

## IDENTITY NEGOTIATION AND SELF CONSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF BERICHO COMMUNITY IN HUNZA

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### ABSTRACT

*For a very long time, a small community in Hunza, in the extreme north region, Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan which borders with the Xingjian province of China. The Bericho community resides in a small village called Berishal. It is referred to as the 'heart' of Hunza because of its strategic location and famous craftsmanship of various agricultural materials. As this community is on the verge of extinction, the author undertook an oral history research by collecting oral stories from the local community members. Berichos were highly skilled blacksmiths, craftsmen and artisans. Over the passage of time, this community had undergone geo-spatial movements in terms while bearing biased attitudes from the wider communities of Hunza and forsaking their traditional, highly skilled blacksmith trade and craftsmanship of musical instruments in favour of modern professions such as government and armed services. The skilled musical 'ustaads' disappeared and were replaced by Brushaski speaking (Brusho) young talented locals of Hunza. Furthermore, the unique language of this community, Beriski (Doomaki in Shina) slowly faded in favour of Brushaski language. The people of Hunza often quoted Bericho for their artwork who used to prepare musical instruments, weapons for warfare, and were strong blacksmiths without the use of any machinery. Given the nature of their job, it can be said that the Bericho formed the silent yet strongest foundation for the community of Hunza. Despite the critical importance of the Bericho community, they were not treated and regarded equally in Hunza. To say that the Berichos were not treated fairly would be an understatement. Why were they considered as the lowest caste? To understand this question, the author dives deeper into this region's history and culture.*

**Keywords:** Migration, Geo-spatiality, Language, Oral history, Hunza, Pakistan.

### INTRODUCTION

This article describes the geo-spatiality of Mominabad a small village in Hunza in the northern part of Pakistan by drawing on the oral history of Bericho, a community whose ancient heritage and culture had resulted in loss of familial hierarchy. From a marginalized and self-contained background to a now integrated community, Bericho community had developed mastery in music craftsmanship as well produced skilled educators and armed forces personnel.

Bericho community was a marginalized community. Not much has been written about this community. There was drive for upward social mobility among the community through forsaking their language, culture and occupation and they have attained it. The research aims to document the change in their culture and language and how do they construct themselves through oral history and according to their surroundings. The article takes a multi-pronged approach:

- Study of the radical change in the culture, language and integration of the Bericho community with the wider community at large, through oral history, and see which direction it is heading towards, and its future
- record and document the oral history of this community as much as possible because it remained ignored by the sociologists and anthropologists of the area
- develop a narrative of the self-construction of the Bericho Community

This paper is written from the lens of an oral history methodology to research further into the origin of the Bericho community in an effort to sustain their lived experiences.

### Geo-Spatiality of Mominabad

Hunza is divided into three main parts: lower Hunza, central Hunza, and upper Hunza. Lower Hunza is dominated by the Shina speakers. Central Hunza comprises mainly of Brushaski Speakers whereas in upper

Hunza, Wakhi speakers are in majority. In central Hunza, there is a small village by the name of Mominabad which is the focus of this paper. Mominabad is a very small unit of Hunza whose social, economic and political aspects are interrelated and dependent on the main structure of Hunza. Mominabad is about a kilometer away from the main Karakorum Highway (KKH) and a part of KKH connects Karimabad (the oldest and main town of Hunza) with this small village.

There are 76 households in this village with a population of 546 members (Akhter, 2018). All the inhabitants living in Mominabad are primarily 'Bericho' by caste whilst their language is 'Beriski'. The geographic location of this place is interesting which explains much about the whole society of Hunza which will be explained in this article later on.

### **History of Hunza**

Hunza remained semi-isolated and bounded by the wilderness for centuries. Due to this, this society, to a certain degree, attained its own cultural and social stratification with a centralized government. Hunza became one of the chief's self-ruled 'princely states' by the 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of the British Indian Empire (Staley 1969). However, when the British involved this part of the world in their geo-political scenarios (referred to as the 'Great Game') with Russia, it brought about significant changes in the mid-1800s. Hunza was annexed by the British into the Gilgit Agency in the Jammu and Kashmir State in 1891 (Leitner 1899). After that, Hunza's independence remained largely unaltered until the British left India in 1947. The state of Hunza joined Pakistan soon after the Indian subcontinent was divided and the Kashmir conflict erupted. The Mir or *Thum* continued to have internal administrative authority for the first two and a half decades of Pakistani rule (1947–1974). When the Bhutto regime eliminated the privileges of the princely states in 1974, this independence came to an end. Hunza state was subsequently placed under Islamabad's rule and split off into the Northern Areas District.

"The Mir, an autocrat who also went by the Brushaski name "Thum," stood at the top of the traditional political hierarchy of the state. In addition to exercising authority, the Mir was revered as the source of fertility because of his ability to control glacier melting, produce snow and rain, and calm storms (Baig 1980, p. 219).

The successional family that could be traced back to ancient kings was the only one from which the Mir of Hunza was chosen. Only members of the family were eligible to ascend. Mir was followed by a very well-run administrative hierarchy made up of representatives who held hereditary positions within the social and political order of the castle. This government was led by the Wazir, who also held the positions of prime minister, ambassador, and military commander. He was duty-bound to serve the ruler. The basic unit of political organization was the village community. There was a Trangfa, or village headman, in charge of each village who reported to the Wazir. The Trangfa handled day-to-day operations in their villages and arbitrated small disagreements.

One of the Trangfa's main responsibilities was the distribution of water. Water allocation disputes were also arbitrated by Trangfa. In this case, the water channel was being maintained and watched over by a "Darago" (officer). Trangfa's final responsibility was to make sure that the residents of their communities fulfilled their legal responsibilities to the state. The Mir owned the majority of the land in almost all of the villages. The royal steward, or 'Ayerfa,' oversaw the planting, irrigating, reaping, and harvesting of the ruler's lands.

A small group of landed aristocracy served as the source for Wazir and Trangfa. Below this aristocracy, there was a large class of cultivators who worked small land holdings, typically one to two hectares. They were known as "Karpating" (aristocrats). The Karpating and small landowners were allowed to carry weapons and were required to serve in the military. In traditional Hunzokutz society, the tenant farmers known as "Baldakoyo," or "load carriers," were a lower class than small landowners.

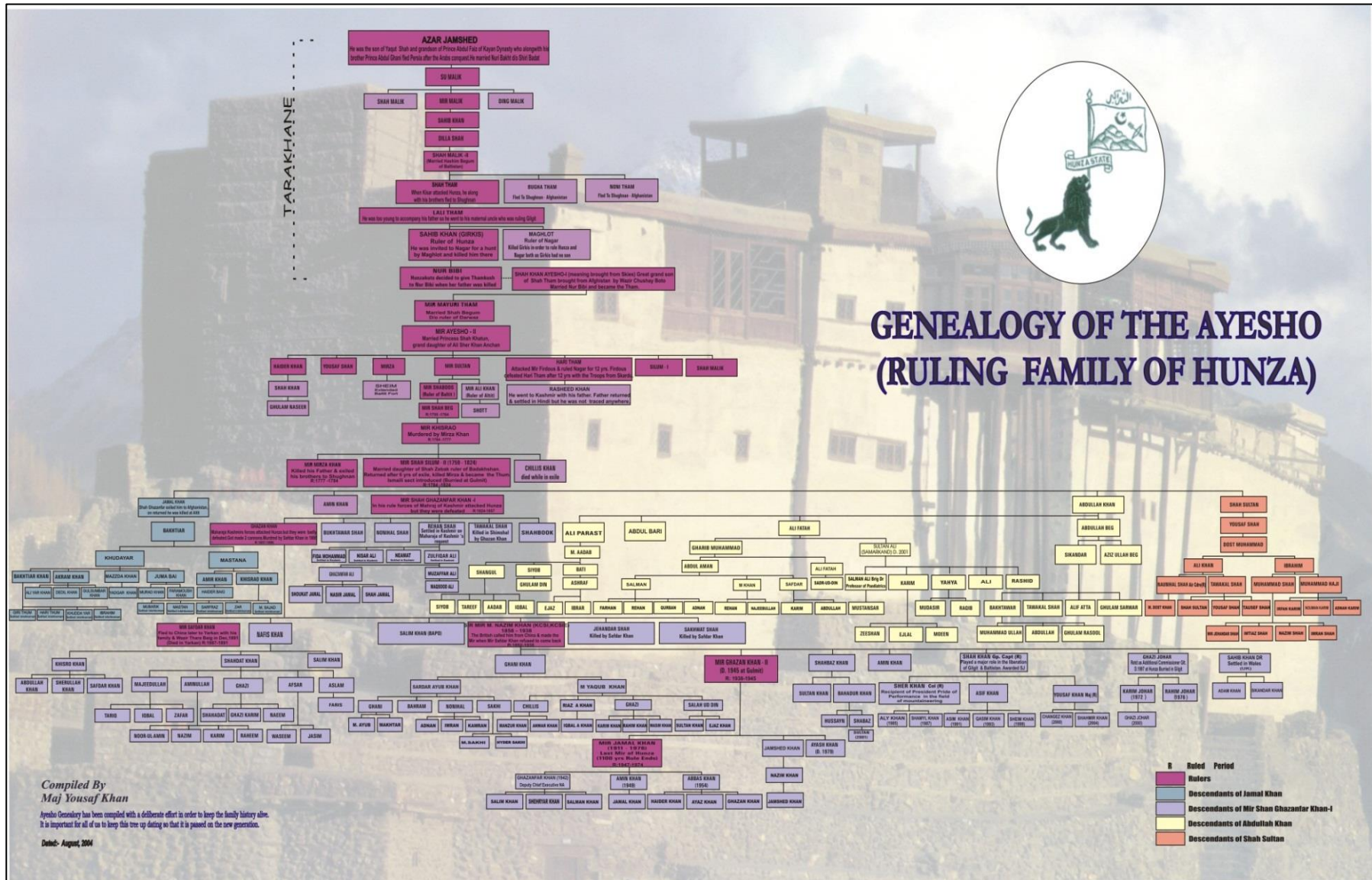


Figure 1 Genealogy of Ayesho family (courtesy of Ayesho family)



Figure 2 Social Hierarchy of Hunza (Hunzui, 2015)

Baldakoyo were compelled to perform the Mir's mandatory labor, which included moving his goods from village to village and cultivating his lands. These load carriers were compensated annually in return. The Baldakoyo also had to provide two men to work for each Karpating family.

These Baldakoyo were obligated to work as gold washers for the state, under the supervision of the Wazir and Trangfa, in the spring and fall. In times of war, the Baldakoyo served as military porters and were forbidden from possessing weapons. As previously stated, the social, political, and economic life of this area is reliant on the larger Hunza society. The lowest position in society was held by Bericho. In addition to offering their skills as blacksmiths and musicians, they also oblige the Mir by bringing him firewood and occasionally caring for his livestock. The Bericho were also prohibited from possessing and using weapons, but they were enlisted to carry out the risky task of spying during times of war. Small-scale landowners and tenant farmers were required to contribute "Rajaki," or labor. The Hunza state was entirely based on a barter system and operated without a formal currency.

### **Social Structure: Tribes (Qoams)**

According to Lorimer (2006), there were originally three tribes in Hunza. The *Hamachating* at Ganish, *Thapkients* at Baltit and *Usengumuts* at Altit. There was no concept of a Tham (monarchy) at that time in this region. These tribes were very powerful, and they used to collect taxes and distribute among themselves. Monarchy started from the lineage of Girkis and after that the Thams of following time started to collect the taxes. All these tribes were massacred by different kings of Hunza. Fortunately, somehow a pregnant woman managed to escape and gave birth to a boy from Hamachating Tribe and the origin of Dirmiting was created.

Presently there are six main *qoams* (tribes) in central Hunza, namely *Thamo*, *Borong*, *Barataling*, *Derramating*, *Khorukutz* and *Bericho*. These main qoams are divided into sub-*qoams* which are:

Akhter

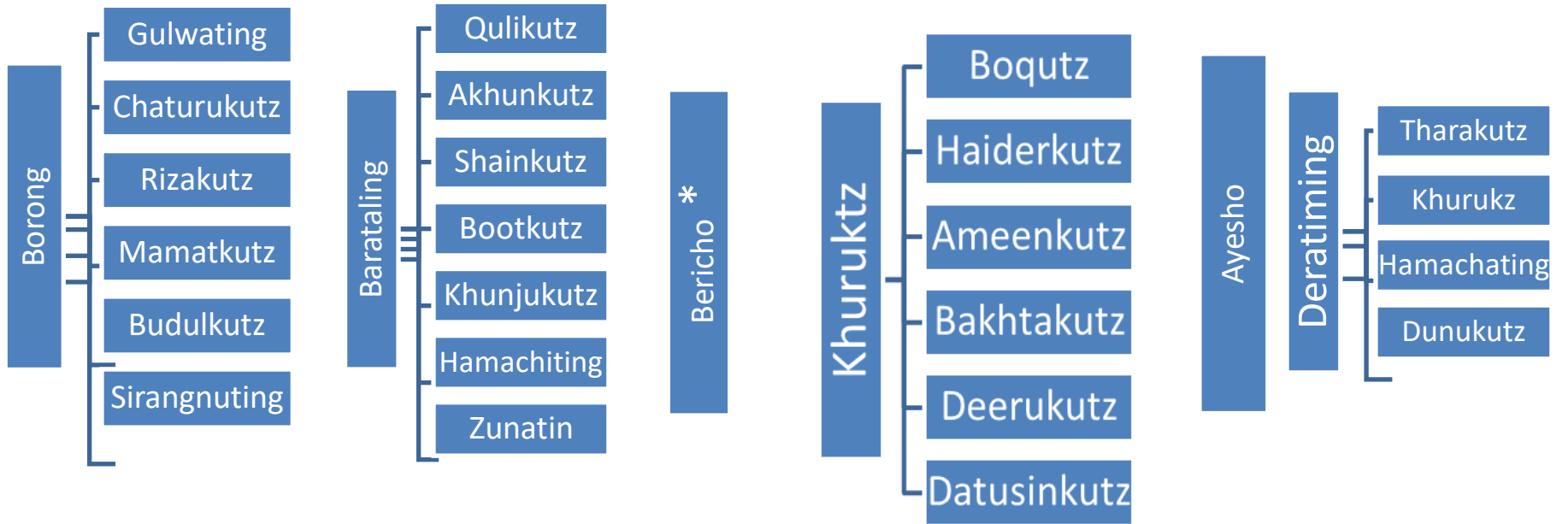


Figure 3 Social structure of Hunza



*Ayesho* (also known as *Thamo*) are the ruling monarch family and has no sub-castes. This paper will shine light on the *Bericho* Qoam of Hunza. Describing the socio-cultural seating in Hunza in the early 1980s, Ahmed (1986) describes:

“Hunza is a dream place of every western writer, they love the idea of Hunza. They are fascinated by the longevity and come here to learn the secrets. The apricots? The glacier water? (Muddy but said to contain very healthy minerals) the climate? Or maybe the local wine? These physical factors may be important but not that much. The main factor is the social organization and social behavior of this place. They have a traditional and a relaxed life there is no forced authority, all the people are in a state of middle class, you can't find very rich and very poor people. The population is small and homogenous” (The Ismaili sect of Muslims)”.

A lot has changed since Ahmed's description, especially in the last three decades. Social organization still remains the same, however, technology, media and the shift from agriculture to the corporate sector, had changed the people. Hunza now has a combination of traditional and a modern life, as if we are stuck in a time machine.

### **Upward Mobility and Its Causes**

The community of Mominabad had moved their standards in a short span of time. Within four decades or less than a half century (from 1970s till now) they had moved their social status significantly higher. The State of Hunza was integrated with Pakistan in 1974. Till this period, they have been treated as untouchables in India (Weinreich 2010). But the present scenario is quite different from this. They have a very comfortable living standard in terms of resources and living. During this study, the author visited most of the houses in the community and basic amenities were available. They do not have any lesser living standards than the surrounding community. All this upward mobility had their root causes which are discussed below.

### **Change in Attitude towards Education**

#### **(Case Study of Ustad Mollah Madad)**

Education is the basic element which can cause rapid changes in any society. The communities which focus on education can grow flourish and develop. Though till 1960's the layman of Hunza was also unaware of education and its consequences. There were very few primary Schools where Hunzuz used to study.

In these situations, the people of Mominabad were more into their skillful work. I will quote the history of education from the first teacher in Mominabad, Ustad Mollah Madad, with reference to his life story and how he influenced his community for education and religious teachings.

He started his story as:

*“When I was a child my father sent me to One of the Nobles of Karimabad to study from him, his name was ‘Sangi Khan’. I studied the ‘Quaida’ (first level of education) from him. This was in 1955. I was very keen to get education but it was my misfortune that my teacher died and I was left without a mentor. My curiosity for education did not die along with my mentor and I remained determined to continue my education. I was not only curious for worldly education; I was also keen to get religious knowledge. My passion for both ran parallel in my life. My interest in religious matters started from one of our elders named Noor Shah. “Noor Shah” was a blacksmith in our village (Berishal) who went to Sarat (presently know as Attaabad). He learned how to say Namaz, when he came back he was the only person who use to recite Namaz for all of us. He was a blacksmith but a very intellectual man. The present ‘Alla numberdar’ Habib Ullah Jan and myself, learned Namaz from that person and used to recite it for all in this area. I felt very proud when it was my turn to say Namaz. It filled me with joy.”*

*Ustad Mollah Madad further narrated that,*

*“When the concept of schools started in Hunza few students from Berishal were also enrolled. It may have been a surprise for the Mir and his notables because for them, education did not belong to “people” like us!”*

*“One fine day, some boys were going to school from Berishal when Ayash Khan (more commonly known as Sakatar saab), the Secretary of State, came across the boys and started conversing with them. He was very happy to see these children getting an education. He inquired where the children were from, to which the children replied, “Berishal!” Upon hearing the reply, He became furious and started beating the*

children with his walking stick and exclaimed, "If you are going to study then who will be the musicians and blacksmiths? Who is going to work and serve us?"

There was no school in Berishal. The nearest school was in Ganish. We were a group of 17 students from Berishal who were studying in Ganish. The Secretary of State, Sakatar ordered the teachers (Master Sikandar and Master Ali Gohar, 1957-58) that if anyone educated Bericho's, they would be banished from Hunza!

The next day, Master Sikandar called our group of 17 students and told us that his horse is hungry and needed some food. We all being from a very poor background had hardly any excess food yet we all gathered grass from our homes and presented it for the Head Master's horse. After collecting our tribute, we were all gathered at the end of the morning assembly. Master Sikandar addressed us and told us the Executive decision made by the Secretary of State. We were told to pack up and leave that very instant"

"After the executive order by Sakatar, all the children from Berishal gave up on education. Some took up music whereas some took on the trade of blacksmiths. Regardless, I was passionate about studying so I kept a 'Quaida' book in secret. I used to hide the book in my armpit and used to study it whenever I was alone or had free time.

Eventually some of us went to Karimabad's Barbar Jamat Khana to continue their education. There was a basic school in Barbar Jamat Khana. Unfortunately, one day, one of my fellow's (Darbeesh) shoes (HUCHOO) were wet, "HUCHOO CHUM HUMACHIN DUSEEMEE" means his shoes are filthy. The teacher used this as an excuse and did not let us inside the school by saying that these people make our school dirty. Fate was playing a cruel joke on us"

"But with the passage of time, some of Hunzukutz whose conduct was kind with us, convinced us to take up schooling again. These kind people even went to the Mir of Hunza, along with some of the elders of Berishal and pleaded our case for education. These notable Hunzukz went as far as to tell the Mir that his throne was not in any danger with our education. They asked for permission, for the community to read and write, after which, the Mir allowed us to go to school"

"I started school again in 1961 or 1962. I used to work hard and I did work day and night for my passion. The result day was here, at that time in Karimabad polo ground our result was announced by an AD (Assistant director). I had topped in entire Hunza. I got prize. which came all the way from Karachi, it was a small English diary. I passed 5th class in 1965 with a lot of pride"

"I went to Gilgit for my further studies, there was a hostel in which I was supposed to enroll but due to late admission, I couldn't get accommodation. I spent three months in Gilgit and it was very tough on me. I spent many nights out in the cold and slept on the footpaths. When I came back for my summer vacations, I caught a disease of the backbone and was once again unable to continue my education in Gilgit.

Soon enough, a school opened in Berishal. It was a primary school and I started off as a teacher here. I was paid Rs.500 at that time in 1970s. I used to teach the disabled as well as regular students in the same class. Once some directors came from the education department and took an evaluation test from my students. The directors questioned my disabled students and made them write on the board, to which they did. The directors were very happy and gave me a performance allowance.

From 1975 to 83, I taught here at the school but once again I became unfortunate. I was relieved from my position under the pretext that I did not complete my Matriculation. I did not let this setback deter me and after a break of 17 years, I set out to complete my Matriculation. I attempted to clear my exams but after attempting twice, I failed in six papers but had passed in 4 (said with pride). Again, I worked hard for my papers. Master Zawara from Ganish helped me a lot with my preparation. As luck would have it, I remained unlucky, and on the very same day of my matriculation paper, my father passed away and I could not appear for the exams. I was an only child. I had to look after my step mother. My father used to be a security guard in a guest house.

In 1990, I again attempted my Matriculation exam. My hard work paid off when I cleared all subjects but unfortunately the school didn't give me my old job again. Apart from education, I was also into religious matters. I started 'Khalifa Garri' (fulfilling religious rituals like marriage ceremony, death ceremony etc). Later in 2010 the Regional council offered me to teach in religious school (night school). I taught in the night school for about 2-3 years after which I was offered to teach Islamiyat in the New Beacon School –

*Altit due to my experience and skill set (I could read, write and speak Arabic fluently). I taught in this new school for over nine years”*

This case study depicts how history of education in this community was not much bright as children were not allowed to attend schools. Regardless of all this, the current literacy rate in this community is 89%. The change in school enrollment and behavior of these people was triggered by many reasons. *The first school in this community was built by the Aga Khan Education Services. It was a primary school where few students were enrolled only. It was composed of one room in the premises of their prayer hall (Jamaat Khana). Then with the passage of time, this school was upgraded to secondary school. Now it has a very well managed building in the community’ (Habib Ullah Jan (a respondent from the community) Through this school, the community gets to know the importance of education and its impacts with the passage of time.*

In this community, there are individuals serving in every field of life including government, education, army, arts, and international organizations. This community owns this change proudly while it was easy for the rest of Hunzukutz, the struggle was real for Berichos.

### **Change in Attitude of the Wider Community**

Members of dominant communities of Hunza always considered Bericho community as inferior to them because of their history. We can also say that it is also because it was the accepted and prevalent attitude for generations, but the attitude of this wider communities changed with time and some incidents.

The community of Mominabad and the surrounding Hunzukz are Ismailis in majority. They are a sub-sect of Muslims belong to Shia sect of Islam. They follow Prince Karim Aga Khan as their 49<sup>th</sup> hereditary Imam (religious leader). The chain starts from Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) as the last prophet, then Mollah Ali as the first Imam with the chain of Imamatus continuing till the current Imam. The spiritual leader visits his followers from time to time. The current Imam had visited Hunza five times in the last sixty years. According to the community of Mominabad, with every visit the Imam leaves something symbolic for the community of Mominabad.

- *In 1987 before his visit, the engineers came to analyze the required specifications of the helipads. The most feasible helipad was in Mominabad. It was very shocking for the rest of the community to acknowledge the fact that the Imam will be landing in Mominabad. They were not only shocked but also resisted. Regardless, the Mominabad helipad was chosen and the Imam landed here. This was the first incident which calmed down the attitudes of the surrounding community and made people of Mominabad something to remember by.*
- *The next visit of Ismaili’s Imam to Hunza was in 1996. It was a very exemplary and defining change for this community. This time Imam and Prince Charles visited Hunza for the inauguration of Baltit Fort. This fort now being 900 years old was renovated with support from Aga Khan Cultural Support Program (AKCSP). After the event, the Imam stayed at 5-star hotel, Serena, in Gilgit. He sent his helicopter to get the best piper player from Mominabad so that he could appreciate some music of Hunza. This example is still quoted in the wider community of Hunza. Members of other communities outside of Mominabad slowly changed their attitudes towards the people of Mominabad. They also began to appreciate music as an art and the craftsmanship of their musicians. This incident also resulted in the increased pursuance of music as a career for the Brusho who came to be known as the Brushaski speakers and the list goes on ( Narrated by Mollah Madad 2018)*

### **Identity Crisis of the Community**

The community of Mominabad had gone through several phases. They have experienced marginalization based on their social status. They have continued to struggle against this marginalization. They had undergone a transitional phase of coming out from the state of being considered ‘untouchables’ being as considered as ‘normal’ humans. They had struggled to educate and advocate to integrate with the mainstream society. At present, they are at the stage of re-constructing their self-identities and forsaking their previous associations that were attached with their casts and tribes in terms of their professional occupations, skilled trades and economic dependencies. This started an identity crisis among this community. After being given access to formal education at the level of tertiary education, they became



highly educated. They are increasingly leaving their ancestral professions of blacksmiths and artisans in for the sake of improving trades and employments in other sectors of life. Due to these transitions and identity crisis, they remained in a constant struggle to be comfortable in their own skin and with their own identities. These identities are most of the time not only self-constructed but also socially constructed.

Slowly and gradually, this community had deconstructed its identity even at its fundamental level, i.e. language. They prefer to speak Urdu (Pakistan's national language) rather than Brushaski. When the author walked around in their locale, she saw the young girls speaking in Urdu language even though Brushaski is more dominant in their surroundings. The stigmatization of the history has affected them in a way that they are now regressing from their environments and what were always a tradition.

### **Self-Construction**

The community of Mominabad has been transforming its identity through self-construction with the changes in their economic, social and cultural conditions. A friend of mine, Ali narrates as follows:

*"We had a Doom family at our village that used to take care of our lands, cattle and house while we all used to live in Gilgit city. When we were kids, we used to play with the caretakers' children who were of our age. They use to call us "kaka" (it means elder brother in respect) throughout our stay. I left my village, went to Islamabad and after some years returned back. I met the same caretaker's son while he was purchasing a car. He saw me and referred to me with my first name very casually. The change of his tone from kaka to my first name was quiet amusing" (Ali 2018).*

The above narrative reveals the change in the boy's self-identity that they were respecting due to family's improved status and not out of respect. When they became strong financially, they considered themselves equal to each other. From been a caretaker to a financially strong man, the changes were noticeable in speech thoughts and self-identity. The changes were not only in their attitude but also with their narrations, addressing of personal names and identities.

### **Berishal to Mominabad**

With the passage of time, the name of Berishal (Berishal means the place where a Bericho lives) had changed to Mominabad because of the prejudiced and disparaging biases associated with the word 'Bericho' or 'Berishal'. The Brushaski speakers always use this word in derogatory terms. They used these words to belittle someone in a conversation.

One of the stories, that from where the name has been changed to Mominabad is as follow. A respondent narrated:

*"This was the era from 1965 to 1970, when there were very few people in Hunza who were educated and who knew how to read and write. This man from Mominabad named Shayoo wanted to write a letter to his son- in-law who was somewhere in Lahore. He went to Allama Nasir Sahab (a writer and scholar of Hunza) and requested him to write a letter for him from his side. After completing the letter, Allam Nasir sahib while writing the sender's address said 'because it is considered derogatory to say Berishal so I will not write Berishal on the sender's address, instead I will write Mominabad' which he wrote so. This was the first time when someone used the name Mominabad for Berishal. Then they got this name approved from Mir Jamal Khan in 1971 and from then Berishal was called Mominabad formally. This story is the oral narration from the locale" (Karim Sahab 2018).*

This change of name was also mentioned in the book of the same person who changed the name. He has suggested in his book that the responsible people should change this word of Berishal to Mominabad as it was considered derogatory in the Brushaski language and the wider community of Hunza. They are human beings and spiritual brothers/sisters of the wider community. (Karim Sahab year2018). The name Berishal was changed to Mominabad with the conscious efforts of the scholar and the Ismaili regional council and the people of Mominabad. This was done to integrate these community and members with the mainstream and the wider community of Hunza. (Hunzai, 1965)

This changed situation still prevails in Mominabad community. The people of Mominabad still do not accept the word Berishal for their village. Even though this is as natural as any other name of a place, they want to call themselves the people of Mominabad. The word Mominabad itself tells the story of their

deprivation. This word Mominabad means the place where prayerful people live. This name was suggested and accepted to change the self- identity of the people of Mominabad.

#### **Beriski to Doomaki and Now Dawoodi**

Although the language is same, but the names were changed with time. As explained above, the community has a different language from rest of the languages in Hunza. It is basically called as *Beriski* (means the language of Bericho). This is a common understanding in the locale that in Hunza specifically, this language was called as *Beriski* till the 1970's. No one in Hunza knew this language by any other name until this time. With the passage of time and flourishment of the community, they completely forbade calling it *Beriski* and instead called it *Doomaki*. Though the word *Doomaki* means the language of Dooms in Shina language, the same caste which lives in Gilgit and surrounding areas were also called as Dooms. For decades, they called this language as *Doomaki* in Hunza also. This was because they wanted to get rid of the word *Beriski* and the biasness associated with it in the process of changing their identity and the name of their language.

*After Doomaki, this community call their language as Dawoodi, which is the language of Prophet Dawood. In the very beginning once, the author asked one of the study participants about the language by referring to Doomaki. He got offended and immediately corrected by to Dawoodi and not Doomaki. When probed, he said, "As Prophet Dawood was a blacksmith and master of ironmongers, we are also the sons of blacksmiths that's why we call our language as Dawoodi - the language of Dawood."* (Sultan Karim, 2018) The change of the name of the language is clearly the construction of their identity such as relating their language and association of trade craftsmanship with a Prophet and calling their language as Dawoodi.

#### **Change in Occupations**

With the passage of time, the Berishal community had changed their professions and became skilled artisans, blacksmiths and musicians. However, the current scenario is different. There are 76 households and the exact population in this small village consisted of 576 members. The historical narratives reveal that narration that almost all the population would have been in the profession of music, blacksmith and doing small odd jobs for the rest of the surrounding communities.

Currently only five people hold the positions as blacksmith. A few others earned from music, with no one being into the artisan work. In contrast, the surrounding community of Brusho had adopted these occupations specially blacksmiths, artisans, and music. When the author roamed in this locale, she observed people doing odd jobs like such as tending or farming on their fields. When inquired about the workers, the response was that they were hired for these sorts of jobs as support was needed to manage their farming jobs and increase agricultural yield.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Self-construction and identity are transformative processes. For a community, the process towards modernization is not without due struggles and attitude changes from members. More often than not, change is driven by resistance to age-old norms and the status quo is only improved when leaders in a community develop the willingness to explore alternatives. This community is on the verge of extinction. They have forsaken their language, musical skills, blacksmith and making of instruments. They are changing the name of their language, the name of their village, for a better self-construction. They want to get a better self-image by abandoning their own historical names and trying to blend with the surrounding community. The struggle to change and evolve is because of the derogatory relation and behaviors of the surrounding Brusho community of Hunza. The current oral history of the community is clearly reflecting the frustration of the community.

When a lot of dominant histories and discourse come together and came in conflict, oral history is the one which can resolve many things in the history of a community (Raleigh 2005). Depending on the mindset with which it is used, oral history may not always be a tool for change. Oral history can, however, be a tool for changing both the subject matter and the aim of history. The writing of history—whether in books, museums, radio, or film—can give back to the people who made and experienced history through their own words, breaking down barriers between teachers and students, between generations, and between educational institutions and the outside world (Thompson 2003). Through an oral history narrative, a community of Hunza in Northern area of Pakistan was brought forth to light with rich anecdotes from locale

members. For a very long time, Bericho community was known as the silent foundation of Hunza state. Till 1974, Hunza was an independent state where Berichos were considered as the lowest caste. Despite being the lowest caste, they were the ones responsible for running the Hunza State through their agriculture, craftsmanship of warfare tools and utensils.

This community was notorious for been treated in a biased way. For instance, the musical instruments were made and played purely by this community but the words for songs on these instruments were in Brushaski and nobody out of the Berishal community knew the names of these instruments in Beriski. There are three different clans in this community. Each clan had their own story to tell about their history and migration to Hunza. During the course of this research and the collection of oral narrations of the community, the author had come to a conclusion that there are three main clans in the Bericho community and that these clans are further divided into sub-families. Each clan has their own version of how they came about to Hunza. My research further inspires me to formulate my own theory of how the Bericho community originated which is linked to the common characteristics of the origin stories as narrated by the clan members.

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