

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NOMADIC COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT LAYYAH PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

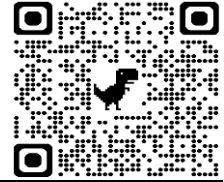
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ABSTRACT

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Nomadism or more precisely pastoralism is a rational adaptation of human life to the environment and becomes a way of life. The nomads are no longer conjures up the image of mythic and inscrutable creatures, fiercely independent and existing outside the purview of the civilized world. The traditional roots of nomads belong from hunting and gathering societies which eventually become different types of tribes and has its unique culture and livelihood and quality of life with different socio-economic conditions and cultural characteristics. This evaluative study was conducted in district Layyah Punjab, Pakistan and the participants were head (male & female) of the nomad's families and who currently reside in the areas of district Layyah. Purposive sampling techniques applied and primary data collected through survey. The findings of the study reveals that most of the nomads families migrate from one place to other place due to economic, social and cultural reasons. Study highlighted that due to this continues movement the quality of health and level of education strongly impacted, they face meager conditions regarding basic human needs such as water, sanitation, hygiene, nutritional needs especially among women's and children's. Even these pathetic socio-economic and health conditions they are satisfied with their livelihood and strongly associated with their cultural values.

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INTRODUCTION

Nomadism or more precisely pastoralism is a rational adaptation of human life to the environment and becomes a way of life. The prime concept of nomads no longer conjures up the image of mythic and inscrutable creatures, fiercely independent and existing outside the purview of the civilized world, this

Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics of Nomadic Community: A Case Study of District Layyah Punjab, Pakistan

notion was not easily vanquished, and one can trace a long tradition of world travelers (Ahmad et al., 2023). The traditional roots of nomads belong from hunting and gathering societies which eventually become different types of tribes and change the basis of race, sex, caste and religion among others. Each nomadic community has its unique culture and lives in the form of tribes but with the passage of time the formation, interpersonal relationships, socio-economic conditions, cultural and ritual discourses are entirely changed (Jost et al., 2022).

The nomadic communities existed throughout the world even in this era of unprecedented advancement in technology and human development. The existences of nomad communities are more common in developing countries like Pakistan (Jazib et al., 2023). Most of the time in the developing world, the impact of social, economic, cultural and symbolic exclusionary processes is not confined to attitudes towards the poor. Operating through formal legalized and institutionalized systems as well as informally, these processes devalue and undermine the cultures and voices of indigenous peoples around the globe (Mahmood et al., 2021). They are contributing to the displacement of millions, rendering many stateless and condemning them to live in extreme poverty and constant fear with limited if any rights (Rai et al., 2022).

Pakistan shares influences that have shaped the cultures of South Asia and there are thus wider regional similarities extending beyond the national boundaries; cultural ways in Pakistan are broadly similar to those experienced in large parts of Afghanistan and northern India (Ridwan et al., 2023). This entire region was deeply influenced by the Arabic-Persian culture that arrived with Muslim conquerors beginning roughly a millennium ago. On the other hand, the specific regional cultures of Pakistan present a picture of rich diversity, making it difficult to speak of a single Pakistani culture (Aryal et al., 2018). Residents of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, for example, lead lives similar to fellow Pashtuns in Afghanistan. In other parts of the country, Urdu-speaking Mohajirs brought with them many cultural ways and values found among the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim populations of northern India (Boyd et al., 2023).

The people and the culture of Pakistan are divided in different tribes at the bases of gender, caste and religion among others. Pakistan is a home of nomadic people and rural tribes and according to the constitution of Pakistan all the inhabitants of Pakistan have equal rights but in spite of it our civil society shows some observations regarding the rights of nomadic community due to numerous reasons (Ahmed et al., 2023). The social exclusion of nomadic communities and this exclusion is more to perform minorities, marginalized and nomads or another which has less prestige in society. In South Asian countries and especially in Pakistan they face economic repression. They are deprived of their basic rights such as the right of self-esteem, the right to freedom, employment among others. Furthermore, they mostly depend primarily on their culture and beliefs. This system of nomadic communities has divided people into different categories (Dadas et al., 2023).

The livelihood and socio-cultural life perspectives of nomadic communities vary on the basis of demographic and geographic conditions. The Pakistani nomadic community has a different type of

charming and attractive culture. They decorate their homes or camps cushions, handmade mats and other embroidered things like bed sheets among others (Jazib et al., 2023). Each tribe has its different language according to its region and some among the important types of Pakistanis nomad communities such as

Qalandar: Qalandar caste in Pakistan is all Muslims and their ethnic groups are Jogi faqeer, Raawal and Sai among others. Qalandar basically belongs to Sufi / saints origins and connected to their traditional occupation of entertainment of people through their pet monkeys, dogs and cats. They are magicians and baggers.

Churigar: Word Churi is derived from Urdu which means bangles and gar mean market. As their name indicates that they belong to the bangles trade. They are makers of bangles, which are mostly used in the sub-continent as in Pakistan, BanglaDesh and India. In Pakistan they are living in Sargodha, Sialkot, M. B. Din and Gujarat among others. They speak Punjabi, Saraiki and different words of Hindi in their languages.

Domba: Domba peoples are also followers of Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. Dom terms related to the drum and mostly they are musicians and blacksmith. They are found especially in Gilgit Baltistan, Hunza Valley and Athena Ashri linked nagar. Dom people have no permanent homes and most of the male members of the group are working in the circus and their wives assist them in the shows.

Gujjar: According to Sanskrit dictionary “Gur” means enemy & “Jar” means destroyer. Which are mainly found in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. This caste is related to agriculture and is interested in pets held as Cows, buffalo, sheep, goats and horses, etc. Gujjar people are related to the religion of Islam, Hindu and Sikh. This is one among the dominant tribes in Pakistan. They have lands and a better social and economic rank than other tribes. They also live in other Asian countries such as Kashmir and Madhya Pradesh.

Jutt: Jutt mostly live in Pakistan and Indian Punjab and their languages are Punjabi, Urdu Sindhi, Balochi and Saraiki. All the people who are living in Pakistan are Muslims. They are rigid about their culture and folkways and about their religious practices and about customs and traditions, and take action against the members of their community who neglect the rules of the group.

Kanjar: Kanjar are living in Sindh and mostly are non-Muslim. Their languages are Punjabi, Rajasthani, Bhojpuri, and Hindi. Kanjar escaped from the Mughal harassment and migrated to jungles. In the past they were in the profession of hunting but now they are related to other professions.

Baloch: Baloch are the Muslim community and comprises approximately 10 to 15% of the entire population of Pakistan. Their languages are Balochi, Urdu, Pashto and Arabic. Baloch society is the most famous in the world due to its unique culture. Without nomadic communities, Balochistan has no value. It was they who, somewhere between 500 and 1,000 years ago, led in the language area, the identity and more visible - the values that have come to constitute the culture of Balochistan.

Balti and Afghan: Balti people are living in Baltistan and they were introduced to Islam in the 15th century Noor Bakhsh is a name of their religion. They speak the language of Balti and are related to Buddhist culture. In the first war in Afghanistan in 1980 people migrated from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Afghanistan is the neighboring country of Pakistan's that's why people came here. They are living in Fata, KPK and Balochistan. Most of them are born in Pakistan, even though they are still called the citizens of Afghanistan.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics of Nomadic Community: A Case Study of District Layyah Punjab, Pakistan

Nomads are the most important people of Pakistan and they have to face a lot of difficulties with respect to their social, economic, health, education and basic human rights among other aspects of life (Jazib et al., 2023). Most of the time they are entitled to celebrate their cultural events and carry out religious practices according to their own. The researcher's try to understand through this research the reasons for their social exclusion and how they face discrimination from mainstream communities (Rai et al., 2022). This study will also explore the different aspects of the traditions of the nomadic culture in the Layyah district. In the district of Layyah, Punjab province a huge proportion of nomadic communities travels throughout the years due to various socio-cultural characteristics of this region. Through this research researchers analyze the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the nomadic communities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the geographic and demographic characteristic of nomads communities living in Punjab Pakistan.
- To assess the social, economic and cultural characteristics of nomads communities and its impacts on their livelihood and quality of life.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This evaluative study was conducted in district Layyah Punjab, Pakistan and the target population was the nomads who visited from place to place in the whole province of Punjab. The respondents of this study were the head (male & female) of the nomad's families and who currently reside in the areas of district Layyah. For this study researchers applied purposive sampling techniques to extract a sample of the whole population and total 100 respondents. These migrants came from all over Punjab and belong to different cultures and religions. Each group has its differences to move from one place to another and have a unique socio-economic and cultural reason.

The survey methods and interview schedule were applied as an approach and tool for primary data collection from the selected population. The interview schedule were designed on the basis of intensive literature review and keeping in consideration the prime objectives of the study with several sections as section one discusses the geographic and demographic aspects of nomads life, section two elaborates the social, economic and cultural characteristics and section three tries to examine the impacts of their life style on their livelihood and quality of life. Both close ended and open ended questions were added for intensive response from the participants.

The collected data allotted codes and entered into a statistical package for social science (SPSS-21) for further descriptive, univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis. The study tries to find out the direct and indirect impacts of considered study variables for better understanding the issue and for future policy matters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Various descriptive and inferential analysis were applied on collected data and findings presented in the form numbers and percentages for better understanding of various demographic characteristics of nomads communities currently residing in district Layyah.

Table 1 Distribution of demographic characteristic

Demographic Characteristics	Description of characteristics	N	%
Caste of participants	Balochi	10	10.0
	Gujjar	7	7.0
	Malang/fakir	12	12.0
	Any other	71	71.0
	Total	100	100.0
Marital Status	Married	52	52.0
	Unmarried	30	30.0
	Divorced	14	14.0
	Widow	4	4.0
	Total	100	100.0
Family System	Nuclear	33	33.0
	Joint	45	45.0
	Extended	22	22.0
	Total	100	100.0
Family Members	2	1	1.0
	4	23	23.0
	6	40	40.0
	More than 6	36	36.0
	Total	100	100.0
Education	Illiterate	40	40.0
	Madras	23	23.0
	Primary	14	14.0
	Middle or more	23	23.0
	Total	100	100.0

Table 1 indicates the findings regarding caste systems of the participants and most of them belong from numerous castes. A large portion of the population 52% were married and out of total 45% living in a joint family system. Out of a total of more than 76% families having six or more than six family members and maximum participants 63% reported that they did not get any formal education.

Table 2 Distribution of social characteristic of nomads

Demographic Characteristics	Description of characteristics	N	%
Attitude of society	Bad	27	27.0
	Normal	55	55.0
	Good	18	18.0
	Total	100	100.0
Behavior of society with females	Bad	58	58.0
	Normal	26	26.0
	Good	16	16.0
	Total	100	100.0
Female harassment	Yes	69	69.0
	No	31	31.0
	Total	100	100.0
Societal discrimination	Yes	76	76.0
	No	24	24.0
	Total	100	100.0
Awareness regarding quality of life	Yes	73	73.0
	No	27	27.0
	Total	100	100.0

**Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics of Nomadic Community:
A Case Study of District Layyah Punjab, Pakistan**

Table 2 highlights the social characteristics of nomads and points out that 55% of study participants reported that they face normal attitudes from society and 58% reported bad behavior with female nomads due to their informal nature and mingling habits with common people. When they asked about the harassment 69% participants reported that their female faced harassment and 76% faced societal discrimination. Similarly, when the participants asked about their livelihood and quality of life a large proportion of the population reported that they are well aware of the concept and standards of quality life.

Table 3 Distribution of economic characteristic of nomads

Demographic Characteristics	Description of characteristics	N	%
Source of income	Beggary	22	22.0
	Own business	38	38.0
	Unemployed	21	21.0
	Any other	19	19.0
	Total	100	100.0
Monthly Income	Less than 4000	44	44.0
	More than 4000	22	22.0
	Less than 8000	12	12.0
	Above 8000	22	22.0
	Total	100	100.0

The economic characteristics of participants were presented in table 3 which indicates that nomads belong from different sources of income such as 22% were beggars, 38% have their own business and 21% were unemployed. Maximum 44% participants have less than 4000 and only 22% have 8000 or more monthly income.

Table 4 Distribution of culture characteristic of participants

Demographic Characteristics	Description of characteristics	N	%
Reasons for Migration	Traditional	9	9.0
	Financial	50	50.0
	socio-cultural	38	38.0
	Any other	3	3.0
	Total	100	100.0
Caste of participants	Balochi	10	10.0
	Gujjar	7	7.0
	Malang/fakir	12	12.0
	Any other	71	71.0
	Total	100	100.0
Mother language	Saraike	41	41.0
	Punjabi	34	34.0
	Any other	25	25.0
	Total	100	100.0
Cultural dressing patterns	Shalwar qameez	56	56.0
	Pant shirt	14	14.0
	Lungi kurta	11	11.0
	Any other	19	19.0
	Total	100	100.0

Table 4 presented the findings regarding cultural characteristics of the study participants as there are 50% participants reported financial reasons behind their migration from place to place and 38% reported socio-cultural reasons. A large proportion 71% belongs to various small portions from different castes and among them 41% were Saraike speaking and 34% Punjabi speaking. Furthermore, there are 56%

participants wearing Salwar kameez as the national dress of Pakistan and remaining chose pant shirts, lungi kurta among others.

SUMMARY REGARDING OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Responses regarding question 10 indicate that 69 percent women have to face harassment. 15 mental% of women are sexually abused. Other women are enduring physical harassment. They are stigmatizing. For example, a study's lead investigator presents a face to face interview and meets with respondents. 30 respondents were of lower caste belonging to Kanjar caste. The findings from question 12 relates to the problem of discrimination in society with the nomads. After collecting research data, 76% of nomads are facing this problem because of their social exclusion. This discrimination is based on 50% of the class system and 30% on grounds of caste and 20% are taking this problem because of other political and social reasons. Similarly, the question 24 indicates that 72% of respondents do not have their personal source to move from one place to another. Only 28 percent of respondents have a personal source, for example, animals and vehicles or any other source. Furthermore, question 35 shows that 56% of nomads have a dowry system. They give different things, for example, the home appliances or animals and money. They give dowry according to their culture.

DISCUSSION

The research is carried out to know about the life of nomadic societies. Interview programs were developed to measure their problems, pattern of living culture. Most of the people are illiterate. So your main reason behind poverty is education as the findings support the outcomes of Trupp et al., (2020), Woldoff et al., (2021) and Majeed et al., (2022). After analyzing and discussing this, the researcher found these key points such as the majority of the nomads are illiterate, large families, No technical skills, they have no permanent place, they have simple dress and that they never afford easily, they never fulfill their basic need. Most respondents were above the age group of 30 years. 14% of respondents belong to 15 to 20 years of age, 29% belong to the 21 and 25 and 16% belong to the age group of 26 to 30. Most men were married. In this research, mostly divorced women and widows were supporting their children alone and 95% of respondents were Muslims and 4% were Christians.

Most nomads were illiterate and 23% of respondents received madras education and 50% nomads migrate due to economic problems and 38% move because of the socio-cultural aspects. Only 9% nomads migrate due to traditions. 78% respondents do not migrate seasonally and just 22% migrate seasonally. Furthermore, 78% of respondents face socio economic problems in their new place. There are 55% respondent face the bad behavior of society which cause of their social exclusion and 58 % women face the problems in society and 69% female have to face harassment in the society. In this study 51% respondents do not have access to technical and social services. As highlighted earlier by Van et al., (2019), Kishore et al., (2020), Detter et al., (2021) and Kalra (2022). The major reason for their lack of access was the society discrimination and 26% nomads were deviant and did not follow the norms of society and also 76% nomads have to face discrimination in society, and this discrimination based on the caste gender and group.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics of Nomadic Community: A Case Study of District Layyah Punjab, Pakistan

Findings show that 67% nomads use the hand pump for the source of water and Sanitation was also a cause of problem for 72% of people. Majority of respondents do not have their formal community leader. Majority of respondents were not aware about their health issues, and do not have savings for health emergencies. They do not take proper treatment of their diseases and 38% of respondents have their own business and 44% of people with less than 4000 income, are living in huts.

CONCLUSION

The result of the research shows that most nomads have a low standard of living and are poor. The fundamental reason behind their poverty is their low level of education, without family planning, and no technical knowledge. If government and non-governmental organizations working for education and technically trained and improve their standard of living and participate in the country's progress. Education plays a key role in the socioeconomic development of the nomadic society. Despite the importance of education, many nomads have not embraced it. Mobility, lack of funds, poor curriculum design, and the dependence of the youth labor are some of the causes of the negligible share of the Fulani in education.

RECOMMENDATION

It is imperative to provide services for nomadic communities in the broader context of national development. If the channels used are permanent centers, units of mobile services, settlement programs or otherwise improving the quality of life of nomads through education, basic services, rangeland management, cooperatives and other programs should We should study thoroughly, and integrate and optimize projects and national development programs.

Governments of Pakistan must come up with integrated development programs for grazing, including improved range and water, animal husbandry and veterinary and better social services. In order to alleviate the sectoral disparity pastoralists suffer in education and other services, it is suggested that planners centrally wonder how they justify their actions, which are aimed to help and how you can determine that proper nomadic want. Instead of being exploited by urban centers, pastoral areas should be developed proportionally. Nomads should be assisted to improve production, productivity and income. They should provide social services such as education and services to improve the quality of life. Research, management, planning and investment arrangements and institutions should be established to enable pastoralists to achieve a viable and self-sustaining economy.

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