

# SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT & CHANGE IN THE HUNZA VALLEY

A STUDY OF GHULKIN

Part 1

Fazal Amin Beg

## Abstract

This study presents a holistic picture of the development and change from the people's perspective in the mountain society of Hunza valley by taking the village of Ghulkin as a case study and the AKRSP's intervention year in the rural settlement [1983] as a reference point. Development and changes are seen against different indicators within the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental realms. Many facets of this study could be generalized on the development and change in the regional contexts.

## 1. Introduction

If humankind (and their interests) are the source of their society's formation, it is then the humankind themselves, who can determine, bring and manage change, and move ahead at individual and collective levels. There could be three ways of bringing societal change: internally motivated or forced; externally motivated or imposed; and/or the blend of the first and second approaches. Effective and sustained societal change could be brought only if changes come or are brought first in human minds. Minds would accept the change only when they perceive the needs, get motivated and wish for the change. Without bringing change in human minds and/or stirring up the mindsets, societal change may not be more effective or sustainable because a society—whether a rural, urban or a blend of both—fosters diverse views and thoughts (supportive, opposing and latent) of its dwellers possessing different backgrounds and interests (e.g., familial, ethnical, lingual, religious, financial, political or otherwise). In such circumstances, around the diverse interests, the roles and functions of some social groups at different levels become very crucial who lead, guide, advise and represent their members on various options and directions.

This study is about a small but an impressive rural society, a village called Ghulkin of the Hunza valley in the Karakoram region. Ghulkin was previously unsettled by humans except for the existence of other biodiversities. For the first time, emigrants with different descent groups came here in varying periods from different geographical regions such as Central Asia, South Asia and China; and founded the settlement. One can imagine how the societal composition of different human entities would have shaped this settlement with the course of time. Since its inception, the apical ancestors of different descent groups engaged themselves in the developmental activities of their rural society by constructing the water channels, bridges and footpaths in the arduous terrains in absence of any adequate tools; in building their houses and developing/leveling the lands; raising the livestock and having transhumance; in cultivating crops and celebrating festivities and rituals; in regulating the society and representing their clans, in confronting each other and preventing/resolving conflicts, in having the corporate and forced laboring and so on.

In its history of not more than three hundred years, the Ghulkin society, like others in the valley, encountered with and witnessed different experiences and phenomena, critical and normal, and progrened ahead. The societal change has been observed through a reference-point before us, against which measurement the previous and post development is seen comparatively. In the context of Ghulkin (also entire Hunza), we find various events as reference points in historical perspective. For instance, 1824 CE: the first Ismali Mir (ruler), Silum Khan-III's death and peoples' conversion to Shi'a Ismaili faith; 1891: the British campaign against and occu-



Fig 1: A view of Ghulkin valley

pation of the former principalities of Hunza and Nager; 1912: establishment of the first ever primary school in Hunza [Baltit] by the British-Indian government; 1921-22: visit of Agha Abdul Samad, His Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan-III's representative, to Hunza and China; 1940: the peoples of Gojal's revolt (excluding Gulmit and Ghulkin) under Arbob Adob Khon of Passu against the injustices in the chieftdom and demands for reduction in taxes; 1946: establishment of the Diamond Jubilee schools in Hunza by His Highness, Aga Khan-III; 1960: the visit of the first ever Imam of the Ismaili community, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan, to Hunza; 1974: the abolition of the Principality of Hunza by Zulfqar Ali Bhutto; 1978: the opening up of the Karakoram Highway (KKH); 1983: the development intervention of the Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) in the village of Ghulkin; and the like.

Among the above important turning-point in regional context, I have chosen the AKRSP's intervention year

(1983) as a reference-point, which proved both internal and external motivation source for the community to bring societal change. Second, post-AKRSP intervention year in all its history could be observed as an “era of rapid societal development and change” in the village as well as in the region. Some critics may argue that it was either the KKH or abolition of the princely state that brought change in the region and the regional change affected in the village’s development. I would partially agree with them; but we cannot give the sole credit to either the road-communication (KKH) or the abolition of the state. Sticking with the reference point, this paper tries to explore development and change in Ghulkin around different parameters/indicators within social, economic, environmental and cultural realms.

## 2. An Account about the Locale

Ghulkin, a village of Lower Gojal<sup>1</sup>, is situated on the west of the Hunza River in the Karakoram. The village is entrapped<sup>2</sup> naturally by and between the glaciers and glaciers’ streams: to the north by Ghulkin-Hussaini glacier, and to the south by Gulmit glacier. Within the main settlement, Ghulkin is bifurcated by the *Rawd*, water emanating in the spring season from the glacier and flowing from the middle of the settlement. To the West of Rawd are Suru Diyor (Upper village) and Pastu Diyor (Lower village); to the South lies the Abdulloh Khon-e Shawaran (polo-ground of Abdullah Khan) and Chunum, snout of the village. To the East and North-east of the Rawd are Matur Kits and Nachirey Diyor. Besides, there are also the sub-villages named as Žųų Šıı (the lake area), Suru Jinal (Upper Jangle), Pastu Jinal (*Lower Jangle*), Chatghust and Ghushtik Bushay that lie in the south, east and northeast of the main village respectively.

The link road<sup>3</sup> of the village from the Karakoram Highway (KKH), is almost 142 kilometers away from Gilgit city. The village is then accessed through its the link road by ascending further 3 km from the KKH at Ghush-tik Bushay—currently not a communal residential area but future’s commercial center of the village. Ghustik Bushay is that particular place on the KKH where the land of Serena Hotel was bought by Prince Ayn Muhammad, Aga Khan, in 1989 and the hotel is expected to be constructed in the future.

There are currently (in September 2009) 153 households in the village with a population of 1185 individuals<sup>4</sup>. According to a conservative calculation, the literary rate of the village is above 75% while 100% of the children (male and female) do attend the three types of schools: Diamond Jubilee (DJ) middle school, government primary school, and Nasir Khusraw Model Academy. In addition, religious education is also given to the students in the religious centers. Ghulkin has also an attractive *jamatkhana* (prayer-hall). The government has facilitated the village with a basic health facility, a first-aid post.

The language spoken in the village is Wakhi—a language of the old Eastern Iranian Stock within the Pamiri group. All community members presently speak the same language and have same religious affinity, being

<sup>1</sup> Lower Gojal signifies here the villages from Passu to Shishkat: that are, Passu, Khuramabod, Zarabod, Sisuni (now named as Hussaini), Borit, Ghulkin, Gulmit, Shishkat and Ghawušben(now as Ayinabad).

<sup>2</sup> Besides, people of the village have also their land in Borit and Qara Chanay, Khunzhrav valley.

<sup>3</sup> The jeeb-able link road of Ghulkin was constructed for the first time in 1962; then made tractor-able in the first half of 1980; and currently the road is being expanded for the trucks.

<sup>4</sup> In 2006, the population of Ghulkin was 1098 with 145 households (Shia Ismaili Council for Gulmit).

the Shia Ismailis, but it is interesting to note that the social environment of the village is further composed of and colored by different descent groups and ethnicities coming from different regions and localities.

Population-wise, there are two big descent-groups in the village called *Busing Ktor*<sup>5</sup> having 79 households and *Nakhchirey* comprised of 45 households. The apical ancestor of the former was Khoja Ahmadi Busing who is said to have come from Darwoz (Darwozi speaker); while the apical ancestor of Nakhchirey, named Palwon Zanchi<sup>6</sup>, immigrated to Ghulkin from the Shigar valley of Baltistan (a Balti speaker). The Busing descent group has three sub-clans known as Bakht Ktor (37 households), Qerghez Ktor (22 households) and Cheqer Ktor (20 households). The Nachirey clan has four sub-groups named as Khalifa Ktor, Qurbon Shoh Ktor, Dinor Ktor (also as Shor Ktor) and Mamusing Ktor.

Four other descent groups, came in the village from different regions, have allied with the two sub-clans of Busing: Bakht Ktor and Qirghez Ktor. These allied clans are called *Buduley* (also called *Budul Ktor*: 13 households), *Abdullah Khan Kuts*<sup>7</sup> (4 households),

*Matur Kuts*<sup>8</sup> (8 households), and *Shotman Kuts* (4 households) within *Maltashey*<sup>9</sup>. The apical ancestor of Buduley or Budul clan is said to have come to Gulmit from the Chaprot valley in Nager; and then two brothers, named Khuram Shoh and Bodur Shoh<sup>10</sup> were settled in Ghulkin. The apical ancestor of Abdullah Khan s/o Mir Silum Khan-III<sup>11</sup> was Ayashum Ayasho [Shoh Khon] who has been brought from Darwoz of Afghanistan in order to rule the Hunza State. The apical ancestor of Matur Kuts (or Matur Kitsik), named Yighul Matur, has emigrated from Tung of Sariqol to Tashkurghan [both places in Xinjiang], and from Tashkurghan to Chipursan and then finally he settled at Ghulkin. The ancestor of Shotman Kuts has come to Ghulkin from Manich of Yasin Valley. This descent group also links itself, paternally or maternally, with the Diramting tribe of Baltit.

All these clans and sub-clans thus do maintain covert and overt roles and function, which give them a pride, prominence and identity in their society. On the other, they also significantly influence and dominate the societal development in Ghulkin.

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<sup>5</sup> Ktor in Wakhi, Guru in Farsi and Kuts in Burushaski signify the descent group (i.e., either lineage, or clan/tribe). Besides, kuts in Burushaski also denotes someone's geographical relation: e.g., Hundzu kuts means (dweller) of Hunza, or Baltit kuts, dweller of Baltit.

<sup>6</sup> The apical ancestor of the Nakhchirey was Palwon Zanchi but became famous with Nakhchirey. The suffix "-ey" indicates Ktor or lineage or clan affiliation. Thus, Nakhchir means "fox" and Nakhchirey means "from the foxy's descent group. Historically, Palwon Zanchi came along with the then Mir (ruler) to Ghulkin and liked this place. and the Mir gave him land here.

<sup>7</sup> Abdullah Khan lived in Ghulkin in the nineteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> The sub-descent groups are Bai Mamud guru in Ghulkin, Dardaw guru in Gulmit and Gul Badan kuts in Altit.

<sup>9</sup> Maltaşey [Maltashey] is a tribe in Manich, Yasin valley. One of the clan members named Nawbahar Shah came from Yasin five generations before and settled in Ghulkin in alliance with Bakht Ktor.

<sup>10</sup> Historically, to counter or balance the power of the opposite sub-clan of Nakhchirey (called Qurbon Shoh Ktor), two brothers named Khuram Shoh and Bodur Shoh s/o Hassan Ali (five generations before) of the Budul clan were taken to Ghulkin from Gulmit on special request to the then Mir by the elders of Bakht ktor, as the siblings' paternal family was politically strong (remained as the headmen); and on the other, siblings' mother was from Bakht Ktor.

<sup>11</sup> Mir Silum Khan-III was the first Ismaili ruler of Hunza. Living in Gulmit in the house of his foster brother named, Arbob Bai Nazar, Mir Silum Khan passed way in 1824; and the Ismaili tradition of Chirogh Roshan, was performed for the first time. The house still exists with name of Khalifa Aliyar's house.

Politically, besides a small number of neutral group, there are two strong groups affiliated with the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Ghulkin has a union councilor represented in the respective union council for Lower Gojal.

Above all, there are numerous voluntary setups whereby hundreds of volunteers work for the social, economical, religious, cultural and environmental development of their society. Significant among them are the village and women organizations (VWOs), local clergies (*Mukhi, Kamarria, Khalifas*), member of the Ismaili Council for Gulmit; Ghulkin Educational, Social Welfare and Nature's Conservation Association (GESWNCA)—the umbrella organizations of the village, the uniformed volunteer groups of the Aga Khan Volunteer Corps, Boys Scout, Girls Guide, Board of Governors of the community school (Nasir-e Khusraw school), committees of other schools and so on.

### 2.1 The toponym and the etymological interpretation

The two syllables toponym of Ghulkin is composed of compound words, *ghul* and *kin*. It depicts different meanings in different related languages; and they almost hold true contextually. As mentioned earlier, there is no aboriginal descent group in the settlement, rather they have historically come from different regions with different ethno-linguistic identities such as Pamiri, Dardic, Burusho, Tibetan and Turks. It is noteworthy, however, that the academic exercises of the etymologies derived out and interpreted hereunder may not be termed final.

*Ghul* in Arabic means "giant", "ogre" or "demon"; and *kin/keen* in Farsi means "rancor", "spite", and "revenge". Both these coined words signify as "giant's or ogre's rancor or revenge." In the folklores of the region, we often come across the stories of the giant, ogre or demons; and the tug-of-war and animosity between [the spirits versus humans or vice versa. In Ghulkin's context, the folklores, narrated by the respondents, describe that when Khoja Ahmadi Busing, came for the first time in this village, he was along with his immediate family. Some respondents say: "Khoja Ahmadi controlled the evil- spirits such as giants, demons or ogres and involved them for the construction of the Ghulkin irrigation channel, which were seen at that time by the women of Busing's family when they carried lunch at the construction venue."

Second, *kin* in Farsi is also an abbreviation of "*ki in*" means "that (which is) this." When *ghul*, as explained above, joins its second syllable, then Ghulkin gives meaning of "that, this is the giant or ogre or demon." The land, when it was unsettled, could have been the "land of giants, ogres and demons." The folklores are in abundance in this regard, as mentioned in the first interpretation.

Third, there is also another word in Arabic called "*ghull*", which means "Iron collar"; "chains"; "yoke"; and *kin* in Farsi for "rancor", "spite", "revenge" or "hostility". In this way, the coined words of *ghul-kin* gives us meaning of "yoked or chained in revenge or rancor or spite." When we look into the respondents' narratives with regard to their societal evolution and development, it becomes clear that these heterogynous clans coming from different regions with different ethnicities got problem of recognizing each other's existence. The strife could be observed from a historical account. The respondents narrate that because of the inter-clan tussles and strife in the village—and consequently to counter or balance the power, the opposite sub-clan of

Nakhchirey called *Qurbon Shoh Ktor*, two brothers named Khuram Shoh and Bodur Shoh s/o Hassan Ali (five generations before) of the Budul clan were taken to Ghulkin from Gulmit on special request to the then Mir by the *Bakht Ktor*. This was done so because the siblings' mother was from the Bakht Ktor of Ghulkin; and more particularly because the siblings' paternal family was politically dominant, being the *arbobs* (headmen), in Gulmit (the second capital of the former principality). In brief, "*Ghulkin*" could therefore also mean "yoked or chained in [clan] rancor or revenge or strife". The influence of clanism, as is for other villages of the region, too, could be observed even today.

Fourth (Wakhi-Wakhi): "Ghul" in Wakhi is for "group", or "gathering in circular-form" too. When *ghul* combines with the second word *kin* (of Fars & Wakhi), it gives us the meaning as "group(s) in rancor, spite or revenge". Connotatively, the explanations have been made above (in third) whether rancor, spite or revenge is *among the evil-spirits* or *among the humans (inter-clans)* or *between the evil spirits and the humans*. Furthermore, *kin* in Wakhi also means "whose". In this manner, Ghul-kin means "Whose group."

Fifth (Burushaski-Farsi/Wakhi): "Ghulk" in Burushaski (and also in Wakhi) means a "pond." When *ghulk* joins the second part *kin*, then it means "pond of rancor, spite and revenge or animosity".

Sixth (Burushaski-Burushaski): There is another Burushaski word *khan* [*i.e., kan*], which means "settlement". In this way, *Ghulk-khan* gives us the meaning of "pond-like settlement". The landscape of the main settlement of Ghulkin is like *ghulk-khan*.

Seven (Burushaski-Burushaski): When *in(e)* of Burushaski meaning "his", joins "*ghulk*", then Ghulkin signifies as "*his pond*."

Eight (Burushaski-Farsi): if the second syllable "in" of Farsi becomes prominent with the first syllable of Burushaski *ghulk*, then Ghulkin gives a sense as "*This Pond*." Eight: when *ghulk* combines with the Wakhi *kin* (means "whose"), then *Ghulk-kin* means "*whose pond*."

### **3. Societal Pictures before and after AKRSP's Intervention Year**

The prevailing situations before and after the AKRRSP's intervention year at Ghulkin are seen around different parameters, that clearly shows societal change from its previous state to the present.

#### **3.1 Social Organization**

Before the AKRSP's intervention in the village, the people, like other societies, organized around their interests at the level of descent groups (families, lineages, clans) and village, besides their age-grade or friendship associations. The community would diverge on different issues, but for their communal interests, they converged again. Politically, the people would organize around the *arbob* (headman of the village, and performed their tasks at community level such as the involuntary or forced laboring (called *ashar*) in the fiefdom. There wasn't however any adequate or truly representative platform whereby the whole community members could openly and democratically participate, express themselves and discuss their common issues.

When the AKRSP arrived in the village in 1983 that provided the community, for the first time, the collective forums in the form of village and women organizations (V/WOs), as one of the community leaders expresses

proudly:

"When the AKRSP began its development intervention in the village, it firstly started organizing the community around one platform each for male and female by forming the Village and Women WVO), in 1983 and 1984 respectively; and advised us to hold regular our weekly meetings, deposit and maintain our savings, openly discuss our common issues, and make effective and agreed resolutions to address those issues and challenges."

A VO member says: *"It was a time when the people had no money; and few people had seen the currency notes."* *"We initially started our saving from half a rupee and one rupee only. While we had no money, we would sell eggs and save the money in our WO account"*, a WO member describes.

Commenting on the previous socioeconomic conditions, another community leader describes: *"Although, Ghulkin had a good reputation for its agricultural produce (specially faba-beans and barely) which also met the needs of the needy people in our village and other villages by lending the grains to them, but even then, I must say, the socioeconomic situation was worse, indeed."*

Composed of contrasted descent groups (related to the Caucasoid & Mongoloid races), the small society of Ghulkin (comprised on 83 households), the people at the grassroots level came encountered each other in the VO's forum. Initially, it took time for the members to understand and accept each other's views in a democratic way. Resultantly, confrontations on development emerged.

### **3.1.1 Confrontation among members on the first PPI to Ghulkin**

After the formation of the VO, members discussed getting a Productive Physical Infrastructure (PPI) project from the AKRSP having two different proposals. A minority group favoured the construction of the irrigation channel to a deserted-land in Chatghust; but majority of the members supported to construct the irrigation channel in *Shohbod*, an old settlement in Borit that had become desolate due to the cut-off and severe damage to the previous channel as a result of glacial movement. Keeping in view the majority's opinions and benefits, the AKRSP opted for Shohbod's irrigation canal was constructed and water began flowing to the desolate-land.

After bringing water to Shobod, the community of Hussaini, a neighboring village, immediately sued against Ghulkin community in the government's court [in Gilgit] claiming ownership of this desolate-land. The litigation continued for several years but no result came out. In meanwhile, the Aga Khan Arbitration and Reconciliation Board (AKARB) within the Shia Ismaili Council for Gulmit<sup>12</sup> intervened and settled this case outside of the government's court.

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<sup>12</sup> Introduced in 1969 by His Highness, Shah Karim al-Husseni, Aga Khan, the Shia Ismaili Council (SIC) for Gulmit under Regional Council for Hunza is a totally voluntary setup that functions at Lower Goal level (Passu-Shishkat) having more than seven villages and 13 jamatkhanas. Since its inception, SIC for Gulmit has been functioning efficiently, especially in line with social mobilization for community development.

### 3.2 Housing structure of the community

The Wakhi Pamiri housing structure is fascinating, which has different portions and platforms inside the house. Conventionally, there are four main portions of the traditional house named as *Sroy*, entrance, corridor and toilette portion; *Kanj*, intermediary part between the main house and *Sroy*, also for keeping shoes; *Xun [Khun]*, the main-house; and the *yanz*, store for cereals, flours, dairy and fruit products. The *main-house* has six platforms named as *nasun-e razh* (*razh*), sleeping platform; *jiča or ziča razh*, infant's or delivered-mother's platform; *kla razh*, sheep/goats platform; *past-razh*, lower-platform; *nikard*, sitting platform around the hearth; *dildung*, upper-platform of the hearth. Besides, there are other parts in the main house such as *yorch*, place of fire-woods (and also dance during wedding); *čikiš* (childishly as *chikish*), utensils' place; *yiri*, place of bread-basket, pots of yeast and dough and so on. The main house stands on seven pillars and it has two big-holes for the light, air and smoke called *ricn* [ritsn]. On top of the roof, there remained a fruit-store called *mara* along with its terrace termed as *bildi*.



Fig 2 : Villages elders performing traditional dance

Traditional Wakhi house is attractive, but one thing could be considered negative in today's perspective as it had open toilet system, mostly located at the entrance of the houses. Normally, there was no bath-room system. Besides, the cattle-houses were also attached with the human houses. Such phenomena therefore openly invited diseases at all seasons to the humans. For the first time in Ghulkin, Ashraf Khan, then an employee of the Northern Areas Transport Corporations (NATCO), introduced the modern lavatory system in his house in 1976 and the community looked at it awkwardly. The villagers thought "It was bad and would restrain the people in producing manures for the agricultural field.", the respondents say.

After 1983, the community members began replacing their traditional lavatory system and also detached the cattle-houses from their houses. Workers of the Aga Khan Health Services, Pakistan (AKHSP) established its center in Gulmit in 1979, also contributed about hygienic issues and the lavatory. Presently, all houses in Ghulkin have the modern lavatory system with running tap water in the bathrooms. Most of the people have also

constructed additional rooms and bathrooms. The cattle-houses and pens are detached.

In the 1990s, Building and Construction Improvement Program (BACIP) within Planning and Building Service of AKDN experimented in the traditional houses in introducing the hatch-windows (on the roof), better lighting, and insulation system. Today's traditional Wakhi houses in the village vary in many respects from that of the previous period.

### 3.3 Family, kinship and marriage system in the society

Hunza valley, like other regions, has a patriarchal society tracing descent through the male line. Basically, being agro-pastoralists, the family types in Ghulkin remained extended with an exception for some nuclear families. Mostly, clan-endogamy was preferred in the society, besides cousins' marriages; though, some inter-clan and inter-village marriages also took place, especially for building their relationships.

Mate selection was arranged for the conjugal partners. Levirate marriage, termed as *haqdor*, sorrorate marriage and polygyny also remained in practice. No marriages out of their religion took place. There was no education, thus no education preference, rather wealth along with the partners' personal character were determinants. Marriages took place in teenage, rather before; and procreation of more children was preferred. Preparation of marriages would involve four to six days. Time and day calculated by the *khalifa*, village clergy. On the last day, the wedding would take place. If marriages were between distant villages, the time consumption for travel was long in absence of any road and vehicle as the people would travel on horses' back and on-foot.

Before the era of Mir Nazim Khan (1891-1938), some respondents describe, the musical instrument in Gojal mainly included flute (*nay/tutek,gabi*), tambourine (*doriya or daf*) and a kind of violin (*sitor; ghizhek*); and the womenfolk could also dance in the wedding. The three local musical instruments, the drums (*dedang & damal*) and pipe (*surnay*), were introduced and followed in the Wakhi society during Nazim Khan's period.

The previous family types do exist in the village, nuclear families are increasing (47.8%). See the following table.

Table-1: Family types and houses of the descent groups in Ghulkin

No.	Descent groups	Sub-groups	Nuclear families	Extended/joint families	Total
1	Busing Ktor	Bakht Ktor	18	19	37
2		Qerghez Ktor	11	11	22
3		Cheqer Ktor	11	09	20
5	Allied groups of Busing	Budul Ktor	07	06	13
6		Matur Kuts	04	04	08
7		Abdulloh Khon Kuts	03	01	04
8		Shotman Kuts	01	03	04
9	Nakhchirey		18	27	45
	Total		73	80	153

Source: Author's own survey through respondents, September, 2009.

The current preferences in mate-selection are more focused on the state of boys' and girls' educational qualifications, income and personal characters. The previously arranged and preferred endogamy (within cousins, clans or village) is losing position (though, still strong) in result of people's more exposure to education and the media, especially the electronic. The expected conjugal-partners have presently more power in the decision-making processes than other immediate family members. Marriages of consent, understanding and love between the expected life-partners are regarded. Age-limit as minimum 18 has been fixed for the wedlock. Procreation of more children is not encouraged and most of the conjugal partners follow the modern family planning techniques and practices. A son's birth is still preferred as was before.

The traditional way of marriage arrangements of four to six days are also in practice, but a move is also witnessed. Instead of engaging the clan members for several days in managing wedding, some people either gave up their livestock or engaged in employment, opted for the alternatives in giving food orders and arrangement in the restaurants/hotels. Today, the days travel is covered in minutes and hours by riding vehicles opposed to the previous time. The role and power of a *khalifa*, has greatly reduced. Now a *khalifa* could be engaged only in few rites and ritual. All traditional musical instruments are in use except for *ghizek*, as there is a great dearth in this regard.

### **3.3.1 Role and importance of children**

Child's birth is very welcoming in the Wakhi society, especially on the birth of every son, the immediate family members and other relatives rejoice it by shooting fire in the air. On birth of more daughters, the parents and the family members would not be pleased. The roles and responsibilities of children remained diverse laboring such as grazing cattle, goats and sheep; collecting and bringing fire-woods and dung; and performing other different tasks according to their capacities and gender. The children thus relieved their family members from a big chunk of workloads and saved enormous monetary resources in today's term.

Today, the children according to their capacities and gender have drastically changed. From age 3, girls and boys are sent for getting early childhood education, then to their schools then moved ahead in colleges and universities. Realizing the importance of education, most of the parents in the village have given up rearing the sheep and goats; and also cut down the size of cattle, sheep and goats. A few children could be there who are involved in helping their parents in rearing the livestock while returning from their schools.

### **3.4 Gender roles, responsibilities and functions in the present context**

As per norms and values, hard or heavy weighted tasks remained part of men in the Wakhi society. A highlight of some of their tasks follows as carry out manures from the cattle-sheds to and cultivating the fields; watering the fields, forests and gardens; cutting trees for timber and other purposes; carrying out forestation; breaking stones/boulders; building walls or houses; leveling the lands; carrying heavy loads on their backs (e.g., fire-woods, cereals et-cetera); fighting in the battles and so on.

Women's roles and responsibilities mainly included cooking, washing, sweeping, rearing children, bringing fire-woods, grazing and caring the livestock, cleansing cereals, fetching water, and processing and preparing dried-fruits and dairy products, and so on. Within the households, a senior woman would perform as a manager to

supervise and conduct the in-house affairs. In addition, there are some areas of work that may not be heavy and could be shared by both gender group.

Confined to their domestic chores, women had no say in their personal decision-making processes such as marriage engagement. Food of good quality was for the male members and low quality or even the leftovers were for the women. Being a rare item, wheat bread was offered only to the guests, and if something left was presented to the male members in the house; but as per routine, both gender group ate bread of *faba-bean* in their houses. The people considered girls' education (like boys education) awkward by saying: would the girls become *khalifas* or a *munshi* (clerk)? In case of any negligence or otherwise, there was harsh behavior of the male members (or vice versa). Compelled women of the village got suicide. Divorce of women was relatively high.

As per norms and values, the hard tasks are still part of men today, especially among those who are non-literate or less educated. Majority of the village people have given up goats & sheep and women's chores along with children in grazing cut-down, and less manure carrying task for men.

The previous women chores such as cooking, washing, sweeping and so on exist, though wool-related tasks ceased when rearing sheep and goats ended. Fetching water from distant places in drums finished, as clean drinking tap-water is available in houses from the spring. The senior women's role in supervising in-house affairs mostly ended, especially providing flour and other stuffs to the junior women. The non-gender-specific tasks are performed by both sexes such as fire-woods, lighting fire, caring children, supplying food on the table/cloth, picking fruits from the tree et cetera. Today, men assist women by cooking food also, when they got exposure to the outside world.

Today, all womenfolk of the village have power to decide for their fate (conjugal partnership). There is no more food discrimination, rather both women can eat their meals together on the same table. Women's suicidal case in their houses are not witnessed, except for a girl student of a school who suicide when failed in her examination in 2007. Women have begun their own enterprises by modernizing their traditional handicrafts at individual and group levels in the field of sewing, knitting, weaving and so on.

Women have acquired full participation and representation in the community's social life. "Women were used by men like animals, and now thanks to the AKRSP's initiatives, our situation has improved," mentions a previous WO member. Besides, women are also holding positions in different organizations (CSOs and public sector) and contribute shoulder-to-shoulder with men in employees and volunteers. Men strongly support, these days, girls' education and female empowerment.

### **3.5 The educational status**

Informal education remains part of every family and elders in a society whereby different facets of cultures are taught and transferred to their progenies and generations. In Hunza, besides family members, the *khalifas* and other elderly members of the society had their big role in providing informal education to their descendants. Formal education in Hunza began in 1912 when the British opened a primary school in Baltit;

and more particularly, when His Highness, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan-III, opened the Diamond Jubilee (DJ) schools in 1946 in different parts of Hunza including Gulmit. Some students of Ghulkin attended the school in Gulmit in a pastime manner, not to become a past-master, as the high priority remained for their agro-pastoral activities.

For the first time in its history, a DJ primary school for boys was opened at Ghulkin in 1957<sup>13</sup> with Ali Johar as the first native teacher<sup>14</sup> and run initially in a local traditional house, then in the *langar*, communal kitchen cum store attached to the *jamatkhana*. The girls' education was initiated (as coeducation) in this school in 1970. The government opened its primary school in the village after 1974. The first boy and girl students did their matriculation in 1968 and 1982 respectively.<sup>15</sup>

Due to the social taboos, the literacy rate before 1983 was very poor<sup>16</sup> and 100% of the students, especially girls did not attend the school. People were unable to leave their village for educational or other purposes because of an overall poverty.

After 1983, the educational progress is amazingly different in this tiny village. At present, there is no social taboo on girl's education rather parents prefer it keeping in view their Imam's directives. 100% children, both boys and girls, do attend the three types of schools: the AKESP, the government primary, and the community<sup>17</sup>. Since 2007, through community-AKESP partnership, classes are also run at Early Childhood Education (ECD) and secondary level<sup>18</sup>. The ECD classes are also run in the government primary school with community partnership.

The following table hereunder reflects the number of schooling going students in educational institutions within the village.

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<sup>13</sup> In the AKESP's record, the school was opened in 1961.

<sup>14</sup> Ali Johar served from 1957-1959. He was getting a pay of Rs. 10/- (ten only). Afterward, Mukhi Arman Baig took over him and served for 18 years.

<sup>15</sup> First male matriculate was Ashraf Khan s/o Niga Shah and female-matriculate was La'l Jahan d/o Teghun Shah.

<sup>16</sup> By 1982, in Ghulkin, there was only one female-matriculate; who then got married in Shahrizabz (Chipursan valley); and one female matriculate from Gulmit got married in village. In male-education, there were seven intermediates, two graduates (bachelors)..

<sup>17</sup> The community-initiated NKMA (Nasir-e-Khusraw Modle Academy) was formed in November 1991, which is run at middle level (grade-8) at present. Dozens of NKMA's students have marvelously been qualifying the admission tests in the famous educational institutional institutions in Gilgit-Baltistan and down countries.

<sup>18</sup> Education in the government school is free but for the ECD, run community partnership, the parents pay Rs. 50/- only as the fee. The fees are given as the stipend to the two teachers who assist the other two government teachers.

Table-2: Number of students in different types of schools in Ghulkin

No.	Name of school	Number of students		Total
		Male	Female	
1	DJ Middle school	51	59	110
2	Government primary school	28	25	053
3	Nasir-e Khusraw Model Academy (NKMA)	65	39	104
4.	Community-based secondary classes	07	13	020
	Total	151	136	287

Source: Records of the schools, September 2009

In percentage, the female students are of 47.4% and male 52.6%. This village seems a laboratory for the community on education; and on the other, there seems a competition among these schools in attracting students in the respective institutions. There, however, arise serious questions related to facilitating students, primarily in availability of teachers. The following table shows the number of teachers available in different schools of the village.

Table-3: Number of Staff members in the Schools of Ghulkin

No.	Name of the school		Number of teachers		Total	Number of Support staff		Total
			Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1.	DJ Middle School	DJ teachers	03	03	09	00	00	01
		Community Teachers	01	02		00	01	
2.	Govt. Primary School	Govt. teachers	02	00	04	01	00	01
		Community Teachers	00	02		00	00	
3.	NKMA (middle school)	Community teachers	02	09	11	00	01	01
	Total		08	16	24	01	02	03

Source: Respondents of the respective schools, September 2009.

Looking at the number of students and teachers on the one hand, and community's participation such as paying fees etcetera in enabling environment for the children on other, it becomes clear that the focus is enormously on education of their children. The table hereunder shows the students' monthly fees of the educational institutions functioning in the village.

Table-4: Statement of per month fee in the four types of school in Ghulkin

SNo	Name of School	Education Fees				Remarks
		ECD PKR	Primary level PKR	Middle level PKR	Secondary Level PKR	
1.	DJ Middle school	200	350	600	500	ECD and secondary level education are community-based started in 2007.
2.	Govt. primary school	050	No fee	NA	NA	Community-based ECD and fee paid to the teachers
3.	NKMA (middle school)	100	200 300	350	NA	250 for Nursery class 300 from Prep-Grade-5

Source: Records of the respective schools in September, 2009.

The above cited educational platforms have given the parents different options in order to admit their children for getting education. The DJ school has insufficient teaching staff (and probably capacity, too) as also holds true for the Government Primary. They therefore depend on the community-teachers. While the purely community-led school, NKMA has adequate teaching-staff but with not retainable teachers who leave the school when the teachers get high-paid salaries.



Fig 3 : The girls now having equal opportunity in the village

The school buildings were constructed through self-help initiatives as the community, *yurt*, offered their voluntary laboring and individual philanthropy as we can see the cases with the government's primary school in the

1970s, the old and new buildings of the DJ school in the 1980s, the community-driven and community-led school building of Nasir-Khusraw Model Academy.

### 3.5.1 Computer facilities in the schools

All schools in the village have also been facilitated with computers, NKMA has even a separate computer lab, but these schools lack in having relevant computer instructors. Besides, many households have computers, too and facilitated their children to be acquainted and experienced with the computer know-how in their houses.

### 3.5.2 Students of Ghulkin studying out of the village

Besides the 287 students pursuing education within the village, there are 249 students engaged with their studies in different institutions out of the village that are illustrated in the following table.

Table-5: Number of students studying in different places in the country

No.	Place of pursuing education	Number of students		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Gulmit (FGHS, FGGS, AMS)	21	09	30
2	Central Hunza (AKHSS, private schools/colleges)	02	28	30
3	Gilgit	34	28	62
4	Islamabad	08	01	09
5	Rawalpindi	10	10	20
6	Abbotabad/ansehra	04	01	05
7	Peshawar	01	02	03
8	Kashmir	01	00	01
9	Lahore	02	00	02
10	Karachi	68	19	87
	Total	151	98	249

Source: GSA (2009), GECA (2009), and through enumerators & respondents in September, 2009

After acquiring education at middle level, most of the students get options either to go to attend the community-based secondary classes in the DJ school at Ghulkin or go out of the village in search of better educational institutions found in Gulmit, Central Hunza, Gilgit and down country. Same occurs for acquiring admissions at college and university level. The current (2009) number of regular students enrolled in some universities of Pakistan (not included university students through colleges) engaged with their masters level education (MA, M. Sc, MBA,MPA, M. Com etc) is shown in the following table.

Overall number of students engaged in their education from ECD level to masters is 536 (302 male, 234 female) making 45.2% of the total population. In the premier institutions in Gilgit-Baltistan like the Aga Khan Girls Higher Secondary Schools (AKHSS) in Karimabad and Gilgit, there are currently (September 2009) 9 girls & 14 boys respectively. In the Karakoram International University, Gilgit, there are total 16 students (10 female and 6 male). It is estimated that every year, the number of masters' degree holders would increase by more than 15.

Table-6: Current Number of Students from Ghulkin pursuing their Master's Degree

No.	Universities	Number of the regular students		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Karakoram International University, Gilgit	03	01	04
2	Peshawar University	01	02	03
3	Universities in Islamabad/Rawal-pindi	03	03	06
4	Karachi	01	00	01
	Total	08	06	14

Source: Own survey through enumerators (September 2009).

### 3.5.3 Master Degree-Holders from Ghulkin

Before 1983, there was no masters' degree holder<sup>19</sup> from Ghulkin; but in the aftermath a slow move is witnessed till 1999 (only seven master degree holders and no female). From 2000 onward, an amazing speed is seen. Presently (September 2009), there are 54 Masters' degree-holders (40 male and 14 female).

### 3.6 Health condition and healing approaches

Before 1966, there was no health facility at all in the entire Gojal. Among the whole Hunza, there was the only dispensary in Aliabad (50 km away from Ghulkin), established during the British Indian government. The people of the region therefore depended mainly on two types of healings: supernatural knowledge, and acquired indigenous knowledge. Within the former approach, there were further categories. *First*, individuals would present special offerings to God in their meditational place. *Second*, patients healed by clergies called *khalifas* or *mullo*, who would make talismans/amulets or other healing tools. *Third*, pay special visits to the shrines such as Bobo Ghundi in Chipursan valley. *Fourth*, pay visits to the shamans called *bitan*.

In contrast, there were the indigenous knowledge specialists who would treat the patients through the scientific approach of their capacity in line with setting the joints' dislocation; adjustment of bones' fractures or cracks; dealing with stomach problems, headache, jaundice, treating tonsils and the navel related issues, pneumonia and so on. Patients for complicated and serious types of diseases were in great trouble and passed away. For addressing the issues of maternal and child health during delivery, the senior/experienced ladies would voluntarily serve the patients. The maternal and child mortality rate was very high, however.

For the first time, in the history of Gojal, the government opened a first-aid post in 1960s in Gulmit<sup>20</sup>, the principality's second capital. The patients were given the first aid treatment. First time again, the Aga Khan Health

<sup>19</sup> Gul Baig s/o Awal Baig is the first master's degree holder of Ghulkin who did it in 1983. He currently holds a trustable position with the government as General Manager, Finance, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulation Authority (PEMRA), Islamabad.

<sup>20</sup> Khuda Aman from Central Hunza headed this first-aid post. According to him, this health facility was provided in 1965/6. Second time, he went to Gulmit in 1971.

Center was established in Gulmit in 1979 that effectively targeted women and children health issues in the region.

The government facilitated Ghulkin with a first-aid post in 1984 in a rented house, then it constructed its own building. Preliminary health issues are dealt here; but for complicated problems, patients are carried to the hospitals in the Gulmit; and in case of any emergencies, patients are referred better treatment in the in Aliabad, Gilgit or down country.

The previous dependence on the traditional healing approaches, especially the *supernatural* has significantly decreased; but dependence on the indigenous knowledge experts in the field of bones and joint fixation still exists, as many related patients still do prefer to be treated by the practitioners of the indigenous knowledge in Gulmit<sup>21</sup>. (To be continued)



The author is specialized in Social and Cultural Anthropology, and works as a "Development Researcher & Consultant"

<sup>21</sup> A prominent indigenous knowledge specialist/practitioner (bone-setter), named Zafar Ulah Beg (80 year old), has a record of successfully treating more than 40,000 patients for the last 55 years. Besides some tourists, many bone-related patients (as per documentary records) from the entire Hunza (even out of the region), after getting treatments from the doctors in PIMS, CMHs, DHQ hospital Gilgit, even from the AKUH came to him and he settled/adjusted.