

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 2, No. 2 (2010)

Distinctive Cultural and Geographical Legacy of Bahawalpur

By Samia Khalid and Aftab Hussain Gilani

Geographical introduction:

The Bahawalpur State was situated in the province of Punjab in united India. It was established by Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan I in 1739, who was granted a title of Nawab by Nadir Shah. Technically the State, had come into existence in 1702 (Aziz, 244, 2006).¹ According to the first English book on the State of Bahawalpur, published in mid 19th century:

... this state was bounded on east by the British possession of Sirsa, and on the west by the river Indus; the river Garra forms its northern boundary, Bikaner and Jeyselmeer are on its southern frontier...its length from east to west was 216 koss or 324 English miles. Its breadth varies much: in some parts it is eighty, and in other from sixty to fifteen miles. (Ali, Shahamet, b, 1848)

In the beginning of the 20th century, this State lay in the extreme south-west of the Punjab province, between 27.42' and 30.25' North and 69.31' and 74.1' East with an area of 15,918 square miles. Its length from north-east to south-west was about 300 miles and its mean breadth is 40 miles. Of the total area, 9,881 square miles consists of desert regions with sand-dunes rising to a maximum height of 500 feet. The State consists of 10 towns and 1,008 villages, divided into three *Nizamats* (administrative Units): *Minchinabad*, Bahawalpur and *Khanpur*. Since each *Nizamat* was further subdivided into three *Tahsils*, there were nine *tahsils* in all. (Ahmad, 1998)

According to census of 1891 the total population of the Bahawalpur state was 650,042. The Muslims numbered 546,680; Hindus 90,013; Sikhs 13,321 and Christians 11. The big landlords were Muslims, while the money lending and banking sector was mostly comprised of Hindus. (Ali, 1994) In 1901 the population of this princely state was recorded by British government as 720,877 and 83 percent

of the total population was Muslim. (Ahmad, 341, 1998) Most of Hindus, by caste, were *Rajput, Jat* and *Arora*². Sikhs were *Grawal* and *Jats*. Muslims were mostly, *Rajput, Daudpotra, Jat, Baloch, Arain, Joiya Sheikh, Syed, Pathan, and Mogul*. (Ali, 1994)

During the rule of the last Nawab, Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V, Bahawalpur State was merged with West Pakistan in 1954. As a result, Bahawalpur emerged as an administrative division of Pakistan, with its headquarters at Bahawalpur City³. Accordingly, location of Bahawalpur division appeared as follows: in the north its boundaries were limited to River *Sutlej, Panjnad* and Indus River, which separates Multan and *Dera Ghazi Khan*, (where the adjacent districts of *Sahiwal, Vehari, Multan, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh* and *Dera Ghazi Khan* are located); while *Sukkur* Division of Sind province lies in south west. The East Punjab province of India and ex-princely states of *Bekaneer* and *Jessalmer* were adjacent to the south of Bahawalpur. This area is extremely important regarding national defense and from a strategic point of view. (Ali, 1994). Three districts of Division Bahawalpur are integral part of it: *Bahawalnagar, Raheemiyar Khan* and Bahawalpur District (Gazali, 35, 1984). Bahawalpur division was an administrative unit of the Punjab Province of Pakistan, until the reforms of 2000 when the third tier of government was abolished.

Consequently, Bahawalpur got the charge of district, and it was bound on North by *Lodhran* District, on the East by *Bahawalnagar* District and India, on the South by India and on the West by *Rahimiyarkhan* and *Muzafar Garh* Districts. Bahawalpur is one of the largest districts of the Punjab covering an area of 24,830 square miles. It has peculiar demographic, topographic and geographical characteristics. The district is situated almost in the center of the country at an elevation of 152 meters from the sea levels. It has Five Tehsils; Bahawalpur, *Ahmad Pur* East, *Yazman (i/c Cholistan)*, *Khair pur Tamewali, Hasilpur*. The population of Bahawalpur district has increased from 1.453 million in 1981 to 2.411 million in 1998 showing a growth rate of 3.88 % per year as compare with 3.3 % of total Punjab. Population density has increased from 59 in 1981 to 97 in 1998. (<http://www.bahawalpur.gov.pk/history.htm>)

The soil of central Bahawalpur mostly consists of the plains of Indus basin, which is at the height of not more than 150 meters above sea level. But the south-western desert, which is called *Rohi* or *Cholistan*, is mostly undulated due to the presence of sand dunes. The height of the sand dunes does not exceed 150 meters (according to Imperial Gazetteer of 1901 height of dunes was not more than 500 feet). Before the construction of *Sutlej valley Project's Canal* system, the irrigation was carried out with the flood water of *Sutlej*. This area is called "*Otarh*." The second major area in terms of topography, extending between the railway line and

the passage of Hakra, comprises of clay. The special ingredients are silt and sand dunes. Locally this is known as "*Hitarh*" and this is the prosperous and fertile area of the dwellings and markets of the colonies of Sutlej valley Project. Imperial Gazetteer concluded had divided this area lengthwise into three great strips: *Rohi* or *Cholistan* (desert); the central tract was *Bar* or *Pat* (upland); and the third was fertile alluvial tract in river valley called Sind. (Ahmed, 1998)

The climate of Bahawalpur is hot because, being adjacent to *Rajputana* desert, this area overall resembles the dry climate of an arid desert. The summer season lasts from the month of March to October for almost eight months, while the weather is pleasant and cold from November to February. The average temperature in the summer season remains between 40 and 50 degree centigrade, while during winter it is between 5 and 15 degree centigrade and sometimes it falls below the freezing point, which ruins the crops. Before the launching of canal system, when the Bahawalpur region mostly comprised of sand dunes, the temperature of Fort *Abbas* and *Khanpur* sometimes used to match that of Jacobabad and became the cause of sand storms. (Rehman, 1899)

These days Bahawalpur receives more rainfall all over the year even in summer, which shows that even Bahawalpur is also not immune to the effects of global warming. The months of July and August constitute the months of rainy season (commonly known as *Sawan*). The remaining monsoon winds of Northern Punjab occasionally cause heavy rainfall in this area which makes the weather pleasant. *Cholistan* consists of 10,399 square miles. There are some places, which do not receive rain years at a time. During winter sometimes the western winds coming from Persian Gulf would move towards this desert, creating conditions of thunderstorms, which last for over a week or so. Moreover, *Rabi* (spring harvest) of this region is dependent on rain; particularly the *Cholistan* desert's crops are entirely dependent on these rains.

Rainfall is comparatively very low due to the fact that most of the area comprises of desolate and barren desert. *Cholistan*, the great desert, was once green and prosperous land, where cultivation was practiced. Around 4000 BC, *Cholistan* was a cradle of civilization commonly known as Hakra valley civilization. The major source of irrigation was the water of Hakra River but with the drying of the river the area was desiccated and left with only grazing lands. The river supplied water regularly to this region until 1200 BC but near 600 BC it became irregular in flow and subsequently vanished. In cultural advancement it can be compared with the Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Harappa civilization. Probably a variety of problems such as hostile invasions also contributed to the ultimate disappearance of this great civilization. (Ahmad, 2005)

Hakra River⁴ was called *Saraswati* in ancient times, which joins the Indus River after passing through *Pattan Minara* in *Rahimyar Khan, Sukkur, Bhakkar* and *Rohri*. According to several historical traditions, seven rivers used to flow in the Indus valley, which was also known as “Sapat Sindhu” which means the land of seven rivers. The two of the rivers Hakra and Ghaghra have since dried up and remains of ancient cities have been discovered on its banks. These ruins are now visible in the form of sand dunes. (Punjab States Gazetteer, 4, 1908)

In Bahawalpur, sand storms were excessive at the start of summer before 1920. In 1920 when canal irrigation system was introduced here to cultivate the area, agriculture flourished and as a result, sand storms reduced. Otherwise, these storms turned into the clouds of sands, which overcast the sky and the darkness would prevail even during day time. During summer the direction of the wind usually remained from North east to South west.

From ancient times wells were the only mean of irrigation or watering in this area, and earliest ones were un-bricked wells. Until the advent of twentieth century, the soil was also irrigated through flood channels along with wells. The state of Bahawalpur paid particular attention to irrigation system in 1900. Therefore Ahmad notes: Rs.7, 20,000 was advanced to cultivators for digging of 1,280 new wells and the repair of 159 old ones. Up to 1904 about 8 lakes had been thus advanced but still these activities were insufficient to deal the need for water. (Ahmad, 1998)

Later on a project called the *Sutlej* Valley Project was designed jointly by the Bahawalpur State and the Government of India to irrigate the fertile basin of *Sutlej* river, and was approved during 1920-21. According to this project four head works were built, out of which three were set up within the boundaries of Bahawalpur State: *Sulemanki, Islam* and *Punjad*, while the only exception is the *Ferozpur* head works.⁵ In this irrigation system there are two types of canals, perennial and non-perennial. (Ali, 1994) This boosted the cultivation in the vicinity.

In the early days of the state, the widely grown crops were wheat, cotton, oats, cereal, gram, barley, maize, rice, tobacco, sugar cane, turmeric, corn etc. ‘The crops which covered the largest area in 1903-4 were wheat (607 square miles), rice (183), spiked millet (90), great millet (85) and gram’ (82). (Ahmad, 1998) At present almost all kinds of crops are grown here. Different types of rice of extremely fine quality were produced abundantly in the area of *Khanpur*. The crops of wheat, barley and gram were produced mostly in the area of *Minchanabad*. Bahawalpur enjoys distinction for the production of wheat and the cotton in Pakistan. Among fruit dates, pomegranate, orange and mango have been noted for quality of production. In the ancient times, the pomegranate and date palm of this area were sent to other countries as gifts. The state was also exporting wheat, gram, indigo, dates mangos and *Gur* (unrefined sugar). (Ahmad, 1998)

In the last decade of 19th century, three rice-husking mills were functional in this area. Three cotton-ginning mills at *Bhawalnagar*, *Kot Sahab* and *Khanpur* were also working. Bahawalpur was also famous for its silk, metal cups, impure carbonate of soda and porcelain vessels. (Ahmad, 1998) Soap making and cotton ginning are still important enterprises. New factories, producing cottonseed oil and cottonseed cake were constructed in the 1970s. The principal industries are cotton ginning, rice and flour milling, and the hand weaving of textiles. Bahawalpur is an imperative marketing center for the contiguous undeveloped areas. It is located on the crossroad between Peshawar, Lahore, Quetta and Karachi. It is 889 km away from Karachi which is biggest market of goods in Pakistan.

The principal means of transportation was the railway system in Bahawalpur. This played a very vital role in the development of Bahawalpur State. To the north of the state the double track of the main railway line between Lahore and Karachi acceded through Empress *Adamwahan* Bridge across the Sutlej River, with a length of 148 miles within the State (Ahmad, 1998) and total length of about 240 kilometers.⁶ Big towns of *Bahawalpur*, *Ahmed Pur East (Dera Nawab Sahib)*, *Liaquat Pur*, *Kahanpur*, *Rahimyar Khan* and *Sadiqabad* are situated along this railway track. In 1897, another railway track was inaugurated between Delhi, *Bathinda* and *Samasatta*.⁷

A railway track of 257 kilometers long leads from Sama Satta to *Amroka* and another to *Bathinda* and *Hindu Mal Kot* station. Before partition this track had great significance as it was the shortest way to link Delhi with Karachi. The railway tracks built within the boundaries of princely states were named as “Royal Railway Line” and states bore its total expenses. (Ali, 1994) Another railway track of the state was completed in 1928, from *Bahawalnagar* to *Fort Abbas*.⁸ Before the Second World War a railway line was laid from *Fort Abbas* to *Sama satta*, with railway stations built at *Qatul Ammara*, *Yazman*, *Al-Quresh* and *Mansoor* situated along this track. During the Second World War the railway tracks were uprooted according the military needs and finally handed over to the British government.

At the start of the previous century, there were 624 miles of unmetalled roads and about 40 miles of metalled roads. (Ahmad, 1998) But before the partition of the subcontinent, only 32 miles of metalled road were left. One of the important roads was between *Fort Abbas* and significant market town, *Mandi Yazman*. Furthermore, *Yazman* town is connected with Bahawalpur City with a 32 km long road. Another main road connects *Yazman* with Head *Rajkan* and *Bengala Tailwala*. (Ali, 1994)

Now, more than that, Bahawalpur has a national airport facility and the best bus service of Pakistan “Sami Dewoo”, which can take you anywhere in Pakistan. As far as means of communication are concerned the cities of this area are

equipped with facilities like internet, telephone, mails and courier services. Even though these are not up to the mark, they are progressing day by day.

Cultural Heritage:

Horton and Hunt stated very simply, 'Culture is everything which is socially learned and shared by the members of a society.' (52, 1984) The people of Bahawalpur have strong religious sentiments. Hence, religion plays a vital role in their personal and in day to day life. The cultural heritage of this area is of no less importance than the culture of the other areas of the Punjab as far as the poetry, calligraphy, embroidery motifs, music, paintings, architecture, or various games, are concerned. The Culture of this place is a combination of Islamic religious norms and regional mores of Sind and Punjab.

The dress or attire is a significant part of the culture and heritage of any region. The traditional dress mostly worn by the people here includes plain shirt (*Kurta*), embroidered shirt (*Karahi dar Kurta*), cloth (*Lungi*), Turban (*Patka*), cap (*Kulah*), Shawl (Chadar), and crushed turban (*Turah*). The women wear shirt (*Kurta*), Lose Trousers (*Shalwar*), scarf (Dupatta), long skirts (*Ghaghra*) and Veil with Gown (*Burqa*) for concealing the body and *Khussa* are famous footwear of this region. The beautiful and elegant looking embroidery on footwear (*Khussa*) by making petals of flowers (*Gul Kari*) is a specialty of this place. "Bahawalpur is also renowned for gold embroidered *khoosas*. Here people use this footwear in day to day life", though this is not very soft footwear. (Quddus, 191, 1989)

The towns of Bahawalpur are internationally considered to specialize in extremely fine, light, and elegantly designed pottery which is sometimes called "paper pottery".

Its delicacy can be judged from the fact that a clay bowl large enough to hold a pint of water weighs hardly an ounce. This beautiful light pottery is incredibly cheap, and is a thing of great magnetism for the memento collectors. In the opinion of many a connoisseur, Bahawalpur pottery can compete with the delicacy and fineness of world pottery. (Quddus, 181-182, 1989)

Calligraphy (*Khattati*), inscription on gold and bronze's utensils and the art of pottery of the region are also worth mentioning.

The *Chunari* is the art of tying a small point on the cloth by threads and then dyeing it with the required colors. When opened after drying, there is a small circle in the white region splashed around the tied piece of fabric. In Pakistan Bahawalpur is famous for this *Chunri*. In addition, the art of embellished fabrics with embroi-

dery using thread-work, mirror work or gold brocade is prevalent. *Gota* and *lappa* (golden, silver, and other glittering ribbons) work is also popular here. Then Block Printing and Batik work on Cloths, Curtains and Bed Sheets are also in fashion. These techniques are transferred from generation to generation. These people who work in local industries are not formally educated. They just follow their forefathers in running their business, and most often, hand it over to the next generation.

Bahawalpur, along with Multan, is famous for work in the camel skin industry. Usually the skin of camel is stretched over clay moulds for drying. The drying time varies according to the thickness of skin. After it has dried, the clay moulds are broken and thrown away. The skin is then cleaned and dried again. It is then painted in colors repaired by craftsmen themselves. The mixing of these colors is a professional secret handed down from father to son (Quddus, 1989, 192).

Shahamet Ali called the local language the “language of *Daoodputra*” but he does not mention any name for it. He recorded that this language of the locals is a mixture of Sindhi and Punjabi and if a person understands either of these two languages he will not find it difficult to understand it (xxii, 1884). But now this language of natives is known as *Saraiki*. Punjabi, Urdu and English are also spoken and understood by most of the people. The natives of this area who speak *Sariaki* language are known as *Saraiki* people. Although they belong to different casts or *Beradri* yet due to language, they are identified as *Saraiki*. This language has many other Dialects as *Mūltānī*, *Thaalī*, *Jhangī*, *Sindhī*. There are also sub dialects like *Derāwālī* is a sub dialect of *Multani*, *Jāng(a)lī*, *Kacchrī*, *Niswānī* are sub-dialects of *Jhangī*. In the books of history the language of this area is commonly described as Multani.

Bahawalpur even now a day has customs and traditions of its own which are generally based on religious beliefs. “It is hard to find milk in the bazaars of Bahawalpur on the 10th of a lunar month as on every 11th of the lunar month, sweets are prepared to be distributed among poor in the name of the great saint of Baghdad, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Gilani, whose followers are found in large numbers in the area.” (Quddus, 176, 1989) This is not only the practice of Bahawalpur reign but it is a basic part of socio-religious aspect of Punjabi life style. But this area also has distinction in socio-religious mores of Sufis and shrines. Sind claimed to be the house of Sufism and Uch Shareef⁹ was its heart, which is now included in Bahawalpur District. Some other notable Sufis were ‘Shaikh Saifuddin Haqqani of Uch and Pir Jalaluddin Qutab-al-Aqtab who died at Uch in 1292 A. D. and converted the Mazaris and several other Baluch tribes to Islam.’ (Quddus, 150) The largest spiritual heritage, not only for locals but also for Muslims of subcontinent, is in *Uch*. This is a small town today and divided into three different quarters known as; *Uch Bukhari*,¹⁰ *Uch Jilani/ Gillani*,¹¹ *Uch Mughlan*.¹²

Uch Shareef is privileged to witness numerous sufis, saints and Islamic religious persons. As Quddus informs us: “Syed Bandagi Mohammad Ghouse one of the descendants of the great Sufi saint, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani/ Gillani (1078-1115) took up residence in Sind at *Uch* (now in Bahawalpur) and died in 1517 A. D.” (Quddus, 149-150, 1989). In the 13th century the Sufi movement saw four friends commonly “known as ‘*Chahar Yar*’ they were: Hazrat Fariddudin Masud Ghanj Shakar of Pakpattan (1174-1266), Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari of Uch (1196-1294); Hazrat Bahauddin Zikria of Multan (1170-1267) and Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar of Sehwan (1177-1274), all of whom did great jobs in their areas and served Islam. ‘Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari converted *Sumras* and *Sammas*, ruling families of Sind’ (Quddus, 150, 1989).

Archaeologically, and spiritually, some immensely distinguished Sufis shrines existing at Uch include those of Hazrat Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari¹³, Hazrat Bahawal/ Baha’al Haleem¹⁴, Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari commonly known as Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht¹⁵, and Bibi Jawanadi¹⁶ and Shaikh Saifuddin Ghazrooni¹⁷. The surviving shrines, sanctuaries, cemeteries, and mausoleums are incorporate with glazed tiles and brick. Some also have revetments, lime plaster panels, terra-cotta embellishments with brick structural walls laid in earth mortars, along with ingenious cornered tower buttresses. The remarkable Mausoleum of Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari and his family were joined by a series of domed tombs. The first is said to have been built for Baha’ al-Halim/ Haleem by his pupil, while the second is Jahaniyan Jahangasht’s tomb is next to Bibi Jawindi Mausoleum. In the bouquet of Shrines of *Uch*, the shrine of *Bibi Jawandi* sustains its uniqueness because it has Central Asian design, titled in the blue and white faience.

On 22nd May 2009 the U. S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson visited *Uch Shareef*. She highlighted the importance of this place by saying that it is an ‘irreplaceable global Heritage’ furthermore she threw light on the significance of this place in the following words:

The exceptional architecture of this 15th century shrine needs to be conserved, not only for the thousands of devotees who visit every year at the time of the *Urs*, but for future generations.¹⁸ (<http://lahore.usconsulate.gov/1-09052201.html>)

Channan Pir Shrine is located an hour’s drive away from Bahawalpur City and 45 km from *Derawar Fort*.¹⁹ *Channan Pir* was a disciple of *Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht* of *Uch*. The annual *Urs* is held at the beginning of March. A colorful fair known as ‘*Mela Channan Pir*’ (function of enlightened persons) is held here. Devotees gather on the night of full moon to offer “*Fateha*”²⁰ at the tomb of

the saint. During these *Urs* days one can neither hire a bus nor trucks and tractor-trolleys from some surrounding city because all are booked by local people for the *Mala Channan Pir*.

Another worthy place to visit is the *Nawab* Family burial ground near the *Darawar Fort of Cholistan*, where most of the late *Nawabs* of Bahawalpur and their families are buried. The tomb is attractive, built with marble and decorated in blue glazed style. Locals have great affection for these graves of their rulers. The shrine of *Muluk Shah*, a popular saint of his time, is located in the city and visited by the devotees on every Thursday, *Ashura* and *Eid* days. A small fair is also held here annually.

Much folklore is also related with the shrines of this region. As there is a wall in the tomb of *Jahania Jhangash* on which local people believe that he travelled from Delhi to *Uch Shareef* on it. Then there is a gnarled tree outside the shrine which locals say it was planted by the saint himself, which is full of red, green and black wish ribbons/strips of cloths or bangles of glass as a *Chilla*. If these wishes are fulfilled then they give bangles of Silvers as a token of thanks to the guards of Shrine. There is a tiny room, to the right of the door as you enter which is said to house the footprints of “Imam Ali”. According to another legend, one out of 11 pillars in the hall of attached mosque with *Jalaludin Bukhari Tomb* was come there from Heaven. All visitors kiss those pillars one by one to be blessed. In Pakistan, locals associate folklores, legends and myths with tombs or shrines wherever they are found and Bahawalpur is not an exception. Most of the time, those stories do not have any historical basis. But these traditions tell us the oral history of different regions, which are transmitted inter-generationally.

The superstitions also have a special impact on the culture and tradition of Bahawalpur. In spite of an Islamic society ignorance prevailed because before partition the local Muslims were accompanied by local Hindus. Resultantly, Hindu norm imprinted great effect on them. Hindus firmly believed that iron, fire and water are gift of Gods for the safety of human beings from catastrophes. The Muslims of Bahawalpur co-opted these same beliefs from Hindus e.g. the practice of putting an iron knife or something made of iron by the side of a woman during childbirth. They believe this act will save both the child and the mother from bad omens. If the child of any woman died soon after birth, then the next baby was given names like *Faqir* (Beggar) and *Mureed* (Disciple) etc...so that he would survive due to the virtues of holy people. In addition, the very first time when a child was fed, that food was named as “*Ghutti*” which was derived from Hindus. Similarly, to keep the people safe from *Nazar-e-Bad* (outcome of an evil eye) various tactics were applied e.g. putting a black small mark on the forehead of a beautiful baby, a shoe hung in the neck of cattle and a black cooking pot (*Handi*) on a newly built house.

For the safety of new vehicles a black ribbon or strip of black cloth was tied on the rear view mirror or at the back of vehicles. Some time even a small shoe was hung behind the means of transportation.

Furthermore, some things are considered to be the signs of upcoming occurrences. Croaking frogs and ants coming out in large numbers was the indication of rain. The natives of Bahawalpur used to consider arrival of the guest as a symbol of auspiciousness and blessing. For that reason, guests are eagerly awaited. Some indication, which are thought to be the arrival of a guest are the cawing of a crow on the ridge of the wall, the dropping of the loaf of bread from hand, and sighting of a child sweeping.

In general conversation the people usually preface with some salutations. They call their male elders as “*Saeen*” female elders as “*Mai Saeen*” and age fellows male as “*Adda*” for the age fellow females the title “*Addi, Bhen* or *Bibi*” and boy and girl of young age as “*Kaka and Kaki*” are used respectively. Close friends call each other “*Dolha Saeen*” to show intimacy. In Bahawalpur culture, the custom of polygamy was common. For second marriage men mostly use the excuses the rules and regulations of the *Sharia*, which allow a Muslim man four wives at a time. Sometimes death of the first wife, ailment of wife or the desire for a son provides the bases to men for second marriage. Most common except then these causes is the rigid *Beradri* system in which there is a trend of marriage of a person within the *Beradri* (Cast or clan). Specially, marriage of a woman is fixed within the clan to avoid division of property. The bilateral marriages (*Vatta Satta*) are also the motivational factors.

In Bahawalpur State, the upbringing of the children was managed in a specific style. The first diet of a baby was the honey by the eldest person of the family, which was locally known as *Ghotti*. In initial days, baby was massaged with butter and the forehead was pressed to make the features of the face better. The bones of cheek and face were pressed and to keep the skull rounded, the baby was laid down straight after being wrapped by cloth when during his sleep (Tahir, 1979).

The people of Bahawalpur State have been extremely simple, sincere and friendly as well as hospitable. Sikhs and Hindus also lived along with Muslims so the customs and tradition of the Hindus and Sikhs were adopted. In Bahawalpur state majority of the population was illiterate, so they adopted such customs because they were ignorant. The people of Bahawalpur used to celebrate the birth of son very joyfully. They kept awake and festivities would go on for the whole night. On this occasion the people of the state would arrange a function, in which the relatives and friends used to be invited. This was called as function of circumcision. On the conclusion of the child’s “Quran reading” a ceremony used to be arranged (Kavish, 1995).

When the children grew up the responsibility of their marriage would be entrusted to their parents. In the state, the locals would marry their grown up children on attaining puberty which is an Islamic way of life. The custom of reciprocal marriages also prevailed, but in the case of failure of such marriages, not one but two families used to suffer. When the daughter grew up, the boy's family would submit the proposal of marriage. On this occasion the community would assemble and the sweetmeats were distributed and prayers for their welfare would be offered. Usually, first the engagement would be celebrated and afterwards the date for wedding was finalized. When the wedding date was determined, usually the knots on a thread were made to mark the date and handed over to the bridegroom's family. (Kavish, 1995)

The native of Bahawalpur State used to eat meat with great interest, specially cow, beef, mutton and chicken etc. The meat of partridge and quail were also liked very much. The food made with mutton, e.g. roasted meat (*Seekh Kabab*) pieces of flesh (*Tikka*) fried meat (*Karahi Goslat*) and a kind of curry taken in the early morning (*Nihari*) was eaten by the locals of Bahawalpur with great interest. But the special local dish is known as *Dal Patta*. Actually, this dish was famous in Hindu era when they serve a delicious *Dal* (a kind of grain) on *Patta* (leaf of tree). That is still famous here but now it is served in plates. No one really knows when and why this *Dal* or *Dawl* became popular among natives.

In spite of various other mystical folk poets, Ali Haider of Multan and Ghulam Farid's work in Saraiki is very well known among local people. Other famous poets like Sachal Sarmast and Shah Abdul Latif, famous mystical poets of Pakistan, also used this language to give their religious messages in poetry. Sachal Sarmast was more outspoken than Shah Abdul Latif, (d. 1826).

The lyrics of Sachal Sarmast, in Sindhi and Siraiki belong to most ecstatic verses ever written in any Islamic country. Sachal is one in a long line of poets many of them from Baluchi clan of Leghari who used Siraiki besides Sindhi, and whose poems even today repeat the traditional adoration of beauty as well as the acceptance of suffering typical of Sufism. (Qudus, 165, 1989)

The funeral ceremonies were also very unique and still prevail in the region. When someone died, no cooking was done in his home for three days and the close relatives and friends would take care of meals. On the third day *Quran Khawani* (reciting of the Holy Quran) or *Qul Khawani* would be held and prayers were offered for the soul of died person for eternal peace. Furthermore the clothes of the dead person were given away to charity. On the same day the legal heir was ap-

pointed the successor and the ceremony was held. The close relatives, friends and village or community fellows used to gift “one Rupee” or two as a token of love to the successor as “*Pug da Rupiya*” (rupee for the turban). After the death, some poor would be offered regular meal for some period continuously. The natives of *Ubbha* (North) observed 21 days’ ceremony i.e. the community was invited to meal twenty one days after the death (Punjab states Gazetteer, 197, 1908).

Locals *Urs* of different *Pirs* or Sufis are the most important functions and gatherings for public. In sports wrestling, Kabbadi, Malhan (Sindhi Wrestling), Chess, Playing Cards, Pigeon flying, hunting of wild boar and Hog Deers, Tube holding, Rod holding, Fist seizure, and horse racing etc. were very popular. While in children’s games Sheedan, foot ball, *Gilli Danda* (Club and wood rod) kite flying, marbles etc were included. In the miscellaneous games and days, on Sundays of the month of *Sawan* (local name of Rainy season), the people of the Bahawalpur State would assemble on the bank of river or canal and to enjoy by cooking and bathing. *Jhoomar* was the most popular dance, which was played especially on the occasion of marriages and *Dhamal* (mystic dance) was performed on happy occasions.

Large parts of this area consist of desert lands, and locomotive of desert life is the camel. During the *Nawab’s* time there was a great army of camel riders and there were Imperial Service Camel Corps.²¹ But yet Camel is important for the transportation in desert area. They are also involved in recreational activities. In every *Urs* or public gatherings, a camel race and *Dangal* of Camels (wrestling of Camels) are the integral parts of such local functions.

Here all classes also have their own style of recreation. The elite class is too fascinated by *Cholistan’s* Desert Jeep Rally. This is the most interesting event held annually in March in the *Cholistan* Desert. It is generally organized near Drawer Fort and vehicles cover the distance of about 250 km around this fort. It includes the vehicles ranging from 1300 cc to 3000 cc plus. Thrill-seeking tourists gather from all over Pakistan to enjoy the spring in sand and now it is getting international attention.

At the same time the lower class of workers also know how cheer themselves. They arrange donkey cart race on University road which is situated out of the main city. In Pakistan, donkey cart race has been recognized officially and some federations are also working for them especially for the Karachi Donkey cart race. Still the Bahawalpur donkey race is purely public activity financed, supported and enjoyed by local men. The camel race is also a chief pastime in the Desert areas.

Conclusion:

The geographical location of Bahawalpur gave it versatile Cultural inheritance, which is as colorful as it is old. This area is near India and has strong impact of *Rajputana* mores. Moreover, this is between two provinces of Pakistan which also imprinted their culture on this area. The Bahawalpur region and its masses still have some reflections of the Hindu culture. Nevertheless, the *Nawabs* tried to develop complete region in all aspects by establishing educational institutes, library, National Park, Zoo, Railway Station and Airport. This area is enlightened with education, and the hub of education of this area is the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. These all factors are contributing the cultural change of this area. In a nutshell we can say it is a unique of Pakistan with rich past, bright present and hopeful future.

Notes:

¹ The Abbasi Daudputras, Sindhi tribesmen, from whom the ruling family of Bahawalpur belong, claim descent from the Abbasid Caliphs. The tribe came from Sindh to Bahawalpur and assumed independence during the decline of the Durrani Empire. The mint at Bahawalpur was opened in 1802 by Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan II with the permission of Shah Mahmud of Kabul. In the Anglo Sikh wars (1st, from 1845-46, 2nd was in 1848-49) Bahawalpur supported the British and this granted its survival. The Abbasi family ruled over the State for more than 200 years (1748 to 1954). During the rule of the last Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V, Bahawalpur State was merged with Pakistan. During the 1960's (1954) the Nawab agreed (Agreement Dated 3rd October, 1947) for Bahawalpur to be absorbed into modern Pakistan.

² The only commercial class, the Aroras, numbered 66,000 in 1901. Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series. 342

³ This city was founded in 1748 by Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi I and was incorporated as a municipality in 1874. <http://www.world66.com/asia/southasia/pakistan/bahawalpur>

⁴ There are three school of thoughts having different concepts about the Hakra River. Some are of the view that it was the southern tributary of Sutlej River. But to some others, it was a separate river system in itself, which used to fall in the Gulf of the Rann of Kutch and some considered it the upper part of the Nara River of Sindh. However all are unanimous about its extinction. There is another opinion that its

neighboring river Jumna, which springs from its source near Himalayas, it is also called *Saraswati* with its Vedic name apart from Hakra, Ghaghra or Ghaghar. Even today it enters Indian Territory of Bekaneer as a rearing stream and sometimes its water also enters Bahawalpur. (Ali, 1994)

⁵ In 1922 the work in different phases started and ultimately the project was completed in 1930. *Sulemanki* Head works is situated in Bahawalnagar district near the Indo Pak border, and two canals, *Sadiqia* and Fort Wah were constructed to irrigate the eastern part of Bahawalpur. After the Indus Basin project with India, now the water of Jhelum River is supplied from *Balloki* via *Sulemanki* link canal. The second head works of Bahawalpur was built in Islam and two canals, *Qaim* canal and upper Bahawalpur canal were produced to irrigate the central part of Bahawalpur state while the third and the most important head works were built at about a distance of two kilometers on the downstream of Jhelum and Sutlej's meeting point at the place of *Punjnad* near the historical town of *Uch Sharif* and two canals were drawn from the head works to irrigate the central part of Bahawalpur and western part of *Rahim Yar Khan*. The two canals are *Abbasia* canal and *Punjnad* canal. The water is supplied to these canals through *Taunsa Punjnad* link canal under the Indus basin Treaty. In Muhammad Anwar Nabi Qureshi, *Mukhtasar Tareekh-e- Bahawalpur*, year not mentioned, 120.

⁶ Its construction as Indus Valley state railway continued from 1870 to 1880 from Multan to Kotri and it was opened for traffic in 1889. (Ali, 21-22, 1994)

⁷ Baghdad-ul-Jadid, Khairpur, Tamewali, Qaim Pur, Hasilpur, Chishtian, Bahawalnagar, Minchanabad, and McLeod Ganj are located along this track.

⁸ The local markets of Khichi wala, Faqir wali, Haroonabad and Donga Bonga are located on this track.

⁹ Uch Sharif, 75 km from Bahawalpur city is a very old town. It is believed that it came into existence way back in 500 BC. Some historians believe that Uch was there even before the advent of Bikramajit when Jains and Buddhist ruled over the sub-continent. At the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great, Uch was under Hindu domination.

¹⁰ Due to tomb of Hazrat Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari Surkhposh)

¹¹ Tomb of Hazrat Shaikh Mohammad Ghaus Qadri Jilani

¹² After the tombs Sufis of Mughal era

¹³ The tomb of Jalal Surkh Bukhari is unusual with a superb wooden roof painted in lacquer, predominantly red and blue. Hazrat Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari (1177-1272) The compound containing his flat-roofed Shrine and mosque is surrounded by brick wall decorated with blue tiles. The shrine was built in the 14th century and its interest for original woodcarving on the pillars and the 40 beams, some of which

still have traces of early paintwork. The saint's *urs* is held on 19th *Jamad-ull-Sani*. (Singh, 155, 2004)

¹⁴ Bahauddin Uchhi, who was commonly known as, Bahaul Haleem. He is supposed as teacher of Jahania Jahanghasht, another famous Sufi belonging to the same city. His exact date of birth is not known, however, an idea can be made from the dates of Jahaniya Jahanghasht who was born in 1303 and died in 1383. There is no documented evidence about Bahaul Haleem or his services. After the death of Bahaul Haleem, his tomb was constructed by the ruler of Khurasan named Mohammad Dilshad. Floods have destroyed it to a great extent. Especially the flood of 18th century that destroyed more than 70% of tombs remaining was the most devastating. The tomb of Baha'al Haleem has horizontal stripes of blue and white faience tiles, although little of it remains. At this time, the coffin of Hazrat Bahaul Haleem was moved inside the shrine of Hazrat Lal Bukhari. However, it's not known that which grave inside Lal Bukhari's shrine is that of Bahaul Haleem (http://uchsharif.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=45).

¹⁵ Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari (1303-1383), was the grandson of Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Surkh Bukhari He was a prominent member of *Suharwardiya* Sufi branch and was responsible for popularizing of this branch of Sufism in *Uch Sharif*. He was the great grant father of Bibi Jawindi and his famous pupil was Channan Pir of Cholistan. The portal of the square shrine is supported by wooden pillars in a poor state of repair, but the interior, with painted ceiling and two tombs topped with turbans, is relatively well preserved. The ancient carved door has simple geometric and floral motifs. The saint's *urs* is held on 10-12 *Zilhaj*. (Singh, 155, 2004)

¹⁶ Bibi Jawindi, (Living Queen) the great granddaughter of the saint Jahaniyan Jahanghasht, was known for her piety. Her tomb, built around 1498, is considered one of the most imperative, and the most ornate, sites in the town of *Uch*, which was the centre of Sufism under the Delhi sultanate. In plan it is octagonal on the exterior, with the interior walls angled to form a circle. The thick walls rise to two stories, transforming by way of squelches into a sixteen-sided drum upon which a dome sits, supported by bell-shaped brackets. Both the interior and exterior walls are decorated with a profusion of faience revetment. The tomb is in poor condition. (Nabi Khan. 65-67,1980)

¹⁷ Shrine of Shaikh Saifuddin Ghazrooni in Uch is said to be the oldest Islamic tomb on the subcontinent. This is in bad state of repair with no outer ornaments surviving. It's worth a visit for its spiritual and historical significance. He belonged to *Ghazrooni Silsal*, which is not active anymore. (Singh, 156, 2004)

¹⁸ She also said that a 50,000 \$ grant will be initiated in October, 2009 for the preservation and repair work of *Uch*. <http://lahore.usconsulate.gov/l-09052201.html>

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 2, No. 2 (2010)

¹⁹ From Bahawalpur City this Ancient Fort is 75 km away in the Desert of *Cholistan*.

²⁰ *Fateha* means to say some holly verses for the dead one so he can be in peace in heaven.

²¹ 'There is a large number of camels in the State, many of which are employed in the Imperial Service Camel Corps. In 1900, two troops of cavalry and 450 infantry was disbanded, and an Imperial Services *Silladar* Camel Transport Corps rose instead. This consists of 355 men and 1,144 camels. There is also an Imperial Service (Camel), Mounted Rifle Company, with 169 officers, non commissioned officers and men. (Ahmad, 1998)

References:

Primary Sources:

Ahmad, Niaz. (1998) *Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, vol. II.

Ali, Shahamet. (1848) *The History of Bahawlpur: with Notices of Adjacent Countries of Sindh, Afghanistan, Multan, and the West of India*. London: James Madden, 8, Leadenhall Street.

Aziz, K. K. (2006) *Portrait of a Punjabi Family 1800-1970: A Journey into the Past*. Lahore: Vanguard.

The Government of Punjab. (1908) *Punjab States Gazetteer: Bahawalpur State*. Punjab: The Government of Punjab.

Rehman, Muhammad Aziz-ur-. (1899) *Subh-e-Sadiq* (Manuscript) Bahawalpur.

Secondary Sources:

Books:

Ahsan, Wagha (1990) *The Seraiki Language: Its Growth and Development*. Islamabad: Darawar Publications.

Gardezi, Hassan N. (1996) *Seraiki Language and its poetics: An Introduction*. London: Sangat Publishers.

Gazali, Ahmed. (1984) *Cholistan: Lok Wirsa*. Islamabad: Lokh Wirsa.

Khan, Ahmad Nabi. (1980) *Uchchh: History and Architecture*. Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research.

- Nadiem, Ihsan H. (2009) *Cholistan to Bahawalpur: Physiographic, Past, People and Places*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.
- Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt. (1984) *Sociology*. 6th edition ,Singapore: McGraw-Hill.
- Quddus, Syed Abdul. (1989) *The Cultural Patterns of Pakistan*. Lahore: Ferozsons.
- Singh, Sarina. (2004) *Pakistan & the Karakoram Highway (Country Guide) (Paperback)* London: Lonely Planet Publications,

Articles:

- Ahmad, Farooq. (2005, December) “Agro-Pastoral Systems in Cholistan” *Pakistan Geographical Review*, Lahore: Department of Geography, University of the Punjab, Vol. 60, No. 2.
- Ahmad, Farooq. (1999), Eco-regeneration and runoff collection in Cholistan, *UNEP: Desertification Control Bulletin* 35, 50-54.
- Ali, Syed Ashraf, (1994) “Bahawalpur ki Jughrafiye Ahmiyat” Quarterly journal *Al-Zubair*, Bhawalpur: Urdu Academy.
- Malik, Muhammad Saleem, “Bahawalpur ki Zindagi Ka Aik Manzar”. Quarterly *Al-Zubair* Bhawalpur: Urdu Academy.
- Tahir, Siddiq, (1979) “Cholistan Saqfti Meeras Kay Ainay Mein” Quarterly *Al-Zubair* (Cholistan Number),Bhawalpur: Urdu Academy.

Books in Urdu:

- Shahab, Masood Hasan. (1977) *Bahawalpur ki Syasi Takikh*. Bahawalpur: Maktab Alham.

Thesis/ Dissertation:

- Kavish, Rab Nawaz (1995), *Bahawalpur mein Urdu Zuban-e-Adab Ka aghaz-e-Irteqa* (PhD Thesis) Bahawalpur.

Websites:

- <http://www.bahawalpur.gov.pk/history.htm>
- http://uchsharif.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=45
- <http://lahore.usconsulate.gov/1-09052201.html>
- <http://www.geocities.com/pakistanpoint/cholistan>
- <http://books.google.com.au/books?id=FSAEAAAQAAJ>