

**SECTARIAN AFFILIATION IN MARKET
ECONOMY: A CASE OF DISTRICT
GILGIT**



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Dedication

Dedicated to my dear daddy Assad sb and Ammi Nasima Asad

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ABSTRACT

In Gilgit-Baltistan, sectarian disputes are not a new problem. A conflict based on religious differences is well known in the region. There are various sects living in Gilgit-Baltistan, including Shi'a, Sunni, and Ismaili, but sectarian conflict grew in the region after the late '80s. During the British administration, these different sects were not really come across in Gilgit-Baltistan, inactive political and religious prejudices existed for a long time. But with time issues started to raise, attitudes of Sunni and Shia sects showed disrespect that increase the prejudice among moderate people for one another in matters of religion. The genealogy of religious prejudices exists in the region and was created by both indigenous and external actors. Despite all the incidents that happened based on sect, local people still believe that harmony and peace are possible with the collective effort of all sects by removing the prejudices and increasing the harmony through affiliation. Economic markets suffer more because of such incidents because so many people are dependent on them. Firstly, markets are closed, and they suffer for a long period. For this reason, the affiliation of sects in the market is also very important. The purpose of this research is to find out how sectarian affiliation led to the growth of the market economy and how much it is important for its development. The past events of sectarian conflict influenced the consciousness of people.

Keywords: Sectarianism, prejudice, the market economy, conflict

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Ideologically, Pakistan got freedom in the name of Islam, and unfortunately, Islam and religion are used for political gains. We can see extremism and sectarian issues all over Pakistan, but they are dominant and extreme in some specific regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, and Gilgit Baltistan. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan belong to different sects, but the most dominant sects among them are Shia, Sunni, and Ismaili. The Shia sect is in the majority. The Shia and Sunni are the most politically and socially strong in this area, and they have conflicts on a religious basis. Religion is considered a social institution that performs several functions, including psychological, social, and biological functions. Regarding the structures and functions of social institutions, the approaches of Radcliff-Brown and Malinowski's' structuralism 'and' socio-psycho-bio-functionalism 'described by (Flis, 1992) seem very relevant. Both approaches go simultaneously, such as they take society as a composition of various institutions, compare it with the human body, and talk about the functions of those institutions. It means each institution in society has one specific function. For a healthy society, it is important to perform its functions properly. If it fails to perform the functions, then society goes into a chaotic situation, and it does not come to its real state until and unless the same institutions start to perform, their functions or other institutions replace them.

According to (Shekhawat, 2011), sectarianism in the Gilgit-Baltistan area, an area of the unified territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K), presently constrained by Pakistan, should be featured as it fuels mass discontent. The brunt of the extreme Islamization strategy of General Zia-ul-Haq in

the district of Gilgit Baltistan zeroed in on settling untouchables in the territory, affecting them directly and unfavorably. The approach of Islamization, the Afghan emergency during the 1980s, and the upheaval in Iran in 1979 have all cumulatively affected partisan disturbance. Even after these incidents subsided and the overall Pervez Musharraf system was given, the approach of 'illuminated control,' followed by the 'reclamation of popular government' in Islamabad, nothing dynamite has happened so far to mitigate the individuals' injuries. Truth be told, the partisan beast has raised its terrible head more menacingly.

In Pakistan, sectarianism has advanced as an aligned strategy to keep individuals occupied with insignificant issues and to advance the Sunni assortment of Islam in GB. Gilgit-Baltistan is exceptionally assorted as far as its Muslim populace's partisan affiliations. According to Amman Message (2004), Shiite, Sunni, and Ismaili are the three different sects of Islam, with a particular lion's share of a specific organization in each locale aside from the capital city of Gilgit, which is vigorously and moderately populated by Sunni and Shi's with a huge presence of Ismailis. The security situation has been tense in the locale for quite a long time, particularly in Gilgit city, where savagery and shared doubt have developed into partisan separation points. Gilgit city is still divided into "off-limits" areas for the fundamental Shiite and Sunni people groups. Partisan topographies have been created and, in some cases, whole valleys are labeled in a partisan way, demonstrated using flags, banners, and spray painting (Ullah & Ali, 2019). According to Ali & Zaigham (2019) and Anna Grieser and Martin Sökefeld (2015), the Gilgit city has been divided geographically and the people of different sects have symbolized themselves with flags, banners, spray paintings, and large writings on the mountains as well as buildings for religious worship.

Sectarianism has been found at workplaces in Gilgit city. The people of the same sects do favors for the same sects' inhabitants.

For the first time, Sectarian violence got more intense in 1988 when Lashkar (Sunni armed forces) from Kohistan and Diamer, in the southern part of the region, attacked Shia majority villages, which cost the distortion of their houses and the lives of more than 100 people. Most people believe that before the 1980s there was no sectarian violence, but it's not entirely true. The first British agent in Gilgit mentioned the violence against the Shia by Sunni Muslims back in the 19th century, which shows that sectarian violence has a long history in the region (Grieser & Sökefeld, 2015). As I am a native of Gilgit, I have seen many clashes between Shia and Sunni because these two sects are in the majority and these clashes affect the social lives of local inhabitants socially and economically. The textbook controversy and its conflictual context by Stöber (2007) describe how over the textbook and curriculum, violence and riots took place in Gilgit Baltistan, which led to days of protests by people. During these protests and clashes, so many people died and were injured. A prominent leader of the Shia community also died. Schools were closed for almost a whole year. Furthermore, these facts affect the market economy of Gilgit Baltistan and the Gilgit city. Being a native of Gilgit Baltistan, it has been observed that sectarianism affects the economy of any state or region, intentionally or unintentionally. It has been seen that the shutters go up and down during the sectarian violence in the research locale.

Gilgit-Baltistan is important for the more prominent Kashmir locale, which is the subject of a long-running clash between Pakistan and India. The region imparts an outskirts to Azad Kashmir, along with which the Assembled Countries and other global associations allude to it as "Pakistan

regulated Kashmir". Gilgit-Baltistan is multiple times the size of Azad Kashmir. The domain additionally fringes Indian-regulated association regions of Jammu and Kashmir (association region) and Ladakh toward the south and is isolated from it by the Line of Control, the accepted outskirts between India and Pakistan (See *ibid.*).

Border of Gilgit Baltistan relates to the Azad Kashmir region toward the south, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa toward the west, the Wakhan Hallway of Afghanistan toward the north, the Xinjiang area of China toward the east and upper east, and the Indian-regulated association regions of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh toward the southeast (Wikipedia).

The people of Gilgit-Baltistan are recognized for their talent, honesty, hard work, and bravery. So many brave soldiers have given their lives for Pakistan that there are villages that are called the land of martyrs. Hawaladar Lalik Jan, who was given the Pakistan Military's highest award, the Nishan-e-Haider for his bravery in the Kargil War in 1999, belonged to the land of Gilgit Baltistan. Samina Baig, Pakistan's first female mountaineer is also from GB. She is the first female Pakistani mountaineer to summit the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. People in Gilgit follow various sects of Islam, including Sunni, Shia, Ismaili, and Noor Bakhshi. Also live in Gilgit as a minor community.

Some of the world's highest mountain ranges can be found in Gilgit-Baltistan. The Karakoram and the western Himalayas are the two primary mountain ranges. K2 (Mount Godwin-Austen) and Nanga Parbat, one of the world's most feared mountains, are among the highest peaks. Five of the world's fourteen 8000-meter (26,000-foot) mountains are in Pakistan (Gilgit Baltistan).

Some of the most important passes connect Gilgit Baltistan to China, Afghanistan, and Indian-controlled Kashmir. The Siachen Glacier, which is in Baltistan, is extremely important. Gilgit Baltistan is known for its spectacular glaciers, which feed rivers (the Indus River), which account for 75 percent of the country's stored water supply. The Karakoram alone has 40 glaciers.

Gilgit Baltistan has a diverse culture and traditions that differ from valley to valley. People express their culture in a variety of ways, including forums, festivals, clothing, and meals. Here are some of Gilgit Baltistan's traditional dishes. Mamtu, pajo chai, Chap shoro, Daw, Chupati, Fiti, etc. Gilgit Baltistan produces most of the country's apricots.

The diversity of languages is important in Gilgit-Baltistan. Thirty Indo-Aryan, Indo-Iranian, and Sino-Tibetan languages are spoken here. Urdu, Pashto, Shina, Balti, Wakhi, Dumaki, Khowar, Kohistani, Kasghari (Uyghur), Gojari, Persian, Kashmiri, Hindko and Burushaski, as well as English, are spoken, with Shina being the official language.

Every culture has some unique festivals according to their cultural beliefs and their cultural background. Some of the cultural festivals of Gilgit Baltistan are the Polo festival, Shandor Polo Festival, Navroz Festival, Ginani, and Rama festival. Religious festivals include Eiden, Salgirah, Khushhali, etc. Housing patterns have different variations according to the economic status of individuals; local housing designed is one room called desi Haa/desi Got, which is built. Further, they created more places for members of the house. In the past, only one desi Haa/Desi Got was constructed, all family members shared it, and no concept of extra rooms was present.

Every society has a different income. The primary source of income for most people in the world is agriculture. Every household member is directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. New generations, due to their educational qualifications, are associated with different occupations in society. For example, entrepreneurship, medical, engineering, arts, etc.

In Gilgit culture, music has an important role that deals with people of every background. Dhani, Bazmi, Tajwar, Alghani, Saus, Lolo, Tambal, Bulla, Razm, Yudaani, and Danyal/Bitan are some of the most well-known musical tunes in Gilgit-Baltistan. Each of these songs is associated with a unique event. They also serve as a reminder of a time when shamanism and magic were extensively believed and practiced in the region. Ajoli is the name of the traditional music rhythm used during the departure of the groom and bride from the house.

The researcher will find out the interpretation of these symbols and the cause of favoritism at the workplace.

The market economy indicated by Kimberly Amadeo (2020) indicated that there are six qualities that characterize a market economy that incorporates private property, freedom of choice, the motive of self-interest, competition, a system of markets, prices, and limited government intervention. She clarifies that most of the merchandise and enterprises are elite. The proprietors can settle on legitimately confining arrangements to buy, sell, or lease their property. Their assets give them the choice to profit by ownership. Owners are permitted to make, sell, and purchase products and undertakings in a genuine market. They simply have two goals. First is the expense at which they are glad to buy or sell, and second is the proportion of capital they have.

Everybody offers their products to the highest bidder while arranging the lowest cost for their purchases. Although the reason is selfish, it benefits the economy as time goes on. This bartering framework sets costs for goods and services that mirror their market value. It gives an exact image of the organic market at some random second. It has always been seen that competitive pressure keeps the prices low. It likewise guarantees that society's giving merchandise and enterprises most effectively. As soon as demand increases for specific items, prices should automatically increase. There are five determinants of interest: item value, purchaser's pay, costs of related merchandise, customer taste, and purchaser's desires. (See *ibid.*)

As per my research objectives, I will see how sectarian affiliation helps in growing the market. The research will focus on the market economy of District Gilgit because there is diversity and almost all dominant sects live in this district. In other districts, there is no such diversity as in district Gilgit. The research will focus on why and how the sectarian affiliation in market of economy of Gilgit? What is the role of other sectors of market for example tourism, handicrafts and cultural perception about market economy? The researcher through observation and by interview will find out the people perception about sectarian violence in Gilgit city and causes of sectarian violence.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Sectarianism has become a destructive feature of the modern world. It is driven by political elites as a regime-survival strategy and by major powers as part of a strategy for building regional influence, or by religious leaders and believers who are unwilling to accept the equal status of other religious groups. Sectarianism is likely to remain part of the regional landscape for years to

come. Although sectarian conflicts have led to horrific sectarian violence and bloodshed, at the local level, communities can resist the extremism of sectarianism through affiliation. To overcome extremism within the spheres of Gilgit Baltistan and to foster affiliation among the people, it is necessary to focus on research topics like this: sectarian affiliation in the market economy, so the focus will be on growth and the collective efforts of local people to overcome conflict and focus on social development. In general, the concept of sectarianism affiliation is based on the existing body of literature based on conflict, violence, and disputes. In this study, the author describes the sectarian affiliation in the market economy and the collective efforts of people of different sects for social distinction and the development of local markets. Research scrutinizes the affiliation of sects and the local market for their impacts on local people and their betterment. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, students and people do not choose such topics for research. Very limited literature is available on this topic specifically in the context of Gilgit Baltistan, there has been no research work done by students at universities on this topic for 10 to 12 years, which is a huge gap. People avoid talking about such topics. There is almost no work done on the affiliation of sects in any other way. Therefore, the author/scholar intended to do research on this topic.

1.3 Significance of the study

Although enough work has been done in the area of violence and conflict among the different sects and how the people of the Gilgit region suffered because of this violence, this will be the first time a qualitative study will be conducted on this topic, which is about the affiliation among different sects and how all these sects collectively contribute towards the growth of the market economy. The work will be helpful for the community and social, political, and economic development. It will elaborate on the causes of sectarian conflicts, especially between the Shia

and Sunni, and it will document the market economy of Gilgit City. This research will document the culture, customs, and traditions of the people of Gilgit city, which will be contributed academically, as well as in the field of social sciences and culture departments. Most people misunderstand the topic. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, most research students avoid working on any topic that is related to sectarianism.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To understand the relationship between sectarianism and market economy in the context of District Gilgit.
- To explore the impacts of sectarianism affiliation in a market economy.
- To indicate the response of local people to sectarianism.

1.5 Research questions

- What is the relationship between sectarianism and market economy in the context of Gilgit Baltistan?
- How the sectarianism influences the local market economy?
- How the local market help to develop the social status of the local community?

1.6 Organization of the thesis

The rest of the chapter is organized as a chapter to presents a brief description of the relevant literature, while chapter 3 gives detail about data and its methodology, source of the data, sampling technique used description of dependent and independent variable, and brief explanation about the methodology used in the study. Chapter 4 provides information on data analysis and lastly, chapter five includes conclusions and policy recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Sect and Sectarianism

A sect is a small division of a larger group, especially a religious group. A sectarian is a member of a group with a certain set of interests. A religious sectarian is someone who adheres to a specific religious sect or group. Sectarianism has been outlined as a system of actions, beliefs, and structures at a personal, communal and institutional level that invariably involve faith and usually involves the negative mix of religion and politics. According to the context of the British concept of sectarianism, the relationship between Protestants and Catholics is crucial (Deuchar & Holligan, 2010). This schism between protestant and catholic beliefs is the source of European conflict (Side, 2006).

Muslims in the early days of Islam differed on how to interpret the message of Allah and the Last Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) due to varying levels of understanding, changing circumstances, wisdom, and ability. Because of human limitations, these differences have evolved into intolerance and factionalism over time. The majority of Muslim sects arose largely as political schools of thought. Later, in their quest to understand the scriptural and theological foundations of their distinct political beliefs, they evolved into theological sects (Hazleton, 2010).

Right after the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632 CE, the central divide between Shia and Sunni took place. The divide originated with a dispute about who should succeed the Prophet Muhammad as head of the Islamic religion he introduced. Shia followed Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) teachings and the religious direction of his family (known as the Ahl al-Bayt) or his

descendants, known as Shia Imams. Sunni Islamists are referred to as "Sunnis." It is the largest branch of Islam. Its name is derived from the word Sunnah, which refers to the Islamic prophet Muhammad's exemplary behavior of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The origins of Ismaili Muslims may be traced back to Islam's earliest years. Under the imam, Jafar al Sadiq, the Imami Shia rose to prominence. It was also in Jafar al-Sadiq's time that the central Imami doctrine was formulated. Imam Jafar Sadiq's following broke into many groups after his death in 765, including two groups that can be identified as the earliest Ismailis (Daftary, 2011). Despite the contradictions between both sects, both Shia and Sunni shared a peaceful history until the 20th century, when sectarian violence started among the groups of Shia and Sunni for religious supremacy and political gains. As the Sunni-Shia fraction has become politicized in other parts of the world, the same has happened in Pakistan as well, often with deadly consequences (Kalin & Siddiqui, 2014).

2.2 Sectarian Violence

The Middle East has been wracked by unrest and violence for a long time. There are two basic reasons for the increased levels of conflict and competitiveness. The first relates contemporary conditions to the escalation of sectarian polarization in the Arab east; regional dynamics are best described by identity politics, which function as sectarian regime instruments. While tracing the origins of many sects in the Indian Subcontinent, the author asserts that various rulers exploited religion as a tool of power to further their own interests. Various sects existed during the Muslim control of the Indian Subcontinent, and rulers used religious sectarianism for their own temporal gain. During its dominance of India from 1206 to 1526, the Sultanate of Delhi embraced the Hanfi school of thought. Except for Humayun, who was inspired by Shia theology, most Mughals followed Sunni ideology. Shi'ism developed in the Subcontinent during the Humayun era,

particularly in southern India. The British Raj, on the other hand, used their policy of "divide and rule" to amplify sectarianism. During British control, many new sects emerged in the subcontinent, including the Wahabi Movement, Ahle-e-Hadith, Barailvis, and Deobandis, among others (Shah, 2014).

In Pakistan, sectarianism violence has increased to a crucial level over the past period. It has risen to the level of creating militant groups and developed political utility. For that reason, it operates more at a political level rather than a religious one. In the Pakistani context of sectarianism, organized militant activities are performed by people associated with the sectarian community to promote and safeguard the sociopolitical interests of a particular sect (Nasr, 2000). In Gilgit-Baltistan, different valleys were ruled by local kings before the dissolution of princely states. Local kings, regardless of their religious affiliations, increased good relations and alliances and adopted secular policies. The colonial-era increased the region's connections with the sub-continent by making roads, and neo-Islamization started in Gilgit Baltistan during the colonial era, according to history. After the partition of the sub-continent and the accession of Gilgit Baltistan into Pakistan, roads were developed by the state through which communication with the outer part, specifically with religious groups and tablegi jamaat, increased (Dad, 2016).

2.3 Historical background of sectarian incidents in Gilgit

The history of Gilgit-Baltistan is very old; there were different kinds of religions used to live there like Bon Mat, Shamanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and indigenous varieties of animism. Traces of these religions in the shape of sculptures, calligraphy, and statues still exist there, which are great historical sites and hold a history of the co-existence of different religions

in the region (Lambah, 2016). The issue of sectarian violence in Gilgit-Baltistan is not new, and it cannot be understood via an idealized perspective that portrays the region as free of violence before the arrival of modernity. The truth is that sectarian violence has long been a part of Gilgit Baltistan's history. Gilgit has been depopulated and devastated several times throughout history because of intermittent battles between regional polities and different religions. The long conflict between the native Balti religion of Bon Chos and Buddhism is an example of the violent engagement between old and modern religions. The conflict between the two turned into a civil war in the 8th century, which lasted until the 16th century. In the 8th century, Islam arrived in the region. After the Arab invasion of Samarkand, Tashkent, Farghana, and all the way to Kashgar and advance into Central Asia, alarmed the region's non-Muslim Turkish inhabitants. The Azar or Shamsheer dynasty converted to Sunni Islam because of a wave of conversions. Preachers from Central Asia made up most of the conversions. The situation began to shift when the local Raja of Gilgit, Mirza Khan, converted to Shia Islam. This marked the start of a religious rift among the local population, which continues to cause problems to this day. Islam did not disturb local social order or culture when it infiltrated Gilgit-Baltistan's communities. Indeed, it allowed for the coexistence of local shamanistic traditions, cultural rituals, and celebrations in the same social arena. It absorbed into the local culture and social setting in this way (Rafiq, 2014). Due to its steep geographic topography and terrible weather circumstances, Gilgit-Baltistan remained almost cut off from the rest of the world, despite religious pilgrims from neighboring regions dripping in and out on a regular basis. Because of the isolation and lack of organized religion, locals were able to build their own theological and mythical interpretations of self, society, and the universe. Gilgit-Baltistan has seen numerous invaders who were either

integrated into the local population or driven away with the time. British invaded the region in the 19th century that totally changes society because of modern institutions, lifestyles, and ideals, with the military force. They did not adapt to the local culture, unlike the previous invaders. Religious differences were not a concern for the local people of Gilgit-Baltistan until the arrival of the British. As a result, there was no sectarian violence. During the British period, the Kashmiri establishment brought a new layer to the power relationship. They were strong despite of their small numbers. The addition of Kashmiri rule to the power structure has long-term consequences for society, as well as the growth of sectarianism in Gilgit-Baltistan. When the Sikhs conquered Gilgit-Baltistan in the mid-nineteenth century, the concept of a pure Muslim was introduced to the local community, which had previously followed syncretic traditions. The army commander was horrified by the traditions and ceremonies practiced by nominal Muslims in Gilgit-Baltistan and vowed to convert them to true Muslims. During the colonial period, the ideology of puritan Islam was grafted into Gilgit-Baltistan society. The fundamental issue at the time was not religion, but the constant war between princely powers in Gilgit-Baltistan's valleys. When the British officers arrived in Gilgit in the early half of the nineteenth century, they discovered a deserted and depopulated city due to the ongoing war with its neighbors. The British established modern institutions and regulations that allowed them to maintain peaceful rule over the people with the least amount of effort and resources. People in the region saw a contemporary system. When people could not understand the modern order of things or fresh issues because of their old worldview, the clergy became increasingly essential. Due to widespread illiteracy and a lack of exposure to the outside world, religious personalities were able to carve out a role in society by using their knowledge, to have more influence over people's hearts and minds. During the British

period, there was no severe conflict between different sects in Gilgit-Baltistan, but there were latent sectarian biases among the population.

There has been no research done to date on the attitudes of different sects during the independence movement of Gilgit Baltistan. However, there are also oral and written evidence that point to sectarian undercurrents within the leadership and forces of the independence movement. Soon after independence, Gilgit Baltistan's revolutionary forces formed an own governmental system. Shias dominated the ruling elites of this newly formed state due to their numerical dominance in the military and regional majority. Because the bulk of soldiers and commanders in the independence fight was from the Ithna Ashari and Ismaili communities, and Sunnis as well. Some Sunnis feared that they would be forced to submit to the will of the majority. When Sunnis in Gilgit-Baltistan saw that Shias occupied the highest political and administrative positions, they began to feel anxious. Some people in Gilgit-Baltistan believe that the proposal to combine it with Kashmir is an attempt to turn the Sunni minority into a majority. The Shia community, on the other hand, sees itself as the region's most powerful stakeholder and tries to justify its authority by claiming that the Gilgit-Baltistan Freedom Movement saw more Shia and Ismaili martyrs than Sunnis.

The first episode of sectarian violence in Gilgit-Baltistan occurred under the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, not General Ziaul Haq. Some in Gilgit-Baltistan of starting the divide-and-rule policy (Feyyaz, 2011) accuse Bhutto. He is accused of disbanding the Gilgit Scouts out of fear that they would refuse to obey Pakistani government directives in order to protect their own people. In the 1970s, the question of the Moharram procession's route became a point of dispute. Before that, Sunnis used to help in the procession by setting Sabeel and providing water to the mourners.

However, in 1975 a Sunni Mosque opened fire on the Shia gathering. This is a significant event in terms of its long-term consequences; it polarized Gilgit's formerly close-knit kinship-based communities on a sectarian basis (Shekhawat, 2011). Following that, individuals began to identify themselves according to their sect. The change in identity markers opened the stage for religious extremism and sectarian bloodshed.

After the opening of the Karakorum Highway (KKH) in 1979, the route connects Gilgit Baltistan with the rest of Pakistan along with China. The migration of people and commodities from other regions has been aided by improved communication with the rest of the country. It has also allowed local religious groups to form links with national and international Islamist discourses and activities. While the highway has increased Gilgit-vulnerability Baltistan to new threats, such as the influx of illegal weapons, drugs, and prejudiced attitudes from the south, and it has changed the demographics of Gilgit and other towns, as a result, the early 1980s are seen to have had substantial influence sectarianism in Gilgit Baltistan. There was an international dimension to sectarianism in Gilgit-Baltistan as well, in addition to local and national issues. Pakistan became a battleground for an ideological struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the 1980s. Although the Iran-Iraq War was restricted to Persia and Arabia, the ideological conflict between the two countries spread throughout the Muslim world includes Gilgit's far-flung regions to a large degree; the Iran-Iraq War was a covert Arab-Persian struggle. However, it influenced people's impressions of Gilgit's society as religion.

Zia's policies clearly favored Sunni interests during his reign. He is also responsible for the vehement persecution of religious minorities as a part of Islamization. Despite all of this, no local

community ever took up weapons against the other. The final straw in Shia-Sunni relations came in May 1988, when a dispute about the sighting of the moon in Gilgit Town ended in deadly confrontations (Hunzai, 2013). It all began one fine morning in May 1988, when a minor fight between Shia and Sunni Muslims over the seeing of moon for Eid-ul-Fitr after Ramadan in a Gilgit neighborhood spilled over into other areas of the city, resulting in Sunni-Shia riots. Local Sunni had attacked local Shia who had declared the start of Eid celebrations in Gilgit city, resulting in violent fights between the two sects (Kreutzmann, 2008). Sectarian conflicts quickly extended to other areas of the region, with Sunnis receiving assistance from Diamer and Kohistan; on the other hand, Shia received aid from Nagar valley (Stober, 2007). The Lashkar assaulted 13 Shia villages in the suburbs, pillaging properties, setting fire to homes, and destroying everything on the ground known as the 1988 Gilgit massacre (Sorbo, 1998). The English word '*TENSION*' is famously used to describe by local people for this occurrence (Shehzad, 2003). Whenever a sectarian conflict occurs, both groups refer to it as a source of tension. Thousands of armed tribesmen from outside the Gilgit district entered Gilgit via Karakoram Highway in May 1988, igniting low-intensity political rivalry and sectarian tension into full-scale bloodshed. Nobody intervened. In the areas surrounding Gilgit town, they damaged crops and houses, lynched and burned people to death. Hundreds of people were killed or injured in the attack. The exact number of people killed in the 1988 Gilgit massacre has been debated. According to some estimates, 150 to 400 individuals were slain, with hundreds more injured, while other unverified claims claim that 700 Shias were killed. On the one side, it produced a trust deficit against the state among the Shia community, and on the other, it led to the mass weaponization of both populations and the institutionalization of violence. After Tensions sectarianism took a great turn, people realizes once again that their affiliation

towards one sect can cause a huge impact on their lives, and in such a situation nothing as safe not their lives properties, and anything.

Gilgit saw sectarian violence on a regular basis after 1988. Violence, on the other hand, was restricted to the Gilgit district, especially Gilgit Town. After the killing of Shia scholar and leader Syed Agha Ziauddin Rizvi in January of that year, the sectarian mindset that was still in its developing phases revealed itself in Gilgit city, which became visibly split along sectarian lines (Mahapatra & Seema, 2008). Agha Ziauddin Rizvi, 45, was born into a pious family in Aumphary, Gilgit. He finished his studies in Gilgit before transferring to Lahore and then Iran for further religious education.

He served as the central Khateeb of Gilgit Imamia Mosque for 15 years until his death and was widely regarded as a symbol of unification by the majority Shia population in Northern Areas. Despite the curfew, a sizable crowd of his supporters assembled in the Imamia mosque to receive the body. He was assassinated while protesting against the school's curriculum; (Stober, 2007) he believed that the graphics in the curriculum were inappropriate and that the curriculum should be based on Islamic principles. He was targeted while traveling in a car along with his security guards, two of them were shot dead at the spot Agha Zia and one of his security guards was injured and transferred to Islamabad. Authorities have enforced a curfew in Skardu, about 120 kilometers from Gilgit, as a precautionary measure, and troops have begun patrolling the city. Telephone lines have also been disrupted, according to some accounts. Curfew had been extended to the bordering areas of Gilgit, including Danyore and Hainzal, according to a news release issued by the administration, with no respite allowed on Thursday. The act caused rioting in the region, which resulted in the

deaths of 15 people and the injuries of 35 more. The violence, which lasted until the installation of a curfew on January 9, destroyed nearly a dozen shops, including four government offices. According to sources, the late professor was shot at close range and had at least two gunshots in his brain. Most young people (youth) are aware of this incident, which they believe sparked the sectarian strife. To some extent, this is correct, because following this occurrence, the sectarian conflict reached an extreme level.

Another serious incident happened in Kohistan in 2013 where a bus and three minibusses carrying 117 passengers were traveling from Rawalpindi to Gilgit when ten to twelve gunmen dressed in military fatigues stopped them at a lonely portion of the Karakoram Highway (KKH). Sunni militants from Kohistan stopped buses, Gunmen stopped the buses, hopped on, and demanded identification from the passengers. Passengers ID cards were checked and people from the Shia majority area were selected they then dragged a group of men off the bus, lined them up along the roadway, and blasted them cruelly with bullets, the attackers didn't target ladies or children. A criminal case has been filed against the assailant, who has yet to be named. The agenda of this targeted killing was totally sectarian. The shooters were dressed in army clothes, they examined the passengers' identities, took the Shias out of the vans, and shot them, and all the dead were men. After that, they burn down three buses.

Abdul Sattar Khan, a member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, linked the ambush to the death of two Sunni Muslims in Gilgit a few days ago. He mentioned that the residents of the neighborhood have promised to exact revenge. Nisar Ahmed, the bus conductor of one of the vehicles, was also killed in the incident after failing to persuade the attackers that he was a Sunni

Muslim. Nisar was shot dead, according to a police official who documented testimony from the surviving passengers, when he erred in his response to the Fajar prayers. According to local administration, the bus arrived in Gilgit, where the district administration enforced Section 144, ordered offices and schools to remain closed until Friday as a safety precaution, and recommended citizens to stay indoors. In retaliation for the Kohistan incident, a man was killed, according to authorities, injured two others. According to a police spokesperson, Obaidullah was shot and killed in Jutial, while two others were injured in the Skawar area. Residents reported that Gilgit was tense and that the roads were desolate. Most stores were closed, and traffic was light.

There were other incidents that happened on KKH with Shia. Prominent leaders of Shia were targeted on their way towards Gilgit. The area where the Shias were targeted on KKH is Sunni majority areas that is why both Shia's and Ismailis were scared to travel via KKH, which was the only way to connect with the remaining country. After the incident in Kohistan 7, buses full of Shia students studying in cities were taken by govt under the convoy and protection so the same thing will not happen again. Until this day all buses (both public and private transport) traveling via KKH from Rawalpindi to Gilgit are taken under convoy in some sensitive areas to avoid such incidents on their way.

2.3.1 Zia's Islamization

In 1974, Bhutto dissolved the local Rajgi/Miri system. He did not establish any other institutions as an alternative. However, the rule of Gen Ziaul Haq is significant in the history of Gilgit-Baltistan. He declared Gilgit-Baltistan Zone C almost immediately after declaring martial law (Are, 2002). He did it by extending the norms of subjugation to Gilgit-Baltistan. Every government extends only subjugating regulations rather than empowering ones, which is ironic (DAD, 2018).

The inauguration of the Karakoram Highway in 1979 was a significant event during General Ziaul Haq's tenure. Gilgit-Baltistan is connected to Western China and the rest of Pakistan by this route. It has opened Gilgit-formerly Baltistan's secluded area to external living styles, commercial forces, and ideologies. When it came to empowerment, Zia backed a certain interpretation of Islam as well as organizations that might assist him to maintain his reign. Because of the regional and local geopolitical and socioeconomic factors in Gilgit-Baltistan, Zia's period is crucial (Zaman, 2019).

The ulema have always had a minor part in the local princely state's decision-making process. Their function was restricted to the personal realm. However, Zia's backing for specific religious parties and organizations, as well as the power vacuum in Gilgit-Baltistan, gave the ulema a chance to express themselves in the public arena. It was a time marked by the production of seminaries and the adoption of a curriculum that promoted a specific religious viewpoint. Sunni leaders supported Zia's Islamization process, believing that it would safeguard their interests from the Shia community's majoritarian politics (Khan, 1998).

2.4 Instrumentalist explanations of sectarian conflict

According to Nasr (2000), identity mobilization and sectarianism are the two main hypothetical methodologies in the social sciences for clarifying ethnic preparation. They are primordialism and instrumentalism. The principal sees nationality as an "abstractly held feeling of shared personality," a "characteristic" marvel that is profoundly implanted in human brain research and social relations. Subsequently, ethnic activation is fundamental to the political existence of socially plural social orders, particularly where class divisions are frail or missing. The second holds that identity is versatile in the face of changing conditions and serves as an instrument in advancing the interests of political pioneers and their voting public. Both the primordialist and instrumentalist

positions are significant in clarifying the ascent of sectarianism. Partisan characters could not have been politicized except if contrasts in convictions, values and chronicled recollections constrained Shi'is and Sunnis to aggregate activity. Overall, these distinctions without anyone else do not clarify the ascent of sectarianism and its part in the public eye and legislative issues. For most of Pakistan's experience, sectarianism has not been a political power. Contrasts among Shi'is and Sunnis have as of late become a remarkable separation in Pakistan's legislative issues. Instrumentalist contentions, thus, have more noteworthy utility in clarifying sectarianism.

Instrumentalist explanations emphasize two causal factors: economic competition and the political opportunity structure. The first stipulates that competition over resources and wealth can serve as an impetus to ethnic mobilization if winners and losers are separated by identity or if identity mobilization holds the prospect of economic gain. The second argues that identity mobilization is "social and political construction...creations of elites, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to gain political and economic advantage." It follows that, if the structure of a political system permits the use of identity mobilization for political gain or rewards political leaders for engaging in identity politics, then the political system is likely to experience identity mobilization and conflict.

The instrumentalist approach identifies "ethnic" leaders as primary agents in mobilizing identities. The choices and strategies they adopt in furthering their interests, as well as the interests of their communities, propel ethnic mobilization and conflict. Ethnic mobilization is therefore a by-product of political leaders' projects of power and/or a facet of a community's drive to secure economic advantage. Although relevant to the discussion here, especially insofar as the actions of

Shia and Sunni leaders and organizations are concerned, the instrumentalist approach does not provide an adequate explanation of sectarianism, for it does not take into account the agency of international and state actors in identity mobilization. Sectarian distress has been one of the top issues in Gilgit-Baltistan over the most recent couple of many years. A historical analysis shows that Islam resulted in these present circumstances locale in the thirteenth century and all the sects lived in harmony and congruity. The issue has been a new worry as a central issue, and specialists accept that sectarian agitation between the Sunni and Shia sects in the district arose in the 1960s and 1970s and was reinforced during the system of Ziaul Haq. Throughout the progression of time, numerous valuable lives have been lost in the locale, which is an extraordinary human misfortune and obstacle to the production of congruity in society (Khan, Hussain, Baig, Hussain & Batool, 2015).

There has been no research done explicitly on the affiliation among the many sects of the GB. Most of the material is about violence and conflict, and there has been no new work or study on the topic. Most of the research is carried out in universities. In Gilgit Baltistan, there is just one university, and no study on religion and sect has been done in the last 10 to 12 years. As a result, the literature on the subject is out of date. The reason for this is that it is a very sensitive subject, and individuals prefer not to work on it.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research is about answering unanswered questions and creating data that does not exist. Research methodology is a systematic way of conducting research (Bryman, 2012). In the following, I have explained the research methods along with Research Strategy and Research that I used in this research.

3.2 Research Strategy

Research strategy is a general orientation of the conduct of social research. The quantitative and qualitative differences between both will hold a great impact. It represents a useful means of classifying different methods of social research and because it is a helpful umbrella for a range of issues concerned with the practice of social research there would seem to be little distinction between the quantitative and qualitative strategy that quantitative research employs measuring, and qualitative research does not. However, many other authors suggested that the differences are deeper than they seem. For many authors, quantitative and qualitative research differ according to their epistemological bases and in other respects as well.

Some principles of quantitative search are deductive in nature, its practices and norms are positivists particularly and objective reality represents an important role. Contrary to that qualitative search inductive largely based on the structure of words. In inductive research perceived the opinion of the world in an individual manner and it is so that the verity does not remain the same. In most of the periods, both research plans are employed i.e., in mixed-method

research (Bryman 2012). Qualitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes more on words than quantification. The research strategy according to my research will be qualitative. Hence, it is the most appropriate according to my research.

3.3 Units of Data Collection (UDCs)

3.3.1 UDC 1: Shopkeepers

Explanation: Shopkeepers of the main market of District Gilgit have been interviewed because they are part of the mainstream market and play a huge role in the market economy of District Gilgit. They were asked about how a peaceful environment without any sectarian violence is important and how affiliation amongst the sects helps them to prosper and earn their income.

3.3.2 UDC 2: Religious Scholars

Explanation: Religious scholars of three main sects were interviewed. How they are taking their roles for promoting affiliation and to overcome conflicts with one another.

3.3.3 UDC 3: Customers/Consumers/General public

Explanation: Customers or the general public were interviewed, about how they can freely move in the market. What is the difference between the situation during and before the sectarian conflict, and now?

3.4 Research Methods

The research methods are the tools of data collection. Following research techniques have been used for the research:

3.4.1 Rapport Building

Rapport building helps a researcher to advance relationships before with the research participants. It specifies affiliation as an alliance and, more explicitly, sympathy. It analyzes how researcher and interviewee move all through empathic Moments during the process of the Interview. (Prior, 2017) this will help the researcher to observe the surroundings of an individual. I will be using this research method throughout my fieldwork. I am from Gilgit Baltistan it will be easy for me to build a rapport with the people as our language is also the same.

3.4.2 Jottings and daily diary

The jottings of the data are helpful for the researcher to take full notes. It is very difficult for a researcher to complete the full notes during the interview, the researcher will complete the field notes in the free time or at night time and sometimes respondents do not allow the audio or video recording. The researcher will use the daily diary to document the field memories, events, incidents, and the problems which will be faced while obtaining data. Jack Goody was cited in the book of Field notes edited by Roger Sanjek in (1990), 'He defines that the jottings are a significant attribute of writing is the ability to communicate not only with others but with oneself. A permanent record enables one to reread as well as record one's own thoughts and jottings. In this way, one can review and reorganize one's own work, reclassify what one has already classified, rearrange words, sentences, and paragraphs in a variety of ways. The way that information is organized as it is recopied gives us an invaluable insight into the workings of the mind of homo legends.

3.4.3 Interviewing

The interview guide will be used to get in-depth information about the research question. It will assist with acquiring information casually without upsetting the local individuals. Bernard (1994) characterizes its characteristics as simply sitting with the respondent and directing an interview. It does not bind to interviewees, and they are allowed to offer any response reasonable to them. Besides, it will help to discover emic viewpoint like what is locals' understanding. The researcher will use unstructured open-ended and close questions in the field, as individuals should respond easily with their own idea and perceptions. The following interview type will be used in the research.

Bryman (2012) states that while conducting unstructured interviews, the interviewee responds freely, and the interviewer asks open-ended questions to extract qualitative data. These interview-type probes and prompts are used to extract contextual and in-depth data. For these reasons, I used unstructured interviews to extract data from UDC 1 UDC 2, and UDC 3.

3.4.4 Observation

I have observed in the social gathering and events to get their trust as they may not go away and give valuable and accurate data. The researcher will not face any difficulty to mingle with the natives because; the researcher belongs to the same culture, customs, and traditions. Although the researcher performs, the same culture without rapport building it is difficult to get valid and valuable data. It will likewise assist with learning the local language and just as receive same dress example to drench with them. Kathleen M et al, (Spradley, 1980:7) "For the social researchers, member observation is a method where a researcher partakes in the everyday exercises,

ceremonies, collaborations, and occasions of a gathering of individuals as one of the methods for learning the unequivocal and unsaid parts of their life schedules and their culture. "Unequivocal" culture is a piece of what individuals can explain about themselves. "Express culture makes up a piece of what we know, a degree of information individuals can impart about without breaking a sweat".

3.5 Sampling

In this research, both probability and non-probability sampling have been used; because Bernard (1994) pointed out that, it increases the validity of any research. In this regard, systematic random sampling will be used, because it was supportive to select samples with an identified interval to carry out the research more systematically. The researcher also used stratified and purposive sampling in order to obtain data about other factors involved in developing the concept of a market economy. The researcher made strata based on sect, gender, age, occupation, education, and so forth. Through these types of samples, subjectivity can be minimized, which mostly appears in terms of marginalization of certain people and groups due to the above factors.

According to Bryman (2012), one of the difficulties that the qualitative researcher encounters is determining how many individuals will be interviewed at the start if theoretical factors drive selection. It is hard to say how many individuals should be questioned before theoretical saturation is attained. Although theoretical saturation is a helpful notion for determining sample size, data suggests that it is frequently asserted rather than shown. The sample size for the research for random sampling was 20. In terms of purposive sampling, the size of the sample support persuasive

findings which is vary from circumstance to scenario, and qualitative researchers must acknowledge that they are involved in a delicate balancing act:

3.5.1 Purposive Sampling

This type of non-probability sampling is generally used for cases that are informative and when the sample is small. There are many factors that inform the selection criteria while selecting respondents through this sampling technique. The selection criteria include (but not limited to) objectives of the study, the existing body of knowledge about the area of interest, hypotheses formulated, the area in which a particular UDC is specialized, and the knowledge that particular UDC has on the research topic. For the reasons mentioned above, I have used purposive sampling for UDC 1, UDC 2.

3.5.2 Random Sampling

This type of simple random sampling is the most basic type of probability sampling, in which each unit of the population has an equal probability of inclusion in sampling. For UDC 3, I have used random sampling. UDC 3 is customer/consumer/general public, so they were mostly customers available at the time of interview in the market. They were students, women, and men who one way or another connected in the market.

3.6 Locale of the study

The present research is conducted in the Gilgit city of Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan. Gilgit-Baltistan, previously known as the Northern Territories, is a locale managed by Pakistan as a regulatory region and comprising the northern part of the bigger Kashmir area that has been the subject of a

debate among India and Pakistan since 1947 and between India and China from fairly later. It is the northernmost region managed by Pakistan.

The present research will be collected in the city of Gilgit, and it is the capital city of Gilgit Baltistan, a region involving the northern district of Pakistani-administrated Kashmir. The city is situated in a wide valley close to the intersection of the Gilgit Stream and Hunza Waterway. Gilgit is a significant vacationer location in Pakistan and fills in as a center point for traveling and mountaineering campaigns in the Karakoram Mountain range. Gilgit was at one time a significant place for Buddhism; it was a significant stop on the antiquated Silk Street, and today fills in as a significant intersection along the Karakoram Expressway with street associations with China just as the Pakistani urban areas of Skardu, Chitral, Peshawar, and Islamabad. Presently, it fills in as an outskirts station for the nearby ancestral regions. The city's financial action is fundamentally centered on horticulture, with wheat, maize, and grain as the primarily created crops.

Research is about answering unanswered questions and creating data that do not exist. Research methodology is a systematic way of conducting research. In this chapter, I have explained the research methods along with Research Strategy and Research, which I used in this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Markets and Conflicts

Sectarianism exists in every sector of Gilgit almost everywhere and sectarianism has deep and powerful roots in organizational systems as well as in markets. Sectarian problems are extremely delicate in nature, especially at work, so people in workplaces take extra precautions while speaking with coworkers from different sects. People working at the managerial level think about the religious implications of a work-related decision as well. Employees in different organizations believe that they have been treated differently because of their religious beliefs. They face biases toward them from people of other sects.

People, on the other hand, were more likely to support and facilitate colleagues from the same sect, whether legally or otherwise. This has resulted in a power struggle in which various sects compete for superior positions in bureaucratic/public institutions and private sector businesses. This favoritism extends to a broader range of decisions, from major ones like hiring, transfers, and penalties to minor ones like office room allocation, training nominations, and payroll processing of applications with financial or professional ramifications. It is hardly unexpected; therefore, that sectarianism would gain momentum in the workplace in such a societal setting.

There is no single explanation for how sectarianism entered the workplace or why employees accept sects as the most important factor. The logical response is that the socio-cultural

environment in which organizations operate has a significant impact on them, either positively or negatively. However, if we look at the history of sectarianism in Gilgit, we may come up with another reasonable explanation. We may relate sectarianism in the workplace to a perception of being ignored by the government and the inability of state institutions to safeguard and give justice to communities while consolidating territorial authority in Gilgit-Baltistan.

4.1.1 Economy of Gilgit

Most of the people of Gilgit are associated with the professions of agriculture and tourism. The region's economy is built mainly on the historic Silk Road, a traditional trading route. Agriculture and tourism are the backbones of the economy. Wheat, corn (maize), barley, and fruits are examples of agricultural products.

Gilgit Baltistan is the capital of tourism in Pakistan. Trekking and mountaineering are the most popular forms of tourism, and this business is rising in importance. Gilgit Baltistan is home to some of the world's highest peaks, including K2, the world's second-highest mountain. Mountains, lakes, glaciers, and valleys dot the scenery of Gilgit Baltistan. Gilgit Baltistan is frequented for its landmarks, culture, history, and people, in addition to its mountains.

The economy of Gilgit has seen significant development and diversification. Much of it involves trade, tourism, transportation, housing and construction, mineral resources, and communication, among other things. On the other hand, the fast expansion of communication has provided international investors with numerous opportunities to expand their offerings. In recent years, the expansion of the hotel business in the area has brought new vitality and wealth to the ordinary man. This seems appropriate, given that it was the scenic beauty of the United Kingdom that

persuaded local and non-local investors to engage in the tourist industry. The majority of GB's assets are derived from tourism and mining. Furthermore, the Northern Areas produce roughly 70% of the dry fruits consumed both domestically and globally. According to research conducted by the Asian Development Bank, the United Kingdom produces approximately 100,000 metric tons of fresh apricots each year.

4.2 Employment Market and Sectarian Violence:

The respondents of the study argued that employment is very important for the livelihood of the community. The issue of sectarian violence has caused several discriminations in terms of employee hiring and income distribution. It is tilted towards a specific sect in different businesses, which causes imbalances in the job market in terms of access to opportunity. In the days of conflict, markets were closed, which keeps the entire community unemployed, which causes several problems at the household level as well as communal level. One, the shopkeeper added,

“During the issues of extreme sectarianism, we have lost a significant number of stocks and transport vehicles. The shops were on fire during the peak days of sectarian issues in the Gilgit city and in surrounding districts. Food stocks are wasted inside shops and markets”.

These sectarian conflicts brought huge losses for the individuals who were affiliated with the markets and very dependent on them. Many significant minerals in raw form are supplied by this region to the country and the rest of the world, which are highly affected, and employment in this sector is totally dismissed and brought to zero in times of conflict and violence. It is also one of the country's major stone jewelry makers, which also provides a significant share of the employment in Gilgit. The most affected employment segments are associated with the sale of

beef and poultry products because closing markets mean the burden of staying stock on farms increases the cost of production, and most of the employees in this sector are unemployed in times of violence. An Islamic scholar responded that employment is associated with peace and that in times of violence, it is impossible to keep the maximum number of people employed. Of all, the communities and different sects in GB need to cooperate with each other in a way that their livelihood and children remain safe.

4.3 Evidence of Sectarian violence at the marketplace:

The responses of Islamic scholars on this theme explain how Islamic views were intentionally associated with sectarian violence, which is a driving force behind the separate identity issues among the different sects residing in Gilgit Baltistan. The respondent argued that

“Market place evidence was of target killing in markets, putting fire on shops, shutter downs or lockdowns and disturbance of settled shops decorations and billboards, which caused a high level of fairness among the suppliers and customers”.

Another respondent argued that:

“One day he witnessed a brutal fighting incident in the market when two sects came in front of each other during a religious event celebration. That fight cost the whole market lockdown for next two weeks”.

One of the stories mentions by a female respondent, how she almost lost her 8 years old son to sectarianism:

“I sent my 8-year-old son with lunch to her husband at the shop, after 10 to 15 minutes I heard continues gunfire in street, I was so worried and rush out to the street without even covering my head (without dupatta) to look for my son. There were so many dead bodies in the street including dead bodies of young children as well. I held one dead body of a young boy who was also the age of my son and thought it is my son. At the same time, my son came in front of me, and then I came back to my senses. During all this time he was waiting outside the shop of his father because the shop was closed, and his father left already and hid somewhere because of gunfire”.

People not only lose their material things but also their loved ones in such incidents. This is just one story, but there are many more people suffering severely in conflicts like this.

4.3.1 Target killing

Many of the respondents mentioned the target killing incidents in the region during that time. They added that the issue of target killing was more frequently observed in marketplaces, but more often, it was found on the outskirts of the city. Another respondent argued that he witnessed a target-killing incident in his neighborhood during the days of sectarian conflict between the Shia and Sunni. The target killer was caught by the public and turned out to be an outsider, hired by the Sunni community violence promoters. The irony is that in the next few weeks, another target killer was caught in the Suni area, which turned out to be from the opposition, who was targeting the religious scholar. This indicates that target killing was used as one of the weapons during the conflict period.

4.3.2 Mob Attacks

Mob attacks are not new during sectarianism in Gilgit Baltistan. The first-ever mob attack took place in the late 1980s, as mentioned earlier in the historical background of sectarian incidents. Another violent mob attack took place on KKH, also mentioned before, where people of the Shia sect were selected and shot dead because of their religious affiliation. Respondents pointed out that there are many other mob attacks like these in markets and outside of them as well. These attacks also include the incidents of Lulusar, where 12 Shia members were killed by the Taliban representing the Sunni side. Many of my respondents mentioned the incidents involving KKH, Lulusar, and attacks on houses based on sect. In mob attacks, the Shia community has been frequently targeted, but the Sunni community is also targeted, especially in target killings. In target killings, plenty of evidence is explored in Sunni sect areas, attempted or succeeded.

4.4 Conflict and Mobility

Gilgit is so diverse and people of all sects live side by side. That includes all sects like Shia Sunni, Ismaili, and people of other religions, like the Christian community, who live there. That is why areas are defined for specific sects. There are areas where people of mixed sects live as well. There are Sunni, Shia, and Ismaili majority areas. After the rise of sectarian conflict, it became difficult for people to freely move in areas. Shias are not permitted to enter Sunni-majority areas and vice versa. At the time when the sectarian conflict was at its peak, it did not matter whether you belonged to one specific sector went to the area of another sect, you would be shot dead. It went to this extent. One of my respondents had this to say about it:

“Nowadays it’s very difficult to move from one place to another because of your sectarian affiliation to one specific sect.”

After all these issues, the situation is different now. You are no longer threatened with death for going to one specific sect area, but people still avoid going to such areas. In Gilgit, there is a Shia majority, but in the outer areas of Gilgit where you can connect with the world, the routes that lead there consist of a Sunni population. That is why all the killings and incidents happen on the way. The major incidents of sectarian conflict happened on KKH. On that, one of the Shia respondents said:

“Now see as a Shia I can’t go to Chilas and to Ghizer’s side unless I have relatives there or any kind of contact with anyone. Shia can’t go to Sunni majority areas of Gilgit, and Sunnis can’t go to Shia majority areas.”

The population of Chilas is all Sunni, and in Ghizer there are only Sunni and Ismaili available. Mostly Shia people, including Ismailis, get scared while traveling via Chilas because violent incidents at the base of the sect happen there. Even now, almost all buses travel under the convoy in some areas. The Kohistan incident is proof that sectarianism happened based on areas where Shia passengers were taken out. Their ID cards were searched by militants, and they were selected on the basis of areas where there was a Shia majority, and they were killed cold-bloodedly just because they were Shia and from the areas where the Shia majority live.

4.4.1 Restrictions

Due to sectarian violence on an extreme level, the whole region suffers, including the public as well as the market economy. Every sector of the market has suffered because of riots, target

killings, protests, and curfews for quite a long time. The word curfew might sound strange to some people, but the people of Great Britain are familiar with this word so well because they've been part of it one way or another and multiple times. The main reason for this is the sectarian issues in the area. After the issue, hindrances faced by the public as a result, it becomes difficult for people to tolerate one another based on sect, and they diverge, for example, from hospitals, schools, public transportation, and so on.

Continuous sectarian issues have become hindrances for so many people in GB. That includes students at schools, colleges, and universities. There have been riots and protests in universities, too. It is a common notion for people of Gilgit after the incidents of sectarianism that those belonging to the "other" sect are their opponents. Extremist elements, in this perspective, aim to drive members of opposing faiths out of areas where they have a majority. Sectarian forces have organized themselves on contemporary managerial and military lines in places where the culture of blood feuds does not prevail.

4.4.2 Effect on Market: (Supply and Demand)

The markets are a place where transactions are made, but sectarian violence creates barriers to supplying the goods to the markets. The only way to bring goods is through KKH. During the time of sectarianism, transportation also closes, so there is no way to bring goods to market and fulfill the demand. Sectarianism also affects the supply and demand within the area. First, markets are closed during or after any kind of incident, and people avoid going to the markets, which affects the supply and demand of the market.

Most of the time, it is a problem for Shias to access safe markets because the Sunni sect has a stronghold of the regions in Gilgit Baltistan. It has always been observed that at the start of a conflict, demand for glossaries and household items increases, but it becomes zero in the days of heated conflict. It is because the markets are closed that none of the transactions take place.

4.5 Antagonisms and Revenge

During all these issues of sectarianism, the factor of antagonism and revenge is most common and very strong among all, even more so than business and unlikeness towards another sect. If it were not for revenge, the conflict would not have gone to its peak. So many people lose their lives just because of the revenge factor. We have examples of previous incidents, and today sectarianism is at its highest stage, all because of the same thing: antagonisms and revenge. One of my respondents highlighted an issue like this:

“There is no such kind of major reason of sectarian conflict, this becomes a threat to the whole community on the basis of misunderstanding, for example, if Sunni guy murdered by anyone for whatever reason just because he is Sunni, they would blame Shia for the murder and they will try to take revenge by killing Shia person and vice versa.”

If people did not take revenge in the first place, the issue would not have reached this level. Here, people lose their loved ones just for the sake of their belief system. The longest duration of sectarian violence in Gilgit was also due to the same issue when Agha Zia was assassinated in targeted killing. The Shia community of Gilgit is demanding justice and revenge for the killing of their religious leader.

“At the start they martyrdom our Agha Zia, after his death all this started.”

The respondent is mentioning the riots and protests that took place after the death of Agha Zia and how they gave a very new shape to the sectarian violence in the whole region.

4.6 Sectarianism in State Politics

Gilgit Baltistan is part of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Everyone is familiar with the rivalry between India and Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir. This makes Gilgit Baltistan a disputed area. New Delhi considers Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (Azad Kashmir) and Gilgit-Baltistan Indian territory, whereas Islamabad claims the whole Kashmir area, including the India-administered sector. Gilgit Baltistan got independence on 2 November 1947 and decided to become part of Pakistan after 20 days of its independence. In the same year, Gilgit-Baltistan was a component of the contested state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The people of GB did not get their rights as citizens of Pakistan. There are poor health facilities, and the same goes for education. The government is unable to provide necessities to the people of Great Britain. During the peak of sectarian issues in Gilgit Baltistan, so many people became victims of sectarian war, but the government was unable to protect them until so many people died. After the events of 1988, a section of the Shia population accused the government of supporting the mujahideen. It argues that a large-scale attack would need organization, logistics, and training, which the Diamer people lacked. The mujahideen are suspected of being involved in the attacks on Shia villages in Gilgit's suburbs. During the interview, most of my respondents were not happy with the government, and some of them put the blame on the government for failing to protect their citizens. Some of them believed that the government was involved in giving flames to minor issues of sectarianism and making them bigger, so the area could not be in peace. One of the respondents said:

“Gilgit Baltistan is a disputed area and it’s under the control of the Federal Government. The government does not want this region to be developed so it can always remain in slavery. They do not give us our rights. You can take the example of tourism, it is the best way to show the right image of people of Gilgit Baltistan, but government creates conflicts on purpose to ruin the image of GB.”

There was a time when tourism was at its peak in Great Britain. GB was a hub for international tourists, but after the terrorist attacks and the rise of sectarian war, it went down to zero. People related to the occupation of tourism became jobless and unemployed, and the market economy went downwards. There were attacks on international tourists at the base camp of K2. The person involved in the target killing of these international tourists was also part of the militant group that attacked Shia leaders travelling via Babusar from Rawalpindi to Gilgit. That person is part of a terrorist group. After the attack on the international tourist market, the economy of tourism almost shut down for years. People again attack the government for its negligence and ignorance towards the development of the area. They also blame government agencies for creating such issues on purpose. Respondents say things like:

“Governmental agencies creating issues regarding sectarian so people of GB fight with one another and don’t ask for their fundamental rights, our economy won’t grow as well. GB has enough resources to grow the market economy of the whole country.”

The main incidents that happened based on sect are not justified. The government is unable to provide justice for the families who lost loved ones in the sectarian war in the region. A person involved in the killing of international tourists is in jail, but recently a video clip of him along with

his companions came out on Facebook. It means that a person is free and roaming around the area. He is also part of a terrorist group. The person is already a threat to people and, again, it is the government that cannot punish a man who is responsible for the deaths of so many people and will repeat the same thing again in the future. The same happened with the killers who were involved in the targeted killing of Shia leader Agha Ziauddin. Again, the government failed to punish the murderers.

“Agha Ziauddin became popular figure after raising the issue of curriculum and as an active participant of protests to change the inappropriate pictures from children book, for his activism he was even sent to jail. He even met Pervaiz Musharraf former president of that time. The government targeted him because they did not want anyone from Gilgit to stand against them and challenge them by asking for rights. For other such kinds of issues, we have an example of Baba Jan as well that how he was put in jail for fighting against the rights of innocent people.

This is how a government treats us. They give us basic things, so we forget our freedom.”

The government, first, failed to protect its citizens, and then it failed to give justice to its citizens. It is unable to give justice to a prominent figure and the leader of a dominant sect.

“Before the incident of target killing of Agha Ziauddin when Shia go to jaloos in the holy month of Muharram Sunni community used to set Sabeel for the Shia jaloos. However, right after the incident sectarian war broke between the two sects and that is also because of the government, victims lose their lives and criminals never were punished for the targeted killing. If the government was able to provide justice to the families of victims, then sectarian war will never have happened, but the government is unable to do so”.

4.7 Sectarian Affiliation and status of peace/harmony in Gilgit:

After so many incidents, people are now living well and working, as they should after so many unrests, material, and human losses. Again, Gilgit District became a tranquil area for both domestic and international tourists. However, sectarian events still occur on a small level, but most of them avoid getting into a fuss about not making it serious because it will not take time to become such a thing. The people of Gilgit have experienced significant disturbances and violence on these grounds, and they are not at this point and the government is largely responsible for its weaker policies. Therefore, they are not going to extreme heights now. Recently, an incident happened. A car was targeted and then five people perished after the unexploded firings. People sought to put it into the sectarian conflict, but subsequently, it was proven that it was a personal problem and not a sectarian dispute. This occurrence may lead to a major problem within the sect but, before acting against the members of a different sector, people examine it, as I stated previously, since, as they do not think, these issues actually originate from outside parties that create trouble. On the issue, one of my respondents, who is a student studying outside Gilgit, said:

“Sectarian issues of any kind are in Gilgit only, outside Gilgit especially in urban areas everyone is Gilgiti despite their sectarian affiliation. There is no Sunni no Shia and no Ismaili.”

It is evident that the issues regarding sects are limited to the region of Gilgit only, so through this, the change in the thinking of people and their behavior can be changed.

The same thing happened when the Baltistan bus (the Shia majority) collided with an accident while traveling to Rawalpindi, causing injuries to scores of passengers. Residents from Chilas (the Sunni majority) treated them with first aid and brought them in their private automobiles to hospitals. Nobody expected such gestures from the people after extremism at a high level on KKH. In tough circumstances like these, victory over the conflict, which is evidence of the fact that the sectarian war is nothing but controversy, the key component, is togetherness and kind heart for which Gilgit Baltistan's peoples are famous.

The new generation with their new thinking, ideas, and mindsets can bring change to the region. It is very important to educate the new generation in a way that they would prefer peace and growth, despite the fight and conflict. Since the new generation of Gilgit is so familiar with the sectarianism in the area because they suffer in one way or another. They have seen the closure of their schools, colleges, and universities as well. They are also familiar with the curfew and so forth.

“I would suggest there should be collective tanzeem of the youth of Gilgit Baltistan related to any sect (Shia, Sunni, and Ismaili) if youth will be united people will listen to them. This issue could be resolved either by Scholars or youth.”

One of my young respondents, a student at university, suggested a tanzeem, or social organization for the younger generation, whose aim should be peace and harmony within the region. Youths of such organizations are not only aware of people about harmony and peace, but they themselves will not participate in such issues in order to avoid conflict.

“If our Aalims/Scholars and leaders for example Qazi Nisar of Sunni sect and Agha Rahat from Shia sect got together for MUZAKRAAT, they can bring peace and unity in the area by working together but no one is ready from either side for such thing”.

Other than youth, if one can take part in maintaining peace, that is the religious leader. Because so many people trust and obey their religious leader, almost all sects in Gilgit Baltistan follow their religious leader, who guides them on a case-by-case basis. If religious leaders guide their people to behave in a way so that any kind of conflict will not grow, if they play their role by telling people to tolerate as regarded by their religion, these issues will never arise. This is how peace can be maintained. This is the message of religion as well.

4.7.1 Role of local politics

In Gilgit, the jirga system prevails with the local politics. In every village, there is a leader for the jirga system who resolves the issues of local people within the area without going to the courts or police station unless it is necessary to go there. For the issues and conflicts in villages, local people consult with the leader of the Jirga, who is called the *Numberdar* of the specific area. Sectarian violence is not limited to a few areas of Gilgit; rather, it occurs on a large scale and almost everywhere. Therefore, it is beyond the control of any kind of jirga or numberdar to resolve. The only thing they can do is to make their area peaceful by avoiding any kind of fight against the other sects living in the same area. It is also their duty to maintain peace. It is also their duty to save the minority sect in the area so the people of the majority sect will not harm them. Despite the chaos and sectarianism that engulfed the region, most villages remained safe, with no serious incidents occurring in Gilgit, for example. In fact, the incidents and protests took place in the urban settings of Gilgit. Local governments tried to prevent it by imposing curfews and by arresting the culprits

involved in the target killings. Local government to resolve the issue invites religious leaders from different sects, specifically from the Shia and Sunni sects to table talk so they can resolve the issue through the collective efforts of religious scholars and local government as well. One of my respondents, a religious scholar, also highlighted the efforts of the local government to resolve the conflict between the sects. He also mentioned the roles played by security forces, both negative and positive, regarding the sectarian issue:

“The local government tried its best to bring the religious scholar of both sects on table talk through this they tried to bring them on one page. The security forces played their roles in positive as well as a negative way be it enforcing curfews arresting people involved in creating more chaos in exiting sectarian conflict.”

4.7.2 Role of Religious Scholar

The role of a religious scholar is very important, especially when it comes to any kind of issue related to religion. People were more connected to their religion than to anything else, such as culture, traditions, norms, and so on, and because of this close connection, people believed and followed religious leaders. According to Islam, the supreme leader is Allah Almighty, and after Allah, the Prophets of Allah hold a very important role.

People follow religious scholars; they consult the religious leader or scholar in every situation. Every sect has its own religious leader in Gilgit, but there are other religious scholars apart from the leader from whom they seek help and consult them for their concerns. Sectarian conflict affects the daily life of a religious scholar because in such a situation, people look towards their leader, so they guide them with the knowledge they have gained through studying religion thoroughly. It

is the duty of religious scholars to guide them in the right way. People expect from them and believe in them, that they can bring peace and harmony. People also respect their religious scholars and follow them. This makes a religious scholar more responsible and authoritative towards taking big decisions about such issues. During all the sectarian issues until now, religious scholars have played a huge role in bringing peace. By promoting peace instead of fighting and by encouraging tolerance. After the massacre of Shia passengers on KKH, the families of the victims, despite wanting revenge or anything else, prefer to tolerate and ask for justice so no more lives can be taken. Religious scholars have become successful in promoting peace instead of conflicts, as instructed in the Holy Quran. In this regard, one religious scholar said:

“In Quran and Hadith, there is nowhere encouraged and justified that violence without any reason. Quran stated about the rule of “Qissas” meaning an “eye for an eye” beyond this it has never encouraged any form of violence; instead, religion teaches us to be humble and peaceful.”

The root cause is a misunderstanding between the two sects. Misunderstandings of Allah's commands and their references in various books it is not a reason to kill one another, as mentioned earlier, and it is not the preaching of Islam. People, for political gains, highlight such issues and make them turn into chaos, and the hatred increases instead of diminishing. There is a solution to this issue as well, and that is the collective effort of local people. Their harmony and cooperation with one another can bring peace.

“It is the duty of religious scholars to promote tolerance in the society through their lectures and sermons. They should be role models for the society in context to tolerance.”

“The solution is already provided in Holy Quran in Surah “loh” verse no. 6. We just must consult the Quran for the solution. The concept is you have your own religion and I have my, so e should not interfere with each other religious sentiments.”

Sectarianism has deep roots in organizational systems, especially in markets. Gilgit District became a tranquil area for both domestic and international tourists due to this issue of sectarianism. Sectarian events still occur on a small level, but most of them avoid getting into a fuss. The key component is togetherness and kind heart for which Gilgit Baltistan's peoples are famous. It is very important to educate the new generation in a way that they would prefer peace and growth, despite the fight and conflict. To resolve this issue role of religious scholars, matter because it is related to religion and religious scholar plays an important role in religion. Every sect has its own religious leader in Gilgit, but there are other religious scholars apart from the leader from whom they seek help and consult them for their concerns. Religious scholars have become successful in promoting peace instead of conflicts, as instructed in the Holy Quran. The root cause is the misunderstanding between the two sects. There is a solution to this issue and that is the collective efforts of local people.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Gilgit Baltistan is indeed a very beautiful place with mighty mountains and mesmerizing plains and meadows. It holds not only beautiful but natural resources as well, especially water resources for the Indus River. It also has the world's highest mountains. For instance, K2 is the second-highest mountain in the world. Gilgit remained a land of diverse religions in history, but now most of the people of Gilgit are Muslims and divided into different sects of Islam like everywhere else in the world and Pakistan also.

Muslims divided into different sects for quite a long time now. The first-ever division took place right after the death of the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) over the leadership. For the first time, Muslims were divided into two different sects. Since then, the two main sects of Islam do not get along with one another. Such serious incidents occurred between Shia and Sunni Muslims until the 1980s. Tensions between Shia and Sunni communities have increased since the 1980s, especially after the construction of the Karakoram Highway, which connects this once-isolated region of Gilgit with China and Pakistan.

On a societal level, sectarian violence has shattered Gilgit's social fabric. It has caused sectarian schisms, separated local communities from all kinship-based bonds and identities, and infused various identities with sectarian colors. Furthermore, it has had a significant influence on the economy, social fabric, politics, education, and people's thinking.

The clergy has become the sole spokespersons for economic, political, social, and religious complaints because of the organization of numerous shades of religion under a single banner of sect-based and religious politics. Most religious organizations have grown so powerful that people feel forced to use the sectarian card to get employment and enter politics. It gets tough to survive otherwise.

Religious parties have become a vehicle for expressing people's concerns because of the failures of major political parties to solve people's problems. When seen in this light, it is possible to conclude that public discontent is expressed through religious politics, which, in turn, acquires legitimacy for its anti-democratic actions by feeding off the political economy.

The birth of new enlightened souls can save Gilgit Baltistan from the Dark Age it is in because of sectarianism that has engulfed the people's hearts and minds. Unfortunately, this dormant form of religious intolerance has revealed itself in the real world and it is everyday life of people, the application of sectarian logic to daily action. In Gilgit-Baltistan, the cumulative effect of religion and sectarianism politics is the suffocation of a meritocratic, democratic, pluralist, and open society. Wallowing in the bog that devours everything progressive and illuminating is something that such a closed ego enjoys.

Life in Gilgit city is dominated by sectarianism, to the point that people's sectarian connections have such an impact on them that a sectarian logic is effortlessly applied to ordinary acts and ideas. 'Thinking in sectarian terms has become an unavoidable element of social life in Gilgit-Baltistan, and sectarian identities have grown more significant,' more significant than kinship, language, and

regional belonging identities.' Hundreds have perished in the region because of deadly confrontations in a religious conflict poisoned by politics.

5.2 Policy recommendations

The economic industry, however, needs assistance in terms of technology, talent development, and marketing. As a result, further public investment in Gilgit is required to provide access to basic utilities. In addition, immediate focus must be paid to skill development. Government funding restrictions and the problems of public investment may prevent high-quality skill training. As a result, creative and cost-effective collaborations to foster skill development in the region are required.

It is necessary to expand on such initiatives with the help of local startups. However, access to high-speed internet in Gilgit is critical to expanding the creative economy's horizons. The region's young generations can then work wonders to diversify the economy beyond tourism. Another distinguishing feature of the region's economy is its ability to serve as an energy center. In rural areas, there has been a minor improvement in the installation of high-tech and heavy industries. However, it is hoped that after gaining the status of a province, the government would devote more resources to modernizing the economy of the Gilgit District.

The government must impose a ban on sectarian militant organizations that advocate sectarian war to guarantee regional peace and avoid significant concerns with sectarian strife. It is the government's responsibility to ensure the safety of its population. As a result, extra protection should be provided for judges and public prosecutors who are involved in the cases of suspected

sectarian extremists. Government should also equip and train security personnel, such as the police, to track down and apprehend members of such a violent organization.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The limitations of my research work are limited numbers of respondents due to COVID19 and smart lockdown in the country, specifically in Gilgit in order to overcome the viral disease.

Another limitation of my research is the language barrier. People of Gilgit-Baltistan speak different languages, and the District of Gilgit is so diverse because of its urban setting. People from different areas are settled in Gilgit, making it a diverse place. Therefore, my respondents also speak different languages. I am also from Gilgit but could not speak or understand any language other than my own mother tongue, Shina. For that, I needed a translator who could understand and translate the responses of my respondents.

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Appendix

Interview Guide:

Shopkeeper	General Public	Religious Scholar
Gender	Gender	Gender
Age	Age	Age
Sect	Sect	Sect
Nature of work?		
Which was the longest period of conflict?	Which was the longest period of conflict?	Which is the longest period of conflict?
How much loss do you have to bear?	How much loss do you have to bear?	
The sectarian conflict happened between shopkeepers within market?		
Conflict with customers based on the sect?	Conflict with customers based on the sect?	
How does sectarian conflict affect the lives of people?	How does sectarian conflict affect the lives of people?	How does sectarian conflict affect the lives of people?

What is the main reason in your view?	What is the main reason in your view?	What is the main reason in your view?
Collective effort is important or not?	Collective effort is important or not?	Collective effort is important or not?
What solution would you suggest?	What solution would you suggest?	What solution would you suggest?