning in first language during early ages from family and society become the core foundation in developing strong concepts and schemas. Hence the words and expressions of first language become a kind of subconscious resource that comes to surface at times of sentimental expressions.

From the data, it is evident that the first language is the language in which any individual learns things the first time. This may not necessarily be the ‘mother tongue’ or the native language of the persons’ ancestors. The first images and meanings acquired in a language make that language partially a person’s ‘first language’. The first language may be the local, national or any other regional language to which the individual has exposure in early ages. Whatever the first language is, it has enormous ‘cultural content’ and its protection is directly related to the protection of cultural identity.

The study found that emotional, artistic and literary cultural expressions are articulated in the first language. The characteristics of spontaneous expression of intimate and deeper feelings manifest in first language. Hence opportunities of cultivation, promotion and broader space for first language (mother tongue) positively contribute to the formation of cultural identity. In this study, the first language of the majority of the participants is their mother tongue, the local language Balti. Few participants of the urban area use both Balti and Urdu at home. Similarly, among participants, two students use two languages, Balti and Shina as their first languages because their parents speak two different first languages (Urdu and Shina) and both are equally used at home. In school settings, the first languages (L1) are not used and hence the opportunities of development of students’ cultural identity are limited.
Place of Languages in School

The place and proportion officially given to the languages (Balti, Urdu, English) in school processes such as items of ceremonies and giving or not giving permission to a certain language are indicators of how certain language practices are encouraged or discouraged. The level and degree of appreciation to certain language practices is an indicator of how schools promote languages.

Medium of Instruction

The common language used in the school in and outside of classrooms is Urdu which is the national language. The language of textbooks is English while the instruction language of these textbooks is a mix of English and Urdu. Teachers seldom use Balti words especially when calling upon a staff person and would rather use Urdu mixed with words from English. The native language of the students and most of the teachers is the third language by priority, importance and practice in schools when it comes to instruction.

School Language Policy

Observation and interview data revealed that a ‘written language policy’ is not prescribed by the authorities for general interaction in school except the medium of instruction. However, it has come to knowledge consistently that the authorities have verbally banned the use of the local language, i.e; Balti. This is evident from an anecdote shared by a teacher in the girls’ school who was once fined by the Director of Education for speaking in Balti during his visit. Such kinds of tough and serious measures are taken and messages/orders are passed to control the use of native language in school. It is also worth noting that one high ranking official who usually disallowed the use of Balti language during his visits, was a non-local officer. Below are the actual responses of some of the participants:

“There is compulsion in class, so [we] have to use Urdu” [PSB(Eng)].

“Yes we ask students not to speak Balti, though there is no stated (written) policy, but we strictly prohibit Balti in class” [PSA(Eng)].

We strictly instruct them to talk in Urdu. Strictly” [PSA(Math)].
“We impose ban in school, at least in class Balti is prohibited. It is not written but verbally instructed, I do not know about any written order” [PSA(SS)].

“Yes, there is order that you will not speak Balti in the classroom. No information about any written or formal school policy regarding use of language.” [PSA(Math)]

Analysis reveals that there is a strong verbal directive from senior education officials that prohibits speaking in local languages in schools. One of the head teachers referred to the verbal instructions of the Director of Education:

Our director [name] called me on telephone several times that there should not be any word in Balti in the school. You have to do everything in English. In fact the director himself used to come often, during his visits he used to say ‘never speak Balti’ بلتی کبھی نہیں بولنا [PSA(HM)].

The teachers obeyed these orders and ‘strictly instruct’ students to talk in Urdu. Several teachers used the words ‘strictly’ (سخت یسے) that reflects the intensity of compliance. Some of the teachers referred to the headteachers’ order while others did not mention any order and shared their own practices of discouraging the use of the local languages in school generally and in classrooms particularly.

“No policy as such [exist in school]. The headmaster has told (ordered) us that we should speak either English or Urdu in the classroom” [PSB(Isl)]

“No idea about any [existence of] written policy but we have been instructed that in classrooms we need to talk in Urdu” [PSA(Isl)].

The absence of any formal written policy yet repeated verbal orders and vigilant control show the hidden curriculum to promote only the national language and English and suppressing local native languages in schools. The strong verbal instructions of the director as mentioned by the respondents reflect the hegemonic power play in the broader context of government education system. As a result, the modes of discourse production are aligned accordingly, to silence the local languages. Hence the local voices are symbolically stifled.

Only one teacher was of the view that they can use either language; “No formal policy, it is open we can use either language” [PSB(Urdu)]. This response may mean inclusion of Balti with either Urdu or English.
The orders of high officials in the government are then translated into instructions of head teachers at school level which are implemented in the classrooms by the teachers. Some of the responses in this regards are as follows:

“Children are not allowed to speak anything in Balti, we do not allow them. In the classroom we do not permit them” [PSB(Isl)].

“We are told that by 2015 necessarily by force everything has to be in English. By 2018 whole syllabi will be in English” [PSA(HM)].

The students of FGD also confirmed the situation. When asked about any restrictions on speaking Balti in the classroom, the students replied affirmatively. One of the students responded, “Yes sir, if anyone in classroom speaks Balti, she is fined. Though there is no restriction [written order] but it is not spoken, we can do (speak) Balti in break time” [PSA(FGD)].

The strong verbal instructions of disallowing Balti despite no written policy is a subtle way of exercising influence over public discourse, the hegemonic tactic. The prevalent practice of not using Balti with a sense of fear of some sort of penalty (fine or discouragement) shows the hidden curriculum at work to minimize the use of native language in school. Apart from the norm set for normal discussion, national songs and religious poetry in native language are allowed in school ceremonies. These are the only two modes of expression in Balti found in school ceremonies. Details will be discussed in the ‘ceremonies’ sections.

**Rationale for the Unwritten Policy**

The generally perceived and understood rationale of this unwritten policy of silencing Balti in school is to maximize the use of Urdu and English even at the cost of mother tongue so that children have more opportunities of practicing these languages during school hours.

(We) “Do not allow use of Balti in class. Reason is that they (children) know Balti, it is their mother tongue, and they can speak it at home. It is seen that most of the children are weak in Urdu, so we insist Urdu, so their Urdu will be good” [PSA(Eng)].

With this intention however, it seems that the power of mother tongue for conceptual understanding is ignored. The interviews revealed that a general perception has
been created among teachers and students that local language(s) is an obstacle to acquiring higher education and jobs. When asked ‘whether your first language can be an obstacle in life’, initially there were mixed responses. Some agreed and others disagreed and few opined that it should not be the case. But when probing questions were asked like “Whether, efficiency in native language or inefficiency in market languages become obstacle in success”, the teachers realized the difference and said that the barrier to success is always lack of knowledge of the required language, and not sufficient or good knowledge of one’s native language or mother tongue. It means that the perception has no solid logic. Two of the teachers however had sound arguments. They noted that disallowing Balti is maximizing opportunity and chances of speaking and practicing other languages, and if the habit of using Balti limits practicing other languages then it is an obstacle to success. However, this in fact is a learning management issue rather than a cognitive issue of language learning. A female teacher precisely describes, “I do not think that our language can become obstacle if we know other languages. Not knowing of any language can be a barrier but fluency of any language cannot (be obstacle in success)” [PSA(Math)]. Studies show that multilingualism is a strength not a limitation. For example, a study by Engel de Abreu, Cruz-Santo, Tourinho, Martin and Bialystok (2001) confirms that bi/multilingualism enriches cognitive abilities of learning in other domains irrespective of socio-economic background of children. It can be concluded that any kind of ban on first language could alienate students from their cultural roots, not enhance their language efficiency in the 2nd and 3rd languages.

A second rationale given for disallowing Balti speeches in school ceremonies was the difficulty of writing speech in Balti as presently Balti is normally written in Urdu (roman) script because original Balti script Agay is not in use. Observation and interviews revealed that teachers give written speeches to students in order to ensure quality. In view of one teacher, “Children cannot prepare speech in Balti by their own, it was not tried”[PSA(Isl)]. “Only national songs and qaseeda⁹ are allowed, opportunity of speech is not given (in Balti”)[PSB(Isl)]. Since it is difficult to provide written speech to students in Balti, opportunity of speech in this language is not provided. However, the practice of giving written speeches itself can be questioned academically as it promotes narration not speech.

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⁹ Religious poetry in praise of Holy persons or Imams (mostly in Balti)
The Dilemma of Using Local Language

Although the teachers try to comply with the verbal orders; however in absence of a clear written policy, using local language for effective teaching and learning is a dilemma for students and teachers. The reason for banning Balti is to improve learning of Urdu, giving students a chance to practice Urdu in the school. When the teachers were probed further to seek their opinion on the possibility that children will remain non-participative in class if they are weak in Urdu and they are not allowed to speak in Balti for necessary questions and responses, one of the teachers replied, “No they speak in Urdu, even then if there is a difficulty in and I allow Balti” [PSA(Eng)]. Another responded, “There is no restriction asking questions in Balti. [Do they ask Q in Balti?] NO, they prefer to interact in Urdu with teacher. There are examples that student answers in Balti, and it is accepted” [PSB(Math)].

Here the importance of local language as an effective means of communication and learning is recognized especially when students know the conceptual answer of a question which they can better express in Balti. “Students ask question in Balti. They are allowed however… [does not complete the sentence]. Students can answer and ask question in Balti” [PSB(SS)]. This incomplete response may reflect the conditionality and the permission aspect of the situation. The dilemma of order and practice is further clarified in this response:

Children ask question in Urdu, but they talk in Balti among themselves. We ask them to avoid (speaking Balti). .. Once Balti was banned in staffroom by Madam, then teachers who feel easy in it use Balti [PSA(GSc)].

This response shows that there was a ban on teachers using Balti in staffroom however it was not effective for long. On the one hand, the ban by the headteacher, the verbal orders of the director and the emphasis on Urdu and English in school reflect the school context, while on the other hand, permission of questions in Balti, teachers feeling at ease to talk in Balti in staffroom and students talking in Balti at break times are examples of the local community context. The practice of banning local languages is not only the case with Balti. A senior teacher from Punjab shared his own experiences about disallowing the use of the local language, Punjabi, by the headteacher in his school,

Our headmaster had banned Punjabi. We could speak either Urdu or English. When the headmaster imposed restriction [on Balti], we were in trouble. In HM’s period we would
not go for pass even. Until we do not speak in Urdu, we cannot do anything. We started speaking few broken sentences, and others would make joke of us. But here (in Skardu) children speak Urdu very well [PSB(GSc)].

The example of ban on Punjabi as the first language in schools of Punjab confirms similar functioning of the ideological state apparatus (ISA) for imposing ‘national identity’ upon diverse cultural identities. This situation is also a clear violation of the right of children to learn the languages they are comfortable with for self-expression and communication. One of the teachers concluded her response telling me that “There should not be any policy compulsion. Children have the right to [learn] everything. They have right to learn any language. If they are stopped, then they will be stopped and will learn nothing” [PSA(SSi)].

Teachers realize that any kind of compulsion in using certain language(s) would mean limiting students’ freedom for learning, expression and creativity as well as act as a pull-back force upon development of their cultural identity. UNESCO’s research has confirmed and underscored the importance of first language for both quality learning and healthy cultural orientation. In such a UNESCO study, Ball (2010) found that:

Children’s L1 is important for their overall language and cognitive development and their academic achievement; Existing research suggests that mother tongue-based bilingual education programmes benefit children’s language skills and overall academic achievement, along with their self-confidence and cultural pride. Mother tongue-based bi/multilingual programmes enable learners to begin their education in the language they know best. Later, a lingua franca and an international language can be introduced as subjects of study and eventually as additional media of instruction.

The situation of our schools in terms of language preference and practices is contrary to these research proven recommendations.

**Teachers’ Competency in Multilingual Environment**

Using multilingual approach for effective teaching and learning is a skill that can be more effective if both the students and the teachers are competent in the languages being used. It seems that in multilingual environments and societies, certain language(s) serve certain purposes better for effective communication. For example, teachers use Arabic for religious prayers, Balti for devotional, emotional and social communications, Urdu and English for professional and technical discourses.
“[I] use ‘our’ language on occasions of happiness, condolence. Pray in Balti after Arabic (prescribed text)” [PSB(SS)].

“[I use] both Urdu and Balti at home, Urdu with parents, Balti with in-laws and husband. In Skardu, the environment is becoming more Urdu. I was in private school that was although English medium but the preferred language was Urdu. All would speak Urdu and hence we learnt it” [PSA(GSc)]

The responses and practices show that four languages are being used by the teachers and learners of Baltistan i.e. Balti, Urdu, English and Arabic. Mostly, Arabic is used for religious recitations only. Frequent code switching is a normal communication style. Teachers are of the view that languages have to be used as per need.

**Implications of not Using Local Language(s)**

Classroom observations and staffroom discussions show evidence that being multilingual, both teachers and students show different comfort levels when using any language at different times and occasions. The simple reason is that at times the meaning of certain words in one language cannot be exactly translated into another language. Hence it loses its full meaning. My own teaching experience also shows that there are certain terminologies which lose their meaning (mostly contextual) when translated into another language(s). Multi or bilingualism can be a big resource for conceptual understanding of many themes especially in social sciences. Multilingualism is a kind of multidisciplinary competence which enhances learning not impedes it. Restricting the use of any language is in fact narrowing such capabilities, which consequently poses challenges to the diversity of languages and cultural resources.

The implications of not using local language(s) can be:

- limiting freedom of expression,
- control questioning and answering,
- impeding development of deeper conceptual understanding and growth of cultural identity,
- gradually losing the significance of these languages and hence their use,
- loss of the linguistic cultural resources and ultimately,
- loss of the diverse indigenous cultural identities.
Other Opportunities of Using Local Language

So far the only officially encouraged (allowed) opportunity of using Balti language in the schools is the national songs and the religious poetry normally *qaseeda*. Use of Balti in instructional modes, teaching learning is occasional. In the school ceremonies, only these two forms of Balti poetic expression is present. In a teacher’s own words, “*Qaseeda, naat*¹⁰ and *milli naghme* (national songs) in Balti are bits to promote Balti”. These two kinds of items seem apparently ‘bits to promote Balti’ but in fact, are tools to promote the national and religious identities only.

The textbooks of Grade-VIII were observed for document analysis and it was found that none of the textbooks have any chapter on the local languages of GB including Balti.

The situation can be changed with the implementation of the 18th amendment of the constitution of Pakistan where education and curriculum have been decentralized and declared as provincial matters. Now the provinces are free to develop their own curriculum that is more contextual as well as form local education policies. There are greater opportunities of promoting indigenous cultures and local languages if the provincial governments have the will. However, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) being a province like administrative unit and not a constitutional province is facing the dilemma of implementing 18th amendment.

The situation is further complicated since the federal education ministry no longer monitors matters pertaining to education and locally, there are no bodies and infrastructure for curriculum development and policy formation. So far the GB education department is running on ad hoc basis with adopted curriculum, textbooks and policy of previous federal ministry and/or other provinces. Therefore the promotion of local languages through provincially developed curriculum in case of GB seems conditioned with its politically disputed status. The Karakoram International University (KIU-GB) and/or any international agency such as UNESCO can plan projects for promoting the more than five local languages of this region.

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¹⁰ Religious poetry in praise of the Holy Prophet (in any language)
The Sense of Loss

From the discussions and observation of teachers’ practices, it is evident that they are following the school norms set by the authorities to disallow use of Balti language in schools. However at the same time (as reflected in interviews) they also have a deep sense of loss of language and culture. Such inconsistencies in practice and perceptions are common. They complain that Balti language is on the verge of becoming endangered. It is one of the endangered languages and potentially has to be conserved and revived, however their own practices do not support this standpoint. Here one can easily observe the hegemonic compulsions in form of the so called professional norms set by the schools. On one hand they feel the need to revive their language and on the other they ban it in their school context. This sort of contradiction clearly reflects the power struggle behind the scene. They think that someone else should do the job of preserving language. The teachers have to faithfully follow the orders and ‘professional norms’ regarding national and international languages for which the local language(s) has to be shut out in classrooms. Here are some of responses in this regard:

“Balti should not be vanished as human’s identity is with language. This has to retain, we impose ban in school not to speak in Balti” [PSA(SSt)].

“I feel Balti should not be banned but emphasis should be laid on use of Urdu and English” [PSB(SS)].

The social studies teacher was of the view that Balti has become more of a dialect than language. She distinguishes a language from a dialect. Language, she explains, is in formal written form, it is read, books are written, proverbs preserved, etc. while dialect is just in spoken form or verbal tradition. Education and schooling are also responsible for transforming it from language to a dialect. On the question on whether the presence or absence of schooling is a problem, she was of the view that the absence of a specific institution is a problem which means that there is a need for such institutions that can revitalize and promote the language. This response also implies that conserving or promoting the local language(s) is not institutionalized as a part of the school processes. She said, “Educational institutions are there, I do not say there are no schools, but in the way Arabic language is promoted, Balti should also be promoted, but it is not the case. I have not seen in any school” [PSA(SS)]. Arabic and to some extent Persian are formally
offered as part of the curriculum in religious schools (*madaris*), but there is no organization or institution to provide formal learning opportunity of Balti.

Absence of any formal institution for (promotion/ learning) of Balti is one reason of becoming Balti a dialect. Schools do not play any role in preserving it (Balti). We did not get benefit of our elders, they kept all knowledge with them they know what is going wrong, but do not come forward to correct it. Nobody thinks of preserving Balti. No one realizes that it is endangered, is becoming a dialect form a language [PSA(SSit)].

Interestingly, even with all this awareness and realization, in practice, we see the same teacher reporting imposing a ban on speaking Balti in class.

The Islamiat teacher was aware of a research on endangered languages (report published on BBC Urdu website) he cited it,

Previous year there was a research study on endangered languages and Balti was one of them. This is a tragedy for us. Hence we have to strengthen Balti language, not only strengthen it; our language should be made part of curriculum in Baltistan so children become aware of the importance and the use of our language. [PSB(Isl)].

In the English teacher’s view, “Our Balti language has been lost somewhere in between. We do not know what qom (ethnicity) we belong to and [native] speakers of what language we are” [PSB(Eng)].

Analysis of such responses reflects a deep sense of loss on one hand, but on the other hand their practices in school are indifferent to this loss. In school, teachers seem to focus on the utilitarian and symbolic value of languages only. The general trend of ban on use of local language(s) shows this utilitarian trend that undermines the cultural aspects of language.

Losing the mother tongue not only means losing the sentimental ties with family members and relatives, but breaking the link with their cultural roots; hence alienating them from their own homes. Loss of first language means loss of one’s childhood identity. When we say ‘loss of a child’s identity’, it is in fact the loss of the joys, the early memories, the affections, loss of the sweet hymn of their mothers, the warmth of their laps, in fact all the memories of the ‘dawn of life’. Loosing such a wealth means losing hope of life and making one alienated from her/his own primary self. The English teacher precisely summarized the situation:
It is necessary to have attachment or association with one’s own culture. When we have attachment, we will practice… [if not have attachment and do not practice] It will be bad. The culture will be endangered, if its value is not in our eyes, it’s very essence will be lost [PSA(Eng)].

When these strong bonds of language and culture are fragmented, the ties are weakened, self-confidence and self-efficacy is shaken. The ability of evaluation and sense of originality, ingenuity and higher levels of creativity and aesthetic/artistic appreciation acquired in the early ages, in the first language, will be compromised if that very language is made obsolete.

Losing the very essence and significance of one’s native language may also mean losing the joy of sublime art and culture, the passion of emotional maturity, the bonds of human relations, the integrity of personality, and the worth of spiritual aspirations. Under such circumstances all the emotional and cultural values are converted into market buy-and-sell, profit-loss, producer-consumer kinds of binary relations, and ‘the march of monoculture’. No diversity, no variety, no color, no hues and no melodies.

When the indigenous cultural roots are damaged, the strong social bonds are broken. Nations and ethnicities become mere mobs and crowds of people that can be cautioned by a single whistle for the ‘march of monoculture’. The healthy way is to save the endangered cultures and let them grow in the face of cross-cultural experiences. A balanced approach based on social justice and equity of cultural diversity can also help saving the biodiversity and contribute to sustainable development. This could be the approach of peaceful coexistence of communities which is one of the biggest challenges of today’s globalizing world. Schools are the best sites to promote this peaceful sustainable co-existence through valuing cultural diversities.

In school, co-curricular activities, local culture and language is not given any chance to become part of public presentation and discourse. The purpose of using different languages in public discourse was stated as:

Languages have to be learned as per need according to need we have to be efficient in that language. For national level affairs such as national politics, Urdu would be better. For international market, English is better. We have to see the utility of each [PSB(Math)].
This shows that for teachers the utility aspect matters. The other dimensions of language such as cultural or artistic expression may not be that important to pay attention to and hence competencies are developed accordingly.

Balti language in practice only serves to promote the national and religious ideologies in the school context as national songs and religious poetry are the only allowed and appreciated forms of Balti poetry. This way mother tongue is being used as a tool to promote religious and national identities.

Language has been made a criterion of social and economic inclusion and exclusion. Local languages and their speakers are excluded from many of the socio-political and economic circles by the national language. The international lingua franca and official language English excludes people who have efficiency in only the national language, from the broader and higher job market. In such a scenario, if students are allowed to learn English as their second language instead of third language, they may be in a more privileged position socially and economically. Therefore, in this sense English should be encouraged as the whole and sole medium of instruction and language of learning.

After a series of observations and discussions it was obvious that the ban on first language limits students’ free and voluntary expressive abilities. For example, during the first two rounds of FDG of the boys group, the students responded mostly in short sentences and phrases. Later, on the suggestion of the supervisor, when I had a third round of open discussion with either Balti or Urdu, students were able to say more complete and longer sentences in Balti. ‘The fear of being wrong’ in second and third languages becomes a major obstacle in communication and expression.

The teachers’ response over mistakes is normally very discouraging. Therefore, students prefer not speaking at all in classes just to avoid being wrong. Another factor is embarrassment and peer pressure students might face when speaking a grammatically incorrect sentence or word. Due to these reasons only a few students with literate family background (where they had developed better linguistic skills and confidence) become more confident speakers in class.
Pedagogical Implications

When the transcription of FGD was analyzed, it was noted that the responses of the boys’ group were shorter (mostly in few words or phrases) as compared to the girls who responded mostly in complete sentences. I was suggested to explore possible multiple reasons of this response hence I had a third round of interaction with this group who were in class-IX then. This time I tried to have an informal discussion with boys group in Balti as well as Urdu. The responses were more extended this time with mixed language (L1+L2) but not that encouraging. One of the major reasons for this was shared by the Urdu teacher during his interview who explained that students take time responding to any question asked. This is mostly due to shortage of vocabulary and the formation of correct sentences (in the language of response i.e. Urdu or English). Normally, they are afraid of being incorrect which could result in ridicule from fellow classmates and the teacher. Therefore, students choose to stay silent. This is also reflected in classroom participation.

Another aspect of this pattern of response with the boys group was that most of the students in the boys’ school were from rural valleys where exposure to Urdu and English is lesser as compared to the town area settlers. These students have come to town after primary or middle classes just for their studies and most of them live without their families. Whereas in the case of the girls, almost all of the students are living with families in the town hence are more exposed to the national language through media and other social sites. Other reasons could be difference of quality of instruction, human resource and school environment due to different projects of quality enhancement. For example in the girls’ school three NGOs were involved in different projects while in the boys’ school there was no project by any of the NGO.

Another reason was that I conducted my FGD in a classroom. An untold norm is thus developed, ‘safer if silent’ in class, worked here too as there is no risk of making a mistake. Therefore, the students did not speak complete sentences and avoided lengthy responses. One can infer that when not allowed to say something in L1, students prefer to say nothing at all if not confident in giving the same response in L2. Similar response was given by the general science teacher. He noted that during his student life, his headmaster would not allow the use of L1 strictly and therefore they even controlled their needs of going to the toilet because they had to ask in L2. The same teacher was also of the view that there is more harm than benefits of such a ban on L1. It is concluded that any kind of
ban on L1 means limiting opportunities of free expression and hence limiting development of self-confidence, creative and artistic thoughts. Overall it inhibits the development of a distinct cultural identity. Lack of opportunities of freedom of expression blur their identities, in terms of who they are, what they want to be or become, what they can do, what they have to ‘say’ and how they can utilize their personal talents and cultural resources.

**Psychological Effects of Ban on First Language**

From the observations and interview responses mentioned earlier, it is established that there is an unwritten policy of disallowing local language(s) in schools which can be ascribed as the hidden curriculum. This situation on the one hand constraints students from using native language for cultural expression and on the other hand it has pedagogical implications also. This sort of ban may limit the creative and original thinking of young learners in their native languages that consequently reduces confidence in native language. The conceptual understanding may also be affected if L1 is not used at all in class especially while grasping scientific concepts. Similarly in cultural terms, the bond with family, elders and society depends upon cultural communication. If this very communication and expressive skill is underdeveloped, students’ relations will be damaged and they can become alienated from the family and society. This state of alienation among youngsters is a common complaint in the society which at times is termed as generation gap. It is in fact cultural and communication gap, not a gap due to the age factor only.

It is obvious that students have limited vocabulary of L2 especially for those students who have come from far-flung rural areas. Hence they are hampered in developing social relationships with other students and suffer a sense of inferiority. The continued pressure and taunting of teachers reinforces that sense of inferiority and at times these *perdesi* (out of home) students also suffer from nostalgic loneliness and home sickness. All these are just unnecessary emotional disturbances due to the ban on L1 that effect identity development in a smooth and healthy way.

This analysis is confirmed when we see that girls are more responsive with extended responses. Girls who live at home with parents are not sent alone to go to town for studies and they live in hostels at secondary school levels. Therefore girls may not go through nostalgia and loneliness.
One reason of the less responsive attitude can also be attributed to the prevalent physical punishment especially in the morning assembly. This practice might have shaken the confidence of boys more as compared to girls. I observed no punishment in assembly of girls’ school while it was present in the case of the boys’ school. The damage caused to creativity, innovation, speaking ability and communicative skills due to the ban on L1 as well as the trauma of physical punishment are few other possible consequences as research has shown.

Regarding gender differences in identity development, it is an overall observation reflected from the interview responses that females are better in accuracy, grammatical correctness and fluency of language as compared to males (both teachers and students). For example, regarding the boys use of language, one of the female teachers said, “They (boys) throw what come to their mouth”, while girls are careful while constructing response. Similar responses were reported by several other teachers. For example, the science teachers shared an instance of three little school going girls who used to learn and try to speak Urdu on the way to school. This also shows the interest of female students in language learning. From these findings, it can be inferred that girl students have better opportunities of identity development as compared to boys in terms of refined linguistic and communicative skills.

More male teachers said that there is no restriction on the use of L1 while the female teachers said that they disallow L1 in classroom. However, I observed that the frequency of using L1 words and sentences in both classes was almost equal. During break both girls and boys speak freely a mixture of L1 and L2.

Almost all teachers and the students of FGD suggested inclusion of L1 in the curriculum, because when it becomes part of the curriculum or textbook, it becomes official knowledge and the teachers can teach it better. Dawa (2007) found that, “people in Baltistan are desperate to learn and preserve their language, as they have realized the significance of their language in promoting social solidarity and in maintaining their own identity and culture” (p.431). But officially no steps in this direction seem to have been taken by the government and the education department. The role of formal school education seems counter promotion of Balti language.

Until and unless L1 does not become part of the curriculum (official knowledge), teachers will be reluctant to promote it in school. This reveals the blind following of the
textbooks as ‘the only authentic’ prescribed source of knowledge and all other things beyond them are considered ‘out of course’. This ‘course’ and ‘out of course’ notion is then linked with the assessment system. ‘Out of course’ content beyond the prescribed textbooks, is not encouraged in schools as this may waste time regardless of the quality and relevance of this knowledge. The perception is that such content is not ‘necessary to teach’ and ‘must not be assessed’.

‘Course completion’ is one of the major tasks for teachers. This is irrespective of whether the content is covered only through simple reading or rote memorization. In the case of this study L1 is categorized as ‘out of course’ and therefore has to be out of the class and out of the school. However, the price that students have to pay is not only in terms of blurring their ‘cultural identities’ but in terms of their academic performance as well.

The lack of conceptual understanding, creativity, relevance, better construction of knowledge, communicative skills, all can partially be ascribed to disallowing L1 for learning. In fact, disallowing the use of L1 is, in other words not allowing learning in the easier and familiar ways. This situation can potentially have learning disadvantages and hence impair academic performance even with higher cognitive abilities. The potential extent of damage due to obstructing the use of L1 for learning, damages ‘normal development of cultural identity’ of the students and limiting academic performance. The other damages caused to self-esteem, confidence and creativity are additional to that.

Conclusion

In the case of language practices, the gap and inconsistencies of responses between the perceptions, the real practices and the preferences are very common and evident. It seems that in terms of language, the acquired identity is different from the desired or aspired identity. Teachers say that local Balti language should be preserved to preserve Balti culture and they also appreciate the literary richness and decency of this language. They want that Balti may become part of the curriculum and measures must be taken to conserve and promote it. Further, they complain about the absence of native language in the curriculum and lack of any institution that is seriously working for culture and language preservation. However, in practice, they discourage and disallow Balti in class and school. For the so called ‘professional reasons’ they insist on the use of Urdu and English in the classroom and school. They do not prefer to speak Balti for professional reasons and do not permit
students to speak the language for similar reasons asserting that the use of native language will hamper learning of other languages.

The core reason behind the gaps and inconsistencies in perception, practices, and preferences are due to the undeclared ban on the use of first language in classrooms and in schools by high ranking government officials. In the view of Foucault (2010, p. 167-168) such “contradiction is the illusion of a unity that hides itself or is hidden: it has its place only in the gap between consciousness and unconsciousness, thought and text, the ideality and the contingent body of expression”. This contradiction is created by the curriculum, the education/school policy and by the bureaucracy of the education department.

Almost all the teachers were unsure about the existence of a formal written policy or instruction in this regard, but ‘the authorities’ always insist and verbally ordered not to speak Balti in schools. During their interviews, two teachers mentioned that since the Director of Education fined a teacher for speaking Balti, the head teacher too ordered to avoid speaking Balti in school. This defacto policy or in fact the hidden curriculum prevalent in schools, is the silent hegemonic functioning. The social structures, perceptions and authoritative hierarchies are so devised and designed that it is hard to escape from that trap even if people wish to do otherwise. For example, a teacher who reported that s/he strictly disallows Balti in class, is also complaining of the absence of Balti in school curriculum and the eroding culture.

Limiting student access to their native languages and limiting the language resources from access into public discourses, are hegemonic tactics of state apparatuses. The role of the director of education (the top regional authority) was key reference in strictly prohibiting Balti in school. This is a clear example of silencing the local voices. This is also an example of misuse of social power. Social power can be defined as “the control exercised by one group or organization (or its members) over the actions and /or the minds of the members of another group, thus limiting freedom of action of the others, or influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies” (vanDijk , 1996, p.84).

vanDijk (1996, p.85) clearly describes this situation and the expected consequences:

Through special access to, and control over the means of public discourse and communication, dominant groups or institutions may influence the structures of text and
talk in such a way, that as a result, the knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are – more or less indirectly affected in the interest of the dominant group.

Permission of only national songs and religious poetry and disallowing other forms of literary expressions in native language is yet another problem. This seems a deliberate effort of inducing and strengthening only national and a specific religious identity.

If there is any function (celebration) in the school, and if a few national songs are sung in Balti, it may not be termed as presentation of culture. Because there would be only few celebrations and there could be hardly one or two songs in Balti. As now a days there is a manic struggle for English, perhaps we are also strangled in that [PSA(HM)].

The order of high officials has been translated in practices and instructions of teachers. Not only normal conversations in Balti are discouraged but expressive opportunities in local language are limited in co-curricular activities and school ceremonies as well. It is interesting to note that only ‘religious poetry’ and ‘national songs’ in Balti were given way and hence encouraged. These consequently strengthen religiosity and Pakistani nationalism. Analysis shows that regarding the use of language in schools, there were clear inconsistencies in teachers’ perceptions, preferences and practices. As cited above, they prefer to preserve and promote Balti, but in practice they disallow it in school. Some of the respondents are of the view that disallowing local language can enhance efficiency of using the national language. This inconsistency can be ascribed to the verbal orders of their authorities who want to see only Urdu or English in schools.

The interview responses revealed a misperception that local language can be an obstacle in learning national/international language(s). This perception was prevalent, and as a result, local language is being presented as a burden not as a strength for learning. Through this misperception, the flaws in curriculum, weaknesses in teaching methodology and even the incompetence of language teachers are ascribed to native languages. Instead of using the diverse competencies of local languages for better teaching of national and official languages, effective ban on speaking native language(s) has been suggested as the remedy of challenges in language learning. The situation is not just a result of mere ignorance thinking of mother tongue as a hurdle in learning other languages; it is in fact a hegemonic plan to alienate people from their native languages, cultures and identities and to forge the national identity and global identities at the cost of local cultural identities.
Now if the opportunities of expression and communication in the native language(s) are systematically narrowed down, underrepresented and discouraged, it could result in devaluation of the cultural worth and hence denial of the ‘cultural identity’ associated with that particular language. Our schooling system and curriculum are full of such covert and overt examples of disallowing cultural diversities to nurture and grow.

The practice of and association with local languages is a major maker of native cultural identity. The institutional appreciation, permission, encouragement or otherwise responses towards local languages effect formation of cultural identity. In case of Baltistan, the clear denial of access to local language(s) in schools, not giving opportunities of speech in mother tongue, not allowing to other language resources except national songs or religious poetry, and giving a false perception that the local language is the major obstacle in learning other languages all seems functioning of hegemonic state apparatuses.

The school curriculum does not contain any specific subject or chapter (in another subject) about the local language or culture. There are a few topics in some of the books about the geography and natural resources of the region, proudly stating that these are the wealth, beauties of Pakistan such as the K2, Siachen Glaciers, River Indus, etc. However, aspects of intangible human culture and heritage are missing. It seems that the social science curriculum and the content of related textbooks are alien to the contextual realities. The problem is multiplied if the policy makers do not acknowledge the existence of such cultural diversities in the curriculum and allow schooling to address local issues and cater to the development of cultural identities.

In school processes, one can see instances of plain negations of local cultural identity in terms of muting and silencing their voices, blocking and even disgracing modes of cultural expression such as different forms of khulu (Balti poetry, folk lores, rgyang khlu, zdrong khulu, ghazal, etc) and speeches in their native languages. All forms of khulu is forbidden in school religiously which is an example of the hidden curriculum.

The ultimate consequence of the measures of officials seem simply to devalue the local language in all respects so that the attachment, the association and the pride in one’s mother tongue fades away and hence the cultural bondage is fragmented. When the strong bond with first language is shaken the whole soft tie with one’s culture becomes fragile. This can then be molded in any way through the currents of powerful media of hegemonic
regimes who have the control and access not only of media but the other market forces as well.

Music: A Background Perspective of Balti Music

Historically in Baltistan, there used to be ‘music’ for all major social events, especially for the social ceremonies of marriage, seasonal ceremonies of losar, mephang, strobla, brasmus\(^{11}\), and jikhmos (local seasonal celebrations), the entertainment and sport events of hltanmo\(^{12}\) and polo. It is said that there were more than 50 kar’s (notes or raga) in polo match only to communicate the messages of running commentary to all the distant listeners who would make sense of the match’s progress through certain types of music. Until quite recently, elders in the community used to send song titles and music titles as gifts or tokens of remembrance to friends. The title of the song or the folk tale would reveal the whole story although not apparent. If the receiver could not make sense of it (connect it to the folklore) s/he would go to an elder person of the village and ask the meaning. The elder person would interpret the theme according to the gift and the title. The musical talent and understanding of public generally and the royal family in particular were highly developed.

After the introduction of Islam by Sufi saints, the local music was enriched and supplemented with mystic spirituality. Several kinds of Balti music with Persian names such as zikr, yagah, dogah, segah etc. are evidence of this. One of the research participants [PSB(Isl)] also mentioned these types of religious music.

Islam does not encourage and allow any kind of lustful cultural manifestation including music. Any action including music and dance that leads to and promotes exploitation of sexual emotions would be prohibited. But music itself is not prohibited, especially in context of Sufi traditions where sama, qawali, and zikr\(^{13}\) of the whirling dervish are famous not only as cultural but spiritual practices as well.

School practices

\(^{11}\)Losar, mephang, strobla, brasmus & jikhmos local seasonal celebrations and festivities to welcome the new year, spring, sowing & harvesting, seasons and occasions respectively
\(^{12}\)special Balti music and dance program, entertainment event
\(^{13}\)sama, qawali and zikr are all are types of Sufi chanting sacred texts/verses with music
The cultural history of ‘Baltistan’ shows that Balti music has evolved more than
written or spoken language. With the historical backdrop stated above, one can expect that
music might have its due value and place at least in school ceremonies and events. The
findings of my school observations and interviews present a different picture.

No musical instruments can be found in school-A. These are considered religiously
unlawful. During interview a teacher shared that a set of learning resources was sent by the
project office for the Early Childhood Development (ECD) class. There were several
musical instruments in the resource kit. A teacher saw them, collected all the instruments
and asked children to break them saying ‘music is haram (religiously unlawful) in our
religion’. These instruments were broken and thrown away. When this act was reported to
the headmistress, her reaction was of a careless indifference. This kind of action clearly
reflects the sensitivity of teachers towards music for religious reasons.

During the FGD in school-B, students shared that musical instruments are present
in the school but it is “not allowed to use them”. Perhaps the instruments have been sent as
part of teaching kits. These are available but not in use. It can only be used in ceremonies
for milli naghma (national songs) they reported. The school ceremonies and events that I
observed did not have any musical item played with instruments or musical recording. The
naat, qaseeda, milli naghma (national songs) and kalam-e-Iqbal poetry items were sung in
melodious voices but without musical accompaniment.

Teachers’ Perceptions about Music

Although music is not a part of the national curriculum in Pakistan, it is a part of
curricular activities. In several private schools, music is an essential part of the morning
assembly and a common element of song items. However, in government schools music is
totally absent. When the perceptions of teachers are analyzed, crucial and sensitive
reactions are discovered. On the question of teacher’s own perception about music, a senior
teacher responded: “our (Islami) culture has no concept of music”. Later, she added, “If
rhythm is music, surely it can be included as part of poetry. No music other than poetry has
to be permissible in school” [PSA(HM)]. Another teacher’s response was even more
alarming who responded saying, “Although there is no official ban in schools but in our
societal set-up if these things happen people will attack us. The action against such
(musical) activities could be severe” [PSB(Eng)]. The threat of a possible attack reflects
the severity of perceived public perception and response about music. The same teacher
was the only respondent from the research participants who himself liked music and could play a few instruments. His responses reflect a strict level of religiosity or dominance of the clergy who are against music.

There would be big problems if any musical activity is done in class, if a song (romantic) is sung in school. Perhaps the early Muslim preachers had imposed restriction on music, so overall people do not think music a good thing and the same is in school [PSB(Math)].

Another teacher added “Music is not allowed from Islamic point of view. It is haram, prohibited (in a very low tone). Music is that which puts you in trance” [PSA(Math)].

“There should not be music(al) events in school because our area is a religious one. No music whatsoever local or non-local” [PSB(SSt)].

Analysis of the responses clearly indicates that the major reasons of forbidding music are religious sanctions by clergy. None of the respondents’ claims and perception about music being prohibited by religion was supported by any religious text. Neither local nor non-local music is permissible in school. This response shows the dominance of orthodox religiosity.

As far as music in school is concerned, there is a consensus that music must not be part of school (co-curricular) activities. It is especially disallowed for females. A strong gender specific restriction is visible. The responses about music had religiously charged words showing high sensitivity. When seen from the cultural perspective, such kinds of responses and trends reflect a very high extremist position far from the secular cultural values. This state of affairs, if persists for longer time in schools, can potentially pose serious threats to cultural identity. The hegemonic control of certain kinds of extremist religious orthodoxy is visible in schools.

“Perhaps you may call me narrow-minded in this respect, because as far my view is concerned there is no permission of music in Islam” [PSA(HM)].

“Our school environment is a bit Islamic” [PSA(GSc)].

“Here is no system of music, neither local nor non-local. There is no musical program…I think it (music) should not be (in school)” [PSA(Isl)].
“In present day Baltistan singing by females is not appreciated, especially in Balti, it is almost prohibited. For these reasons few singers from big cities came here and recorded songs in Balti but due to their accent, the pronunciation is deformed” [PSB(Isl)].

The last response mentioned above also shows another dimension of the damage to local accent when few non-local singers were invited to sing Balti songs. The broader social context seems a macro replica of the school context where singing and music are looked down upon which is why no female singer can sing any Balti songs publically. Only national songs or religious songs could be heard at times in school ceremonies. The invisible presence of fear seems prevalent for music and singing.

In a few other responses, teachers shared that an exception for music exists. It is/can be allowed for national songs. This means that for national causes the religious sanctions can be relaxed or at least the clergy has no objection. “Light music may be allowed such as music in national songs” [PSA(Eng)]. Another teacher also confirmed permission of music for national songs: “At times national songs (with music) is played on tape recorder for children” [PSA(Isl)].

Though institutionally, music is not allowed (except in a few cases of national songs), there were two teachers who personally like music and favor its presence and conservation.

“Local music should be conserved. It perpetuates through people. Soft simple Balti music is now developed enough. It is diminishing. Balti musician Marghub was declared top musician by a BBC report” [PSA(SS)].

Another teacher commented in favor of music, saying:

Music must be there in school. I am fan of it I used to play myself. I play local music with piano, harmonium, drums. There should be musical events at times in school. There is no harm, but yes, there are reservations. There must be something in this regard (musical activity), because this is a fact and there is nothing bad about it [PSB(Urdu)].

Students’ Perceptions about Music

Though perceptions of students about music are mixed but dominant response is similar to that of the teachers. In this regards, girls have softer views than boys. Girl students think that light and soft music should be allowed in ceremonies like Independence
Day celebrations. In the girls group, there were one or two negative responses, several affirmative responses to music while few remained silent. In the boys group, the situation was just contrary. The responses of FGD for boys were as follows:

Music should be allowed but not in school. Teachers neither encourage nor discourage. Teachers do not allow music, some allow some not. Musical Instruments are present. There would be ban on singing.

“Music and Khulu is haram, It is religiously forbidden, sinful. Our religious scholars (clergy) say it is sinful. Urdu and Balti all songs are haram”.

The debate over music progressed to discussion on songs, qawali and naat. The response to songs was negative. However, music with qawali and naat got a mixed response. The group was divided but was dominated by the students who think that any form of music is not permissible. A boy rejected even qawali and naat for having musical content. Regarding Balti songs, they were of the view that “Singers of khulu (Balti songs-romantic) are not respected. People consider it insolence” [PSB(FGD)].

Regarding the school practices, all the teachers and students have similar consistent response that there is no musical activity or item in any school ceremony or bazm-e-adab. Only two instances were mentioned when recorded music was played with a national song. “There was music once in a 23rd March parade. [other than that?] No, No” [PSB(FGD)].

In view of the historical Sufi traditions (which have been more inclusive and receptive of local cultures) and the major influence of Irani culture in Baltistan, one can expect a soft image of music but data in this study presents a different picture. Stating the place of music in the cultural history of Baltistan, Kazmi (1985), Nazeer (1998) and Hussainabadi (1984) mention four major Categories of Balti Music: Hareeb, lum kar or lamna (lamsna), Hrtsekar, Staqara and Khulu-kar. The suffix ‘kar’ stands for the tone or rhythm. According to Hussainabadi (1984) and Wazir Himayat Hussain (2011) there are 60 (subtypes of) hareeb. It is interesting to note that dancing music is different from listening music. Hrtse-kar is typical dancing music without verbal songs. There are 19 such

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14 Balti poetry, presently the non-religious and romantic or other literary kinds of poetry are generally known as ‘khulu’
15 Semi-religious kind of (Urdu) poetry normally sung with musical instruments

It is also very interesting to note that more than 60% of the Balti folklores (Kazmi, 1985, Hussainabadi 1984) were composed by women. I am interested to do a study on those folklores which have a rich feminist literature of Balti culture. Although not known as ‘poetesses’, we find the narratives of women in Balti society in the form of ‘rgyang [rgya] khulu’16, special type of songs highly rich with symbolic and literary narratives of one’s life experiences. According to the cultural historians and elders, these folklores and songs possess the treasure of Balti culture. It is also interesting to note that many of the songs belong to the post-Islamic era and are composed by women such as ‘stroghi kazim’, a song composed and sung by a woman for her husband ‘Kazim’ who was away in a jail.

In this historical and cultural backdrop, when the perceptions and practices in school processes is seen, data reveals some interesting and alarming situation regarding music. It is interesting to note that female students and male teachers seemed to be more open and positive towards music or have at least a soft corner for music. While majority of the female teachers and the male students have extremely negative responses about music. Overall the views are divided. Some respondents show their likeness for light soft music. Only two teachers PSB(Urdu) and PSA(SSi) were of the view that local music has to be conserved. They showed their interest and liking for music, especially Balti music often on the radio. The clergy do not directly object radio broadcasting being a government media channel; however they discourage listening to it even on radio. Among the research participants, only one teacher [PSB(Urdu)] said that he himself can play musical instruments. Except one teacher, none of the participants appreciated music in school as part of co-curricular or cultural activity.

Generally, teachers were of the view that some light music can be allowed with national songs. Except few, the female teachers discouraged music of any form in school. The only exemption of permission would be possible for national songs. The FGD of the girls group showed a moderate response.

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16 The type of classical Balti poetry consisting of narratives, stories and mostly sentimental content that conserved a bigger part of the history in form of oral traditions.
The Severity of Perceptions

In the FGD boys group, a boy who was dominant in discussion was of the view that music is ‘haram’ sinful and prohibited. All forms and manifestations of music whether with national songs or qawali, are ‘haram’. The word ‘haram’ was repeated seven times. Several supported his view but no other boy dared to explicitly negate his point of view possibly because of fear. Perhaps the outspoken boy was a son of a notable sheikh or molvi. Other students did not negate him out of respect. They repeatedly referenced “ulema” (religious scholars) and insisted that singing is haram, no matter Balti, Urdu’ or any other kind of music. However, the group views were divided. There were voices saying that teachers do not allow music and other stating teachers’ views as ambivalent. Two or three of the students were of the view that music should accompany polo matches. This reflects a desire to preserve music but outside of school at other cultural sites.

Playing music either by students or by teachers is not allowed in school except on occasions of national ceremonies with national songs and sports events only. Traditional orthodoxy considering ‘music’ to be irreligious and un-Islamic seems to be spreading in schools either due to the dominance of religious clergy in society or due to the school processes and teachers’ approach and hidden curriculum. The responses vary in this regard from mild disliking to considering it as ‘haram’ or sinful and hence liable to religious chastisement (to both listeners and players). In some cases, the situation goes to the extent that the very word ‘mosiqi’ (music) itself becomes a notion of religious taboo. For example, while talking about mosiqi, a senior teacher narrated “Astaghfiru-Allah” ‘God forgive me’ which shows the intensity of the perception towards music.

One of the male teachers partially favored music in a different way, with the view that there is Islamic music as well in Balti culture that can be promoted. And secondly, the Balti music as a mean of cultural communication especially in polo match and rituals of royal family has to be preserved. Mentioning music as a means of cultural communication, connecting it to the ritual of Polo and royal family movements, means that preservation has to be limited to these activities. School has neither Polo matches nor movement of royal family.

Pakistani national curriculum and textbooks are silent about music. There is neither any content (reference to textbooks of Grade-VIII) favoring music nor disfavoring it. No role of state is visible in discouraging music in schools but interestingly in the view of
several respondents, music was ‘permissible with national songs only’. Even few of those respondents who were of the view that music is ‘haram’ see no harm in it if it is coupled with national songs (milli naghme). In other words though religion does not allow music, national (state) ideology can make music ‘halal’ or permissible. This is the contradiction and in-built ingredient of Ideological State Apparatus through which both religious and state hegemonies operate in collaboration with each other. It is to suppress the local voices and diversities especially those cultural manifestations and values which have huge potential of resistance. Music is one of them in the case of Baltistan. If it is allowed, the effects of sermons of religious authorities and lectures of the agencies of Repressive State Apparatus (Althusser, 1971) will fade away and sink into oceans of imageries.

Summary

In the present day Baltistan, and especially in schools, music is not appreciated. It is silenced and negative perceptions are being propagated towards music. Students can be exposed to ‘Balti music’ only in polo-grounds when during national days they are allowed to watch polo matches after the ceremonies. The almost total absence of musical items whether local, national or international in school events, the kind of prohibitions, the personal perceptions, practices and preferences are all consistent in case of music. With reference to the consensual responses mentioned above of disallowing music due to religious sanction, the state of affairs shows the over dominated influence of religiosity regarding music. This will consequently result into vanishing traditions, practices, knowledge, instruments, interest and appreciation for music and may give rise to more monoculture ritualism and repressive ways that strengthen fanaticism and extremism. Use of emotionally and religiously charged words such as ‘haram’ ‘sinful’ not allowed at all, ‘astaghfirul-allah’ (I seek salvation from Allah) with respect to music have very sensitive and serious implications in preservation and development of musical dimension of culture. These perceptions are developed in such a way that even the very word ‘music’ (mousiqi) itself has become contentious in the school setting.

Apart from the word ‘music’, at times even the word ‘culture’ itself is seen as contentious bearing ‘poetry, music, dance and sports’ as its essential components or features. The present day schooling in Baltistan seems compromising cultural identity of children in terms of their mother tongue, poetry and all forms of music.
The findings of this study indicate that first language or mother tongue of the students is not given importance in the school, speech items on any topic in the local language (Balti) is absent as folk songs in the school ceremonies is totally non-existent. In this way the local voices are silenced, however by allowing religious poetry and national songs in Balti, the linguistic cultural resources are used as effective tools to promote religious and national identities. The native language is perceived and presented as a burden. If we look at music, which is another important factor of culture makes the situation much more disappointing. Playing music either by students or by teachers is not allowed in school except on occasions of national ceremonies. Singing a Balti song by a girl student would be out of question.
CHAPTER 6

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND RELIGION

This chapter covers the second part of the findings, analysis and discussions on the themes of school rituals and ceremonies, religion, and other minor themes that emerged from data such as dress, games, food, history, ecological sites etc. The school ceremonies and rituals are the major learning experiences beyond prescribed textbooks. Therefore, as part of co-curricular learning experiences these activities open up new and enormous potential of learning that contributes in development of students’ cultural identities.

Religion, being the spiritual dimension of human life, affects almost all dimensions of life. In various secular, liberal and conservative societies, religion has varying influence upon culture. Generally, it is perceived that scientifically less advanced societies are more likely to be influenced by religion and religious culture is dominant in those areas. However, this partly depends upon the definition of ‘religion’ or certain religious thoughts. Theoretically considered, ‘religion is a code of human life’, where the visibility and the likeliness of the dominance of ‘religious culture’ increases. This study depicts that ‘indigenous culture’ is being replaced with ‘religious culture’.

The school ceremonies and rituals are powerful acculturation strategies. “School rituals are one of the important parts of school life. In the rituals, all kinds of agents in the school come to the front to participate to produce an educational context in which students are both participants and learners” (Zhu, 2007, p.135). As Zhu’s (2007) study shows, the topics of speeches, the textual and emotional content of the speeches, the environment, occasion and the legitimizing factors (presence of officials, declaring this as an official event, endorsing by social elites etc) all collectively contribute to the affective and cognitive learning experiences of students that shape and sharpen their cultural identity.

The regular morning assembly with recitation, prayer, poem, and national anthem build a kind of prototype obligatory ritual in such a way that children assume it to be the only way to start school. This also inculcates the aspects of religious faith and national identity. Punishment to those who are absent or are late in assembly indirectly teaches them that any lack of interest in the ritual may bear severe consequences.
Rituals and Ceremonies

Rituals and ceremonies in any society or community are sites of more formalized cultural expression. Through these activities, people express what they value in life in certain ways. What is presented in the rituals and ceremonies would be understood as ‘the selected one’ for a comparatively larger audience, less frequently getting together in the same way.

These ceremonies are then bound and associated with notions of sanctity, collective aspirations, collective performance, for collective causes. Hence the value, the sociological and psychological effects and implications, the political outcomes of ritualistic and ceremonial events are normally huge as compared to other routine and more frequently occurring events.

The school rituals “facilitate appropriate sentiments towards the dominant value system of the wider society” (Bernstein et al, 1966, p.429). Mostly ceremonies are ‘special occasions’ to celebrate, to observe a special social happening to make it memorable, or to recall, refresh and reemphasize any historical memories. Through these ceremonies, cultural practices, myths and traditions are kept alive. Celebrations and ceremonies may aim at attaining national and ideological aspirations. In the form of festivities, these events also serve the purposes of human catharsis, entertainment, and a rejuvenating opportunity for its participants.

A larger ceremonial event may consist of a series of ritual performances. Each piece and segment of certain ritual has its own discursive meaning and significance, at times loaded with emotional content. The school processes consist of many such rituals and ceremonies along with the formal classroom teaching-learning activities and experiences. Among the school processes, all the regular (officially allowed, scheduled, organized, and observed) activities and events other than classroom teaching are placed under the heading of school rituals and ceremonies.

In my study as observed and also shared by teacher during interviews, the participant schools officially observe the following major and regular rituals, ceremonies and events:

- Morning Assembly (daily)
- *Bazm-e-Adab* (literary meeting, weekly)
- National Days (as per calendar dates)
- Religious Days (as per Islamic lunar calendar)
- Annual Events or Special Days (as per decision and schedule of the school management or as per order of the directorate of education) such as result/award ceremony, parents’ day, sports weeks, World Literacy Day, World Water Day etc.
- Other routine informal activities that become part of school culture such as tea-break when staff get together in staffroom and have informal chats that reflect the dominant discourses in schools. Similarly the examinations and tests also reflect the school culture which indirectly reveals many broader cultural aspects.

Nature of School Ceremonies

The observation of the school ceremonies, rituals and interview responses confirmed that these rites were primarily national and then religious in nature. In all ceremonies, the religious aspect was an essential element in the form of recitation from the Quran, naat and sometimes qaseeda/madah. There was a consensual agreement between teachers and students about the special national and religious days which the schools observe and/or celebrate. The top three national days were Pakistan Day on March 23rd, Independence Day on August 14th, and Defense Day on September 6th. While Iqbal Day on November 9th, Quaid-e-Azam Day, Iqbal’s Anniversary on April 21st and yom-e-takbeer 17 on May 12th were the national days which are observed on small scales within the school.

Among religious days, the two major Eids, Eid-ul-Azha and Eid-ul-Fitr and the birthday of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) known as Eid-e-Milad, are nationally celebrated as off days and schools observe these days on alternate working days. Normally, three days are observed as national holidays on the two Eids. The birthdays of Hazrat Ali (AS) (the first Imam, cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet), Hazrat Fatima (AS) (the daughter of the Holy Prophet), Hazrat Imam Hassan (AS), Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) (grandsons of the Holy Prophet) and other Imams are normally observed/celebrated in schools with due reverence and devotion. In schools Eids are normally celebrated one day before or the following days after Eid at least at class level if school level ceremony could not be arranged. The death anniversaries of these holy personalities are normally observed as full

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17The day when Pakistan became the 7th nuclear power with several blasts of nuclear weapons
or half off days (holidays) and students are officially allowed to join religious congregations and mourning sessions. The 9th and 10th of Muharram are nationally observed as holidays on the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and his followers in Karbala. In Baltistan, the first ten days of Muharram are normally shortened days without break or shorter periods. From 8th to 10th and then the 13th of Muharram are observed as local holidays with two days national holidays. During the sessional Ashura normally during the month of July-August, one day local holiday as ‘asad aashura’ is observed for aashura processions. During the fasting month of Ramadan, the school days are shortened for the whole month. Eid-e-Ghadeer, Nooroz and Shabe Barat are other significant religious ceremonies which the respondents mentioned.

The nature of the special days officially declared as holidays or ceremonial days are national and religious in nature. All these days whether observed as ceremonial days in school or officially allowed (given space) to participate in, out of school, mostly at religious sites strongly promote and nurture the national and religious identities that consequently suppress the cultural identity.

Teachers also mentioned few international days which the schools observes/celebrates such as World Literacy Day, World Water Day, Earth Day etc. However, these days are not part of school’s regular calendar. I could observe Literacy Day in the Boys School where the school had arranged a walk to the bazzar of the town. The students were holding placardss and banners with slogans to promote literacy. Weekly Bazm-e-Adab and Parents Day (once a year) as well as Results/Awards ceremony were the significant ceremonies and co-curricular events in both the schools. The head teachers shared almost a comprehensive list of all the events.

14th August, 23rd March, 6th September Defense Day, yome-takbeer18 12th May and Quaid Day are celebrated. In Ramzan (the fasting month) chapters of Holy Quran is distributed, Islamiat quiz competitions are held. Competitions on Eid Milad, we observe (world) water day, earth day, we have put in plan on board which is now removed. Speeches on water day mentions our glaciers and Gang-Singe (local name of a glacier) [PSA(HM)].

18 The day when Pakistan first time tested its nuclear arsenals and became the 7th nuclear power
The male head teacher distinguished between the regular and occasional events that the school observes. “Mostly national and religious celebration, 23rd March, 14th August, 6th September, Eid Milad, birth day of Quaid, regularly celebrated.” [PSB(HM)] Other days are celebrated occasionally as per orders of authorities such as ‘World Water Day’ or ‘Literacy Day’ etc. The school “Try to observe death anniversaries of Iqbal and Quaid with small functions. On 14th August and 23rd March, the school participates in district level events. Rallies on Literacy Day, Kashmir Day, games: football, volleyball, hockey, are played in school.” [PSA(HM)].

During the focus group discussions, students confirmed many of the rituals, events and celebrations. They listed 14th August, 23rd March, 6th September, Parents Day, sports week, bazm-e-adab, drill period and Human Rights Day. In the FGD, students also shared an estimated percentage proportion of the events. They said that proportion of the national ceremonies are 50%; religious ceremonies 40% and other types of ritual, events, and celebration comprise 10% of events [PSB(FGD)].

“We have bit different kinds of Eids such as Eid Ghadeer19, Matam Majalis20, 23rd March, 6th September, Parents’ Day and bazm-e-adab. The items presented are tilawat, hamd, naat, manqabat, dua21, national songs, speeches etc. [PSA(FGD)].

The morning assembly being a daily ritual is considered to be a part of curricular ritual and is not mentioned by the respondents as co-curricular activity.

The list of rituals, ceremonies and events in terms of regularity and observance by the schools, the estimation of students of FGD seems quite close to those reported by the teachers. The teachers also reported that national ceremonies and rituals make half (50%) of the whole school events, followed by religious events which is 40%. The remaining 10% is the given space for other aspects of life and dimension of learning such as sports, literary, artistic, musical and cultural types of co-curricular activities.

19This Eid is the the day when the Holy Prophet nominated Hazrat Ali, the first Imam (his cousin and son in-law) as his deputy and vicegerent.

20 The sad days of mourning, usually on the occasions of death anniversaries of Holy religious persons

21 Recitation of verses of Quran, praise poem of Allah, praise poem of Prophet, praise poem of Imams, and supplications respectively.
The rituals and days mentioned are observed only under normal routine (ideal) conditions. For example, morning assembly is not conducted on rainy days or when there is snow fall and severe cold. Break time is excluded on half days during the month of Ramadan and the first week of Muharram. Bazm-e-adab does not take place during exams, month of Muharram or even when the in charge teacher is absent. Similarly, it is not necessary that a ‘day’ is observed on the same date, it may be observed/celebrated on the nearest convenient dates or may not be observed at all due to some other reasons. An example of this is if there is any overlapping in the solar and lunar calendar, if a national day falls during the Eid holidays or Muharram, or if a religious day falls on a Sunday or national holiday. In such cases, normally the national day is put on second priority ahead of the religious day. One of the female teachers mentioned that Defense Day was not observed due to Eid holidays this year.

This pattern of observing school ceremonies and decisions taken clearly show that the top priority is given to religious and then to national purposes. Academic objectives fall behind them. Eliminating break time and shortening periods during the month of Ramadan and Muharram is an example of this. On one hand it puts continued burden on children without any break and on the other hand shortening of periods (working time) reduces span of teaching-learning time. The time spared from school timing is supposed to be spent for religious services and observance of religious rituals.

Normally, major national and religious days are observed as public holidays. Organized celebrations take place on alternate days if school plans to observe it as a school-event. An overall observation is that school ceremonies and other co-curricular activities are more frequent in boys’ school as compared to the girls’ school. For example, there was neither participation of girls in interschool competition with boys nor were they given any opportunity for inter-girls-school competitions. The officials of education department were engaged in ceremonies of boys’ schools and girls were neglected that day. This trend also shows the access disparity to public discourses for boys and girls. Bazm-e-adab was also less frequent in girls’ school especially during the last months of academic year due to course completion, preparations and exams.

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22 The first month of Islamic lunar calendar ore famous for mourning the sacrifices and martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (the grandson of the Holy Prophet) and his colleagues who stood against the tyranny of Yazid, the Umayad ruler of Syria.
The analysis of these observations reveals that in terms of priority and preference, the religiosity aspect is on top followed by the national aspect. The academic dimension becomes third priority as seen in the case of short days without break during the months of Ramadan and Muharram. It means that in terms of identity, schools try to make children ‘Pakistani Muslims’ and then students. To be a Balti could be the fourth identity chosen by students without any guidance or facilitation from the school.

Gender disparity is not only visible but dominant in terms of opportunities for participation in public discourses which is again due to certain interpretation of religious affiliations. It can be concluded that development of students’ identities are facilitated in directions of religious and national (Pakistani) cultural lines while the lines of local indigenous cultural expressions are narrowed down and almost disallowed in school ceremonies and function.

The Start of a School Day

In the participant schools, the day begins with the morning assembly. It is a regular ritual in all schools, but the format is slightly different. The overall themes emerging from the morning assembly are: religiosity, nationhood, discipline (with element of military training), uniformity, and behavior control measures (including taunting and penalty of physical punishment).

In both the participant schools, the morning assembly is held in the open ground. Common format is that after lining up of students through cautions of ‘stand easy’, ‘attention’ exercises, in ‘stand easy’ mode, the team of students (selected for rituals) comes forward, one student recites few verses (normally a short sura) from the Holy Quran, then a prayer poem is sung followed by the national anthem. In the participant schools, the prayer poem of Iqbal ‘children supplication’ is the official poem. Immediately after this poem, the children are cautioned to become in ‘attention’ (high alert) position and the national anthem starts. During the recitation and prayer poem, children can join the rows and one can move around but when the anthem is being sung, everybody is expected to stand still wherever they are to demonstrate a very respectful body posture. The ‘attention’ body posture is a very firm rule similar to that observed during army parade. Even movement of hands and body is not allowed. In this way, the national anthem becomes a certain kind of liturgy with high power symbolism of nationalism.
The participation of all students is obligatory in the morning assembly. After national anthem, announcements (if any) are made. In the girls’ school, the students are asked to move to their respective classrooms in rows where class teachers take attendance.

In school-B (normally but not always) students are asked to be seated after the national anthem. The PTI (practical training instructor) or PT teacher administers the assembly. He is also responsible for the school administration in terms of monitoring and controlling students’ activities and movements out of class. In the assemblies that I observed, the PTI calls upon names of the absconders (who left school without permission or were late for assembly); they are brought forward in front of the assembly, and given corporal punishment. Uniform is also checked on a daily basis. Cleanliness and proper hair are checked once a week and deviants are punished. Taunting, beating with a stick and making the culprit crouch like a rooster in an uncomfortable and painful stance ‘Murga bana na’ (مرغا بنانا) are still common penalties and punishments practiced in the assembly in front of all the students and teachers.

When announcements and duties of the PTI is over, students get in class groups where their class teachers take attendance. In the girls’ school, attendance and checking becomes part of in-class administrative/disciplinary activities hence absconders are saved from public embarrassment.

One of the daily routines is the break or recess which is tea-break for staff and play/free movement break for students. I had an opportunity to join in many of the tea-breaks in the staff room and in the principal’s office. The tea break is the time of informal and light chats. In the boys’ school, teachers enjoy tea, smoking and commentaries over diverse socio-political topics, discourses and events. Mostly the matters discussed are also ‘hot issues of the day’ over a hot cup of tea or samosa (fried pastry with filling local edible). This was the regular routine in tea-break. In the girls’ school, I joined the head teacher and a few teachers or guests for tea in the headteacher’s room, while in the boys’ school, I mostly joined the teachers in the staffroom.

The major purpose of morning assembly is prayer session (religious), national anthem (national) and disciplinary exercise (through military approach and style). This

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23 Murga bana na-making the literal equivalence of Urdu term used for a kind of punishment in which the person crouches down passing hands from beneath legs and hold both ears so the posture becomes like a ‘Rooster’. It is a very insulting kind of punishment making a child look like an animal.
pattern clearly confirms the emerging pattern observed elsewhere in other ceremonies that determines the direction of students’ identity development. The overall discussions in staffroom was mostly dominant with immediate social and political concerns such as law-and-order situations, stories of political parties (elections) and performance of bureaucracy including stories of corruption in the education department. Only occasionally, there were stories of academic and cultural concerns. The informal chats of teachers can also be indicators of school trends.

At times, there were very hot discussions and debates over political issues as well. However regarding educational matters, the corruption stories of a person in the department was the dominant discourse. The teachers shared astonishing stories of corruption often legalized in some ways. This shows the concerns of the teachers over the seriousness of the matter though it was often discussed ironically for fun. The frequency of mentioning the person and his actions also reflects the eroding system of school education in the region in terms of merit and quality. The proportion of discussion about school matters was however seldom. I could see, sense and enjoy the interesting ironical and literary anecdotes and humorous dialogues among teachers that show their sense of humor and literary capability.

The discussion in school-A was more educational and social with the dominant element of religiosity. Latest news were also shared during the break on tea-table such as matters of condolence, forthcoming events or expected visits of some political figures, incidents in the city or incidents that effected the city. The stories and comments of target killing incidents of February and April 201224 were very dominant during all following days and months during tea-break, off hours and sometimes even in classrooms as a natural response to the concern.

The morning assembly and tea-break as routine school activities are real sites that depict the formal and informal school culture on a daily basis that consequently strengthen the identity of children along the same lines. As mentioned above, the morning assembly covers and reinforces the dimensions of religiosity, nationalism and military style discipline and disciplinary actions. The informal chats during tea break reflect immediate and ongoing

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24 During the months of February and April 2012, in two incidents occurred in Kohistan and Chilas of Northern Pakistan, dozens of passengers were identified and killed on sectarian basis and among them were several persons from Baltistan.

24 Noroz meaning the new day is the first day of the new year according to the Iranian calendar
concerns and interests of teachers. In school-A, the discussions were mostly educational and religious while in school-B the discussions were mainly about politics and social concerns including religious matters. Discourses of religious nature seem dominant in both schools. The reason of dominance of religious discussions might be due to the sectarian assault in the country as an immediate concern. However, the pattern shows that females were more interested in their professional and academic discussion about teaching learning, school management and children’s issues while the male teachers were more concerned about the broader society and country politics. Matters related to local culture and cultural orientations were seldom reflected in these activities. The pattern of teachers’ informal discussions is also reflected in their classrooms that shape and influence students’ identity accordingly.

**Bazm-e-Adab**

The term *bazm-e-adab* literally meaning ‘literary congregation’ is the name of the weekly scheduled co-curricular session/ceremony or event in schools. This is an opportunity for students to participate and nurture their potential talents especially artistic and cultural. Through *bazm-e-adab*, talents are explored and nurtured, opportunities for expression are given, and confidence and speaking skills are improved. As mentioned in the interview of the head teacher, ‘many of the artists, poets, authors and journalists of the city have been nurtured by the ‘school bazm-e-adab’. This is a mass educational event in schools when all the classes and all the students attend and participate in the assembly in both roles as performers and as an audience. In both roles students learn a lot.

As observed in both schools, the significant occasions, events and days are normally celebrated in the *bazm-e-adab* i.e.within the scheduled time slot for this weekly event instead of arranging separate events in order to save time and resources. For example, Iqbal’s death anniversary in school-B, and speech competitions in school-A were held as special *bazm-e-adab* sessions.

The format of routine *bazm-e-adab* in both schools may be different however the format and sequence of observed *bazm-e-adab* was almost the same in terms of type(s) of item(s) and its place in the sequence of events.

Here is the item-wise general format of some of the observed *bazm-e-adab* ceremonies incorporating occasions:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bazm-e-Adab Sessions</th>
<th>Bazm-e-Adab Day</th>
<th>Bazm-e-Adab Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Tilawat**, **Hamd**, **Naat**, **Mangabat**
- Balti qaseeda
- Speech by student ‘obedience of law’
- Speech of the guest
- Speech of senior teacher
- Concluding remarks/speech of the Head teacher

- **Tilawat**, **Naat**, **Mangabat**
- Student speech on Iqbal
- kalam-e-Iqbal (Iqbal’s poem)
- Speech by guest
- National defense song اے راہ حق کے شہیدو، (واکی تصویرو)
- Address of host headteacher
- Presidential address of the Deputy Director Education
- Special supplication (prayers) and ‘vote of thanks’ by the Vice Principal.
- **Durood**
- Four poems & nursery rhyme (after 2 or 3 speeches)
- Result announcement
- Prize distribution
- Guest’s comments
- Concluding remarks by the HM.

Below are the percentages of theme-wise items in each bazm-e-adab. This does not show time proportion, allocation, and weightage or degree of significance of any item which could be different. For example, the address of the chair or the concluding remarks may have the core message of the event, hence could be more significance as compared to others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bazm-e-Adab</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>40% religious; 40% national; 20% others</td>
<td>20% religious; 20% curricular/entertainment (poems and rhymes from textbooks); 10% national, 50% others (administrative/operational, moral, prescriptive, informative) speeches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally in all ceremonies and bazm-e-adab the two components of tilawat (recitation) and naat--praise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are essential and compulsory.
items. In the participant schools, *hamd* and *manqabat* and/or *qaseeda* are also frequent religious items. Other than the *muharram* days, a national song is also an essential part of the routine *bazm-e-adab*. In the observed sessions, only two items of *qaseeda* and *manqabat* (both religious poetry) were in Balti, recitation and *durood* in Arabic and all other (expressive) items were in Urdu.

When we do *bazme-adab*, we have *tilawat, naat, hamd*, poetry, national songs and speeches etc. A little play/drama but we do not pay attention to the local culture, at maximum a Balti poem is narrated [PSB(Eng)].

“We celebrate *bazm-e-adab* on Fridays. *Tilawat, naat, national songs and speech etc.*” [PSB(GSc)]

In the girls school, *bazm-e-adab* although often observed, is not regular at school level. However at classroom level, some teachers organize it. “At classroom level in last period we celebrate *bazm-e-adab*” [PSA(Isl)].

Analysis reveals that similar to the themes that emerged in morning assemblies, in the *bazm-e-adab* sessions *religiosity, nationhood and, discipline* emerge as prominent themes. The other themes that emerged from the items/activities and contents are: *prescription* (mainly moral, national and religious), *selection* and *information*. Prescription in the sense that most of the speeches have ‘do’s’ and ‘do nots’ elements, suggesting normative functions with ‘should, must or ought’ type of words. There is very limited opportunity of free expression both in terms of expression of free will of the presenter and equal access to all students. Firstly, the topics of speeches and content are selected by teachers (mostly from textbooks), and secondly there is no equal opportunity of participation for all students. The item(s), its content and the performers are all selectively chosen. The speech items have potentially an opportunity for ‘true self-expression’ if students are allowed to speak ‘what they wish to speak’, but unfortunately speeches are either dictated or given in written form by the teachers. Hence the speaker has no choice for topic selection but to narrate what is given. Freedom of expression is limited and suppressed in this way in order to ensure the so called ‘quality of speech’ in terms of language accuracy and conformity with the norms of national and religious ideologies. As observed in these events, the poetic items are either ‘religious’ or ‘national’ in nature which are again already written by someone. In other words, a subtle control of hegemonic state apparatus regulates all school events that give way to only the items patronized by the
government. Development of free expression and local cultural identities are hence compromised. A kind of censorship, and hence an inclusion, exclusion situation is always there which is debatable and questionable.

National Days

According to the interviews, the focus group discussions and school records, the schools observe following national days as holidays and/or ceremonies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S#</th>
<th>Day/dates</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
<th>Nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August (1947)</td>
<td>Independence Day of Pakistan</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; March (1940)</td>
<td>Pakistan Day: when resolution for creation of Pakistan was passed</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September (1965)</td>
<td>Defense Day: when Pakistan proclaimed its defense success in war with India</td>
<td>National/Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May (1998)</td>
<td>Yome-Takbeer: the day when Pakistan tested its nuclear weapons for the first time</td>
<td>National/Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; December</td>
<td>Quaid Day: birthday of the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November</td>
<td>Iqbal Day: birthday of the great national poet, philosopher and thinker Allama Muhammad Iqbal</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>Iqbal anniversary; death anniversary of Allama Iqbal</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Islamic month Rabi-ul-Awal</td>
<td>Eid-Milad: Birth Day of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him)</td>
<td>Religious/National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; and 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; of Islamic month Shawal</td>
<td>Eid-ul-Fitr: grand festivities on conclusion of the fasting month Ramzan; mass-religious celebrations</td>
<td>Religious/National</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Earlier all these national days except Yom-e-Takbeer later a declared national day) were observed as national holidays. During Musharraf's regime legislation was passed according to which Quaid Day, Iqbal Day, Defense Day have now been cancelled as holidays. Other holidays are intact. In Baltistan, three consecutive days of Ashura are observed as local holidays to allow students to participate in mourning sessions and procession and pay homage to the martyrs of Karbala. Similarly, three days consecutive holidays for both Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha are observed. No official event of mourning on Ashura and festivity on both Eids are observed in schools, however high respect and reverence are ensured. Eid-e-Milad and other national days are celebrated officially in schools on the same or alternate days.

**Celebration of National Days**

Out of the above mentioned national days, I could observe four ceremonies and events out of three national days (two events of 14th August, one of 23rd March, and one of 20th April Muhammad Iqbal’s death anniversary--for April, 21st).

Below are some excerpts from the record of observations field notes:

a) Observation of 14th August flag hoisting ceremony attended by the students and teachers of government high schools of the town. The commissioner, the senior most administrator was Chief Guest.

The host Deputy Commissioner (DC) delivered his speech. The DC acknowledged ‘the hardworking of the education department and the children of the
schools who made this event a success’ and as a reward he announced the next day (August 15) will be observed as an off day (holiday) for schools in the whole district. This announcement was welcomed with loud clapping. The host DC concluded his speech with slogans with a request that the slogan-reply must be so loud that it reaches to the army fronts and echoed from the mountains of Siachen and Kargil (defense sites). The DC left the audience with slogans of ‘Pakistan--Zindabad’ With slogans of Naara-e-takbeer--- Allhu-Akber25; Naara-e-Haideri---Ya Ali26; slogans of ‘Long Live Pakistan’ followed by the special slogans ‘Long Live Pak Army’ (which is an essential part of almost all national ceremonies here in Skardu).

The analysis of slogans and the content of the speech with mention of the defense sites reveals that inculcation of nationhood, religiosity and reverence to Pak Army are the key themes focused in national ceremonies.

The special message of the Prime Minister of Pakistan was then narrated and finally the Chief Guest, the Commissioner Baltistan, addressed the gathering. The Chief Guest said:

On this occasion I would like to communicate the message to the great people of Baltistan that we need more efforts to understand the meaning of freedom (آزادی)(liberty and independence). Freedom does not mean that rules, laws and the norms of a civilized society are not taken care of. Freedom is not liberty in ethical sense. Freedom is that you value your country, protect the assets of your country, its resources, such as roads, buildings, hospitals, [must be] valued. This is the real thought of freedom [that warrant freedom]. And think that whatever is to be done, you have to do without any administration [officials], you are the administration, you are the government, and you are Pakistan. When you feel that you are Pakistan, this will lead you towards development and that is my message for today.

The Chief Guest reiterated this sentiment expressed by the DC saying that the slogans called upon by the DC might not have reached across the borders. He asked the audience to raise the slogans in such a spirit that they go beyond borders. The Chief Guest requested

25 Islamic slogan, Allah is Great
26 Slagoan of Ya Ali, a Slogan of the devotees of Hazrat Ali
(in fact ordered) all the heads of departments sitting among the audience to stand-up, gather near the stage and then raise powerful slogans. While the elders (heads of departments of district administration) stood from their seats, gathered near the stage (4 feet down the seat of the Chief Guest) the Chief Guest said, “When you shout saying ‘Pakistan-Zindabad’, it means that our heart and soul are ready to sacrifice for Pakistan. So (you) have to express that spirit, mere hollow slogans does not make sense”, saying this he also requested the whole audience especially children to stand-up and reply to the slogan, of ‘Long Live Pakistan’ Pakistan-Zindabad, was raised three times, each time with a request to be louder.

The speech of the Chief-Guest was, and is ‘the final’ word (in both sense of temporal sequence and significance). In a way this is the legitimizing authority in that context. Using Michael Apple’s notion, normally the speech of the chief guest, being an authority endorses the ‘official knowledge’. Each word, phrase, sentence, both discursive and non-discursive expressions have meanings. When we situate the speech text in context, supplemented by the ritualistic performances of raising slogans, asking people to stand up and come to the stage for yet louder and collective slogans, the desired and intended intensity of the messages, meanings and impact can easily be guessed. We can find two key messages in the speech. The emancipatory message part was:

And think that whatever has to be done you have to do without any administration [officials], you are the administration, you are the government, and you are Pakistan. When you feel that you are Pakistan, this will lead you towards development and that is my message for today.

In these two sentences, it seems that the Chief Guest wants to empower the local masses so that they own the whole administration and government. However, in the second sentence the prime condition is stated “When you feel that you are Pakistan, this will lead you towards development and that is my message for today”. The condition for ‘development’ is to become an unconditional Pakistani. The chief guest highlights the point by saying “that is my message for today” to be taken as ‘the core message’ of the day; that the only way to success is to become a complete ‘Pakistani’. “When you feel that you are Pakistani” it means complete internalization of the national identity as the prime condition of ‘development’, and we know that prosperity, wellbeing, freedom of choices and many more attractive cosmetic notions are associated with the concept of development.
The second and more explicit message of the speech is that of compliance, obedience to the rule of law and sacrifice for the country. These are in fact quite common messages especially in school ceremonies. Many of the popular national songs consist of the core message of sacrifice and glorify martyrdom. Similarly in his speech the Chief Guest said, “When you shout saying Pakistan-Zindabad, it means that our heart and soul are ready to sacrifice ourselves for Pakistan”. The discourse analysis of this sentence reveals the intent, content, extent and implications of the message conveyed in the specific context. The context is ‘Independence Day’, the speaker is ‘the Chief Guest’ of the ceremony with administrative power and position, the audiences are mostly students and government servants (his subordinates), the speech is the concluding speech and the words were concluding words followed by the slogans. When we situate this message in the whole context considering the mode of production, the producer, the receivers, their respective positions, the occasion and significance of the liturgy, we may be able to interpret the statement and draw more appropriate conclusions. The message literally demands solid sacrifices for the country. Mere verbal supplications and adorations are not sufficient “Hollow slogans does not make sense” as the Chief Guest added. Only (unconditional) offering of all kinds of sacrifices ‘heart and soul’ for the country, can bring ‘the real life’. With an emphasis on these instructional and prescriptive messages of nationhood, compliance of the laws of the land, unconditional sacrifices and adoration to Pak army with sensitization of the security aspect, given to the youngsters celebrating ‘the Independence Day’, the ceremony was concluded.

Such a liturgy and message may have potentially diverse and adverse implications for an audience of youngsters. Slogan of “Long Live Pak Army”, references made to Siachen and Kargil borders and asking to raise slogan so our voices get across the border, are not only the signs of security state administration and military glorification but at the same time promotes rivalry sentiments towards the neighboring country as ‘the enemy’.

A little further analysis can reveal the inner-message (the subtle message beyond the narrated), enveloped in this message. The occasion is Independence Day (both Pakistan from British Empire and Baltistan from Dogra Raj). On such occasions, one may expect messages and news of liberty and freedom in both talk and rituals, but the situation seems quite contrary. There are messages and practices of domestication, dependence and forced compliance. Asking all the senior officials sitting on chairs to get-up and come near the stage for the final slogans was a symbolic order of the administrative head. The request of
the Chief Guest responded with respectful compliance demonstrates the ‘order-compliance’ pattern of action. The local sacrifices for freedom from the Dogra Raj and then the unconditional invitation to Pakistan was neither referred nor appreciated; hence one of the core memorials of the day in local history was simply missed or just forgotten. This neglect could not be ascribed to the ignorance of the Chief Guest about the local history of independence, it is simply neglecting the local history.

The second ceremony on the occasion of national days organized for schools was Subh-e-Pakistan (the morning of Pakistan) which was an interschool National Songs Competition in Awan-e-Iqbal Satellite Town Skardu.

On the eve of Pakistan Day and jashn-e-noroz meaning the new day is the first day of the new year according to the Iranian calendar. This also the day the Eid-Ghadeer according to solar calendar so has dual significance.

27Noroz meaning the new day is the first day of the new year according to the Iranian calendar. This also the day the Eid-Ghadeer according to solar calendar so has dual significance.
The political party representative repeated in his speech the rhetoric of favors of the government and the Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP) the ruling party over the region. However, he also mentioned the menace of corruption which had unfortunately become a normal practice of their government. Perhaps out of his sincerity, these complaints emerged as challenging issues faced by the government. The participants’ composition was 10% teachers, officials guest and journalists and 90% students. After the speeches of the two political representatives, the religious scholars spoke on the topics of peace and harmony. The speeches echoed the tragic incidents of February 28th in Kohistan when innocent passengers were identified on sectarian basis and were shot to dead. All the 18 passengers were from the Gilgit-Baltistan region. There were huge violent protests. However the religious scholars of Baltistan controlled the situation while in Gilgit government imposed curfew for weeks to control the situation.

The recording of this event was to be broadcasted on local media through cable networks and local radio. My participant school won the third prize in the national song competition.

An interesting thing to note in this ceremony was the medal of first prize that was a “sword souvenir” which is symbolizes military power. When I asked a teacher whether the selection of this momento was by the teachers, he replied it was purchased by the bazm-е-ilmo-fun, organizing committee of the event.

Another significant observation at this event was the welcoming ritual to the chair of the ceremony for his presidential address which was not the usual applause. When the chair was called upon for his speech, he was welcomed by “salwat” instead of applause. Normally national days are secularly observed. The element of religiosity in ceremonies is hence strongly presented.

The presence of high officials of security (police force in this case), the sword souvenir as first prize and the salwat as welcoming ritual are clear symbolic representation of the religiosity and glorification of defense power (militancy). As Kapferer (1981, p.264) states symbols and forms of symbolic representations both verbal and nonverbal, “carry a meaning-load representative of ideas other than those directly represented in the symbolic

28 Supplications as reverence to the Holy Prophet and his progeny
form itself”. In public ceremonies, prominent presence of forces and civil bureaucracy are power and control symbols. All the guided, directed and in fact dictated items and performances of the ceremonies under the shadow of these RSAs serve as the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA).

The symbolic representations of the ‘two-tip sword souvenir’ as first prize, is another clear symbolic representation of military power of certain religiosity as it is the symbol of zulfiqar (a symbol of bravery and power triumph). I asked several teachers of the participating schools about the rationale of the selection of such a souvenir as the first prize. They had no knowledge of it. It was the selection of the host organizer (bazme-ilmo-fun). It seems that the consent of the authorities of education department was there in the decision of the memento for the first position as both were equally hosting the event. This memento is in fact the best symbolic reflection of all the rituals and discourses of school ceremonies on national days and the summary of my whole discussion and analysis. The renowned columnist and journalist Hassan Nisar in his column of the Daily Jang (August 6, 2012) cites an Urdu verse exactly reflecting the situation stating how the wealthy people exploit the poor:

امیر شہر غریبوں کو لوٹ لیتا ہے
کبھی بہ حیلہ مذہب ، کبھی بہ نام وطن

(Translation: The rich of the city exploits the poor, sometime with the tool of religion and sometime in the name of country).

c) The third ceremony held in school was the Special Bazm-e-Adab on Iqbal’s Anniversary April 20, 2012:

As the head master (HM) stated, “today’s bazm-e-adab is a special event with anniversary of Iqbal and prayers for the army in Siachen who are buried under the glacier avalanche and sliding”.

According to the HM the Deputy Director Education (DDE) had consented to participate in the bazme-adab at 10:00. However, the DDE team arrived at 11:09 and ceremony started at 11:10 with salwat. After the welcoming words, an introduction of the ceremony was given by the Maser of Ceremonies who has been a research participant in
FGD. “This special *bazm-e-adab* is in the memories of Hazrat Allama Iqbal, ‘the Poet of East’ who left his thought and poetry for us, whose anniversary is tomorrow. Today we also remember our soldier brothers of Pak Army who are yet under the snow in Ghiyari Siachen. We are here to pray for their lives”, the compere explained.

The ceremony proceeded with: *tilawat, naat, mangabat*, a speech about Iqbal and *kalam-e-Iqbal* (Iqbal’s poem) by students. Then as guest, I was invited for a speech. A national song about army was presented after the guest’s speech. The host HM addressed the audience and thanked the DDE for sparing time and encouraging students in his speech. The ceremony was concluded by the DDE’s presidential address. The HM specified that this *bazme-adab* had been organized as an occasion specific event”.

The DDE thanked the HM and staff for organizing such an event. He praised the confidence of presenters. “We forgot the sacrifices of our ancestorsاسلاف” he said. Describing the function of schooling (education) and the role of teachers the DDE said, “Despite the shortcomings of schooling, at least we can make you loyal to country.”کم از "کم بیم اپ کو محب وطن تو بنائیں. He also mentioned the role of media and private sector (schools) to challenge the government system. At the end, the vice principal offered *dua* prayers/suppllication for those who were buried under the glacier; This was mainly because there was major uncertainty about their lives. The ceremony was concluded with prayers for the victims of Siachen incident.

The elements of religiosity, loyalty, Pakistani nationalism, applause for the sacrifices of Pak Army and hence the glorification of their role was also highlighted and emphasized in this ceremony. The punch line message of this event in the words of the DDE was “irrespective of the shortcomings of schooling at least” the schools would “make students loyal people”. Here, in the context of the text, this means loyal citizens of Pakistan. The confession of shortcomings means that in terms of academic quality and excellence, the gaps and shortcomings of the government schools are acceptable. However, ‘at least’, means at any cost the function of inculcating national identity would be the top priority. Promotion and development of national loyalty could be one of the major aims of schooling. However, it may not be the core purpose even at the cost of academic achievement and by sidelining local cultural identities. The function of schooling and the role of teachers stated by the responsible authority of the local education administration has huge meaning and it clearly shows that schooling is being used as an assimilative tool and
schools as assimilative sites. The element of religiosity is present in the same proportion with four religious items (tilawat, naat, mangabat, salwat) and special prayer for the departed souls of Pak Army in the incident of avalanche in Siachen.

Space for Cultural Items in School Ceremonies

Observation of the school ceremonies as mentioned in preceding pages show that these events are promoting the national and religious identities without providing opportunities to celebrate the local cultural identities. It is evident that components of local cultural expression is only in form of ‘national songs’ or ‘religious poetry’ (normally qaseeda and mangabat) to strengthen the national and religious identities. Other forms of Balti poetry and speech items are absent. When asked about the proportion of cultural items in school ritual and ceremonies, the responses showed that cultural items and events are almost none in general school events and co-curricular activities. Some of the typical responses are presented below:

“No emphasis on cultural events” [PSA(Eng)].

“But we do not pay attention to the local culture, at the most a Balti poem is narrated and that is all. Though it is desirable that there must be poetry in Balti”[PSB(Eng)].

“There is no attention to local culture (cultural events)...No local cultural celebrations in schools” [PSB(Math)].

“There is no focus on local culture (cultural events)” [PSB(SS)].

No speeches in Balti, never yet, but mostly kids sing national songs (in Balti). The independence day of Baltistan is not celebrated separately. Special ceremonies or festivities are of national and religious nature, cultural events are not frequent [PSA(SS)].

The respondents consistently reported that there were neither (local) cultural events nor any due proportion of items in Balti language. No items about local culture are presented in the school ceremonies. “Any speech in Balti could only be by chance” [PSB(GSc)]. The only items presented (allowed to be presented) in Balti would be national songs or religious poetry. “National song in Balti was part of national events” [PSA(GSc)]. “There could be song in Balti but not speech in any function” [PSA(Math)]. “In Balti only national songs and qaseeda are performed. Speech is not done. It is difficult to write in Balti” [PSA(Isl)].
Though national songs and religious poetry are the major public cultural expressions and outlets but one respondent complained that even these forms of poetry and their local styles of narration are vanishing due to the influence of the electronic media. “Nowadays all naat, hamd are copied from TV and radio. There is no style or composition of our own qaseeds, noha, marsia” [PSB(Isl)].

According to the respondents, local cultural events have never been celebrated in schools. “We have never observed local celebrations. We did not have any idea. Now when you came and you are studying culture, I am becoming interested in cultural things and feel there must be such events. (Mephnag) Being a Hindu event is not appreciated but it is an entertainment” [PSA(HM)]. “No local celebration (such as mephang, losar) is celebrated in school” [PSB(FGD)]. “Noroz not celebrated. [students] Do not know about local celebrations such losar, mephang [PSA(Isl)]. According to the students, “Celebrations are mostly Islamic then national” [PSA(FGD)]. They named nooroz, Odspur (charaghan, lighting), mespur (for mephnag), qurbani Eid) as local celebrations. The analysis shows that no local cultural event is observed or celebrated in schools, the misnaming of local festivities by the students is evidence that they do not know about these festivities and celebration. Some of the local festivities and celebrations/ ceremonies are termed as Hindu tradition or non-Islamic so are discouraged and hence the opportunities of development of cultural identity through cultural celebrations and festivities are narrowed to absence.

From the observations and interview data as reflected above, cited excerpts and quotations, it can be inferred that in school rituals and ceremonies:

- Nationhood and religiosity are the dominant aspects in terms of items, content, intent and extent.
- Local culture is absent in school ceremonies.
- Local language Balti, the mother tongue of more than 90% of the students is not given opportunity for speech and other cultural items except for ‘national songs’ and ‘religious poetry’. The Balti language has its presence in school rituals and ceremonies for only ‘national songs’ and ‘religious poetry’ which on the one hand

29Marsia and noha are tragic poetry and lamentation

30Losar is Balti new year celebration and mephang is the ceremony of welcoming spring blossom
is the only mean of its literary public survival but on the other hand is being used as a tool of assimilation.

- Both ‘nationhood’ and ‘religiosity’ are supporting each other while the ‘local culture’ seems considered rival of both. It seems that under the present day schooling, only national and religious identities are allowed to develop and are nurtured. Local culture and identity are just ignored and neglected through subtle hegemonic means.

- Speeches are given in writing by the teachers and the teachers choose topics for speech. Students’ job is to memorize and orate at the stage. In other words, all the speech items are dictated by the teacher (who themselves follow the instructions and order of higher authorities). This state of affairs has both pedagogical and cultural implications.

- Presence of the civil bureaucracy is essential in major school celebrations. In other words, the civil administration ensures their presence in ceremonies of national days.

- In all school ceremonies due emphasis is given on ‘national identity’, reverence to Pak army, and religious culture. The local indigenous culture is somehow underrepresented and marginalized through a systematic way.

- Students are sensitized about security concerns through slogans, and other means. Glorification of military events, personnel, achievements and sacrifices are normal. An overemphasis and extra-coverage is given to ‘the causes of national security’ in ceremonies.

- Generally, music is not permitted except occasionally for ‘national songs’ for religious reasons. This finding is further discussed in relevant section on ‘music’.

- Diversity is not appreciated, “minds are jammed” [PSB(Urdu)] through memorization of prescribed texts and limiting free thinking and expression, as one of the teachers commented.

- If the annual school schedule is observed, the time spared for religious days and events cover and consume much of the time of academic session after long seasonal vacations. This has implications in terms of learning time required to cover the syllabi.

- Some of the practices of local culture are rejected with labels of religious notions such as saying that ‘mephang is a Hindu festival’. For such kinds of marginalization and exclusion, the cover of religion is being used.

168
Girls are kept deprived of most of the learning opportunities of co-curricular activities; the gender bias is also in the name of religion.

When the talks and texts and their modes of production, utilization and consumption are situated and seen in the social context (Fairclough, 2006), the intertextual social meanings of discourses are revealed. As Uzelac (2010) suggests, we can see that in this study too, the school events and ceremonies are powerful liturgies to inculcate, indoctrinate, endorse, authenticate, legitimize and promote the national and religious identities. The speeches of the chief guests/the chair in the observed ceremonies have clear notions in this regard.

If observed with a critical lens, all these national ceremonies seem powerful assimilative tools. Although an addition of emphasis is over the civic roles and citizen responsibilities which may perhaps help students to situate them better in their own context and perhaps stay connected with their roots, but no such opportunities are observed in these ceremonies. With the absence of local culture at times, there are clearly stated discursive formations of negation of regional/ethnic/cultural identities.

Bernstein, Elvin and Peters (1966, p.429) are of the view that schools transmit “two cultures: an instrumental one and an expressive one”. The instrumental culture consists of professional and academic skills and knowledge while “the expressive culture of the school can be considered as the source of its shared values and is therefore cohesive in function” (Bernstein, Elvin and Peters, 1966, p.429). In the participant schools, the expressive culture is very much limited.

In cultural life, ceremonies, festivities, celebrations and other communal rituals and rites are the markers and makers of the expressive culture and the cultural identity of a people which maintains cultural cohesion. If the opportunities of cultural expressions in terms of artistic and aesthetic representations (variety of local poetry, songs and lore) in local languages are limited or denied, then social cohesion will be fragmented. Students may not be able to keep the link to their cultural roots if the opportunities of cultural practices are not given. Depending upon the nature and constituents of the ritual or ceremony, it could be a kind of liberating or domesticating learning opportunity. Unfortunately, it is observed that school ceremonies demand compliance and serve for domestication rather than emancipation.
Generally, the ‘national’ cultures of states (especially in case of incorrectly or loosely defined nations for a collective of diverse ethnicities) are arbitrarily defined and presented as if this is ‘the national culture’. In order to promote this supposed national culture, the National Education Policy (2009) of Pakistan, like other previous policies emphasize more on uniformity as educational goals rather than appreciating the reality of diversity as the wealth of national culture. Since as a matter of fact there is not a single representative culture to be termed as ‘the Pakistani culture’, so our policy makers and curriculum try to seek refuge in the notions of ideology, which in itself is not clearly defined. The term ‘ideology of Pakistan’ was common in speeches of ceremonies. In order to achieve such national goals of education, school rituals and ceremonies have a vital role.

**Security Sensitization**

One of the key findings that emerged from the data was ‘security sensitization’ through uniformed presence of security officials as special guests in ceremonies and repeated mention of borders, army, national songs with homage to the warriors and martyrs. Remembering the date of ‘Defense Day’; glorification of the services of Pak Army, and the slogan “Long Live Pak-Army” are essential elements in ceremonies of national days. Development of cultural identity (learned set of behaviors, ideals and values) is strengthened along the dimensions which are repeatedly inculcated and persistently valued in the school processes. Although ‘Defense Day’ is no more observed as a national holiday, but it is interesting to note that the day, 6th September, was remembered and mentioned by all participants in interviews and focus group discussions as national day. The Quaid e Azam and Iqbal Days are national holidays but few of the participants mentioned them. As reported by a non-local teacher, this was an unlikely response in schools of other provinces where students and teachers may not remember or observe ‘Defense Day’ like this. In other parts of the country, if it was a holiday then, “it is a holiday, while here the days are departmentally celebrated” [PSB(GSc)].

A senior science teacher shared a story of a singer of national song known as Armeela (in fact ‘Army la’ meaning dedicated to the army). On a national day, this Balti song about Pak Army and Kargil war was welcomed and applauded in such a way that the army brigadier present there, who learned the meaning through a translator, was overwhelmed with sentiments; he stood up, hugged the boy and awarded him rupees ten thousand as prize from his own pocket. The participant teacher further stated:
And then the brigadier wrote a detailed article in a newspaper column about the event. In his column he wrote if you want to know about (the worth, value of) national days, ask the children of Baltistan, listen to them, listen to their poetry. I am stating all this (his sentiments) from the newspaper. He writes further, the love of Pakistan that they have in their minds, if you want to know the real love and meaning of national heroes and days and if you want to feel the sentiments in this respect, listen/feel it from the people and the children (students) of Baltistan [PSB(GSc)].

This kind of adoration to army is mainly created through schooling and the religious clerics (who in return win the support of army). ‘Long Live Pak Army’ is an essential slogan of national days, special supplication to army is an important part of religious ceremonies and sermons here in Baltistan. There could be several possible reasons for the consistent and prominent response of reverence towards Defense Day and national defense songs. Remembrance of the day by all participants could be due to the time contiguity of interviews with the day (month of September, October). The reason of such reverence may be due to the geographical location of the research site situated near the border (with India) and observing frequent movement of army through the city. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan have experienced the Kargil war in which many of their brothers and sons were martyred; hence the memories are still fresh. It may also be due to the overemphasis of schools on defense related ceremonies and events to keep the people of the border area devotedly loyal to the Pak army.

Overemphasis and extra commemoration of Defense Day may also be an outcome of the ‘militarized national curriculum’. The historical and psychological reasons of this prevalent element of military pedagogy is due to the long time ruling of military regimes in the country who enjoyed sufficient time to transform educational policies and curriculum according to their own line of profession and thinking i.e. everything seen in the perspective of security as mentioned by Nayyar and Saleem (2002). If we extend the scope of analysis a bit further, then the region of Gilgit-Baltistan firstly being a border area and secondly being politically disputed and its strategic geographical importance, remains under vigilant surveillance of the army and the intelligence agencies. In order to hold up the order of the state and meticulously silencing any kind of possible voices or cultural uprising in the region, all the state apparatuses are active. The respectable way of sustaining such hegemonic control and hold is the glorification of army, security institutions and their uncontested success stories.
With this important finding of the study, I browsed the local and national dailies on September 6, 2012. In the two leading local dailies of Gilgit-Baltistan, the Daily K2 and the Daily Baadeshimal, there were 11 and 9 advertisement box messages respectively in each paper from the ministers, and advisors of the GB Legislative Assembly on Defense Day in praise for the Pak Army. Contrary to this, none of the national newspapers carried any such message. Few national dailies printed special pages with stories and images of 6th September but had no such messages of advertisement. By printing these messages of allegiance, a rhetoric of particular form of bravery and love of the country is kept alive, while newspapers also have their financial gains.

In all of the four ceremonies/events of national days that I observed, the top civil bureaucracy of the region/district had occupied the seats of Chief Guest and/or the Presiding Chair. Especially the presence of the head of police (the Deputy Inspector General DIG) in full uniform and stick in his hand as the president of the 14th August flag ceremony, and presence of the second in command (Assistant Inspector General Police AIGP) in the Pakistan Day national songs competitions show the regular presence of security (police) officials. However these security officials did not participate practically by making a speech or saying even a few words can be ascribed as the presence of the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSP) as indicated by Althusser (1970).

The presence of power symbols in the ceremonies is not only appreciated by the school management but they feel proud and legitimized by such presence. Interestingly, in both the ceremonies the chair did not address which means that they had no part to play in the co-curricular activities of the schools except being present to show that such events are held under their guardianship or patronage.

**National Songs**

One of the interesting and significant findings about the ceremonies was inclusion of only national songs and religious poetry in the local language Balti. However, such provision was not observed for inclusion of speech/talks on any topic and other kinds of folk songs or Balti *khulu* poetry. Apparently, cultural expression in local language (other than national and religion) is not encouraged or appreciated by the mere act of excluding it from many festivities celebrated inside the school. As national songs are the appreciated outlets of public poetry, the content of the national songs in Balti have rich emotional content and message of nationalism. Following is a sample of a few verses of a national
song that one of the participant students remembered and said that he presented at one of
the school ceremonies.

نا نری ستروقیو وطن نا میولی منتخ سی کھہ سکور
فچوس وطن محمد علی سی سنگ نا مک کن کهراق بیاسے
شاعر مشرق ل. خوابنگ تهونگی منتخ سی کھہ سکور

(Translation: I may sacrifice my soul over the name of the country and homeland;
The land which was built by the enormous efforts of Muhammad Ali (Jinnah) who made
the country mixing the blood of heart and eye;
I may sacrifice over the name dreamed by the Poet of East (Iqbal)

Through the emotional content, rhetorical representations and the message of these
verses, one can guess the intensity of inculcating national identity with intertextual
messages of negation of other identities. ‘I may sacrifice over the name dreamed by Iqbal
(i.e. Pakistan)’, that is the demand and aspiration being created among the people who even
do not have basic citizenship and constitutional rights of the country. This glorified and
romanticized ‘national identity’ is not yet accepted, however they are sacrificing their own
cultural identity for it. Schools may not help to give them the desired or required ‘national
identity’ in its true sense, however it is taking away their own native cultural identities and
overfeeding national and religious identities.

As the national songs have become an appreciated public outlet of poetry, legendary
national songs have been composed in Balti. Permission of national songs in Balti gives
students an opportunity to get prepared and sing it in ceremonies for public praise. The
whole exercise will consequently strengthen the ‘national identity’ at least in the participant
singer(s).

The selection of content (songs/speeches) and presenters for certain events is mainly
the decision of the teachers. Using words of Freire (1994), it can be concluded that the
selectivity and prescription of songs/speech items in ceremonies serve functions of
maintaining domestication rather than allowing emancipation and liberation.

The space given to observe events are in fact allowing students to participate,
practice and develop their identities in line with the themes of the occasions. Promoting the
national and religious identities would be appreciated or may not be an issue in itself if multiple identities including the native local cultural identities are given way of expression and practices. But here the situation is different; the local cultural voices are suppressed through subtle ways. For example, local literary and folksongs are not allowed, local music is looked down upon and speeches in Balti are not present.

**Implications of the Conformity Pedagogy for Shaping Cultural Identity**

Similar to the instructional pattern in schools, ceremonies and religious events are all prescriptive and with almost similar core messages. Some of these messages even counter the existential rights of people. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 3 the basic right of human beings is the right to life; first survival, then anything else. If directly or indirectly pupils are taught, instructed and inculcated through curriculum, and school processes that ‘country and religion’ are more important than their own lives, then this could be considered as an existential threat and a clear violation of the basic right to live first. The importance of defense of the country and sacrifice for religion as noble acts and causes cannot be denied in all societies. However, the gravity of the message given in the curriculum and presented through the school processes in such a way, could be dangerous. Over emphasis of ideologies may restrict the child from being able to shape his/her own cultural identity in a free democratic way.

The suicide bombing phenomena in Pakistan might be an indirect result of such kind of military/sacrifice pedagogies in the religious seminaries where young brains are indoctrinated for the so called jihad by the extremist elements. Such tendencies tend to deform cultural harmony and split people along the lines of faith based schools of thoughts.

Under such circumstances, questions arise if schooling should teach such lessons of sacrifice for ideologies as taken for granted values and the policy for all? Sacrifice of life could be appreciated only to save lives at large, not to save anything else including certain dogmas or geographical territories in the holy names of religion or country where there could be no followers of the faith saved. A place where there is no countrymen/countrywomen to live in, especially from those who gave their lives. The emphasis on warship, glorification of military (and militancy) especially in education can be problematic.

It is a time for critical evaluation of what we intend to achieve through schooling. Are school processes that are confined to the state imposed ideology result in an
indoctrination of students thinking? Are we influencing young minds by confining the unseen and seen curriculum to the glorification of warships and intolerance of other beliefs? Is the curriculum teaching just black and white with no allowances for grey areas making no space for the student to think, discuss or question which can be problematic. Instead should we not be teaching them about their own and others identity, about cultural diversity, acceptance and tolerance and about the value of life and humanity.

The Balti culture so far has been by and large inert towards the sectarian militancy in other parts of the country. Not a single intra incident of such sectarian militancy has occurred yet. Though recently in 2012, the innocent passengers of this region suffered in incidents of sectarian target killings. Even then, Baltistan maintained law and order in the region. As Norberg-Hodge (2009) observed in Ladakh, the cultural reservoir of patience, tolerance and compassion have been helpful to remain under control in such instigative incidents. However, the trend of religiosity and militancy in school processes, erode the centuries’ old peaceful atmosphere and pull this region too into the malice of sectarian militancy. The marginalization of native culture as observed in school processes may become a multiplier to the situation in furthering the trends of religious militancy.

**The Element of Religiosity**

In the observed school ceremonies, the slogan of *salwat* i.e. paying homage and reverence to the Prophet and his family is part of all rituals. In school ceremonies (school-A speech competition, school-B Iqbal anniversary), *salwat* was recited at the start of the ceremony, before and after recitation of verses from the Holy Quran and *naat*. In the Pakistan Day ceremony, when this small ritual is situated in the context, we can see that the physical and ceremonial context is the same. The Pakistan Day and national songs competition were held in the same hall but the social context becomes different that changed the welcome ritual. For other guests, welcome ritual was applause but for the Chief Guest (a religious figure) it was three times *salwat*. The response, energy and narration of the words of the *salwat* in presence of the variety of participants, speaks to the power relation and the way students are educated in subtle ways during these ceremonies.

This piece of data in the context reflects religious respect as well as a certain kind of religious (dominant group) power. The normal secular ritual of clapping goes behind the scene.
Another significant finding here is that in school rituals and ceremonies, the Pakistani nationhood and devotion to the country and army is as sacred as religion. Both ‘national’ and ‘religious’ liturgies go side by side supporting each other as allies, while the ‘cultural’ liturgies or dimensions seem to be set aside, as if it were rival to both. Both suppress cultural manifestations through their respective hegemonic apparatuses and try to use the cultural resources (especially language and poetry) for the services of their own purposes. Balti poetry is appreciated and allowed to be presented only in the form of national songs and religious poetry. Any other kind of poetry or literary expression is not given a chance.

On one hand, the cultural festivities are discouraged with myths (labeling something as a Hindu ritual) while on the other hand religiosity is promoted by similar activity but with different names. For example, Balti cultural festivity *Mephang* is discouraged, but similar event of lighting on the hills with the name of *charaghan* on Eid (happy) days is practiced. Similarly, entertainment and sport activities are marginalized while the military dimension is glorified through all means with out-of-proportion presentation in symbolic forms. ‘A souvenir of holy sword’ as the first prize of the national songs competition is an example of this.

**Gendered Access to Co-curricular Activities**

The school events and activities when seen through the critical lens, the co-curricular activities in the boys’ and girls’ school show clear pattern of gendered access to opportunities for expression and showcase of talent. Following are the co-curricular events, ceremonies and days observed in both schools:
Table 11 Gendered Access to Co-curricular Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys’ school</th>
<th>Girls’ School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Day’ celebrations, participation of teachers and students in the rally and ceremony at the Martyrs Memorial, (out of school)</td>
<td>No opportunity of participation in the ceremony and no participation in the national songs competition; even a separate competition for girls was not organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the interschool national songs competition (out of school)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence Day’ rally, and participation in the flag hoisting ceremony (out school)</td>
<td>No opportunity to participate in either event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the interschool speech competition (out of school)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally and walk to the main bazar on Literacy Day (out of school)</td>
<td>No walk or rally on any occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports week (intra school matches of cricket, hockey, football, volleyball, tug of war etc) (in school)</td>
<td>No sports week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Bazm-e-Adab (in school)</td>
<td>Weekly Bazm-e-Adab but less frequently (in school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Bazm-e-Adab on Iqbal’s death anniversary and prayers day for the martyrs of Siachan</td>
<td>Special Bazm-e-Adab; Urdu English speech competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Result announcement ceremony in which parents, mostly mothers, participated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare the co-curricular activities held in both schools, it is evident that boys have opportunities to participate in out-of-school events and competitions but girls do not. Girls’ mobility and exposure are hence kept limited which may consequently limit development of their talents and confidence. In the case of the boys’ high school, the sports week is an opportunity for entertainment as well as physical education while no such opportunities exist in the girls’ school. Same was the case for interschool speech competition, interschool national songs competition and events on Literacy Day. Girls were
not given the opportunity to participate in any of the district level interschool competitions on national days with boys. This way, girls are denied school based entertainment, cultural, sports and physical fitness activities as well as access to public discourse.

VanDijk (1996, p.85) points out that “One major element in discursive reproduction of power and dominance is the very access to discourse and communicative events”. This kind of denial of access to communicative events consequently results in lesser confidence, limited societal exposure, narrower world view and perspectives. The unfortunate situation is that even this gendered exclusion is also ascribed to ‘religious culture’. Looking at it from an objective perspective, there can be no harm for girl students in participating in speech competitions. If for certain reasons, girls are not allowed to participate in such district level competitions with boys, the education department and girls’ schools should organize their own interschool competitions and co-curricular activities. Only one female teacher said that they were planning for a *meena-bazar*\(^{31}\), entertainment and female shopping activity in school.

Outdoor games with physical body movement are not allowed for the girls. Girls are completely excluded from out of school sport activities, rallies and other opportunities of external exposure. Except national songs, all other kinds of ‘songs’ in any language are not permitted (almost forbidden) for girls even as an in-school activity. Apart from the limited opportunities of communicative expression and talent show, the creativity of girl students seems far better. Their language skills are more refined as compared to the boys of same grade level. One of the simple evidence of this finding is the classrooms environment.

The walls of classrooms of girls school were full of displays, paintings, calligraphic text and colorful representation in such a way that there was no space left, while in the classrooms of the boys school, there was not a single display except time tables on the walls. This shows the superior expressive abilities of girl students (in observed schools). Such decorated classrooms have become the only space for expression of talents and co-curricular potentials for these girl students.

\(^{31}\) A female only marketing activity where they have stalls of food, dresses, jewelry and cosmetics and other sale points
In conclusion the comments of Jalibi (2005, p.3-4) can be presented who sketches the real picture of culture in the country.

The system, of ideas and beliefs by which we lived for centuries is now appearing meaningless and futile to us...In the whole of our society, there is not a single thing that exist in its original shape. What is visible is not original, and what was original is not visible any more.

In the Islamic context, emphasis is placed on acquiring knowledge irrespective of gender. The famous saying of the Holy Prophet mentions “seeking education is a religious obligation upon all Muslims, man and woman”. In another saying the Prophet asks to seek knowledge even if it is found in China. There is no restriction on male or female, both can go abroad for education. From this Hadith (saying of the Holy Prophet) the permission of mobility of females for education can be inferred. However, the mobility of girls is restricted in the name of religion. Limiting and restricting opportunities for the expression of talent consequently results in underdevelopment of personality dimensions.

The cultural aspects specifically Balti songs, music, poetry and other cultural expressions are discouraged for females which may lead to fragile and unbalanced cultural identities. The unfortunate part of the story is that all these restrictions and underrepresentation are exercised in the name of religion. There could be interschool competitions among girls’ schools, sports weeks within schools and many more varieties of co-curricular opportunities but it is not the case. Reasons may be lack of interest, possible apprehensions about reaction of religious clergies or as a matter of deliberate policies of the education department.

Religion and Other Cultural Themes

Among other major cultural themes that emerged from the data, ‘religion’ is one. Religion being associated with spirituality, values, and morality is one of the major determiners of culture next to language. In various secular, liberal and conservative societies, religion has varying degrees of influence upon culture. In the participant schools, religion and religious culture is very prominent.

As observed in the participant schools, all the school functions including the special days and the weekly *bazm-e-adab* have maximum items of religious nature. At a typical school ceremony of the weekly *bazm-e-adab* the sequence of items was as follows: *Tilawat,*
hamd, naat, manqabat and qaseeda. The speeches were also on religious themes. In the girls’ school, the special form of hijab known as abaya, maqna\textsuperscript{32} or veil is common. Almost all girls wear this covering veil while coming to and from the school. Within the school, these were taken off and hanged off the back of their chairs. This black veil is separate from the normal uniform of shalwar, kamees (full sleeves) and chadar (head cover) which is the national dress of Pakistan for women. The color of the veil also has religious connotation. Out of the religious ceremonies, Eids (happy days, mostly birthdays of Imams) are frequently celebrated while majalis (mourning) are observed at religious sites and the student are facilitated to attend these rituals by allowing half days or holiday. This way almost all co-curricular activities have a dominant religious dimension aiming to nurture and promote religious identity. Major religious events/occasions are officially facilitated either by observing it within school or allowing participating off school.

School Wall Chalking and Displays

The school’s visual environment has a constant and continued effect upon the students. The bold official chalking and displays along the internal side of the boundary walls and the walls of corridors of the schools present a learning environment and space with messages that the schools want to instill among students without explicit teaching. These displays normally consist of quotations, key information statements and verses of poetry. The wall displays of the participant schools consisted of about 75% religious text. Below is a summary of the official wall chalking (directed by school management) by a professional painter in beautiful calligraphy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Display type-&gt; School</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Literary</th>
<th>Key information</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys’ School</td>
<td>Arabic text and translation=8 Urdu=2; total =10 making about 76%</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ School</td>
<td>Arabic text + translation=3 Urdu text = 6 (mostly moral cum religious); total= 9 making about 65%</td>
<td>05 (35%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{32} Dress covering whole body except face and hands normally a black chader
The religious texts especially the one with Arabic text are normally quotations from Hadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet) or qol-e-aima (sayings of an Imam, the holy persons next to the prophet according to the Shii interpretation of Islam). These messages are mostly moral and prescriptive in nature. The literary quotes are normally sayings of any intellectual or poet, which are normally normative in nature. The religious texts are mostly taken for granted and are prescriptive in nature. There are explicitly stated quotes for obedience and submission intended to lead students towards uncritical obedience and following what is prescribed (dictated). The ultimate outcomes of such prescriptive quotations would be deprivation of critical thinking and one’s own voice. The core theme and essence of many of the quotes are taken as authentic, especially when the school, classroom and the social context also support such themes. The text, the presentation and the relevance all collectively make up the meaning of the display.

**Religious Identity**

The self-identification profile of students shows that the first and second identification are Pakistani and Muslim respectively. When asked ‘state who you are in three sentences (such as I am…’) during FGD girls group, out of 7 respondents, 5 said they are Muslims first, other two placed religious identification on 2nd and 3rd. Similarly, when teachers were asked ‘how will the students introduce themselves’, they replied that the students will first say their names, then the name of their father name and then state their national and religious identity of being a Pakistani and a Muslim.

During the FGD with the boys group, when students were asked to name any local eminent person or hero, instead of naming great names of literature (poets, writers etc.), politics, or other fields, a boy named a religious clergyman whose name was not known by anyone else in the group including myself (the researcher). When asked about the services of the person it was found that the molvi was a religious scholar who organized the faith community and first established an organization of his own school of thought which later built mosques and religious schools.

Similarly, having salwat as the ceremonial rite instead of applause for all welcoming, silencing and appreciating responses and actions on the results announcement day (December 15, 2011) and on the ceremony of Urdu speech competition (May 25, 2012) show the dominant religious culture in school processes and practices. Avoiding clapping
is a general practice during Muharram or sacred days. However, in the above stated ceremonies, the day or month were not of any such special relevance. This means that the ritual is becoming a normal ceremonial rite instead of applause especially in the girls’ school particularly in respect of religious clergy or scholars.

**The Religious Culture and Social Environment**

In the *bait-bazi* class event on May 21, 2012 with the boys FGD group, students narrated few verses and stanzas of religious poetry *qaseeda* in Balti but not a single verse of Balti Ghazal or *Khulu*. The same day (May 21) when the students were asked to say something about Ali Sher Khan Anchan or Kharpocho, they could say no more than five sentences which show their lack of knowledge of local history, culture and artifacts. The series of *Azan* on loudspeakers by different schools of thoughts are daily routines that can potentially distract class teaching for several minutes. I myself experienced this while conducting interviews in the afternoon between 12:15 to 1:30 pm. Generally, it is expected that the *Azan* is silently listened to and all types of activity is suspended till the completion of the *Azan*.

A senior male teacher, during an informal discussion, (personal communication Nov 22, 2011) proudly shared that “the first complete sentence spoken by my son was ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ and the second was ‘Ya Ali Madad’”. This seemed to be the typical grooming pattern of children of this teacher as observed in the interview discussion. First the national identity followed by the religious identity of a specific faith was reinforced.

Some of the responses of the research participants reveal that by ‘culture’ they mean ‘religious culture’. The below interview responses present the perceived nature of ‘religious culture’ in Baltistan particularly in the town area:

“I feel that our culture is more Islamic” [PSA(Math)-b].

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33 Poetry competition, normally memorized verses and stanzas

34 A famous Balti ruler who made a history

35 A famous fort of Baltistan

36 The Islamic call for prayer, five times a day

37 Help me Oh Ali! A religious slogan seeking for help
Consciously or unconsciously, somewhere our culture is deeply associated with religion…while teaching Isalmiat, I keep the life of our holy Prophet at the forefront…we can see a reflection of the life of our Holy Prophet in our ulema (religious scholars). All the sects here in our area have similar approach; they do not try to impose their own doctrine upon others…Today our Islam in Baltistan is quite clean… From all the minarets of mosques the voices of prayers for the safety and security of Baltistan, Pakistan and Islam are raised… all our rituals, actions and celebrations are started with Bismillah\(^{38}\) and are ended with Alhamdulillah\(^{39}\) followed by Durood-e-sharif” [PSB(Is1)].

The male Islamiat teacher noted, “See! This time Baltistan is with the Islamic values and we have all majalis” [PSB(Is1)]. One of the head teachers also had similar views, who mentioned, “We have maintained observing majalis and thank God it is with the same prestige/sanctity” [PSA(HM)].

“The culture of Skardu is totally different from the rest, and I think it is like Irani culture” [PSA(SSI)].

The above excerpts show that the first and foremost identity promoted, aspired to and enculturated is the religious identity both in school and in society. The social etiquettes of greetings, eating, starting and finishing any job are all Islamic prayers in Arabic. The prominence of certain Islamic schools of thoughts is also visible. Many of the religious rituals and ceremonies specific to the Shia/Imamya schools of thoughts were also mentioned as routine rituals in the schools.

Regarding the religiosity of the students, the Islamiat teacher said, “Yes they (students) are very religious too. If we come with prepared good (religious) lectures and take names of the Holy aima, students recited salwat, when we pray, nobody makes noise and remains with due respects. In other activities they take lesser interest” [(PSA(Is1)].

“We have different Eids such as Eid-e-Ghadeer which other people do not celebrate. Similarly we have Eids and matam/majalis” [PSA(FGD)].

\(^{38}\) Beginning with the name of Allah

\(^{39}\) Thanking Allah after completion of any task
“Every Thursday and Friday morning I recite the Dua-e-Imam Zamana with children and prayers too” [PSA(Isl)]. Eid-e-Ghadeer and Norooz are considered to be local celebrations.

It seems that the top priority is given to religion and religious identity of being Muslims followed by the national identity of being Pakistani. As the people of Gilgit-Baltistan do not have constitutional rights of Pakistani citizenship so in this case, the local identity is not a necessary part of the national identity. In case of GB the local identities are not reflected as constituent part of national identity either in the curriculum or the school processes. Though the expression of sectarian affiliation is not overt, it is clear in all discourses.

There are several analytical possibilities such as the certain level of religious devotion might have given rise to a strong national identity or vice versa. Both religious and national forces jointly and collaboratively work together to diffuse strong cultural identities. The cultural forces have become weaker in the scenario of the global economy and media as compared to other forces which have financial resources.

On a question asking for top preference out of five items for presentation in any school ceremony, the top choices were religious in nature. The suggested items were: Baher taveel (Balti cultural and religious), manqabat (religious), ghazal (aesthetic/romantic poetry), national song (national), and speech (academic skill). Three respondents showed their willingness to present manqbat and naat, two speeches, while none of the participants were ready to present a ghazal; when asked if someone was ready to sing a ghazal, no one responded. Others did not show any preference implying that what is given and asked to be presented, can be presented by them[PSB(FGD)]. These responses show that students are taught in such a way that they consider ghazal aesthetic /romantic poetry and songs to be non-religious and hence not appreciable for presentation in schools.

In some of the traditional villages of rural areas, seasonal celebrations and festivities of New Year which are purely local traditions inherited from the era of Bhuddism are still celebrated. However, these festivities have also been Islamized. The same is the case for marriage ceremonies. “In marriage ceremonies, qawali and naat are played the whole day on loud speakers” [PSA(HM)]. Regarding celebration of these festivities, the head teacher said:
With recitation we start new year. By the grace of Allah we are the most fortunate people of the world (being that religious), there is no singing songs, playing music or dance etc (on such occasions). There is prayer, adoration and satisfaction, for the same reason (of not having irreligious things) thanks God [PSA(HM)].

The expression clearly indicates a dislike for cultural activities of singing, music and dance. The respondent seemed very pleased that these cultural expressions have been replaced by the religious items.

A positive aspect of strong religious culture is that the literary worth of Balti language is somehow preserved in religious poetry.

“Perhaps our poets are doing somehow a good job in this regard. But the most important thing in this respect in our Balti culture, are the majalis, qasida, noha, marsia etc. (mostly in Balti) and because of these (poetic forms in Balti) to some extent it is (alive)…” [PSA(HM)].

It is evident that regarding the preservation of Balti poetry, the religious factor has been a catalyst. In the form of different kinds of religious poetry, the endangered language has acquired a way of preservation and permeation. This is a very encouraging aspect of religious identity which enables people to feel deeper spiritual sentiments in Balti poetry. Hence, they are associated with and appreciative of the language and its literary potentials in this sense.

In response to a question about identifier of culture other than language and dress one of the teachers said, “Other than these…there are many things. Every culture has its own...(identifiers) as we have our majalis here, Eidgahs40, prayers, we give importance to Juma prayers, these are also among the great elements of our culture. Similarly our dress, we have a hijab system, in Baltistan we say aadab-e-Balistan, this is very important…” [PSA(HM)].

Talking about the salient features of present culture in Baltistan, a senior female teacher said that in cultural terms we are very distinct from others:

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40 Religious site where specifically constructed for religious rituals of Eid and matam
Yes very much… (in) *sharafat* (nobility), religious affinity, to be nearer to religion, in our area people offer prayers as a must, while in other parts of country, as my daughter shares among two hundred girls [in her hostel] very few offer prayers regularly. Only a few offer prayers on Fridays and on occasions when there is any calamity or tragic event. In this respect, in our culture, we thank Allah a lot that we are religious, not me alone, whoever is with us they used to say that at least we know what is pure/clean and what is impure/unclean (*chharu, hlzhakhma* i.e. *pak, napak*) [code switched in Balti]. This is a very distinct feature of our culture, isn’t it? And those who are *namazi* (regular performers of prayers) and those who observe fasting. You know if someone is not a *namazi*, how we look down upon them in our society. While in Pakistan at times the *namazis* are seen in some other sense. This is our distinct feature. Isn’t it?

And I think if anybody doesn’t offer prayers, s/he is not in any sect of Islam (cannot be recognized as Muslim, acclaimed to be Muslim) what else can be the sign. No matter to what level we are modernized, the *hijab* system is here everywhere, covering face is not required but decent dress of *hijab* prevails here, either in fear of God or of people and society. But this is a big mark of identity [PSA(HM)].

This interview excerpt describes the picture of religious culture and the religious identity of the respondent who then as a teacher teaches and trains students accordingly, to shape a strong religious identity. Though the religious identity is a part of cultural identity but it is evident that this identity is formed after pruning all non-religious cultural aspects. Hence it can potentially shape an extremist religious identity.

Discussing the depth of the internalization of the religious identity, the math teacher shared a joke about the sense of sanctity of Arabic language when illiterate people use the religious text in Arabic. He shared that a woman who had memorized the religious texts/verses recited them in the five times prayers. Once she told a colleague of hers, “we should be thankful that the content of our prayers is in Balti, if it was in any other language, we would be in trouble”, It is in fact in Arabic but due to frequent use and memorization in early ages, it has become so acquainted and internalized that it seems part of the mother tongue [PSB(Math)]. The story reflects on a deep rooted ‘religious culture’ that has almost replaced the traditional Balti culture which is secular in nature respecting all faiths with pluralistic neutrality.

41 Pure and impure
On a question regarding suggestions for textbook reforms to the FGD participants, they suggested changes/additions in Islamiat, Urdu and Social Studies subjects. When probed, “What in Islamiat”, they responded with, “Islam”. On further probing about whether the current material about Islam is insufficient, there were a few whispers but no clear response, with participants preferring to remain silent [PSA(FGD)-1]. A reason for this could be that they wanted to add topics of their own faith/sect but saying it openly was not felt appropriate, so they chose to not respond at all. This can be taken as an example of showing respect towards other sects.

The male Islamia teacher tried to paint the picture of power play of religious forces in Baltistan in a subtle way, referencing a few historical references:

But here in Baltistan we have started using Islamic values more as we are being influenced by the Islamic countries Iran or Saudi Arab or any other country. Though Islam is of the fourteen hundred years earlier Islam, it is not the Islam of 1978 or 1985. … The ground realities of Iran are different from the ground realities of Baltistan. We have to live our life in view of these facts. The invasion of western culture is due to the response of our Ulema. Our youngsters are facing difficulties (of identity crisis) and the reason is that we have forgotten our words (language), our music, our culture. We do not practice them, rather we copy others and our Ulema too (copy others). When someone is copying someone else, no third person can copy the second one (it would be copy of the first). We (can avoid the situation) through one way that we give them (children/young generation) the original things [PSB(Isl)-2].

In this response, the teacher indicated the causes of eroding Balti culture and its originality. The influences of the clergies graduated from Saudi Arabia and Iran with respective contextual interpretations of those countries being applied to a very different context of Baltistan is causing the cultural erosion. Persianization and Arabicizing of Balti language with a negative perception about its origin, calling it Buddhist heritage, the cultural identity is being fragmented in the name of religion. Not all but few of the extremist brands who copy others are responsible for threatening the local culture. An interesting analytical point shared by the teacher is that “The invasion of western culture is due to the response of our Ulema. Our youngsters are facing difficulties (of identity crisis) and the reason is that we have forgotten our words (language), our music, our culture” (ibid). In order to counter and neutralize the extremist tendencies, the western forces are also playing
a role. As a result, indigenous cultures are eroding. Hence, in words of this teacher, ‘we have forgotten our words, our music and our culture’ in the tug-of-war of these forces.

**Local Holidays:**

In Baltistan, particularly in the Skardu district, apart from the nationally observed religious holidays of three Eids (*Eidul-Azha*, *Eidul-Fitr*, *Eid-Milad*) and *Ashura in Moharram*, schools observe many local half-days and off days on occasions of religious days. According to the sources of the office of District Directorate of Education, 10 to 12 local holidays are observed in the district on religious days/occasions. The first eight days of Muharram, few days of *Assad Ashura* and during the month of Ramadan (month of fasting) the school days are shortened by 1 to 2 hours.

The practices of local holidays and half days in government schools have developed religious orientation much more than schools in the rest of the country or the region. Schools here seem to have developed deeply rooted religious orientation somewhat similar to religious schools. This practice of local holidays is directly reducing teaching-learning time in schools that will consequently have implications on performance and quality of learning on one hand and over-promoting religious identity on the other. As a result of this trend and permission to allow the same from the government, various religious ideologies are striving for their survival and dominance in the region.

**Other Cultural Themes**

In addition to the envisaged four major themes (language, music, ceremonies and religion), few other cultural themes emerged from the data such as: dress, food, games, jewelry, crockery, historical places and ecological sites of significance. These themes are also makers and markers of cultural identity. They are the ‘visible to outsiders’ identity makers and hence are significant. However their relevance to school is not much.

**Dress**

Both the schools have defined uniforms for students; pant shirt and tie for boys, pant shirt or *gameez shalwar* for male staff, *Qameez, shalwar* and *chadar* for women as well as for the girl students. *Hijab or parda* (covering the whole body except face and hands, especially for females) is reported as one of the significant cultural indicators of Baltistan. *Parda* is observed in schools. I observed that all the female teachers and students
wear chadar and/or abaya (overcoat kind of dress covering the whole body) mostly black in color when they are out of the school boundary. Within the school, the abaya is kept in classroom or staff room. For boys, both pant-shirt and qamees shalwar are acceptable uniforms. Half sleeves and skirts are not appreciated for female staff. Though it is acceptable, it is not appreciated for men to wear pant shirt to the girls’ school. Dress code is hence an essential part of culture and the school endorses and observes the standard Islamic Hijab. Variations of additional dress, color and kind are optional as per climatic conditions and occasion. The traditional Balti dress was mainly made up of pure wool, but is scant now. All market prevalent fashions of dresses that meet the basic Hijab condition are used.

Dress is one of the basic overt indicators of a culture. Dress on the one hand helps protecting the body from climatic conditions while on the other hand dress styles show the aesthetic taste and cultural orientation of people. Dresses are also occasion specific according to the traditions and customs of social rites. For example, dress for a happy occasion is different and almost opposite in color to that of a dress supposed to be put on a sad occasion.

Food

Several respondents and students mentioned the local food as an aspect of culture. According to respondents, prapu, mar-zan, tos-khur, varieties of balay, hrsab-khur\textsuperscript{42} salt-green tea with milk and local butter (a rosy color hot drink), and several varieties of bread are considered to be exclusively local dishes and foods, these are nutritious and made with Balti ghee (apricot oil) [PSA(FGD); PSA(SSI)]. The female Social Studies teacher and male Math teacher shared that some of the local foods are occasion specific. The type of food is associated with various events and different social rites such as birth, marriage, death or religious ceremony of Eid and Matam. The elders try to observe this relevance and specificity strictly. In the girls’ school, a few of the local dishes and cuisines are made as

\footnotesize{Local dishes mostly organic foods}
part of the Home Economics practical. This is the only presence of food items as cultural dishes in school.

Games

Few of the local games that were mentioned as essential parts of (Balti) culture are also played in the schools. Some of these are, *chholo* (a girls’ game played with pebbles still very popular in villages, is played during break time by girls. This means that there is no restriction by the school on girls playing their cultural games inside the school during the break time. This game was seen being played by the students of middle grades (Grade-V to VIII).

The teachers also shared names and the key rules of few other games such as, *Bishmalo* (treasure hunt), *Cha-sna* and *theu* (memory alertness and language games), *chup-bup* (a discipline game to keep children silent by elders, an effective tool in classroom management as well), *aapush* (an outdoor boys’ game similar to cricket but without the ball and with a big and a short piece of stick), *tiyapu* (outdoor girls game, played through single leg jumping), *shtayu* (hitting balls made out of socks), *puntha* (indoor mathematical game played with pebbles, nuts or like objects), *zburzbur* (fan making and running) [PSA(SS)]. These local games were neither reported being played in school nor were observed in either school.

Jewelry and crockery

Jewelry and crockery were also mentioned as cultural items. The Social Studies teachers mentioned a cultural event held in another school where crockery, jewelry, and tools were displayed as cultural items. The tools consist of indigenous farming and grain grinding tools. The teacher was appreciative of these events and she uses example tools in her lessons.

Ecological and Historical Sites

Ecological and historical sites were also considered as significant dimensions of ‘culture’. It could be debatable whether ecological sites can also be termed as ‘cultural’, however cultural stories are associated with these sites. In classes, teachers mention these
ecological sites as examples such as the Deosai National Park, K-2, Shangri-La. Hence, students also name historical and ecological sites as ‘cultural heritage’ of Baltistan.

Research participants seem more proud of their geography and ecology than their intangible culture. This could be because the ecological geography is visible surrounding them and many tourists also come to visit these sites. But cultural dimensions are relatively more abstract and intangible in nature so have lesser realization. The other interpretation of this situation is that the schools do not educate children about the intangible culture. Another perspective could be that the participants who are in the age-group are adolescents in the Piagetian formal stage of cognitive development and may not have clear understanding of abstract and intangible cultural notions. However, the teachers also mention material and tangible culture more than the intangible.

Other interview respondents and the students of FGD also mentioned the geographical sites of lakes (Sadpara, Kachura), mountains (K2, Mashabrum), resort (Shagri-La), plateau (Deosai) and historical sites including forts, palaces and mosques (such as Amborik and Chaqchan mosques, Shigar fort, Khaplu palace and Kharpocho) as cultural heritage. Although in textbooks, there are very few occasions when these sites are mentioned, students have knowledge of these sites. It was also observed that they do not have detailed information about the sites which means that they were not taught properly about them. For instance, students did not know where Mashabrum Peak is exactly located, or who built Kharpocho Fort.

**Relevance of Curriculum Content**

Analysis of responses on a question about relevance of the content of school curriculum as presented in the textbooks show that the textbooks have no content on the local context and culture. Teachers were of the view that since they have to cover the syllabus on time, they cannot provide additional material about the local context and culture. They can put their official efforts only if a minimum required material is included in the syllabus. Otherwise they are supposed to teach what is prescribed. There is no detailed material except limited content on geographical and tourist sites. There is nothing of (local) cultural significance in the textbooks.

When explored about the kind of material the teachers wished to include, their suggested content was on the topics of historical and tourist sites as well as dress, food and
Islam. Material on Islam was considered insufficient by the teachers, particularly in Social Studies.

In the FGD group of girls, while sharing what should be in the curriculum of social studies, other than the topics about geographical and historical sites and natural resources, one girl added a new dimension regarding history. In the books of social studies, there are chapters about the army, the soldiers and the martyrs. However, these do not include local personalities from Gilgit-Baltistan. She said, "یہاں کے فوجی بھی تو شہید بوتے بیین سر" meaning “soldiers from here too have given their lives sir!” However, these have not been mentioned or recognized in the textbooks. This simple and spontaneous response shows the absence of acknowledgement of local narratives in the textbooks.

**Discussion and Analysis**

From the analysis of school ceremonies and co-curricular activities, it is evident that the religious aspect of cultural identity is not only maintained and preserved but also nurtured and promoted in schools along the lines of the dominant faith. The increasing influence of ritualistic religiosity seems counteracting and suppressing other dimensions of local culture such as music and songs and varieties of romantic and folk poetry in schools.

Being open to the outside world, media has also contributed in introducing different cultures of the world to the remotest areas. Some of the religiously incompatible rites or customs propagated through electronic media are being used to acquire power and public attention by the religious clerics by saying that they are struggling against an un-Islamic cultural invasion. In this way, under the umbrella of ‘defense from western culture’, they try to silence all other forms of cultural expressions which may not go in their favor. As a result, the youngsters are facing a cultural identity crisis. Instead of practicing the religion, people copy clerics (Ulema) who themselves copy someone else abroad where the ground realities and context are quite different. One of the teachers also pointed out the solution by saying, “We (can avoid the situation of identity crisis) through one way that we give them (children/young generation) the original things” [PSB(Isl)-2]. Giving the children original things would be the solution. Here original means natural and then locally produced/made things.

When the responses and discourses are seen in the immediate school context and the broader social context, the schools contribute effectively to nurture a religious culture.
This is along the lines of the dominant faith group with specific ceremonies and rituals not common among other sects. These key words of religious ceremonies, rituals and rites are very common and schools facilitate them either by observing the specific days and events in school or class or by allowing students to take time off to half days for local holidays.

The encouraging aspect of religiosity is that the Balti language in the form of religious poetry has conserved some of its literary wealth and now has become the only source of literary expression in the public sphere while other forms of poetry are disappearing from the cultural scene. Types and varieties of *khulu* are not appreciated publicly especially for mixed gender audiences, while religious poetry is for all. However, this trend has not only limited the growth of literary evolution in other cultural dimensions but has also side-lined other forms of precious poetic literary expressions. Hence, it has attenuated the romantic, aesthetic and pure literary aspects of Balti language. The trend of taking things for granted and as ‘the correct way’ if it is said by the religious clergy, leads to enforcing monoculture; one sidedness and potentially fanaticism. Such a trend may discourage critical thinking and diversity. Instead of appreciating or celebrating diversity, uniformity is emphasized that may result in social intolerance and extremism.

Though yet very peacefully coexisting society (perhaps for being Balti) as compared to other parts of the country, the recent trends of power struggle within and between sects, seems leading to yet more competitive and possibly more strained and conflict ridden struggles of existence and dominance. When power and wealth become the prime objectives of social groups then the spirituality and the ideal religious teachings and practices of love, compassion, tolerance and service of humanity are all evaporated as non-realistic ideals. Ritualism becomes more important than spiritualism. In fact power politics is being played in the name of religion (mainly manifested in ritualism) because the religious umbrella has multiple hegemonic tools and tactics as compared to simple political ideologies.

The process of discourse production and access in schools reflect that religious discourses are institutionally permitted, encouraged and facilitated allowing the power permeation of religious culture in the society. Other cultural aspects have no opportunities of expression in schools and are gradually fading away by being underrepresented and marginalized. The access to faith based discourses is normally limited to one particular faith group alone which is about 70% of the population of the town which is proportionally
the same in schools. In other words, such eventual results mean limiting access to co-curricular and cultural activities that are supposed to nurture talents of ‘all students’. Lesser the opportunities of participation, lesser would be chances of having equal voices and opportunities of development of capabilities and talents.

Within religious culture, the trends of uniformity seems to underplay accepting diversity, which may lead to discouraging diversity as ‘differences’ and promote a monoculture. The ‘march of mono-culture’ in any way underestimates the potentials and beauties of diversity.

Irrespective of any faith group, the overall emphasis on Arabic language, Quranic teachings, the reverence to the holy personalities particularly the aima and ulema, the eids, majalis, Hijab etc are the salient features of today’s culture in Baltistan. Uncritically accepting and endorsing (if not teaching and indoctrinating) the authority of ulema leads to a non-critical pedagogy. Teaching compliance and obedience are the major features of such non-critical pedagogy which is the key factor in nurturing a ‘religious cultural identity’ in schools.

Regarding the other cultural themes that emerged from the data, the Hijab dress code, and indoor games have more relevance in school. The dress code as mentioned earlier, represents the cultural and religious orientation as well as the climatic needs. As shared by some of the respondents, the Hijab dress code is considered as one of the core cultural identifiers and people are very careful and sensitive towards the observance of Hijab for all especially for women. Tight and short dresses are not appreciated even at home. People dressed in proper Hijab are considered as dignified while someone in a short or tight dress is looked down upon.

Very few of the local games are occasionally played in schools such as chholo and tiyapu by girls, or apush and dong by boys. As these are indoor, small group, minor games, they are not taken care of either judging on religious grounds or promoting as cultural practices. Food, jewelry and crockery are some of the other significant cultural identifiers but are not much relevant in school processes.

The conclusion drawn from the observation of school rituals and ceremonies indicated that both nationhood and religiosity are supporting each other and it seems that the local culture is considered as rival of both. Local cultural identity is ignored, neglected
and marginalized. It seems that the promotion of local culture potentially poses threats to the two ideologies. From this study it can be concluded that present day public schooling serves shaping the religious and national identities better. The present schooling system lacks in creating high aspiration of moral and aesthetic values and vision for future development of a pluralist society.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“It would be a contradiction in terms if the oppressors not only defended but actually implemented a liberating education” (Friere, 1972).

This chapter consolidates the findings especially the discussion and analysis parts of the focus cultural themes which are in fact the makers and identifiers of cultural identity. The effects, trends and the intensity of the acculturation/enculturation processes through schooling are then elaborated briefly followed by the recommendations for policy guidance and further research.

Formation of Cultural Identity

Formation of cultural identity is a socialization process, guided, driven and affected by the social institutions such as family, school and society etc. The role of schooling in shaping students’ (native) cultural identity in the context of Baltistan has been explored in this study. By approach, this study is a ‘critical ethnographic qualitative inquiry’. It is ‘ethnographic’ due to its focus on ‘culture’ and ‘critical’ due to its approach to discover and explore the power relation in the development of cultural identity. This approach was the most appropriate one for the planned research question due to its focus on culture, education, and the power struggle over ‘identity development’ because “an ethnographic perspective provides a conceptual approach for analyzing discourse data (oral or written) from anemic (insider’s) perspective and for examining how discourse shapes both what is available to be learned and what is, in fact, learned”(Gee and Green (1998, p.126). Approach of Critical Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model of Fairclough (2009) has been used for data analysis. The CDA model suits to explore the forces and factors involved in the formation and development of ‘cultural identity’.

A careful analysis of discourses and discursive formations (Foucault, 1969) and intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992) of the original native discourses (not necessarily in native language only) can help unveiling the meaning that the research participants actually
intended. When the discourses are situated in the immediate and broader social contexts, the real meaning of discourses are revealed.

Using the critical lens, this study explored whether and how the indigenous and local culture of Baltistan is being preserved, promoted, given space and/or blocked, silenced, and deformed in the practices and processes of modern schooling especially in government schools that consequently affects formation of the cultural identities of students. Four major identifiers and makers of culture namely: language, music, rituals/ceremonies and religion have been focused on in this study. However, it is not limited to these four only. To see the modes of socialization (enculturation) and/or acculturation (assimilation) of children, the school processes were observed and the perception of teachers and students were obtained. The ‘aspired’ and ‘acquired’ or the ‘asserted’ and ‘assigned’ cultural identities of students are formed though the discourses they learn and participate in at school. Through CDA, the process of the use of power, its reproduction and legitimization by the text and talk of groups is analysed (van Djik, 1996).

The Cultural Identifiers

The cultural identifiers that were anticipated as the major makers of a culture, were found as the basic elements of cultural identity. According to analysis of the data, language, religion, ceremonies and music are identifiers of cultural identity in order of priority and importance. Some more themes such as food, dress code, architecture, jewelry and games were also found as makers and markers of cultural identity or cultural resources that contribute to determining one’s cultural identity.

The first element is ‘language’, in which we learn and live our knowledge. In language we conserve the major portion of our intangible culture. If we see the identity of most of the world’s nations, culture and ethnicities, their identity is in fact the linguistic identity that makes them a nation, a culture or an ethnic group. The population of this study is Balti students. The word ‘Balti’ refers to both the language and the people (cultural group) of Baltistan similar to that of Chinese, Japanese and Arabs. In other words, culturally speaking, the people of Baltistan will remain Baltis as long as they are associated with the Balti language as their first language (L1) or mother tongue.

According to the interview findings, teachers feel that language is the major component or maker of a culture. In quantitative terms, language would be 50% to 99% of
a culture depending on localized perceptions and definitions of culture. In fact the relative importance given to either element shows its part and place in culture.

If language does make up more than 50% of culture, then the protection, practice and promotion of language is in fact protection, practice and promotion of that culture. Language, especially in cases of mother tongue based ethnic/cultural identities; particular identities are produced and reproduced through the use of that language (Bucholtz and Hall, 2003).

Analysis of data shows that the first language or mother tongue of the students is not given importance and its due place in schooling. At times, the use of L1 is even banned and prohibited in school. High officials of the Education Department have verbally but strongly ‘ordered’ not to use local language (L1) and have even fined non-complying teachers and students at instances.

Speech items on any topic in the local language Balti is absent. Similarly, all kinds of other songs and a huge variety of Balti poetry khulu and folk songs are not present in any of the school ceremonies. In the school ceremonies, the L1 has and can have its presence only as ‘national songs or religious poetry’. It is not the case that any item in local language other than national songs and religious poetry is not allowed, not convenient or not appreciated by the audience. Neither are there any presentation issues. The only reason of disallowing speech and song items in Balti seems to be a subtle but deliberate effort at silencing the local language. Whatever the cause be, the result is that the students are practically silenced for expressions in their mother tongue. Hence, if we agree with the responses of the participants, then it can be interpreted that more than 50% development of the ‘cultural identity’ is somehow blocked through attenuation of voices and cultural expressions in L1.

The consequences of not allowing the use of L1 in class and in school are apparent in the form of hampering freedom of expression and confidence in communication. The native language is perceived and presented as a burden or a liability instead of a ‘cultural resource’ and a medium of learning. The example of boys FGD group is evident of the huge difficulty faced by students in expression and communication because L1 is discouraged and they are not efficient in the national language, Urdu.
Many of the teachers described the importance of language and even suggested special subject in the curriculum but practically they themselves do not allow the use of L1 in class and school. This contradiction and gap in perceptions, practices and preferences, reveals the real situation. In these discourses, we find the elements of Althusar’s Ideological State Apparatus (ASA) and Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). The respondents are of the view that Balti language is one of the endangered languages and it is becoming a dialect (يدل) from a language (as mentioned by a teacher), but no measure is taken by schools in this regard rather the language is disallowed and silenced in many ways. The teachers do not seem to be aware about and sensitive to the gravity of the issue of limiting expression opportunities in the mother tongue of children. The teachers are waiting for Balti language to be made part of their school curriculum. When it becomes official knowledge and hence part of their duty, only then they can pay ‘official attention’ to promote Balti language. Otherwise, such efforts will be ‘out of course’ activity.

If we look at music, another important marker and maker of culture, the situation is even more disappointing. Playing music either by students or by teachers is not allowed in school except on occasions of national ceremonies ‘with national songs only’ and on sports events. The thoughts of traditional orthodoxy considering ‘music’ to be irreligious and un-Islamic seems spreading in schools either due to the dominance of religious clergy in the society or due to the teachers’ approach. The absentia of music in school curriculum is another major reason. The responses vary in this regard from mild disliking to considering it ‘haram’ or sinful and hence liable of religious chastisement (to both listeners and players). In some cases the situation goes to the extent that the very word ‘mosiqi’ (music) itself becomes a notion of religious taboo.

There is no room for music in Pakistani national curriculum and textbooks at any grade level. However, no other active role of state or education department is visible in discouraging music in schools. Content of or verbal discouragement from school could be present, but no such evidence was obtained from the data. It seems that teachers and head teachers themselves do not appreciate any kind of music in school. But the interesting thing to note is that in the view of most of the respondents, music was ‘permissible with national songs only’. Even few of those who were of the view that music is sinful ‘haram?’ see no harm in music if it is coupled with national songs (milli naghme). In other words, according to their perception and view, though religion does not allow music but national (state) ideology can make music permissible or ‘halal’. This is the contradiction and in-built
ingredient of Ideological State Apparatus through which both religious and state hegemonies operate in collaboration with each other to suppress the local voices and diversities especially those cultural manifestations and values which have huge potential of resistance. Music is one of these in the case of Baltistan. If it is allowed and permitted, the effects of sermons of religious authorities and lectures of the agencies of Repressive State Apparatus (Althusser, 1971) will fade away and sink into oceans of imageries.

The almost total absence of musical items whether local, national or international music in school events, the kind of prohibitions, the personal perceptions, practices and preferences are all consistent in case of music. This state of affairs shows the overdominated influence of certain version of religiosity regarding music. This non-melodious trend is resulting into vanishing traditions, practices, knowledge, instruments, interest and appreciation for music and is giving rise to more monocultural ritualism and repressive ways that strengthen fanaticism and extremism.

Apart from the word ‘music’ at times even the word ‘culture’ itself is seen as contentious bearing ‘poetry, music, dance and sports’ as its essential components or features. The present day schooling in Baltistan seems stealing the cultural identity of children in terms of their mother tongue, poetry, and all forms of music. This situation consequently, may dim the lights of melody, love and peace, the twinkling lamps of late night (چراغ آخر شب), that can still lit lights of hope, peace and harmony. Jalibi (2005) sketches the picture of culture in the Pakistani context which is very true in the case of Baltistan as well:

All settled values are disintegrating into a heap of broken images. We are observing with our own eyes the spectacles of old sources of meaning and value losing their significance and becoming defunct. The system, of ideas and beliefs by which we lived for centuries is now appearing meaningless and futile to us…In the whole of our society, there is not a single thing that exist in its original shape. What is visible is not original, and what was original is not visible any more (p.3-4).

School Rituals and Ceremonies

In the case of the government schools of Baltistan, the school rituals and ceremonies are the best learning experiences to inculcate national and religious ideologies. School ceremonies are effective tools to indoctrinate the national and religious identities even at the cost of all other multiple identities including the cultural identity,. The program
structure of school events/ ceremonies, the content, the intent, the guest participants and their words, the speech items and the topics, the poetry items and even drama play items are all prescriptive in nature with core themes of nationality and religiosity. The over adoration of the army and sensitizing security aspect is not only common but an essential part in these ceremonies. The items are selected and speeches are given in writing by the teachers and the students just read them out or narrate them on the stage. Because of the same reason, no speech items were in Balti since writing a speech in Balti and reading it would be difficult. No space is given for local cultural expression, and even the local language is not allowed as a medium of communication for speech items and mode of free expression.

The ceremonies are held on the occasions of national and religious days. Bazm-e-adab is a regular weekly school event and a major co-curricular activity. Morning assembly is a daily school ritual in the assembly where all the students get together and offer prayers and sing the national anthem. The themes that emerged in the morning assemblies, in the bazm-e-adab sessions and other ceremonies are religiosity, nationhood, discipline, obedience and compliance. The other themes that emerged from the activities and contents are: prescription (mainly moral, national and religious), selection and information. Prescription in the sense that most of the speeches have ‘do’s and do not’s elements, suggesting normative functions with ‘should, must or ought’ types of words. Selection in the sense that the topics of speeches and content are selected by the teachers (mostly from textbooks), and there is no equal opportunity of participation for all students. The item(s), its content and the performers are all selectively chosen.

Apart from the efficiency parameter, many other concerns are also involved in selection of the performers for a certain item in a certain event. Only ‘presentable’ (as perceived by the teachers) students are allowed to present. A kind of censorship, and hence an inclusion-exclusion situation is always there which is debatable. Nurturing talents of lesser confident students is not the preference; to be ‘presentable’ is preferred, hence widening the gap between the more confident and the less confident students which is another mode of inclusion-exclusion. There is an implicit implication that the fluent and good speakers of Urdu and English languages would have better opportunities of participation in co-curricular activities and ceremonies which leads to ultimate marginalization of native speakers who may not be that good in Urdu or English.
A conclusion drawn from the observation of school rituals and ceremonies is that both ‘nationhood’ and ‘religiosity’ are supporting each other and it seems that the ‘local culture’ is considered as a rival of both. That is why both religious and nationhood identity promoters collaboratively try to silence and weaken opportunities of development of local cultural identity. Local cultural identity is ignored and neglected. It seems that the promotion of local culture potentially poses threats to the two ideologies.

Presence of the civil bureaucracy is an essential element in major school celebrations. The civil administration ensures their presence in ceremonies of national days. This can be termed as a direct surveillance mechanism of the ISA and RSA. Diversity is not appreciated, “minds are jammed” through memorization of prescribed texts and limiting free thinking and expression. Speeches are given in writing by the teachers, items are dictated and prescribed by higher authorities; the students’ role is to memorize and present what is encouraged, asked and allowed. They cannot present anything on their own in terms of their own thoughts, creativity and free will. Even if students do produce something, it has to be verified (proof read) and approved by the teacher as a ‘presentable item’.

Access to the stage also seems to be selective instead of providing equal opportunities of showing talents to all students. The reason is that only ‘presentable’ presenters are normally allowed on stage. The unsaid story seems that ‘all kinds of students’ are not presentable at school level as their performance may be poor and hence discredit the school. Here the schools seem focusing on the overt performance (cognitive) outcome aspects neglecting the role of equally nurturing all students. This may be the case of school management unknowingly doing so. The very job of school is to provide equal opportunities to all of its students and nurture their talents in such a way that students with lack of good performance can come at par with more confident performers. However it seems that even in intra-school and classroom based events, the ‘performance image’ is more important than providing equal ‘learning opportunities’ to all students.

When seen through the gender lens, girls are neither given opportunities to participate in the interschool events with boys nor are there such events organized for girls only. They have only within the school events to participate in. Outdoor sports events are not organized for girls. Girls are held back from most of the learning opportunities of co-curricular activities. This gender bias again is in the name of religion. The very access to
different discourses and opportunities of communicative events is limited for girls. “One major element in discursive reproduction of power and dominance is the very access to discourse and communicative events” (vanDijk, 1996, p.85).

When the talks, texts and their modes of production, utilization and consumption in the school ceremonies are situated and seen in the social context (Fairclough, 2006), the intertextual social meanings of discourses are revealed. We can see that the school events and ceremonies are powerful liturgies to inculcate, indoctrinate, endorse, authenticate, legitimize and promote the national and religious identities. If observed with the critical lens, all these national ceremonies seem powerful assimilative tools. At the same time, these are also effective means and tools of suppressing local cultural identities demanding obligatory sacrifices for the nation. Although the addition of emphasis over the civic roles and civic responsibilities may perhaps help students to situate them better in their own context and stay connected with their roots, no such opportunities were observed in these ceremonies. At times there are clearly stated discursive formations of negation of regional /ethnic/cultural identities.

The ceremonial practices are associated with notions of sanctity, collective aspirations and collective performance, for collective causes. The value, the sociological and psychological effects and implications, the political outcomes of ritualistic and ceremonial events are normally huge as compared to other routine and more frequently occurring events. Mostly ceremonies are ‘special occasions’ to celebrate, to observe some kind of special social happening to make it memorable, or to recall, refresh and reemphasize any historical memories. Through these ceremonies, cultural practices, myths and traditions are kept alive. These are the opportunities for people to get together and share what they have in common and show their affiliation with the memories, events and people with which the ceremonies are associated. Many of the celebrations and ceremonies are for human catharsis, entertainment, and a kind of recharging opportunities for its participants.

It can be concluded that ceremonies are powerful indenting shaping events. However, school ceremonies are very limited in scope to cover these ceremonial functions. The school ceremonies mainly offer opportunities to nurture and strengthen identities in the domains of nationhood and religion. The diversity of multiple identities especially the cultural identity is not given way to nurture or develop.
Influence of Religion

Religion being the most sacred and sentimental aspect of cultural life, in many societies it dominates human feelings, minds and behaviors. This dominance of (any) religion or religious faith could be very positive and helpful if the religion is considered as the divine code of moral life and ethical conduct, a way to purify the human self with teachings of sacrifice, tolerance, compassion and love for all.

Baltistan has had such a blend of great religious traditions of Bonnism, Bhuddism and Islam for centuries that emphasizes tolerance, co-existence, compassion, diversity and plurality with respect and permeation of local culture. This state of affairs kept alive and nurtured the local culture till the near past when ‘music’ was not a taboo, when women used to express their feelings in classical Balti poetry, when folklores, stories and sagas especially Kesar Sagas were sung, narrated, and listened to with due interest. People used to get inspiration, cultural capital and energy from these cultural and literary assets. But since the mid of the last century, these traditions are being diluted.

Historically when the region of present Gilgit-Baltistan became part of Pakistan after partition, the cultural routes and corridors towards Kargil, Laddakh, Tibet and Shaksgam were closed. With this cultural isolation, the infiltration of religious groups and their interest in the region were increased. The state machinery was also active in assimilative strategies, both the state apparatus and religious clergies became allies to fragment the strong pluralist and compassionate cultural fabrics of Baltistan.

In my study, several participants said, ‘we have a religious culture’ meaning that the culture is religious reflecting that other cultural aspects are overshadowed by religion. Due to this ‘religious culture’, all other dimensions of culture which are not religious are undermined, ignored and rejected in certain ways. If religion becomes a kind of sectarianized, ritualistic way of life that limits people to only one right way and negating the huge diversity of all other faiths and ways of life, then it becomes a burden and a danger not only to cultural diversity and cultural identities but to civilizations as well. This could also be a danger to the existence of minority believers as they will be isolated through hard religious inclusion-exclusion criteria.

A current of high religiosity (extremism) is evident in schools that may overshadow the secular and liberal schooling and curriculum. The result is seen in the form of giving
more importance to religious rituals than real studies and education which is not only a survival need in contemporary times but also obligatory in Islam. The religious discourses and discursive formations when placed in the immediate social context situated in the broader socio-political context, the trend can be foreseen easily. Analysis of this study confirms the findings of Nayyar and Saleem (2002, p.v) that “Children’s identities and value systems are strongly shaped by the national curricula and Textbooks”. This study illustrates that the curricula and textbooks are insensitive to religious diversity. The content has dominant aspects of glorification of war and force, encouragement of *Jehad* and *Shahadat*, and a lack of critical self-awareness.

One of the reasons of submerging the goals of secular and liberal education in government schools are the education policies, the system and the curriculum as indicated by Talibani (1996). The curriculum which is supposed to drive the whole schooling process has many gaps in terms of non-coherence, inconsistencies, inaccuracies, redundant information, and vitality for a bright future in its objectives, content and methodology. The findings of Aziz (2004), Nayyar and Salim (2002) and Ali (2010) describe the detailed account of the situation and draw an unfortunate gloomy picture. This study practically observed the real school instances of this picture as painted by these authors.

Another significant cultural theme observed was ‘dress code’ especially the dress code of *hijab* (also with religious connotation) faithfully followed in all schools.

Though not present in schools, some other makers and markers of cultural identity reported by the participants as essential part of culture were foods, architectural monuments, ecological sites, games, crockery and jewelry. No one mentioned the folk stories that used to be narrated by elders during the lengthy nights of winter; no one mentioned the Balti etiquettes of eating and social greeting; the farming and mythical practices still common in villages and towns. This shows that the very notion of culture is becoming limited to concrete and tangible material culture, the abstract literary sublime aspects are being forgotten due to the materialist race of consumerist market-culture. Some images of the tradition of folklores and stories or pure Balti traditions of food and farming may still be alive in remote rural villages, but in the urban town these things seem to be vanishing or absent.
Irrelevance of Textbooks

The textbooks in the context of government schools are the defacto curriculum present and practiced in schools, especially in schools where there are no other resources and options to verify the correctness, soundness and quality of the content of the textbooks. “The Murder of History” by Aziz (2004) as the title suggests, is a self-speaking story of the incorrect, deformed, and manipulated content in the textbooks of Social Studies and Pakistan Studies. As a result of such textbooks, our students only memorize inaccurate factual information instead of having their own understanding of the social realities around them that make them ‘subjects of faithful compliance’ (Aziz, 2004). That is why one of the respondent teacher said that his students are slow and take hours to respond to a simple question.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, following recommendations can be made for the policy makers, school authorities and future researchers:

For policy makers and curriculum developers, it is suggested that a ‘pedagogy of hope’ or ‘a pedagogy of emancipation’ may be introduced. The curriculum has to be made contextually relevant with sufficient content about local culture. For this purpose a subject on native languages (L1) can be introduced. The textbooks must focus on local themes first and progressively move to national and global.

The 18th amendment of the constitution has devolved the general education to provinces and as a result curriculum and textbooks, standards of general education form K-XII grades have become provincial subjects. This is a good opportunity to introduce contextually relevant curriculum and textbooks focusing on local native cultures, languages, resources and opportunities. The native or first languages may be made part of the curriculum either as a separate subject or as a part of other subjects. At least students must be given opportunities of expression in local languages in school ceremonies and co-curricular activities. The cultural elements of music, folkllores, songs, stories and narratives, religious poetry, cultural festivities and events must be allowed in schools that will not only enhance the confidence, communicative and presentation skills and talents of students but also help conserve the diverse local cultures and develop sound cultural identities.

Regarding the general pedagogy and the hidden-curriculum prevalent in schools, it
is recommended that the sensitization of security and military pedagogy and over religiosity in all aspects of life has to be revisited and controlled. More emphasis may be given on secular, developmental and cultural themes and aspects of the curriculum. In schools, the practices of prescriptive education needs to relooked and more autonomy and liberty must be given to students for free expression. For instance, teachers should refrain from giving written speeches and selection of presentation items for co-curricular events, empowering students and encourage their learning.

Diversity has to be appreciated, presented and learned as strength and beauty in policy, practice, curriculum and all school processes. Music must be considered as a secular cultural item instead of an irreligious amoral activity. Local songs and folklores may be taken as historical literary heritage which has nothing to do with religion or nationhood. Opportunities of cultural expression are tools of catharsis and may be helpful for promoting better social bonds and relationships. Repressing cultural expressions would give way to more extremist trends. Blocking of culture leads to eruption of emotional energy through uneven channels.

**Recommendations for Future Researchers**

As the educational outcomes, cultural aspects and their relationships are under-researched in the region; future researchers can study the causes and impact of the increasing religiosity and over-glorification of the military role that leads to appreciation of militancy in civil life. This is a common trend in government schools. The pedagogical effects of the disputed and non-constitutional status of the region and its undecided political identity would be another major area of study which can be further divided into several sub studies. For example, investigating the effects of political identity of people on their cultural identity, the modes of presenting the political identity/status of this disputed region to the students and its result in terms of students’ perceived identity, can be futuristic policy oriented studies.

It would be an interesting critical study to see why and how the hegemonic forces of national and religious identity makers are allies and support each other to undermine the cultural identity. Several interesting studies through analysis of cultural narratives can help exploring the potentials of Balti culture in promotion of and sustenance of peace in the region.
It has been a major finding that the *Khulu* aspect of Balti poetry is discouraged in schools. Some teachers do not even like talking about it showing more conservative views. However, it has been a very interesting finding from literature review that the authors of more than 60% of the Balti classic folk songs (*rgiang khulu*) are females (Kazmi, 1985). These women were not formal poetesses or writers. They may even not be literate in the modern sense but have produced such masterpieces of Balti poetry which are still preserved as classics. On the other hand, the present day situation is that girls cannot even sing any Balti song (*khulu*) or even Urdu songs (except national songs or religious poetry). An exploratory study of females’ perception about *khulu* and its presence in the curriculum and school ceremonies with Urdu poetry may be an interesting study. Comparative study of feminist literature in Balti culture then and now are also potential areas of future research.

From this study it can be concluded that present day public (government) schooling serves shaping the religious and national identities better. This schooling system is seriously lacking in the creative and emancipatory dimensions of education. It serves to reproduce of a class of people whose aspiration would be getting a government job, no matter of what status or quality. High aspirations of moral, literary and aesthetic values and visions are neither awakened nor nurtured through schooling.

The cultural identity is being marginalized systematically through school processes and hidden curriculum in the form of verbal orders of school authorities and disallowing cultural expressions in first language at school. Out of the four major markers of cultural identity, music is the most underrepresented and threatened cultural resource while religion is the over-promoted and over-projected cultural resource. First language or the mother tongue along with its classical literature is disallowed to be presented in school events and ceremonies. The school ceremonies with the bigger portions of religious and nationhood items serve to promote the dominant culture only, even at the cost of marginalization and exclusion of local indigenous culture.

Though there are confusions due to lack of policy clarity and legislation in case of Gilgit-Baltistan being a province like status without constitutional protection, the devolution plan of education under the 18th amendment of the constitution of Pakistan can be converted into a great opportunity. The GB provincial government can redesign its own curriculum according to the contextual needs and national/global demands. The interest of international community and non-government organizations (NGOs) in development of
this region can be mobilized to transform the education system into a globally compatible and competitive system of education with contextual relevance, cultural plurality and diversity.

**Conclusion**

Using an ethnographic approach in tandem with critical discourse analysis this study explored, effects of public schooling on the formation of the cultural identity of secondary school students in Baltistan. With critical pedagogy as the theoretical/conceptual framework the study investigated the ideological and state apparatuses that work in and through the educational system in Pakistan to constitute subjectivities of both the majority and the minority groups and individuals. The educational system, mandated by the political, nationalistic and dominant cultural discourses, defines what it means to be a citizen of Pakistan. This citizen of Pakistan (notwithstanding the fact that Baltistan is not a constitutional part of Pakistan) appears to patriotic, nationalist, religious, male and to some extent militaristic.

It is clear that Balti cultural identity in GB is formally and to a greater extent officially – marginalized and oppressed, and that this is a deliberate policy in which politicians and army leaders, religious authorities, and many teachers – particularly those holding strong religious beliefs – are complicit. There is a general ‘climate of oppression’ surrounding all aspects of educational practice in GB.

Similar to other parts of Pakistan in context of GB also the forms of the militaristic, nationalistic, sectarian, and religious dogmatic factors are involved in shaping students identities.

With reference to the theoretical framework (referenced to ideology, power and discourse), the policy of the Pakistani government seems ripe for analysis from the perspective of ideological state apparatuses and Gramscian as well as Althusserian theories of consent. Pakistani policy in GB is a mixture of rule by the manufacture of consent (this explains the resignation and acceptance of teachers to schools’ policy on several levels including the exclusion of Balti and the acceptance of corporal punishment) and coercion (the corporal punishment, the linguistic surveillance and fining, the military discipline etc.) reflects what Bourdieu terms as ‘symbolic violence’. With regard to linguistic surveillance, Foucault’s ‘Discipline and Punish’ and the panopticon is reminded.
The results of the study show that in the ‘nation-building’ zeal the education policy planners are, to a fair degree, oblivious of the mosaic of cultures, languages and identities that constitute Pakistan.

The findings of this thesis highlighted that the major emphasis of the secondary school is on the inclusion of national and religious identities. The local language and music have no place in the schools except in the form of religious poetry and national songs. This way even the linguistic resources are used for the causes of building strong religious and national identities even at the cost of local cultural identity. Local and native voices are silenced in subtle ways by discouraging opportunities of free expression that limits not only expressive confidence and competence but even limits the emancipatory thinking process.

An over dose of ‘nationhood’ and ‘religiosity’ coupled with ‘glorification of militaristic activities and values’ are evident in public schooling in Baltistan. It seems that these are the dominant ideologies enacted through the ideological state apparatuses (ISA) of school policies, curriculum, ceremonies and hidden curriculum. This trend may have multiple implications and complications if continued. The first implication is the weakening of cultural identities, fading of the cultural hues and vanishing melodies having only human, cultural, secular and aesthetic values. The second serious implication is the likelihood of promotion of religious militancy under the umbrella of nationhood. Third implication is, in words of Norberg-Hodge ‘the march of mono-culture’ and a race for uniformity hence a direct threat to cultural diversity and development of a pluralist society, a clear neglect of human nature that happened to be so diverse by nature.

Consequently increased threats of more frequent and excessive use of power, legitimizing hegemonic tactics, formalizing repressive state apparatuses RSAs would be implications and complications if due efforts are not being made to liberate schooling for emancipation of students not for domestication which seems the case now.

The need of the time, in words of Derrida is "to let Others be"--to respect their otherness and stop trying to assimilate them into our own language and stories" (Noddings, 1998 p.54).
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Annex # 1

Interviewee’s Profile

Respondent: M/F………………

Occupation/designation…………………………………. Qualification………………

First language (L1) mother tongue \( (faskat) \)……………..;

Second language (L2)……………… Third language (L3)…………………………

Medium of instruction (official)………… Dominant mode of instruction…………

Comfortable language (at ease) (1)……………..(2)……………..(3)……………..

Preferred language(s) for interview discussion……………………………………

Teaching Subjects: (1)………………… (2)…………………. (4)………………

Teaching/Administrative Experience …………………………………………………

Position(s) held (if any) in any social organization………………………………

Normal language preferred/ practiced with:

Family at home  …………………

Colleagues/peers at job place (office/school)………………

With friends in society………………

Which language do you prefer for:

Intimate discussion……………………

Professional discussion …………………

Religious discussion……………………

Social/political discussion………………

Code#............
Annex # 1a

Interview guide

Interviews with Principals

(Principal’s own perceptions about culture, identity and functions of schooling will be explored then the actual school processes will be discussed)

Would you please share your own experiences of participation in cultural events as a student, then as a teacher?

How do you feel about the roles you played that time?

According to your view what are the psychosocial needs of the students of the secondary class age?

In your opinion what are the basic elements of a culture to be distinct from others?

How school can contribute to serve the purpose of developing students’ cultural self?

What kinds of curricular and co curricular learning-experiences/ activities are offered in your school to develop students cultural identity?

What do you feel about the present curriculum regarding its relevance to local culture?

Should the curriculum cover the learners’ social and cultural needs? If yes to what extent is this purpose served through our present curriculum?

Is there an official language policy for your school other than the medium of instruction?

Which languages are frequently and dominantly used in your school?

How do you facilitate students’ participation in cultural activities?
Annex # 1b

Interview Guide

Interviews with teachers

1. To what extent your L1/mother-tongue (name) serves expression of sentiments, intimate relations, devotions and anger?
2. In your opinion what are the basic elements of a culture to be distinct from others?
3. Which language do you use or prefer to use at times of congratulation, condolence, expressing affection or anger (soothing words, aqeedat, muhabat, baghawat).
4. To what extent does first language contribute in development of civic sense and civic character?
5. Do you feel that at times your first language becomes a barrier? If yes when and how?
6. To what extent and in what spheres of life is your first language a barrier?
7. To what extent Balti is fasak or maskat (fayul or mayul)?
8. In your opinion what should be the aims of formal education or schooling?
9. Which language(s) L1, L2 or L3 can better serve to achieve these aspired aims?
10. In which language can you better develop conceptual understanding of students? Please give reasons.
11. Is there any kind of stated or unstated language policy or rule in your school or class?
12. Do you prefer to have any rule about using language in school or classroom, if yes what kind of rule do you suggest or prefer? (encourage, mono, bi multi or open)
13. How do you feel about the language of textbooks you teach? (in terms of difficulty level, relevance, clarity, precision, ambiguity) give examples.
14. What is the response of students’ parents (literate and illiterate parents) towards use of certain language in school?

Other possible optional question

a. Obstacles barriers and motivational factors to conserve, promote Balti
b. Any possible gender differences in language usage?
c. Any possible effect of beliefs/religious affiliations on language preference and purity
Annex # 2
Profile of Participants of Focus Group Discussion

Group of: Male □ Female □
Number of participants Science _______________ General _______________
Medium of instruction: English □ Urdu □
Type of school: Govt □ Private □
School locality: Urban □ Rural □
First language (L1): Balti □ Other (please specify………
School uniform: Paint-shirt/Half-sleeve/scarf □

Kamees shalwar chader □

Preferred Language(s) for discussion………………………………………
How do you like to identify yourself as (write number in below box)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Only Balti</th>
<th>Only Pakistani</th>
<th>First Balti then Pakistani</th>
<th>First Pakistani then Balti</th>
<th>Equally Pakistani and Balti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Flash cards will be distributed and brief responses will be collected on cards)
Ask yourself “Who am I?”\(^{43}\) and give five short answers below:
I am:
Ø …………………………………………………………………………………
Ø …………………………………………………………………………………
Ø …………………………………………………………………………………
Ø …………………………………………………………………………………
Ø …………………………………………………………………………………

\(^{43}\) Adapted from Twenty Statements Test (TST) constructed by Manford Kuhn and Thomas McPartlan
Guide for Focus Group Discussion with students

a) Students’ perception about culture and schooling

b) How do these students prefer to identify them and why?

c) The learning experiences offered for development of cultural aspect of students’ life and place of local cultural dimensions in such activities (focused on language, religions, celebrations, and music related aspects of activities and school processes)

d) Students’ perception about curriculum, hidden curriculum and its role in ‘making a person’ identity

e) Students’ own role in volunteering for participation of cultural activities in school events such as local songs, drama, speech in first language, local music etc.

Their preferences and recommendations (if any) about the existing curriculum and school processes for better representation of local/indigenous culture
Annex # 3

Observation Guide

School Observation

School building and facilities:
The building construction in terms of eco-friendliness keeping local climatic conditions, requirements and necessities in mind such as arrangements for winter when temperature falls below zero, facilities for heating arrangements, insulation (stone made buildings and wooden ceilings would be more suitable than concrete and cement blocks). Exhaust options for smoke when stove burning starts in winter or other options of heating such electric, gas heating systems.

The outlook and ecology in terms of wall displays, plantations, setting of staff room and classrooms.

Library resources about local culture books, displays, maps, audio-video recordings, pictures, newspapers, journals, magazines etc

Laboratories and learning resource rooms: Presence and availability of local resources for experiments such as samples of plants, seeds, animals, minerals, stones etc.

School processes and events:

Normal schedule, holidays, language policy (if any), uniform for students, teachers, support staff (if any)

Daily Assembly the language, instructions, lectures, prayers, or any other regular or frequent event such as weekly address, lecture, sports or guest speaker’s address etc.

Co curricular activities (at least one or two in each school). Preparations, topics, presentations (in terms of contextually relevant materials, local culture, language, performance, dressing)

Staff meetings (focus of discussion, modes of interaction, major concerns about students)
**Documents/artifacts** (admission form, prospectus if any, non-personal official letters such as circulars, orders, policy documents, comments of visitors in the office log book or the visitors’ comment register. Letters to parents, notices, annual school development plan (if any in documented form), scheme of work etc.

**Hidden curriculum** unwritten policies and norms

**Classroom and lesson observation**

Classroom environment displays, space, seating, teacher-students interaction, languages used as medium of instruction, code switching instances, modes and types of questions and answers, lesson plan, examples shared and words quoted (beyond textbook), pattern and cognitive level of questions (both by teacher and from students)

(C) **Language of Events**

a. Proceedings

b. Speeches

c. Cultural events (drama, joke, poetry etc)

d. Mode of interaction

   Student -- teacher; teacher - student;

   teacher -- teacher; student -- student

e. Formal official usage

   i. Classroom

   ii. Office

   iii. Assembly

f. Informal usage

   i. Social area

   ii. Telephone calls
iii. Break time before and after school timing (while coming to and going back from school)

(D) Number of local cultural events in Schools

a. Average % of time allocation for local/cultural aspects

b. Average % of number of participants

c. Any specific mention of local culture by speakers in their addresses

d. Level of enjoyment on local songs, music, dance, on social events/gatherings in terms of claps, praises, body movement, emotional expressions of joy/sorrow, tears and smiles

Observation Checklist (during interviews/meetings)

(A) Linguistic usage

a. Purity of language in terms of foreign words (in sample of records of one minute after every five minutes of recording), purity of structure/syntax, verbalization

b. Code switching from ………….. to ……………. Purpose:

   i. Ease (sci-tech vocabulary)

   ii. Expression (to convey more cultural/contextual meaning)

   iii. Confidentiality

   iv. Pride

   v. Humor

   vi. Others

c. Literary and symbolic meaning… use of relevant/contextual metaphors, similes, proverbs, poetic dictions, idioms, humor
Annex # 4

Consent/Permission Letters

The Director/Deputy Director…………………………………………………………………

Dear Sir/Madam,

Assalam-u-Aleukum,

I am a research student doing my PhD studies about ‘the role of schooling in development of cultural identity among secondary students in Baltistan’. In this regard for data collection purpose, six schools from two districts of Baltistan will be selected. If you like to have this research activity in schools under your supervision and kindly grant permission, then a school(s) will be selected with mutual understanding for my data collection. I will be grateful to your cooperation in this research activity. The activity includes observation of the school, classroom, curricular and co curricular activities; and interviews with teachers of secondary classes and principal, focus group discussion with students of secondary classes. When permission is granted, all the aforesaid activities will be carried out with the consent of respective principal(s) and participants as per the time line/schedule suggested and agreed by the principal.

During the interviews and focus group discussions, aspects of cultural dimension in routine school processes and cultural events (if any) in school will be discussed. The interviews and discussion will be audio recorded with permission of the participants.

According to the nature of the study there is no apparent harm of any kind to the participants. Possible benefit could be in terms of learning that the new questions raised may give the participants an opportunity to reflect about our cultural practices and preferences in light of our schooling practices and priorities. The possibility of considering some questions as unnecessary or irrelevant by some participants cannot be ruled out.

Although the active participation of all participants, are highly appreciated, the participants have complete freedom and authority to withdraw from the process at any time, for any reason. No irrelevant individual will have access to the data collected; the identity of the school and participants will be kept anonymous by default in any future presentation or publication of the data gathered in this process.

235
If you agree with all these terms, would you please sign the attached consent form as a formal approval of permission and extension of your cooperation? It will be a great support for me if you issue a permission letter with a note of extending cooperation, to the respective principal(s) as well.

In case of any query, question, clarification or changes in schedule you are welcome to contact me on my cell phone, home telephone no, email and address given below.

Best regards,

Zakir Hussain Zakir

Cell: 03465387993 ; Home tel. no: 0515886693; email: zakir_kiu@yahoo.co.in

Address: Irshad House Haji Rozi Chowk, Mir Maat Road, Haji Gam S/Town Skardu Baltistan
Permission Letter

(by Director/Deputy Director or equal)

I, ____________________________ as (position) __________________________

(School System) ______________________________________________________,

hereby grant permission to Zakir Hussain Zakir student of the Aga Khan University,
Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) to pursue his doctoral research study
on “the role of schooling in development of cultural identity” in school(s) under my
supervision.

According to the terms and condition as stated in the “Consent Request Letter” by
the researcher, the candidate is allowed to collect data from the schools identified with
collaborative consent of respective principal(s) through observations, interviews and focus
group discussions.

I urge the principals and staff of respective schools to extend their best cooperation
in this regard.

Name: ____________________________________________

Official Stamp: _____________________________________

Signature_______________________________ Date: ___________
Respected Principal ………………………………………………………………………

Dear Sir/Madam,

Assalam-u-Aleakum,

   I am a research student doing my PhD studies about ‘the role of schooling in
development of cultural identity among secondary students in Baltistan’. In this regard for
data collection purpose, two schools from Skardu districts of Baltistan will be selected. If
you like to have this research activity here and kindly grant permission, this school will be
selected for my data collection. I will be grateful for your cooperation in this research
activity. The activity includes observation of the school, classes, events, curricular and co-
curricular activities; and interviews with teachers of secondary classes and principal, focus
group discussion with students of secondary classes. All the aforesaid activities will be
carried out with the consent of participants and your due permission as per the time
timeline/schedule you propose and we collaboratively decide.

   During the interviews and focus group discussions, aspects of cultural dimension in
routine school processes and cultural events (if any) in school will be discussed. For this
purpose participants will be involved according to their free will and voluntary consent.
Similarly observations of library, laboratory and classrooms etc. will be made with consent
of concerned responsible personnel. The discussions will be audio recorded with
permission of the participants. According to the nature of the study there is no apparent
harm of any kind to the participants. Possible benefit could be in terms of learning that the
new questions raised may give the participants an opportunity to reflect about our cultural
practices and preferences in light of our schooling practices and priorities. The possibility
of considering some questions as unnecessary or irrelevant by some participants cannot be
ruled out.

   Although the active participation of all participants, are highly appreciated, the
participants have complete freedom and authority to withdraw from the process at any time,
for any reason. No irrelevant individual will have access to the data collected and the
identity of the school and participants will kept anonymous by default in any future
presentation or publication of the data gathered in this process.
If you agree with all these terms, would you please sign the attached consent form as a formal approval of permission and extension of your cooperation?

In case of any query, question, clarification or changes in schedule you are welcome to contact me on my cell phone, home telephone no, email and address given below.

Best regards,

Zakir Hussain Zakir

Cell: 03465387993 ;  Home tel. no: 0515886693;  email: zakir_kiu@yahoo.co.in

Address: Irshad House Haji Rozi Chowk, Mir Maat Road, Haji Gam S/Town Skardu Baltistan
Permission Letter

(by Principal)

I, _____________________________ as Principal / Headteacher________________
___________________________________________School__________________

hereby grant permission to Zakir Hussain Zakir student of the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) to pursue his doctoral research study on “the role of schooling in development of cultural identity” in school(s) under my supervision.

According to the terms and condition as stated in the “Consent Request Letter” by the researcher, the candidate is allowed to collect data from the schools identified with collaborative consent of respective principal(s) through observations, interviews and focus group discussions.

I urge the principals and staff of respective schools to extend their best cooperation in this regard.

Name: ____________________________________________

Official Stamp: ________________________________

Signature_______________________________ Date: ___________
Annex # 4c

Participant Consent Form

(Interviewee)

I, __________________________________________ agree to participate in the research study on “the role of schooling in development of cultural identity” conducted by Zakir Hussain Zakir student of the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED), as part his doctoral studies.

As a participant of this study, I assure my full support and cooperation by giving time and sharing views and information during interview/meeting and discussion, considering these meetings and discussions will not interfere with my duty job/studies

I understand that the findings of this study may be shared, in a report(s) or publication(s) with anonymity of institution and person.

I willingly provide this support with the understanding that I have a right to withdraw from the research, anytime, without any fear. A copy of this letter is being retained for my own reference.

Name: ________________________________

School: ________________________________

Position: ________________________________

Signature_______________________________ Date: ___________
Annex # 4d

Participant Assent Form

(Students Focus Group discussion)

I, ________________________________ student of class________________ am voluntarily willing to participate in the research study on “the role of schooling in development of cultural identity” conducted by Zakir Hussain Zakir student of the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED), as part his doctoral studies.

With due permission of our principal and the class teacher I am participating in this study and there will be no loss of my routine school work/study. As a participant of this study, I assure my support and cooperation by giving time and sharing views and information during discussion.

I understand that the findings of this study may be shared, in a report(s) or publication(s) with anonymity of institution and person.

I willingly provide this support with the understanding that I have a right to withdraw from the research, anytime, without any fear. A copy of this letter is being retained for my own reference.

Name: ________________________________

School: ______________________________

Position (if any):_________________________

Signature_______________________________ Date: ____________