



Available Online at EScience Press

## Journal of South Asian Studies

ISSN: 2307-4000 (Online), 2308-7846 (Print)

<https://esciencepress.net/journals/JSAS>

### An Ethnoarchaeological Study: Continuity and Change in rituals of different Tribes of Mansehra

**Zara Zaib, Sadeed Arif***Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.**\*Corresponding Author Email ID: zarazeb22@gmail.com*

#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study is to provide an in-depth analysis of the continuity and change in the culture of Mansehra district, Pakistan. To achieve this objective, we used a range of primary and secondary sources. The primary data is gathered from answers to a developed questionnaire, personal observations of the author, fieldwork, interviews, and photographs. On the other hand, the secondary data used are articles, papers, and cultural collections in libraries and museums. The research methodology is qualitative, and the results indicate that people in the Mansehra district follow their cultural traditions strongly. However, the study also reveals that there has been a significant change in the way the rituals are performed. The paper concludes that the change is gradual and slow, highlighting the need for scholars to research this topic further. This research is significant because it provides valuable insights into the cultural changes occurring in Mansehra district over time. It will help researchers understand the dynamics of cultural change in the region, and it will open up new avenues for future research. Policymakers can also use the findings of this study to develop strategies that support cultural preservation and promote cultural diversity in the region.

**Keywords:** Culture, Continuity, Change, Tribes, Mansehra, Ethnoarchaeology.

#### INTRODUCTION

Archaeology has long been devoted to solving the riddles of the past and offering important insights into the past, particularly the history and culture of ancient civilizations. On the other hand, traditional archaeological methods often examine the physical remains of past locations, leaving a huge vacuum in our knowledge of modern communities' cultural practices and ways of life. Ethnoarchaeology, which combines archaeological research with anthropological inquiry to examine contemporary civilizations and their material culture, emerges as a potent instrument to close this gap (Imtiaz et al., 2023).

The picturesque Hazara area of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province includes the Mansehra District, overflowing with cultural variety and historical riches. Numerous indigenous tribes reside in the area, each with unique cultural practices, social structures, and material history (Wani & Wani, 2023). The Tanoli,

Jadoon, Swati, and Gujjar are a few of the major tribes in the region. These tribes have established lineages and clan systems that are important to their social structure. Tribal clusters dominate the district's demographic distribution, with each tribe predominantly dwelling in a certain region. For instance, the Jadoon tribe is concentrated in the Balakot and Matta tehsils, whereas the Tanoli tribe predominates in the Oghi and Mansehra tehsils. The Gujjar tribe, which is dispersed across the area, focuses mostly on farming and raising animals.

Due to its enormous historical and cultural relevance, the Mansehra District is an excellent location for an ethnoarchaeological inquiry (Figure 1). Throughout history, the region has served as a crossroads for several civilizations, creating a melting pot for diverse ethnic cultures. Mansehra has seen a complex tapestry of human connections, from the impact of illustrious historical empires like the Maurya, Kushan, and Gandhara to the effect of ancient trade routes linking

Central Asia, China, and the Indian subcontinent (Nasim Khan, 2019).

The tribal traditions, beliefs, and rituals are reflected in the cultural practices of the tribes in the Mansehra District. Each tribe has a unique set of birth, marriage, and death rituals that are engrained in the social structure of that tribe. These traditions often help to sustain a feeling of group identity and to strengthen

social cohesiveness (Torwali, 2021). Another distinguishing feature of the district's cultural environment is its linguistic variety. Each tribe has its own unique language or dialect, which helps to preserve its cultural legacy via storytelling and oral traditions. To preserve a feeling of identity and belonging among the tribal people, language is essential (Riaz et al., 2022).

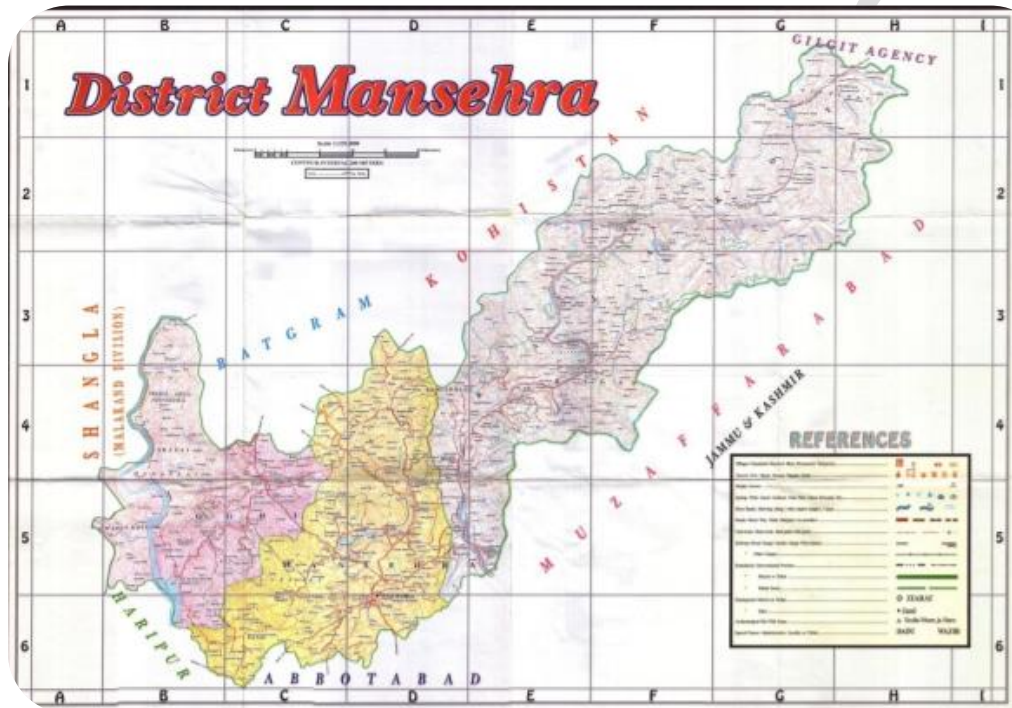


Figure 1. Map of District Mansehra.

Depending on where they live geographically and how they live, different tribes in the Mansehra District have different roles in agriculture, hunting, and collecting in their livelihood. Agriculture is the main means of livelihood for settled tribes like the Tanoli. Cultivated crops provide these populations with a reliable food supply and a means of subsistence. Hunting and gathering are essential to sustaining nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes like the Gujjar and Jadoon (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Cultural heritage preservation is essential for maintaining the tribes' distinctive identities and customs, to start with. The study serves as a storehouse of knowledge by meticulously recording their cultural practices and material legacy, protecting priceless facets of their cultural heritage from future degradation or loss. Throughout the research process, local tribes were

actively involved to ensure that their views were heard, their concerns were taken seriously, and their agency was respected. Through this participatory process, the tribes develop a feeling of pride in and ownership over their cultural legacy. These communities may actively participate in heritage management efforts by being informed about their own history. They may be a key player in the decision-making process, ensuring that preservation efforts are in line with their values, goals, and requirements for sustainable development.

In Mansehra District, the ethnoarchaeological study of many tribes is very important on many levels. Protecting cultural heritage, revealing historical truths, advancing academic understanding, and strengthening local communities are all benefits of this work. The research highlights the crucial role that modern tribes play in forming the region's common human story and its rich

cultural variety by bridging the gap between the past and present. It also praises the cultural diversity of Mansehra.

This research aims to examine the perceptual values of persons in relation to an ethnoarchaeological study of the many tribes that reside in the Mansehra District. This is both the aim and the objective of the study. The primary goals of this research are as follows to critically analysis the tribe or caste origin and their interrelation and for analysis of the culture of the district Mansehra.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study utilizes ethnoarchaeology to explore the indigenous tribes living in the Mansehra District. In order to accomplish our research objectives, we highlight the significance of statistical analysis and data management approaches. For the validity of our results to be assured, the study's methodology must be accurate and reliable. We go through the study's methodology, participant screening, and data processing techniques.

#### **Research Design**

Based on the special characteristics of the data acquired for the research, we selected a quantitative method to assure efficiency in data gathering and analysis. The utilization of ethnographic techniques, such as participant observation and interviews, allows for a thorough knowledge of the social structures and beliefs of the tribes (Pyo et al., 2023). The study follows the positivist research paradigm, emphasizing the measurement and assessment of knowledge via the use of quantitative data analysis. The study subject is compatible with this methodology, which is why it was selected. We favor quantitative data analysis for this research even if qualitative research may supplement ethnographic investigation.

#### **Nature of the study**

In order to collect data, we used quantitative techniques and both allowed and unauthorized data sets. In order to study several facets of the tribes in Mansehra District, quantifiable data from participants was gathered using a questionnaire-based survey approach. Inductive and exploratory methods are also used in our study. Through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, it seeks to provide a thorough picture of the tribes' culture and customs.

#### **Research Methods**

Statistical data were used to assess the assumptions that were developed using deductive reasoning. To choose a

representative sample of respondents from the various tribes in the Mansehra District, we used cluster sampling.

#### **Unit of Analysis**

Individual respondents from diverse tribes serve as the analysis's analytical unit. Our overall research conclusions will be influenced by the information we get from these people. Our study examines changes throughout time and current circumstances using both longitudinal and cross-sectional methods across a given time period.

#### **Data Collection and Analysis**

A questionnaire that was carefully created and verified to verify its ability to capture pertinent data was used to collect the study's data. Interviewees' information was collected by distributing the questionnaire among local community and Hazara University Mansehra. Because it is the only University in Mansehra district, where the students and employees belong to different tribes and Tehsil making it valuable source of Participant. They were originally told of the nature and goals of the study in order to guarantee their enthusiastic and motivated involvement. There are two parts to the questionnaire for this study. The demographics of the participants are covered in section 1, while section 2 is divided into four subsections: general, caste origin and relations, culture, similarities and differences, and general. The Likert scale is used to determine the degree to which respondents agree with particular propositions. The data is analyzed by using the SPSS software.

#### **Response Rate**

We sent 600 questionnaires for this research, and the respondents completed 500 of them, giving us a response rate of 83%. This is sufficient for the data analysis.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect data for the Ethnoarchaeological studies of the peoples of Mansehra District. The results are presented below.

#### **Demographic data of participants**

We sent 600 questionnaires for this research, and the respondents completed 500 of them. Table (1) show the demographic data of the participants. According to the results, out of 500 participants, 325 (65%) respondents were female and remaining 175 (35%) were male. Presented data in the table shows that 463 (92.6%) out of 500 respondents belonged to the Mansehra, 10 (2.0%) belong to Oghi and 24 (4.8%) belong to other areas. The

results presented in the table showed that 108 (21.6%) out of 500 respondents belongs to Sawati caste, 85 (17%) of the respondents belong to Abbasi caste. Among the respondents, 30 (3.6%) belong to Syed caste, the lowest among all. Data regarding the age group of respondents showed that majority of the respondents (43.2%) belong to the age group between 29-39 years.

And the lowest number of respondents (1%) belong to age group between 79-89 years. Data regarding the participants educational background showed that 115 (23%) of the respondents had Bachelor degree, 106 (21.2%) had Master degree and 89 (17.8%) had MS degree. Among the respondents, 2 (0.4%) were recorded as illiterate (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Participants.

| Demographic Features | Frequency (%) |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Gender               |               |
| • Male               | 175 (35)      |
| • Female             | 325 (65)      |
| Area/ Tehsil         |               |
| • Balakot            | 2 (0.4)       |
| • Haripur            | 1 (0.2)       |
| • Mansehra           | 463 (92.6)    |
| • Oghi               | 10 (2.0)      |
| • Other              | 24 (4.8)      |
| Caste/ Tribe         |               |
| • Abbasi             | 85 (17)       |
| • Awan               | 65 (13)       |
| • Jadoon             | 33 (6.6)      |
| • Gujjar             | 61 (12.2)     |
| • Karals             | 48 (9.6)      |
| • Lodhi              | 35 (7)        |
| • Swati              | 108 (21.6)    |
| • Syed               | 18 (3.6)      |
| • Tanoli             | 47 (9.4)      |
| Age                  |               |
| • 19-29              | 175 (35)      |
| • 29-39              | 216 (43.2)    |
| • 39-49              | 63 (12.6)     |
| • 49-59              | 16 (3.2)      |
| • 59-69              | 15 (3)        |
| • 69-79              | 10 (2)        |
| • 79-89              | 5 (1)         |
| Education            |               |
| • Under matric       | 71 (14.2)     |
| • Matric             | 24 (4.8)      |
| • Intermediate       | 66 (13.2)     |
| • Bachelor           | 115 (23)      |
| • Masters            | 106 (21.2)    |
| • M.S                | 89 (17.8)     |
| • Ph.D               | 27 (5.4)      |
| • Illiterate         | 2 (0.4)       |

For the Ethnoarchaeological studies of peoples of Mansehra District, respondents were asked several questions. The following is the analysis and outcome of the data collected from the respondents.

#### **Is the tribal system still enrooted in the community of Mansehra?**

Our finding revealed that majority of the respondents (87.6%) agree with the statement that the tribal system

is still firmly enrooted in the Mansehra community. Among the respondents, 26 (5.2%) strongly agree and 23 (4.6%) neutral to the statement. According to our finding the respondents who disagree and strongly

disagree with the statement were in minor number. About 9 (1.8%) respondents disagree with the statement and 4 (0.8%) strongly disagree with the statement (Table 2).

Table 2. Questioner related to origin and cultural values of different tribes of Mansehra.

| Question's Statement  | Strongly Disagree Frequency (%) | Disagree Frequency (%) | Neutral Frequency (%) | Agree Frequency (%) | Strongly Agree Frequency (%) | Total Frequency (%) |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Tribal system is still enrooted in the community of Mansehra          | 4 (0.8%)                        | 9 (1.8%)               | 23 (4.6%)             | 438 (87.6%)         | 26 (5.2%)                    | 500 (100%)          |
| Is the community of Mansehra holds the culture of different regions?  | 15 (3.0%)                       | 145 (29.0%)            | 109 (21.8%)           | 193 (38.6%)         | 38 (7.6%)                    | 500 (100%)          |
| Many folktales are there about the development of Mansehra community  | 1 (0.2%)                        | 30 (6.0%)              | 39 (7.8%)             | 381 (76.2%)         | 49 (9.8%)                    | 500 (100%)          |
| There are lots of traditional foods are still present in the Mansehra | 3 (0.6%)                        | 10 (2.0%)              | 16 (3.2%)             | 330 (66.0%)         | 141 (28.2%)                  | 500 (100%)          |
| All the main tribes are of same origin                                | 20 (4.0%)                       | 317 (63.4%)            | 97 (19.4%)            | 49 (9.8%)           | 17 (3.4%)                    | 500 (100%)          |
| Tribes are submerged into each other with the passage of time         | 6 (1.2%)                        | 22 (4.4%)              | 41 (8.2%)             | 388 (77.6%)         | 43 (8.6%)                    | 500 (100%)          |
| Intra-tribe marriages are considered common in the region             | 1 (0.2%)                        | 38 (7.6%)              | 24 (4.8%)             | 362 (72.4%)         | 75 (15.0%)                   | 500 (100%)          |
| Each tribe have different signature food                              | 2 (0.4%)                        | 20 (4.0%)              | 23 (4.6%)             | 406 (81.2%)         | 49 (9.8%)                    | 500 (100%)          |
| All tribes possess same ethnicity                                     | 6 (1.2%)                        | 100 (20.0%)            | 102 (20.4%)           | 252 (50.4%)         | 40 (8.0%)                    | 500 (100%)          |
| Each tribe possesses its unique language                              | 2 (0.4%)                        | 10 (2.0%)              | 26 (5.2%)             | 283 (56.6%)         | 179 (35.0%)                  | 500 (100%)          |
| Women's jewelry and ornaments are different for different tribes      | 6 (1.2%)                        | 18 (3.6%)              | 40 (8.0%)             | 275 (55.0%)         | 161 (32.2%)                  | 500 (100%)          |

**Is the community of Mansehra holds the culture of different regions?**

The results of our study demonstrated that 193 (38.6%) respondents agree with the statement that the community of Mansehra holds the culture of different regions. Among the respondents 38 (7.6%) strongly agree and 109 (21.8%) neutral to the statement. About 149 (29.0%) respondents disagree with the statement and limited number of respondents 15 (3.0) strongly disagree with the statement (Table 2).

**Many folktales are there about the development of Mansehra community**

It became evident from our investigation that significant proportion of respondents 381 (76.2%) agree with the statement about folktales contribution in the development of Mansehra community. Among the

respondents 49 (9.8%) strongly agree and 39 (7.8%) neutral to the statement. Out of 500 respondents, 30 (6.0%) expressed their disagreement with the statement and only 1 (0.2%) strongly disagree with the statement (Table 2).

**There are lots of traditional foods still present in the Mansehra**

The data presented in our study indicated that majority of the respondents (66%) agree with the statement that traditional foods still present in the Mansehra. Among the 500 respondents, 141 (28.25) strongly agree and 16 (3.25) neutral to the statement. Only 10 (2.0%) respondents disagree and 3 (0.6%) strongly disagree with the statement (Table 2).

**All the main tribes are of same origin**

The finding of our study shows that a significant

proportion (63.4%) of respondents disagree with the statement that all the main tribes are of same origin and 20 respondents (4.0%) strongly disagree with the statement. On the other hand, 49 (9.8%) agree and 17 (3.4%) strongly agree with the statement. Out of 500 participants, 97 (19.4%) respondents neutral to the statement (Table 2).

#### **Tribes are submerged into each other with passage of time**

The data presented in our study indicated that 388 (77.6%) respondents agree and 43 (8.6%) strongly agree with the statement that tribes are submerged into each other with the passage of time. On the other hand, 41(8.2%) respondents disagree and 6 (1.2%) strongly disagree with the statement. Forty-one participants, which accounts for 8.2 % of total respondents had a neutral stance towards the statement in question (Table 2).

#### **Intra-tribe marriages are considered common in the region**

The data presented in our study indicated that significant proportion of respondents (72.4%) agree with the statement that intra-tribe marriages are considered common in the region. Out of 500 participants, 75 (15.0%) respondents strongly agree and 24 (4.8%) neutral to the statement. In contrast, 38 (7.6%) respondents disagree and only 1 (0.2%) respondent strongly disagree with the statement (Table 2).

#### **Each tribe have different signature foods**

Our investigation highlighted that 406 (81.2%) respondents agree with the statement that each tribe have different signature food. Among the respondents, 49 (9.8%) strongly agree and 23 (4.6%) neutral to the statement. On the other hand, 20 (4.0%) respondents disagree with the statement and only 2 (0.4%) strongly disagree (Table 2).

#### **All tribes possess the same ethnicity**

The results of our study demonstrated that 252 (50.4%) respondents agree with the statement that each tribe is made up of members of the same ethnic group. Among those who provided feedback 40 (8.0%) strongly agree and 102 (20.4%) neutral to the statement. In contrast, 100 (20.0%) respondents disagree with the statement and 6 (1.2%) strongly disagree (Table 2).

#### **Each tribe possess its unique language**

Our investigation highlighted that 283 (56.6%) respondents agree and 179 (35.0%) strongly agree with the statement that each tribe possess its unique

language. On the other hand, 10 (2.0%) disagree, 2 (0.4%) strongly disagree and 26 (5.2%) neutral to the statement (Table 2).

#### **Women Jewelry and Ornaments are different for different tribes**

It became evident from our study that 275 (55.0%) respondents agree and 161 (32.2%) strongly agree with the statement that women jewelry and ornaments are different for different tribes. Within those who responded, 18 (3.6%) disagree, 6 (1.2%) strongly disagree and 40 (8.0%) neutral to statement (Table 2).

#### **DISCUSSION**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province, is the northernmost province in Pakistan. Pakistan has borders with Afghanistan to the west and north, Pakistan-controlled Kashmiri areas of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan to the east and northeast, and Afghanistan to the south and southeast. Towards the province's western boundary, near to the Afghan border, lie the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), a collection of territories that are ethnically similar to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but were semiautonomous until 2018. Peshawar is the provincial capital. The size of the province is 39,282 sq. km (101,741 square km).

Mansehra has several ethnic groupings. Gujar, Swati, Tanoli, Syed, and Awan. The inhabitants eat mostly locally cultivated wheat, maize, and rice. "Salan"—curry—is the major element in rice or wheat bread dishes (rotti). Locals wear shalwar's, kameez, and turbans. Women wear shalwar, kameez, and chaddar or dupatta. Mansehra has several tribes and khels. People are different, like the landscape. Some have been here the longest, some lately. The latter group came to the middle ages. Others invaded and settled here. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Mansehra district. Cultural and ethnic diversity characterize the district. This anthropological research examined Mansehra tribes and their cultural customs. Mansehra has Swati, Gujjar, Karlal, Tanoli, and Hazara tribes. These tribes have distinct customs and languages. The Swati tribe is the biggest in the area, but the Hazara tribe has the most unique culture and history (Khazanachi, 2004).

Mansehra southern Swati tribe dominates. They adore poetry, hospitality, and courage. The Swati people have helped build the area throughout history. Their turban, shalwar kameez, and waistcoat are equally renowned. Most tribal members speak Pashto-based Swati. Another

famous Mansehra tribe is the Gujjar. They are nomads and cattle-lovers. Gujjars go to find greener pastures for their livestock. Their needlework and handicrafts are unique. Most tribal members speak Punjabi-based Gujjar (Junaid & Mehmood, 2023). Mansehra's most unique tribe is Hazara. They're mostly at the district's center. Hazara culture and history are unique. They may be descendants of 13th-century Mongol invaders (Emadi, 1997). Hazaras look like Mongolians. Their needlework and handicrafts are unique. Most Hazaragis speak a Persian dialect called Hazaragi. Mansehra district is mostly Muslim. Small Hindu and Sikh communities exist. Sunni, Shia, and Ismaili Muslims exist. The district's major sect is Sunni, followed by Shia and Ismaili.

Mansehra's cuisine is diverse. Chapli kabab, pulao, and mutton karahi are native specialties. Most meals are cooked over firewood or charcoal. Mansehra residents serve meals on a "dastarkhwan" and dine together. This communal dining custom shows the district's friendliness and compassion. When Hinduism took over, these people converted from Buddhism. Middle Age Muslims introduced Islam to them. Mansehra's people speak Hindko, Pashto, Gojri, and Urdu. Urdu, the national language, is spoken with Hindko, Pashto, and Gojri (Liljegren & Akhunzada, 2017).

#### CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the tribes in the Mansehra region, including their history, culture, differences, food, attire, and shared and unique traits. The results of our study show that most respondents believe that the tribal system is strongly embedded in the Mansehra group. The majority of responders agree with the assertion that Mansehra still maintains its traditional culture and cuisine. The tribes have merged as a consequence of time passing and many indigenous tribes have grown to have their own distinctive traditions. According to the research, each tribe has its own unique culture, traditions, rituals, celebrations, special cuisine, unique language, and unique geographic location.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is the PhD research work of the first author. All the authors contributed in experimentation, plan of research, write up etc. There exists no conflict of interests. We are also thankful to the anonymous reviewers for helping to improve this manuscript.

#### REFERENCES

- Ahmad, A., Ali, A., & Mannan, A. (2022). Mountain Forests and their Significance. *Mountain Studies: Understanding and Managing Mountains for People and Nature*, 97.
- Emadi, H. (1997). The Hazaras and their role in the process of political transformation in Afghanistan. *Central Asian Survey*, 16(3), 363-387.
- Imtiaz, H., Raza, S., Baig, S., & Zahra, K. (2023). Ethnoarchaeological study of the artifacts discovered from Pind Kahoot Mound, district Chakwal, Punjab, Pakistan. *South Asian Studies*, 1-18.
- Junaid, B. D. M. U., & Mehmood, S. (2023). Managing gujar tribe familial lineage of Mansehra. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 7(7), 317-325.
- Khazanchi, T. (2004). Our Earliest Ancestors. *Kashmir and It's People: Studies in the Evolution of Kashmiri Society*, 4, 1.
- Liljegren, H., & Akhunzada, F. (2017). Linguistic diversity, vitality and maintenance: A case study on the language situation in northern Pakistan. *Multiethnica. Meddelande från Centrum för multi-etnisk forskning, Uppsala universitet*(36-37), 61-79.
- Nasim Khan, M. (2019). Buddhism in Gandhāra: Text vs. Architectural Space and Iconography The Case of the Buddhist Site of Aziz Dheri. *Buddhist monasteries of South Asia and China*, 87-102.
- Pyo, J., Lee, W., Choi, E. Y., Jang, S. G., & Ock, M. (2023). Qualitative research in healthcare: necessity and characteristics. *Journal of preventive medicine and public health*, 56(1), 12.
- Riaz, W., Jabeen, T., Afreen, S., & Abbasi, A. S. (2022). Role of society in language change: A phonological perspective of pahari language. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 19(3), 360-369.
- Torwali, Z. (2021). The Dards, Dardistan and its linguistic diversity. *Pashto*, 50(662).
- Wani, M. A., & Wani, A. A. (2023). *The Making of Early Kashmir: Intercultural Networks and Identity Formation*. Taylor and Francis.