

The Changing Pattern of Pakhtun Culture under the Influence of Diaspora

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Abstract

The Pakhtuns love their homeland and culture and for centuries they have preserved their culture, which is known as Pakhtunwali. However, for economic reasons, throughout their history they have been working around the world as their homeland does not produce enough to sustain them. Around 1970s a large number of Pakhtuns moved to the Gulf countries as these countries due to newfound petro dollars wanted to improve their infrastructure for which they needed a workforce. Though the Pakhtuns earned a good amount of money, it affected their centuries' old traditions and lifestyle as well. This impact was quite widespread as it changed their tangible as well as intangible culture. This paper discusses those changes which have taken place primarily due to diaspora remittances and expatriate life.

Introduction

The Pakhtun society of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan is a tribal society with little sources of local income. This is the reason why Pakhtuns are spread all over Pakistan and the world in search of jobs and livelihood. The early 1970s saw a Pakhtun influx in the Gulf States. Though the early migrants faced a lot of difficulties, they were able to earn huge amounts of money, which they sent to their families in Pakistan. This money from the Gulf States brought a lot of cultural changes in the Pakhtuns' society.

The foremost change which one can easily observe is the influence on the structure of the tribal society. The traditional leaders of the society slowly and gradually lost power to the emerging wealthy class who in many cases belonged to the lower strata of the society. This change also brought many problems; particularly it disturbed law and order in the Pakhtun society.

Another important change that affected the Pakhtuns' society was their way of living. Earlier most of the Pakhtuns lived very simple lives. They used to live in muddy houses and most of the Pakhtuns did not have their private guest rooms. With the Diaspora money the Pakhtuns started constructing brick houses. They also constructed their private guest houses which negatively affected the *Hujra* (common community guest house as well as social club for men) culture. They used to celebrate their festivals in a very simple manner but with the arrival of new wealth, the Pakhtuns changed their simple living to a more cosmopolitan lifestyle.

The Diaspora money also brought some positive changes in the lives of the Pakhtuns. With the availability of resources, more Pakhtun children were able to go to better schools and also were able to get higher education. With education their behaviour towards women had also dramatically changed. Further, the economic betterment also reduced the hardships of the Pakhtun women. The availability of economic resources also changed the Pakhtuns' attitude towards girls' education. More and more girls went to schools, colleges and universities. However, this new economic prosperity also saw some hindrances on the free movement of the lower class women. These women who used to freely walk around in the fields,

streets and other places were no more allowed to move out of the houses.

Culture and Sources Responsible for the Change

Culture is defined by different scholars in different ways. Some call it ‘an appreciation of good literature, music, art, and food,’ while others would define it as ‘the full range of learned human behaviour pattern.’ Edward B. Taylor (1832-1917) in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871) defined culture as a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (As quoted in O’Neil 2006a: Online). It is also believed that though through culture human beings survive, it is ‘a fragile phenomenon’ and is prone to constant change as it exists only in our minds.

What are the factors which force a culture to change? According to O’Neil (2006b: Online) “there are three general sources of influence or pressure that are responsible for both change and resistance to it: forces at work within a society, contact between societies, and changes in the natural environment” (See **Table 1**).

In order to make diffusion, acculturation, and transculturation easier for understanding they are defined in the following manner:

1. Diffusion is the movement of things and ideas from one culture to another. When diffusion occurs, the form of a trait may move from one society to another but not its original cultural meaning.

2. Acculturation is what happens to an entire culture when alien traits diffuse in on a large scale and substantially replace traditional cultural patterns.
3. Transculturation is what happens to an individual when he or she moves to another society and adopts its culture. Immigrants who successfully learn the language and accept as their own the cultural patterns of their adopted country have transcultured (O'Neil 2006a: Online).

	Within society	Between societies
Processes leading to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ invention ▶ culture loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ diffusion ▶ acculturation ▶ transculturation
stimulus diffusion		
Processes resulting in resistance to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ habit ▶ integration of existing culture traits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ingroup-outgroup dynamics
Table 1: Relationship between all of the different mechanisms of change operating within and between societies. Courtesy: O'Neil 2006a.		

Last but not the least, there is another very powerful impetus for change, which is globalisation. According to Naz *et al.* (2011: Online):

Through globalization the entire world is changing into a single place, single culture and single identity. Individual distinctions of culture and society are nurturing towards a homogenous global culture, which will redefine the cultural contexts.

After discussing the broad aspects of culture and the reasons for change, now the writer would like to concentrate on the changes

in Pakhtuns’ culture which have occurred due to the Pakhtun Diaspora.

Pakistani and Pakhtun Diaspora

Pakhtuns are one of the primitive cultures of the Central Asian peninsula. Though, some parts of the land of Pakhtuns are now administratively under the jurisdiction of the Government of Pakistan, historically and geographically the land inhabited by the Pakhtuns has been part of Central Asia. Presently Pakhtuns are mainly spread over in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s two provinces viz. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan (Khattak 1984: 130-5).

Culturally and religiously Pakhtuns’ are believed to be very orthodox and are considered hard to change. However, economic migration of Pakhtuns to different parts of the world in the twentieth century has brought changes to their culture. Pakhtuns are around thirty-five per cent of the total emigrant population of Pakistan, who are spread over different countries of the world. According to 2010 estimate of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, the total Pakistani emigrant population is 6.3 million. **Table 2** shows the top four countries where Pakistani Diaspora is working.

Country	Numbers
1. Saudi Arabia	1,500,000
2. United Kingdom	1,200,000
3. United Arab Emirates	1,014,082
4. United States of America	900,000

Table 2: Number of overseas Pakistanis living/ working/ studying in different regions/ countries of the world up to 31-12-2010, Region wise distribution. Courtesy: Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, Government of Pakistan.

According to Akbar (2011) the total number of Pakistani Diaspora is 7 million. We can find different figures about the strength of Pakistani Diaspora but one fact is evident that whatever number of Pakistani Diaspora is working abroad, they are even bigger in size than the diaspora of other large countries. S.J. Burki, former Vice-President of the World Bank, newspaper columnist, and a prominent member of the Pakistani community in the United States, points out:

It is much greater in size, for instance, than the Indian and Chinese diaspora. Even six million Pakistanis – averaging the lowest estimates of 3.9 million and the highest of 8 million – would mean that 3.75 % of current Pakistani population of 160 million is living overseas. (As quoted in Bhatti 2008: Online)

The Pakhtun culture is known as *Pakhtunwali* (The Pakhtun Code of Life). According to scholars *Pakhtunwali* is as old as Pakhtuns themselves and it is this code that governed their lives even before accepting Islam. Even after the acceptance of Islam, Pakhtuns did not forget their culture rather sometimes they followed their culture than their religion (Khattak 1984: 135-40 and Personal Communication: Khan 2010). However, the twentieth century economic migrations had an impact on their culture and traditions. In the following pages the author discusses those wide ranging changes that have taken place in *Pakhtunwali* or generally, in the lives of the Pakhtuns.

Important Changes in Pakhtun Culture

One of the basic cultural traits of the Pakhtuns was/is the tribal structure of the society. In this tribal setup there were traditional chiefs of the tribes like Maliks, Khans, Syeds, etc. They were the ones who also had bigger chunks of the land. Few decades

back the Pakhtun society was mostly agricultural and the landless depended upon the landed class. Thus the Pakhtun Chiefs were not only tribal chiefs but the economic patrons of the landless as well. When the migrations for greener pastures started, initially those were the poorer classes of the rural areas that started migrating under difficult circumstances. However, since their lives at their ancestral lands were also not very promising so they took the risks, which paid off. According to Siegmann (2010), Pakhtuns of the rural areas went overwhelmingly abroad and are now dependent more and more on the remittances. She believes that "... a tenth of average monthly incomes [of the rural areas] consist of remittances flows" (Siegmann 2010: Online). After initial difficulties, they started earning money which attracted more and more migrants.

These emigrants mostly worked hard but spent almost nothing on themselves rather they steadily sent home more and more money. With the availability of large amounts of money, the lifestyles of the families of the expatriates started to change. With this the dependence on the landed classes also reduced. Slowly and gradually the landed class found it difficult to find farmers for their agricultural lands, which also affected their income negatively. Thus while on the one hand the expatriates were getting richer and richer, the landed classes/chiefs were becoming poorer by the day. This resulted in the selling of their ancestral lands in order to keep intact their middle or upper class status. Ironically the purchasers of these lands were the former peasants or economic dependents. This new development also changed the tribal setup of the Pakhtuns. The former chiefs of the tribes slowly and gradually started losing hold on their tribes/villages as the newly rich started challenging the traditional chiefs of the society due to their newly acquired

wealth (Nichols 2009: 160 and Personal Communication: Khan 2012).

This is also evident from the political situation of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. There are quite a number of expatriates or their family members who have contested elections for national, provincial and senate constituencies. Few of them have won the elections as well. For example Abdul Nabi Bangash (Senator), Syed Haider Ali Shah (Member of National Assembly), Farid Mufakir (former Member of Provincial Assembly), etc. (Personal Communication: Bangash 2010). This situation negatively affected the influence of the traditional Pakhtun Chiefs. Though immediately its negative effects were not known, in the aftermath of the rise of religious extremism it became evident that these traditional chiefs were no more influential enough to control the situation (Personal Communication: Khan 2012).

Another important feature of the Diaspora riches was its impact on the simple lifestyle of the Pakhtuns. Generally the Pakhtun houses were made of mud with few large rooms which were mostly shared by the family members. Even such houses did not have washrooms and lavatories. Men and women both would go out to fulfil the call of nature or to take a bath. The male members of the Pakhtuns would go to the natural springs or other fresh water sources to take a bath, while the females would go to their own specified areas, known as *Gudar*. They would wash the clothes of the family members, take baths and also bring water for drinking from the *Gudar*. Traditionally *Gudar* areas were out of bound for the male members of the tribe. With the availability of large amounts of money from their expatriate family members, the people in the villages and towns started constructing cemented houses with modern amenities of

living. Instead of large rooms they started constructing medium or small size rooms so that each individual, at least the male members, got a separate room with attached bath and lavatory facilities. With the availability of these facilities, the traditional places of bath and other necessities started crumbling down. The traditional *Gudars* were abandoned due to the availability of piped or well-water at home. The vanishing of *Gudar* is emotionally lamented by a poet in his poetry which is sung by the well-known singer Haroon Badshah in the following manner:

Khalq Badal shu ka Badal shwaloo wakhtoonā
Jeenakai na razee Gudar ta jeenakai na razee Gudar
ta (Pashto)

(Badshah: You Tube 2006)

(Trans. People have changed or the times have changed,
 Girls are no more coming to *Gudar*, Girls are no more coming to *Gudar*).

The traditional Pakhtun houses also used to have a central fire-place in a large room. With the construction of new houses these gave way to modern kitchens. It had a side effect on the family system as well. Previously the family members would sit around the fire-place, women would cook and the rest of the family members would eat. During winters' long nights the older women and men would tell stories or their past life experiences to the younger generation. The story telling culture was so widespread and popular among the Pakhtuns that one of the famous bazars of Peshawar (The capital of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) is known as Qissa Khwani Bazar (the bazar of story-tellers). It is recorded that during the traditional Pakhtun era people used to sit on both sides of the bazar on *charpais* (traditional Pakhtun's

bed), sip tea and narrate and listen to stories. That is how the bazar came to be known as Qissa Khwani Bazar. With the introduction of kitchens, individualism started spreading. With diaspora remittances, modern audio-visual equipment like tape-recorders, televisions, VCRs or CD players replaced the story-telling culture and one no more sees older people telling stories. With the presence of these modern equipment no one is interested in story-telling (Personal Communication: Badshah 2010).

An important pillar of the Pakhtun culture was *Hujra*, which was used as a common guest house of the tribe, *mohallah* or village. Except rich Pakhtuns, who were very few, normally the joint *Hujras* were used as guest rooms/houses as well as meeting places for discussions on important issues. With diaspora remittances, the families in villages and towns not only constructed cemented houses for themselves but also constructed their individual guest rooms/houses. Thus, a basic cultural characteristic of the Pakhtuns disappeared. In the old days *Hujras* were not only used as guest rooms/houses but were training places for the young Pakhtuns. The young Pakhtuns used to listen to stories from their elders and would observe their etiquettes/styles/actions, which would be generally imitated/ followed by the younger generation. Thus these were the training centres for young Pakhtuns which is also evident from an often quoted sentence when someone acts in a different way than the Pakhtuns would normally do: for example, on such occasions it is commonly remarked – *jor hujra jumaat ye na de leedali* (Pashto) - ‘the person has not seen *hujra* and mosque.’ Due to diaspora riches now the culture of *hujra* has almost disappeared or is at the verge of disappearance (Personal Communication: Ghulam 2011).

Before diaspora remittances, the Pakhtun society was primarily agricultural and was thus having many traditions which were closely associated with the agricultural lifestyle. For example during the corn growing season, the young Pakhtuns would go to the fields and would pluck the corn-sticks and cook on fire in the fields and eat on the spot. This was known as *Daaza* (which literally means the sound of corn peas blasting). But with the disappearance of agriculture from many of the Pakhtun areas this tradition has also vanished.

Another tradition associated with the agricultural economy was the barter-trade. The Pakhtun landed classes used to have stores of grain in their houses. When the children would ask for money to buy something at the *mohallah* shop, the ladies would generally give them some grain to go to the shop and exchange it with whatever they desired. With abundance of money, initially due to diaspora remittances, this barter-trade system also vanished (Personal Communication: Ayub 2012).

Another tradition of the agricultural society of Pakhtuns that has disappeared due to diaspora remittances is the water-mills. In the pre-Gulf diaspora period, since modern agricultural equipment were not available, traditional water-mills were used for grinding grains. The operator of the water-mill, who in Pashto was known as *Zhrandeegarai*, used to visit the *mohallahs* and collect the grain for grinding or deliver the flour (grinded grain). But with the availability of modern agricultural equipment, which people bought using diaspora remittances, these water-mills and *Zhrandeegarai* have largely disappeared (Personal Communication: Raza 2009).

Another cultural aspect of the Pakhtuns that disappeared is the *Kasabgars*' [skilled craftsmen like carpenter, mason, *mohallah* traditional *damaan* (minstrels)] seasonal share in the

agricultural products. At that time whenever the grain was brought to the landed families, the *Kasabgars* would come to get their small amount of share as they depended on the landed families. With the disappearance of agricultural economy and the newly acquired wealth of the poorer classes through foreign emigration, this traditional aspect has also disappeared (Personal Communication: Raza 2009).

Another important cultural tradition that has disappeared in many of the Pakhtun villages and towns is the tradition of *Balandra/ Ashar*. This was the tradition of collective work without any charges. Normally whenever an individual Pakhtun or a family wanted to do some work which required large scale labour, he would ask his co-tribesmen to help him in the job. The one who was asking for help was required to prepare food and traditional drinks for the helpers and there was no payment for the labour they would provide to the one who needed it. Such help could be provided for harvesting and thrashing of the crops or construction of a small room or a wall etc. With diaspora remittances this tradition has died giving way either to paid labour or mechanised agriculture (Personal Communication: Raza 2009).

With mechanised agriculture, another change has occurred in the lives of women. Traditionally, working class Pakhtun women used to help their menfolk in agricultural work. With diaspora money, these people have bought either tractors, thrashers or they simply hire agricultural machinery. They also hire paid labourers and thus the role of women in agriculture has almost come to an end (Personal Communication: Raza 2009).

Few decades back the Pakhtuns traditionally used to have goats, sheep, cows and buffalos. In order to take them to the pastures for grazing there used to be shepherds in every village

who were known as *Gadba/ Shpoon/ Shpoonkai* in Pashto. Every morning, the animals of a *mohallah* or a small village were driven to a common place, from where they were taken to the pastures by the shepherds. These animals used to remain in pastures till afternoon, and then were driven back by the shepherds to the villages. This setup used to make the Pakhtun families self-sufficient in dairy products. When the economic migrations started, either the shepherds left for greener pastures or the Pakhtun families stopped breeding the animals as it required hard labour. Now Pakhtun families seldom have such animals and mostly depend on commercial dairy products for consumption. Thus a drastic change has taken place in the lifestyle of the Pakhtuns (Personal Communication: Hussain 2011).

A positive change due to newly acquired money is the replacement of the cooking style of women. In the traditional culture of the Pakhtuns, women used to cook their food with the firewood and during winters they would light a bonfire for heating. The firewood was either collected by women themselves (Siegmann 2010: 354) or their men folk from nearby mountains. With the increase in income due to diaspora remittances, this also slowly and gradually changed. Now most of the families have the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or in large towns the natural gas through pipe connections which the women use for cooking. The same is also used for heating during the winters. Some times when it is not available, even electricity is used for heating. This change has improved the living standards of the Pakhtun women which were traditionally very harsh (Personal Communication: Ghulam 2010).

A tradition of Pakhtuns known as *Tarboorwali* has also witnessed new dimensions. This tradition generally carries

negative connotations and encourages competition between relatives or others in the village or tribe. Seldom is it used for positive purposes, like if one is getting education, the other is also motivated to do the same. However, as previously mentioned, mostly it is used negatively. With diaspora remittances, (they spent nothing outside but spent lavishly at home, which is evident from a statement recorded by Nichols (2009: 148), “Save there, eat here”), the poorer classes started to have better standards of living which affected the previous elites of society. In order to keep their elitist standards of living, they needed money which was shrinking due to non-availability of farmers or due to higher demands for ploughing their lands coupled with higher inflation. The money they had was not sufficient to match the diaspora remittances, which compelled the landed class to sell their lands to the diaspora or their families (Siegmann 2010: 354). Such practices also disturbed the balance of power in the traditional Pakhtun society. However, initially the sense of *tarboorwali* made them short-sighted. In this new situation the traditional class setup of the Pakhtun society also shattered. The previous low classes started exerting their newly earned influence and in some cases they even became the leaders of the tribe, *mohallah* or village (Nichols 2009: 160).

The Diaspora money also brought some positive changes in the Pakhtun society. For example earlier, majority of the Pakhtuns were poor and could not afford a good education for their children, and also needed their children for helping in the hard labour, and thus, could not spare them for education. In this situation they would make their children do physical work at an earlier age at the cost of their education. Thanks to diaspora remittances, more and more Pakhtun children were able to go to schools and higher education centres. It also changed the

traditional job scenario. Previously the illiterate Pakhtuns could only get jobs in defense forces as foot soldiers or lower grade jobs in civil departments; but now with higher education, they have started to get professional and higher grade jobs which were earlier in the control of the traditional Pakhtun elites (Personal Communication: Rahmatullah 2008).

The diaspora money also encouraged the Pakhtuns to give education to their females. Earlier it was not a priority for a Pakhtun to educate a girl but with the economic affordability they were able to send their girls to schools. With more and more females getting higher education, the traditional culture of ‘women for home’ (Proverb) is also changing. Traditionally, Pakhtuns considered women engaging in a job as shameful but with their education and competitive and improved lifestyles they needed more earning hands, which has removed the taboo of female employment. Now we can see more and more women working outside the four walls of their homes. This has also improved their status in the families as they contribute in the family maintenance. Thus the traditional Pakhtun culture of men earning, women staying and working at home, changed due to new trends in the society under the influence of diaspora remittances (Personal Communication: Raza 2010).

Female education is not only the result of financial improvement of people but also the result of another reason. Siegmann (2010: 348) believes that “Male out-migration in the period before the advent of modern information and communication technologies has resulted in the need for correspondence which in turn aroused women’s interest in literacy.”

The Pakhtun diaspora has also influenced the religious life and thinking of people at home. The religious influence of the

diaspora is of double nature. On the one hand it has brought with itself liberalism and secularisation (Naz 2011: Online) while on the other hand it has brought in its fold religious bigotry and extremism. These two trends can be found among the diaspora depending on the country they work/live. Those who are working and living in Western countries have been influenced by liberal, secular, and westernised thinking. So they have brought with them the same ideas. However, this group is not very strong because since 1979 when the Russian troops entered Afghanistan, religious groups were officially supported at the expense of liberal and secular forces (Personal Communication: Khan 2011). The second group is those who work and live in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Among them particularly those who are living in Saudi Arabia have been influenced by the extremist *Salafi* ideas. They are the ones who sponsor religious *madrassas*, extremist groups and other extremist religious activities. These people also get the support of rich Arabs and are mostly responsible for religious extremism at home (Farhat 2012).

Such religious extremism was unknown to Pakhtuns in their traditional Pakhtun culture. Side by side with Pakhtuns, non-Muslims have been living for centuries in most parts of Pakhtun territory but of special significance is their concentration in Orakzai Agency, Khyber-Agency, Swat, Buner, etc. (Spain 1985: 60). These non-Muslims were generally engaged in businesses and used to travel the width and breadth of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa without any fear or intimidation. They had a special relationship with the host Pakhtuns who were responsible for their protection. The protector of the non-Muslims for them was known as Naik, which literally means the boss. With the import of religious bigotry from Gulf States in general and Saudi Arabia in particular, non-Muslims no longer

considered themselves to be safe as they used to do in the traditional Pakhtun culture. The tolerance in the Pakhtun culture towards non-Muslims was even more than what they had for other sects within Islam. There is a famous story/ joke regarding the matter. Once, a Hindu sweet-maker developed some problem with the *Mullah* (the Priest of Pakhtuns) which made him angry with the sweet-maker. The *Mullah* in anger announced from the pulpit of the mosque that the Hindu has converted to *Wahabism*, and as a result the villagers stopped buying sweets from the Hindu. When the Hindu realised the reason, he went to the *Mullah* and apologised and made him a friend by giving him some gifts. After that the *Mullah* again announced from the pulpit that the Hindu sweet-maker has rescinded his decision and has converted back to Hinduism. With this announcement the villagers once again started purchasing sweets from him (Personal Communication: Khattak 1992). This speaks volumes about the tolerance of other faiths in the traditional Pakhtun society.

The diaspora also has its bearings on the dress, language and folk songs of Pakhtuns. The diaspora of Gulf States and Saudi Arabia has especially brought such influences back to their ancestral villages. For example the traditional Pakhtun dress was of dark colours as they were mostly involved in physical labour. Living in the Gulf States where Arabs mostly wear white dresses, the diaspora also adopted the white dress. Another impact on the dress is the use of slippers by the diaspora instead of their traditional shoes. They also started using *Qatra*, a special small piece of cloth used by Arabs for head-gear. The Pakhtuns started using *Qatra* not necessarily as head gear but as a drape around the shoulders. Sometimes in hot sun they used it to cover their heads. Pakhtuns have also started naming their male children with well-known Arab names, such

as Shah Faisal, Yasser Arafat, Saddam Hussain, Osama, etc. They also use Arabic words for modern household appliances. For example *Salaja* for fridge, *Iqama* for resident card or visa, *Qandoora* for long Arabic shirt, *Kafeel* for visa sponsor etc. From these examples it is obvious that the diaspora in Arab countries have even influenced the language of the Pakhtuns (Personal Communication: Qasim Jan 2011). The Pakhtun diaspora especially in the Western countries have started using a Romanised Pashto script for communication with each other because they do not understand and write the Persian-Arabic script because their mother tongue is Pashto. To standardise it and make it more widespread, some Pakhtun information technology wizards have launched a Romanised Pashto Wikipedia Project, which aims:

... to develop Wikipedia in Romanized Pashto. Romanized Pashto is the writing system based on roman alphabets for Pashto language. The roman alphabets proposed for Pashto language is based on phonetic alphabets for Pashto language used in the dictionaries of Pashto language. Romanized Pashto is also used by the Pashtun diaspora living outside their ancestral region of central and south Asia (Wikimedia 2012).

Like Pashto language, Pashto poetry has also been influenced by the diaspora syndrome. The following few songs, sung by the well-known Pashto singer Naghma, show how the expatriates have influenced the thinking of modern Pashto poets:

1. *Yaara Musafara bas dai Kalee ta raaza
Khatma ka Visa Sabr mai Tamaam sho* (Pashto)

(Naghma: You Tube 2011)

(Trans. Enough is enough my beloved traveler, come back to the village and cancel your visa as I have lost my patience).

2. *Da maa da lairai Watan Yaara
Khwdai dai Naseeb da Khpal Watan waka Mayana
Yaa Janana Khpal Watan Ta Rasha Wai
Ka Khalq Dher Dee Pre Abaad dee Khpal Koroona
Pa Pukhtano Kooso Kai Khwand na Kawi
Dera Kalara Kalara Janana
Ta Cherta Laarai che da zana Sara
Yauwra dai tola zindagee janaana (Pashto)*

(Naghma: You Tube 2010)

(Trans. O my dear beloved faraway country,
May God bless you to come to your own country
O my beloved come back to your own country,
Even if there are multitudes of people, they are in their
own houses,
Quiet and calm does not look nice my dear beloved in
the Pakhtuns' streets,
Where have you gone my beloved? You took away
with you my whole life).

Another Pashto singer Musharaf Bangash has also sung a song of similar meaning.

*Dher raata yadegi kor na rana herai gi mor
Ya malgaro owayai kali ta ba kala zoo*

(Bangash: You Tube 2010)

(Trans. I recall my home quite often and cannot forget
my mother
O friends tell me when we'll go home).

Like language, the diaspora has also influenced traditional Pakhtun games. Earlier when diaspora money was not available, the Pakhtun children used to play cost effective games, which did not cost them a lot of money. Those games mostly involved physical exertion. Some of the games which gave way to expensive and modern games that came with diaspora influence and money are *Skhi Skhi Loba*, *Peetu Garam*, *Aandi Kwatak*, and *Cheendro* etc.

Skhi Skhi Loba was a form of game in which a participant would hold one foot above ground with his hand and would push his opponents with his elbow. The participant who fails to hold his foot high above ground would be considered the loser. The one who would survive to the end was the winner.

In *Peetu Garam* children would collect some small flat stones or broken earthen pots and would draw a small circle within which they would mount those flat stones or earthen pots on each other. This involves two teams. The game would start with a team hitting the mound with a tennis ball. The other team would try to catch the ball if the mound was hit, and such a catch would make them win. If the mound was hit and the ball was not caught, then the struggle between the two teams would start. The one who had hit the mound would try to remake it, while the opposition team would try to hit them with the tennis ball. If the former succeeded in remaking the mound without a ball-hit they were the winners, if the latter succeeded in hitting them all with the ball before the making of the mound then they were the winners.

Another popular game of Pakhtun children was *Aandi Kwatak*. This game requires one long stick and a smaller stick of around 6 to 7 inches, cone-shaped on both sides. With the long stick the player would hit the cone-shaped small stick lying on

soil to make it fly. When it flies in the air, the player would try to hit it hard to drive it to as long a distance as possible. The opposite team would try to catch the small flying stick in the air. If they succeeded in catching it in the air then the player who had hit the small stick in the air would lose his turn to play but his co-players would continue till the end. In this process those who would make more successful hits will be declared the winner.

Among girls there was a popular game known as *Cheendro*. In this game the girls would draw on the soil a diagram with a single column and six or seven rows. The girl whose turn was to play the game is required to throw a round shaped material (like a CD disk) made of earthen pot or even stone, towards this diagram without looking at it. If the material would land on a line she will lose her turn but if it lands in the middle of the box then she is required to push it with her foot in order to successfully cross all boxes one by one while keeping one foot above soil. Again the rule was to keep the material away from the lines otherwise she would lose her turn. The one who would successfully cross the boxes one by one emerged successful.

These traditional games have been replaced by modern, sophisticated, and costly games such as cricket, video games etc. due to the availability of money by the diaspora (Personal Communication: Ali 2012).

Another very dangerous and damaging impact of diaspora remittances is the introduction and spread of Kalashnikov culture. Pakhtuns are famous for keeping and loving weapons but earlier only rich people could afford sophisticated and lethal weapons which could cause immense and widespread damage. The common Pakhtuns had few weapons of limited lethal effect. But with diaspora earnings, the Pakhtuns' love for weapons saw

new dimensions and they started purchasing modern, more lethal and automatic weapons especially Kalashnikov. Those tribes and families who were involved in feuds even purchased heavy weapons such as rocket-launchers, grenades, anti-aircraft guns etc. This trend militarised and equipped Pakhtuns for more deadly fighting. However, this phenomenon was not just the result of diaspora money but was also the result of the Afghan crisis because it flooded Pakhtun territories with modern and sophisticated weapons. To put in a nutshell, diaspora remittances had made money available, and the Pakhtuns' purchasing power coupled with love for weapons flooded the society with modern weapons. Thus it is correct to say that the remittances and the Afghan crisis spread the Kalashnikov culture in Pakhtun territories (Personal Communication: Wazir 2011).

Conclusion

In conclusion it could be said that the diaspora has introduced many a change in the traditional Pakhtun society including both positive and negative ones. While the changes in the standards of living, status and economic structure can be viewed as positive signs, the prevalence of the weapons culture diaspora remittances introduced is in fact a negative aspect. However, it is important to bear in mind that the phenomenon of diaspora does not have any clear-cut negativities and/or positivities. It is in fact a combination of both as explained in the paper and an interesting field to research on.

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