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Factors Driving the Choice of Education in Pashtun-dominated Areas of Baluchistan: a research essay

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Article Information

Abstract

This study is a synthesis of existing research knowledge and of empirical research in the geographic areas of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in which ethnic Pashtuns are a majority. The subject is the how fundamental principles, beliefs and cultural commitments motivate and shape decision-making in education for parents of pre-tertiary young people. Parental choice may seem limited and obvious, but it is subject to a matrix of factors. Access to the rural areas of Pakistan requires navigation, as does understanding the cultural depth of ethnic Pashtuns. Researched and written by a resident official, this study aims to uncover the layers of meaning and significance within the seemingly elemental choice faced by most if not all parents – how their child learns, and what and where they learn. The implications of this decision, this study maintains, will be a shaping factor for a culture and society in transition. And it remains so for current ethnic Pashtuns in relation to the madrassas, private and public schools.

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Introduction

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups […] — *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 26, paragraph 2 (1948)

Imran narrated: he was sent to a religious seminary because his family wanted him to learn the Holy Quran "by heart", and his parents did not have the resources to afford another school or a 'modern' education and were not much interested in his school education in any case. He dreaded the thought of having to "face the mullah" — what religious teachers in Baluchistan are called and who are known for awarding the strongest of punishments for the slightest of mistakes. He did have access to a lower-quality government-funded school, and corporal punishment was present there as well (though not as severe). Narrating his story, Imran's voice expressed discernible pain and anguish: "But, what can I say! They [society; the authorities] say we have to be educated; but this is how education is in my town!"

'Education', while easily overlooked as a social-economic catalyst in human development, is a consistent family dilemma in most societies, as in Imran's. From even so-called 'primitive' times, knowledge and know-how has been 'passed on', and the young instructed in 'the world' as was navigated. The purpose of 'instruction' is manifold in impact but often two-fold in terms of its immediate rationale: firstly, it is an equipping in the art of survival; secondly, it is a medium of social reproduction, principally of one generation sustaining and reproducing its interests, capital, values and beliefs, across another generation. While the former was an ineluctability, the latter maintained a certain aspiration to 'transcendence' — a generation's work endures and evolves, added to and improved upon, as both obligation as much as validation.

But, this type of education mostly took place in an informal, indirect and pre-institutionalised manner. The young learned the ways of their elders through imitation and experience in the broader spatial spectra of society. As human civilization progressed in every place, people, country and region, new ways of learning emerged, today tending towards global models of student-centred, skills-based, institutional arrangements. The purposes of this new paradigm of educating future generations have been modified: as Gert Biesta (2015) observes, 'the objective of education now is to endow pupils with "qualification, socialisation and subjectification: qualifications enable a student to 'do' something; socialization habituates them into modes of behaviour acceptable to a projected world of work and life; and subjectification entails an inculcation into generic traits like individuality, rational thinking and freedom (Biesta, 2015: 77). Concurring with at least part of this last aim (subjectification), Francis Shrag (2014), (offering a review of Philip W. Jackson's thoughts on the question 'what is education for?'), claims that 'extending rationality' is education's 'ultimate mission' (Schrag, 2014: 534). While 'rationality' as a philosophy, as a theory, can be subject to critique ('whose rationality?', 'what is it? 'Can it even be taught?'), it can also be posited as a transcultural aim of education — in our context, central to the formation of the 'worldview' of learners. Thought is embedded with incentives or rationales for what is thought. This 'worldview' is a product of rationality, but while it is a necessarily unified, concrete representation of the world emerging from one's own culture, it is also subject to reflection and open to the existential awareness that there are other worlds beyond… or at least, other (different) people. Rationality is not one seamless cognitive process, but extends from the socio-material environment of the thinker to purely abstract reflection on the logic of thinking itself.

The question of rationality within education embodies all kinds of assumptions on a young person's needs on growth, development and

opportunity. Traditionally, in modern European thought, rationality was abstracted or at least considered separate from material life or the world of necessity (something Marx challenged), yet today we are less inclined to separate rationality from both the material/economic and the spiritual/cultural dimensions of a person's needs. Indeed, with the rise of Human Rights, broader questions have emerged on the interconnections between rational thought, social and economic life — human 'being'. Even so, education systems tend to maintain older categories, and 'rationality' is often either defined within the material/economic or the spiritual/cultural. This is perhaps more true of religious societies. The material/economic appeals to employment or profession-oriented skills-base education, and the latter to behavioural and social values (and perhaps intellectual development). More recently, Martha Nussbaum (2016) laments that through education, chiefly,

> …we are pursuing the possessions that protect, please, and comfort us… But we seem to be forgetting about the soul, about what it is for thought to open out of the soul and connect person to world in a rich, subtle, and complicated manner; about what it is to approach another person as a soul, rather than as a mere useful instrument or an obstacle to one's own plans; about what it is to talk as someone who has a soul to someone else whom one sees as similarly deep and complex. (Nussbaum, 2016: 109)

As Nussbaum points out, the material requirements of life are comparatively easier to define, quantify, situate, and prepare for; the forms of education that aim for a spiritual or 'soul' fulfilment are less so, (unless this is codified within a doctrinal system of religion). It is this traditional dichotomy that is our starting point in a research study on the education in Pashtun-dominated areas of Baluchistan.

Located in the southern part of Pakistan, Baluchistan is a province rich with mineral resources. Almost half of the population lives in Pashtun areas in the northern part of the province (Fig-1) as these are densely populated compared to districts of the Baloch ethnic people. Baluchistan has a large supply of natural gas, oil, minerals, metals, coal and gold, and most inhabitants of the province depend on this economy for their livelihood (Pakistan, 2013: 9). As a place that has always remained on the periphery of national education policy, Baluchistan's education system was never awarded the attention of federal government as were others (especially Punjab). But this lack of attention is not the only reason for Baluchistan's educational situation, and specifically the rural Pashtun zones of the province.

This article only concerns the districts where the ethnic Pashtuns are in a majority, and is concerned with exploring their motive-embedded decision making on choices in education – a choice largely framed by the traditional dichotomy noted above, more accurately defined in terms of 'scientific' or 'modern' (western) education, or religious traditional education. Research literature will be cited, though mostly for purposes of clarifying the often-paradoxical relationship between education and culture (or, economic gains and social expectation, which involves questions of heritage, legacy, personal aspiration, and many other factors). Policy documents, educational reports, newspaper articles and academic scholarship will define more the official discourse on education and identify the drivers of the choice in education among the Pashtuns of Baluchistan. Research interviews with some native to these rural districts will be evaluated by way of untangling the themes animating educational preference in these areas.

Part 1: Literature and Reference points

The literature on this subject is varied — on education in general, its aims and ends and the preference for religious or formal/secular/modern education; on the decision-making criteria on making an education choice; and on the historical antipathies of Muslims (especially in the Sub-continent) towards 'modern' education as generally conceived. While the potential body of research one might consult on this subject is expansive, a cursory survey yielded five common

themes, and so here I will simply identify each theme with notable publications. This will identify the basic parameters, and to a certain degree, the lexicon of this article's line of inquiry.

(i): *Education as a 'White/Un-Islamic' Phenomenon*
This is one of the most prevalent and general notions regarding education that Muslim groups in the underdeveloped and rural areas of Pashtun-dominated areas of Baluchistan, maintain. Though his frame of reference is the whole of Pakistan, Abdul Salam Lodhi (2013) clearly delineates the reasons for why a parent would not choose modern education for his sons (sons only, as in the Pashtun districts of Baluchistan, girls in education institutions are uncommon, or not a norm).

> Secular school education initially faced resistance from the Muslim population, who felt that it was inharmonious with their religious views. Even after many reforms, there remain people who believe that modern education is dissonant with Islamic values, and because the education is rooted in the British system (Lodhi, 2013: 8)

The worldview of Pashtun parents facilitates the fear that if their son is educated in a school, he will go astray of (i) religion – beliefs, practices, and values; and (ii) tribal and social customs and traditions. These two possible fates create a preliminary rationale for their decision making in the choice of education. As Lodhi suggests, a Pashtun father views the acquiring of modern education and conformity to socio-religious beliefs as mutually exclusive. He would therefore rather send his children to a type of institution that consolidates these inherited values, than to one in which they are interfered with or denied: and moreover, for the parent, this orientation of choice maintains a personal integrity if these outcomes can be imagined.

Another relevant if much earlier study, is Abdur Rauf's pioneering text *West Pakistan: Rural Education and Development* (1970). Rauf especially mentions the tribal belt (which predominantly comprises of Pashtun areas in Baluchistan and FATA – Federally Administered Tribal Areas – in southern and northern Pakistan). He says that the people of these regions feared the British education system as they thought it would encourage new and secular tendencies in youth and take them away from their Islamic roots (Rauf, 1970: 25). Their apprehensions regarding the British education were so grave that they though learning of the English language was 'anti-Islamic' and anyone who sent their kids to school qualified as 'infidel' (1970: 25).

What is significant in this early reference is the notion of Muslims acquiring modern education becoming 'infidels'. At the heart of this concern is the idea that Islam, or at least the 'tribal' (to use that colonial phrase, critically examined later) version, is vulnerable to compromise or assault by modern education, and both are diametrically opposed. The consequence that this common logic can lead to is a distancing from independent enquiry and research and blind acceptance of centuries-old social and tribal codes. It can even result in a general social alienation where young people with a modern education become social pariahs and occasionally even experience threats on their life. There have been similar reviews of cases where a Muslim resistance to formal education is on account of it being 'white' and 'un-Islamic (Wilkinson, 2015: 6) as, the 'educational legacy of Islam and Western modernity' as 'inherently oppositional' (Grimmitt, 2010: 168).

(ii): *Education as a Means of Cultural and Tribal Continuity*
In this theme, an argument emerges on the desire of a family or a society for their children to be educated in the type of environment that ensures that they uphold and promote the prevalent socio-cultural order. As Edward Ezewu maintains in his *Sociology of Education* (1990):

> There is a tendency for higher socio-economic status families to reproduce themselves and thus maintain the status quo. (Ezewu, 1990: 28) […] Education as initiation. Initiation into what? It is initiation into the culture of the particular society into which a child is born. (1990: 71)

Ezewu contends that the 'full education' [of the African child] is only possible if he is also taught in the details of his native cultural and social milieu. While Ezewu's context is Africa, his theoretical implications are relevant to the hesitations that Pashtun families face when opting for the type of education for their children. This choice is intended to train them in 'tribal' social and cultural norms and codes of conduct that they can practice all their lives and teach and pass on to their young ones — where individuals are mediators of trans-historic consciousness and practice of trans-generational values and priorities. And this process of inheritance and passage is central to the means of social reproduction that is tribal society.

In the same vein, when talking about the competition faced by the indigenous methods of education in late Ottoman Empire from the British education system, Benjamin C. Fortna (2002) remarked that the Muslims were wary of the civilizational and cultural transformation, for better or for worse, that the British system could cause (Fortna, 2002: 46). As against the financial poverty and administrative inefficiency of the Ottoman educational system, Fortna continues, the fast-spreading British education system was successful in recruiting increasing number of pupils. However, it caused unrest in the masses and for them the student of a British school graduated bereft of 'the spirit' of Islam (1990: 55). A partial explanation for this anxiety can be their unwillingness to accept an upgradation or change to their centuries-old ways and philosophy of life (the trans-historical inheritance of the socio-reproductive religion).

(iii): *Education (institutions) as a Source of Sustenance*
This is perhaps the most potent theme emerging from a literature survey on this subject: as Lodhi observes, 'private educational institutions imparting religious education are locally termed as madrasah. They provide both Islamic and worldly education, additionally offering accommodation and food for the children' (Lodhi, 2013: 7). The security of food, shelter and occasionally clothes for their child is one of the prime concerns for parents when deciding upon educational

institution for their offspring. Enzwu (1998) concurs with this point of view when he says that the type of education that a child gets is a direct function of the socio-economic status of his family (1998: 28). That probably means that children from families with higher income, having not to worry about their basic needs, usually end up in modern/formal education. On the other hand, those from lower income categories find themselves enrolled in religious educational institutions where they are provided with lodging, meals and other very minimal necessities free of cost. If applied to the Pashtun context, that, in itself, is quite a compelling reason for poor parents to select an Islamic, (madrasah), education for their children; and theoretically, introduces an economic factor into the seemingly fluid ancient practice of the trans historical inheritance of the socio-reproductive religion.

A similar discussion can be found in the important CISA report of 2013, 'Madrassa Education in Pakistan: Controversies, Challenges and Prospects' (Zaidi, 2013). In this work, the writer grapples with this dilemma in the face of the historical importance of madrassa education in the region. Of particular import in this regard is his finding linking the choice of madrassa education on the part of parents with the economic conditions of the family. He contends that there is little argument as to the fact that parents who cannot bear the expenses of their children hand them over to the madrassa where they are (a) given a systematic education, and (b) are provided for with amenities of food and shelter — things which may seem obvious, but where they are beyond the means of their parents are a (Zaidi, 2013: 28). It is no wonder, then, that in a country where a significant population lives below poverty line and where it is a common sight to have families of more than five or seven children (Hardee & Leahy, 2008: 3), many of these children become pupils in madrassas which are more than 'philanthropic bodies that provide free education, boarding and food for students' (2013: 26), but are a principle media for the trans-historical inheritance of the socio-reproductive religion.

Ranjit Arora (2005), in his work on racial and ethnic dynamics in education systems, offers

another interesting dimension to this stream of knowledge. His main thesis concerns higher education, but relevant to our interests: in his view, 'the value of education in personal terms and in terms of the social status it accords to individuals within their own community' (Arora, 2005: 12) are key determinants when it comes to people's educational journeys. Taking his conceptual frames of 'personal terms' and 'social status' and applying them to the case study of Pashtun societies in Baluchistan, the activation of personal value in relation to religious education is of social significance in the sense that it is socially viewed as a kind of service to, or worship of, God. The material conditions of social status lose their substantive interconnection with virtue within such acts of faith. Likewise, in terms of social status, those who acquire religious education can also be entitled to piety and positions of leadership and sanctity in social life (i.e. construct social capital).

(iv): *Education (predominantly 'madrasah') as a Socio-historical Reality*
Alongside the economic arguments, the fact that madrassa (religious) education has always existed in one form or the other in the sub-continent at large is another powerful cultural factor affecting people's choice of education. Before the British introduced the current educational system in the aftermath of the colonization of India, the major institution of education was madrassa, especially in Muslim majority areas. Even in the colonial period, the madrassa existed side by side with the English schools.

> On the one hand were government-run schools, colleges and universities whose system and syllabi were prepared under the supervision of the British with an eye to providing a workforce for the colonial government according to the priorities of the British government; on the other hand were Muslim educational institutions called madaris, which were established with the objective of preserving and promoting Islamic sciences and arts. (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006: 325)

One explanation for the large-scale existence of madrassas, even after the arrival of the British framework of education, is the fact that the madaris (plural of madrassa) have historically been seen as conduits of Islamic scholarship and values. Placed against the concept of education that the British brought to India, the madaris struck a more familiar chord with the Muslims because they were home to the major well-springs and scripts of Islamic learning. Besides, they also actively engaged with, imparted and advanced 'the Muslim tradition of education' that has given birth to luminaries in the fields of human inquiry like natural, physical and space sciences and have contributed a great deal to humanity's collective cache of knowledge and discoveries (2006: 328). At the heart of this argument is the fact that madrassa education has been a social and historical reality in most of the Muslim societies, therefore, it was natural that many Muslims wanted to continue with it and thus feared its substitution by other forms of education.

Narrowing down that definition to the case of Pakistan, there is considerable research suggesting that religious education has been an essential reproductive component of the socio-cultural polity of Pakistan itself — the State. It is believed that millions of students are studying in madrassa. Zaidi, in the above cited 'Madrassa Education in Pakistan' (2013) maintains that 'Madaaris [transliterated as madrasah or madrassa] are major societal institutions. They have ardent followers, and thus they can play vital roles for reforms of society' (Zaidi, 2013: 9). He thus affirms its value and asserts that the madrassa cannot simply be 'wished away' due to the fact that it is inextricably intertwined with the fabric of traditional Pakistani socio-cultural life.

More importantly, an aspect that is lacking in the research literature surveyed, Zaidi warns that it would be foolhardy to try to alienate a system of education that is representative of Pakistani society (2013: 25). Islamic education forms the core of many Pakistanis' worldview and, therefore, reforms should aim to include madrassa as a crucial pillar of learning in Pakistan

and not push it to the peripheries. This is a credible view within policy circles, not least as institutions of religious education are vast wells of human resource as they are concrete reference points in for national frameworks of development and planning. It does risk the extremist and destructive mind-set in madrassa-educated youth, against the State and the requirements of broader national life. It is perhaps inevitable in the 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan' (the country's official name), whereby as one of only two Islamic republics (Iran and Pakistan, both quite different and not in harmony despite sharing a border) that came into being and owes its very existence to Islam has (educational) policies that are ill-cognizant of the social psychology of Islamic education and its socio-economic function in the development of an ordinary Pakistani.

(v): *Education – Colonial Perspectives of 'Usefulness' and the Idea of the Oriental Syllabus*
As earlier noted, that prior to the British landing in India, the Muslims already had a flourishing educational establishment, which relied heavily on madrassa. To the Muslims, this education system personified the glorious history and tradition of a once-thriving Islamic civilization and its hallmarks of learning and knowledge. That is why, when the British first offered their model of education to the Indian colony, they faced an active resistance from the Muslim populace:

> In government schools, a policy of religious neutrality was adopted, which meant excluding all formal instruction in religion from the school curriculum. This policy suggested that religion could be confined to a definite sphere, which in turn ought to be excluded from the course of general education. Conversely, if indigenous education was perceived to be suffused with a religious ethos, then reform meant, among other things, taking education out of the religious sphere. (Zaman, 1999: 296)

The problem with the British approach to the institutional formation of education, especially in Muslim majority areas, was that it quite deliberately (on principle) did not take into account how religion and education were not separable in Islamic culture. This separation was not, as the British assumed, either doctrinal dogmatism or an outworn tradition; rather, education was embedded in a social upbringing that cultivated Islamic character and crucial religious ideals in the student. The colonial scenario, naively attempting to construct a syllabus of 'religious neutrality' was non-sensical. For the colonizers, the situation resulted in a fear and distrust of their new system of education among the Muslims, who attempted to counter the promulgation of this formal construction of the process of 'education'. A further proof of the misunderstanding of religious reality on the part of the English colonizers, was the order of the first Director of Public Instruction (in the Punjab province) that aimed at the following:

- taking the religious and the secular "away from each other" in the curriculum
- banning of school education in mosques and other places of religious nature
- stopping the teaching of all books of religious tincture (1999: 297)

As a further blow to the colonial project of the modernization of the indigenous educational system in India, the British stopped budgetary allocation to all schools identified as of a religious character, ostensibly for not teaching 'useful' learning. This distinction between what was useful and what was otherwise, drove the British administration's policies and budgets for most part of their rule in the sub-continent:

> The influential Utilitarian thinker and historian James Mill [d. 1836; father of John Stuart Mill] had written in February 1824: The great end should not have been to teach Hindoo learning, or Mahomedan learning, but useful learning... In professing, on the other hand, to establish Seminaries for the purpose of teaching mere Hindoo, or mere Mahomedan literature, you bound yourself to teach a great deal of what was frivolous, not a little of what was purely mischievous, and a small remainder indeed in which utility was in any way concerned. (1999: 298)

The tone of this passage would alone be enough to instigate agitation (which, in reality, was the relatively new philosophical innovation of 'Utilitarianism', which had great purchase in the context of the British 'Industrial Revolution'). In reaction to this categorization of the religious education as 'useless', Islamic scholars tried even more to demonstrate the efficacy of religion and religious education for Muslims (1999: 299) and this whole saga culminated in a conflict a great part of which was sparked by the colonial officials.

Unfortunately, the British didn't take much note of the fact that education for Muslims was not all about economic returns, career growth and material success; it was also about what we may know recognise as the trans-historic mediation of their ancient beliefs, as their identity, welfare and social status were thereby embedded. This entailed a philosophically vague but social explicit 'nourishing' of the spirit along with the needs of the body and material gains of successful employment: 'From the Islamic point of view, education is not just about meeting physical and material needs, but also covers man's spiritual needs as well" (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006: 329). The British in India envisaged their home country's policy of the separation of all things church-related from state, which didn't quite work in the case of Indian Muslims at least.

Unlike the early British colonialists' view of madrassa, as an institution of out-dated learning, there is evidence that 'Schools of mystic traditions taught 'rational' subjects such as philosophy, mathematics and astronomy, to prepare students for court jobs, the royal bureaucracy and religious duties' (ICG Asia Report, 2002: 4). In fact, the Islamic madrassa has for a long time been the preferred source of education in Muslim societies. The semantic of the word *madrassa* simply denotes a place where teaching and learning takes place; all the great Muslim philosophers, chemists, opticians, and scientists (from Avicenna, Averroes, Imam Ghazali, Yaqoob Al-Kandi, Jabir Bin Haiyan, Ibn ul Haitham and so on) have been associated with their regional variations of madrassa (Said, 1991). Being the foremost organ of educational instruction, the madrassa was threatened by the advent of a form of education that questioned and

even opposed its essential aim. The English education system and Western sciences resisted the very foundation of traditional Islamic learning (ICG Asia Report 2002); in other words, 'the advent of the British had endangered the core values of the [Islamic] clergy, and the Deobandi madrasa 'became one of the responses to the power of the West. This anti-Western trait is still a hallmark of the Deobandi school' (2002: 5). The seeds of division between scientific education and religious education (as evident in current-day Pakistan) were sown in the colonial area when moderate Muslims began opting for the Aligarh-style education while the followers of Jamiat Ulema e Hind opposed the acquiring or using of English and Western education (2002: 6). As a result of that, the Aligarh graduates obtained entry into the British bureaucracy and so moved up the socio-economic ladder. The madrassa graduates, on the contrary, (not knowing English), did not work for the British, and so remained still and unchanged at the 'bottom of this ladder'. The situation is very much the same in the Pakistan of today.

One can find a similar notion about the regional education amongst the British in Avril A. Pawell's *Old Books in New Bindings: Ethics and Education in Colonial India* (2011). He states:

> When Matthews Kempson, a Cambridge not a Haileybury graduate, joined the NWP's education service in the 1860s, he criticized harshly the Arabic and Persian textbooks. Indian booksellers and publishers came under particular fire from him for making such "bazaar trash" available. Surveys, education reports, and memoirs abound with such critical comments. (Powell, 2011: 205)

It is important to note that Mathews Kempson, in the above instance, alludes particularly to Arabic and Persian textbooks. Arabic and Persian books have been studied, especially by Muslims, and so calling these books as "bazaar trash" can but only signify an existing and broader discursive attempt to pitch the Muslim leaders and proponents of madrassa education against the British regime and its educational strategies. The opposition to

alternative educational systems that the British proposed was initiated back then as a fallout of their miscalculation of the situation and is present till this day in rural Pashtun areas in Baluchistan – which is also the context of this essay. This historical aversion of the English to Islamic education only further strengthened the natives' belief in their own education system and their antagonism towards scientific education.

Cruel as it may appear, for some English officers, there was absolutely nothing praiseworthy about the local languages and learning. For this cohort, 'the vernacular languages contained neither the literary nor scientific information necessary for a liberal education' (Trevelyan, 1838: 21). It seems that this group of rulers dubbed anything vernacular as out-dated and hopeless; their hype of the enlightened and modern Western education blinded them to the effectiveness and strength of the Oriental scholarship that had historically sustained Indian civilization. In their opposition to indigenous instruction, they invoke the 'White Man's Burden' (Kipling's famous phrase of 1899), taking it upon themselves to salvage the 'barbarians' of the Sub-continent from the clutches of ignorance and superstition. Like their usual unabashed approach to the governance of India in political sphere, these education system managers and policymakers painted the Oriental education as the 'other' with all the perverse concomitants that invoked. Speaking of the disuse of a set of 'expensive' instruments sent to a college in Calcutta, a spokesman of the Raj remarked that,

> … an expensive set of instruments has been sent out, and it seems intended that the natural sciences should be studied there, the managers of the present institution take care that their boys should have as little time as possible for such pursuits, by requiring from them all, without exception, a laborious study of Sanskrit, and all the useless, and worse than useless, literature of their ancestors (1838: 58).

Not all the colonial officials, however, thought of the native ways of learning as obsolete. There were quite a few who supported the idea that the local people should be encouraged to continue with their style, content, and institutes of education. The foremost of these was the Hungarian principal of the famous British-founded Government College University (GCU) of Lahore, Mr G.W. Leitner. After carefully studying the Eastern learning tradition and analysing it vis-à-vis its Western counterpart, Leitner arrived upon the conclusion that there was significant value and substance in the former. That is the reason why he strongly advocated the idea of a 'completely oriental' syllabus for the people in Hindustan (1838: 207). Much like Leitner, another stalwart of the British Raj, Aloys Sprenger, also espoused the idea that educational philosophy and syllabus in Hindustan should present a blend of 'east and west' (1838: 207). It seems probable that if more British policy makers had looked at the Oriental learning through the same prism, the indigenous – especially Muslims – would not have developed the animosity that they did towards the educational plan of the Raj. Surely, if G.W. Leitner and the likes could see the other dimension of the picture, and if the Indians had acquired and 'made use of' – to employ a British colonial yardstick – the Oriental learning for centuries, then there must have been some truth to its suitability for the residents of the Sub-continent. But, the inexorable ideology of colonial bureaucrats was unable to help perceive that.

There are thus two basic points to consider in further understanding our research problem. First, why acquire education at all? What is the rationale internal to education as a form of social agency? Second, how is education interconnected with culture? A response to the first question might be that education is the medium through which social patterns, customs and values, and worldviews of a community can be passed on, and, hence, continued and sustaining certain forms of life established by ancestors. As Dewey implies, education is the space where the old and the young generations engage with one another in the activity of transference of outlooks, impressions, and philosophies of life (Dewey, 1975). A parallel standpoint is that education is the enhancement of individuality and inventive capability so that learners can evolve the capacity

to reflect and so to modify and make more effective the culture and how it is communicated and disseminated 'generationally' (Stenhouse & Lawrence, 1967) (Cf. W. & Philip, 2011).

On the second question, i.e. on education and culture, it has been proposed that education is that pillar of socialisation that enhances or develops group welfare and prospects (Entwistle, 2011). As its goal, education can evolve a group of human beings that have a consciousness of the inherent complexity and diversity of culture itself, and so further instil 'values related to personal ethical or religious beliefs and to the common welfare of society' (Cairns et al., 2014: 52). This discussion of the interconnections of education and culture invariably leads to the subject area of this research essay, which is the exploration of the association of the choice of education with the following factors:

- Family values/environment/ideology;
- Social reception of the type of education;
- A specific interpretation of the word 'education';
- Economic rewards;
- Rewards in the afterlife.

The following empirical study takes a sample relating to the population of school-age boys (as education remains a male prerogative in the regions under study). I ask the following questions: what socio-cultural choices/reasons influence the choice of education in the Pashtun-dominated areas of Baluchistan? Does a particular interpretation or inflection of the concept 'education' determine these choices? What is the relationship between the choice of education and the religious views on education itself among the Pashtuns of Baluchistan?

The rationale in asking these questions is to identify the social and cultural conditions of choice in the education for children in regional Pakistan, and conceptually exploring whether the theological interpretation of the word 'education' is a key determinant in the actual exercise in choice for education, In this we might discover, what is the relationship between the choice of the type of education and economic outcomes that it

may yield; and finally, we aim to understand the extent to which family values and societal expectations are pitched together as factors into making an educational choice.

In terms of research methodology, the following study is a synthesis of small-scale cross-sectional population assessment and case study: it involves secondary records, interviews, and observations (including participant observation). The study is designed to locate, from a cross-section of inhabitants of the Pashtun-dominated areas of Baluchistan, the relationship dynamics of social determinants like family ideology/background, social values, economic expectations, religious rewards etc. and the choice of the type of education. I use semi-structured qualitative interviewing, and with a number of participants sufficient to represent all the districts of Pashtuns living in Baluchistan, however slight. The were all informed of the purpose of the study, and their consent to participate in the study was sought (mostly tacit and verbal, as is the case with such field research). This empirical material was framed by appropriate literature in the areas of Islam and education, and in observation on factors affecting a person's choice of education generally, and also generally, cognisance of the outcomes expected of one's educational credentials and career; this contextual information is so to render the communication between interviewee and researcher intelligible.

Part 2: The Socio-economic and the Religious in Educational Choice

This part begins with a discussion on economic assumptions — the role of parental earnings, financial status and material affluence of parents/guardians. This is followed by ascertaining the proportion of weight that can be awarded to religiosity or to the strength of religious beliefs in parent(s), as a key factor in our research assessment. That is contextualised to some degree by religious traditions and sayings, both of which can strongly frame the sense of experience of the nobility of religious and madrassa education, and the extra-material benefits. The third important component of the research is the choice of religious education for training the next

generation of Islamic scholars and teachers: the social reproduction of institutional facility itself. This is obviously important, given how it guarantees the continuity of Islamic and Pashtun

way of life (as a socio-cultural synergy), both of which have historically become intertwined. Lastly, we must consider the sociological fact of the dearth of institutions offering a range of choices and not just one type of education in Pashtun districts of Baluchistan; simply a lack of choice is a factor in preferences for one or the other form of education. This will demand a critical comment on a general phenomenon — the inadequate educational policies of federal and provincial governments.

As research affirms (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), and which may seem sociologically evident, there is a connection (Checchi, 2009) between the type of school a child ends up in, and the financial standing of the family. Generally, children from families with higher income and financial resources are sent to school; but the reverse is also true: children from poor households are sent (to madrassas). Thus, a simple equation may be useful for policymakers, and look like this: Higher income = scientific/school education; Lower income = madrassa or religious education.

This equation is simply general observation, and beyond development policies tackling poverty or low-income households, is not especially useful for policymakers. Madrassas oftentimes provide students with food and shelter, and secular schools do not: 'Madrasah enrolment falls as household income increases' (Asadullah et al., 2015: 186); and this makes it economically predictable that families with low income and high number of children opt for madrassa education. In Pashtun-dominated areas, having a family of at least five-to-seven children is common. Furthermore, poverty is prevalent and there are fewer economic opportunities for work or enterprise. Average daily wages for unskilled and semi-skilled labour is so low that, on average, a worker will earn a maximum of Pakistani Rupees 600 (£4 or $5: cf. the data of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) for an up to date currency citation (and Irfan, 1961). Generally,

it is almost impracticable to raise a family of eight people on this level of household income. As an institution that provides free food and lodging, therefore, the madrassa addresses (or inserts itself) into a critical juncture of the economy: and ideologically, it presents itself as an attractive option to enhancing a sense of parental integrity, responsibility, opportunity and cultural inheritance. Religion is a form of capital, that within the context of poverty, can be experienced as a source of great non-monetary wealth.

However, as attractive as madrassas are, they mostly only provide bare minimum facilities to their boarding students. Since madrassas themselves run as charities (and often from a revenue of *zakat*, an Islamic tax, paid by wealthy devotees), it tends not to be possible for them to provide high quality facilities. According to Holmlund et al. (2001), the economic conditions of a family is in direct correlation to the educational level of parents; hence, better educated parents have more resources at their disposal to: (i) enrol their children in (better) schools and provide for their uniforms, books, and fees rather than hand over their education and upbringing to madrassas; and (b) enable their children to do well in schools by providing suitable facilities at home and in general (Holmlund et al., 2011)

In the regions in Baluchistan, where Pashtuns live, parents themselves are not consistently well-educated as to provide better domestic environments and material conditions for their children (Sathar & Lloyd, 1994). As a result, the main career pathway option is 'manual' or unskilled work that does not pay well, and, thus, positions their decision-making within very limited, if not pressured, material confines. Economic 'desperation' is a social psychology that defines a certain line of thinking, often towards the only opportunity to provide for their children. Madrassa provides a principal sustenance, and so is a central opportunity. In his research on madrassa education, the writer P.W. Singer (2001) further elaborates this point:

> The poor cannot afford the private
> schools, which is where the Madrasahs

stepped in. With no better options, poor parents send their sons to Madrasahs, where they receive at least some education. Some Madrasahs provide food and clothes, and even pay parents to send their children, further increasing their enticement. (Singer, 2001: 2)

The veracity of a fundamental economic argument on scarcity and choice, is made more apparent by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) measures for the schools in some of the Pashtun counties. The agency started distributing oil tins, energy biscuits, and other vital physiologically based nutrition, targeting increased enrolment. This instance saw secular schools start offering what the madrassas do in terms of food and basic amenities; and while this strategy saw the desired increase on admission registers, our inquiry into decision making can only accept that economic only account for the basis of rationality for the choice of education in the Pashtun sections of Baluchistan. The USAID economic measures in themselves did not generate a categorical shift in behaviour; on the level of basic observation, the religiosity of the parents and their expectations – both materially and religiously 'in this world', and 'in the world after' – play a significant role in overall decision-making.

In a society where religion is a matter of life and death and where people would go to any extent for defending and promoting their version of Islam, it is only rationale that people value religious education very highly (Caron, 2007). Textual reference is sought in the Holy Quran, and in the traditions of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH), to provide an anchoring to the assumption that 'education' in Islam only means knowledge of the dominant version of Islam. One of those references is the following verse from the Quran,

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ

Read [O Muhammad!] *in the name of your Lord who created*. (96.1)

These were the first words revealed upon the Prophet (PBUH). The first word in the above verse is very important as it means 'read', 'to read', 'to educate'. However, the problem arises in relation to the interpretation of that word. Religious scholars in the Pashtun areas oftentimes believe it *can only* refer to a madrassa education – excluding all scientific, humanities, or formal school training. As a consequence, the madrassa graduates tend to be characterised by a poor understanding of subjects other than the one they are taught, and have few marketable skills to obtain jobs in a competitive market anywhere except in local mosques as prayer leaders. Regardless of this fact, a madrassa education for children remains an established preference. This is because 'parents also derive satisfaction from sending a proportion of their children to madrasahs in a way that reflects their own religious values' (Asadullah et al., 2015: 188). As a God-fearing society, one reason for this might be that religious education is not in itself an investment in the child as it is a parental prayer or service to God. In this way, religious education serves as a familial means of pleasing God and expecting His mercy, along with the 'concerns for after-life' (2015: 197).

Young boys (and occasionally girls) who learn the Quran by heart — called *Haafiz* (a guardian, in which the Quran is ever present in their mind, thus sharing one of the names of Allah himself, Al-Hafiz (الْحَفِیظُ)) — are thought to bring blessing to the house or family by securing a place in Heaven for ten people on the Day of Judgement. For a student who completes all the seven levels of Islamic education, called *Aalim* (the learned, again, a name of Allah: Al-Alim: العلیم), in a madrassa is believed to have earned a seat in Heaven for up to seventy people. The concept of life after death holds a huge place in the existential experience of most Pashtun people. The meting out of reward and punishment for good and bad deeds in the hereafter is a central ethical tenet of the Pashtun way of life, and further makes madrassa education, which is believed to yield returns on Judgement Day, too big an attainment to be ignored. The completion of the seven levels is formally equivalent to a graduate degree in terms of Pakistani education system, but it is one graduation that is spiritual as well as material: this is why parental religiosity

and madrassa enrolment are directly interlinked (2015: 195), and why parents see a value beyond the individual benefit to the child (2015: 192).

After a brief mention of the weightage of both economic compulsions and the religious commitments of parents, our line of inquiry turns to the interlacing of Pashtun socio-cultural life in recent decades with the Deobandi version of Islam. In fact, in the aftermath of the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq's (1977-88) and his policies of Islamization — particularly in the belts of the two provinces of Pakistan where the ethnic Pashtuns are in majority — are indelible imprints of the Deobandi version of Islam have remained on the culture and society of Pashtuns. Comparison has been drawn, for political purposes, between the formation and workings of the Pashtun social order and the ideal of Islamic society (Green, 2016). In such a scenario, it is no surprise that the Islamic education in Deobandi madrassa took precedence over scientific education: 'The Madrasahs became immensely popular by targeting the lower class and refugee populations, whom the Pakistani state has failed to provide proper access to education' (Singer, 2001: 2). What is important in this evidence is that most of the Pashtuns in Baluchistan live in poor rural areas and belong to the lower strata of society, making madrassa education an economic inevitability. Apart from that, the bulk of 3.5 million refugees from Afghanistan who provide a huge number of madrassa population, are settled in the Pashtun region.

As a place where religion has high importance, these religious seminaries are also seen as the breeding ground of the next generation of religious leaders (2001: 2) to lead prayers, perform death rituals, and officiate birth and marriage ceremonies.

Giving an estimate of the number of pupils studying in both scientific and madrassa education, Tahir Andrabi et al. (2006) state that,

> … we can see more clearly the very high madrasa fraction along (and only along) the western border with Afghanistan. This is the Pashtun belt—the Pashto-speaking population most directly influenced by events in Afghanistan. (456-457)… If we use 2 per cent of total enrolment as a cut-off for "extreme" madrasa enrolment, all 14 districts that can be classified as such are either in Balochistan or the North-West Frontier Province. (Andrabi et al., 2006: 467)

In their work, the overall point is that there are still fewer children in religious education than in scientific education, but most of those come from the Pashtun population in Baluchistan or North-Western Frontier Province (now renamed as Khyber Pashtun-khwa, the second province of Pakistan where Pashtun community lives). Thus, the high percentage of madrassa entries in the Pashtuns of Baluchistan can be attributed, among other factors, to the importance of Islam in the daily lives of Pashtuns and their need for religiously trained personnel to lead them in various walks of life. Another explanation for this rising choice of madrassa education can be the desire on the part of Pashtun parents to keep the socio-cultural order in which madrassa graduates feature prominently intact and pass it on to the next generation rather than causing changes to it by sending the young students to institutes of a different type of education i.e. Western, scientific.

Yet a final factor that determines people's educational choices is the non-availability of one type of education (of which the type available becomes the only and automatic choice). Quite often, the non-available type is scientific education which it is the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan to provide, which is difficult in far-flung Pashtun areas of Baluchistan. Madrassa, or religious schools, on the other hand, are founded and funded by independent or private individuals, religious trusts or families, and run on informal financial support or donations of wealthy families and charities. Because of the ready availability of madrassa as an educational avenue, the schooling options for the economically downtrodden are contingent upon issues of proximity with school and, of course, fees and other expenses. (Alderman et al., 2001)

Pakistan ranks among countries with least State spending on education worldwide, which is where

madrassas step in to provide cheaper educational venues in the stead of government facilities of 'non-religious schools' (Asadullah et al., 2015: 187). People's choice of madrassa education is substantially higher in areas that are either located far away from scientific schools or where there is 'insufficient provision of non-religious schools' (2015: 87). Since the Pashtun settlements under discussion are scarcely populated, it becomes even more difficult for children to travel from one town to the other for education. Here is a further testimony of Pakistan's overall meagre monetary attention to education:

> … the government education system in Pakistan has come to the brink of failure. While the law promises all children an education, reality does not. Pakistan spends only 2% of its gross national output on public education, one of the lowest rates in world (just behind Congo in UNDP rankings), and the results reflect it. (Singer, 2001: 2)

The results are reflected in more and more children availing of madrassa education facilities that are oftentimes below quality, both in terms of teaching and the facilities of food and accommodation. Where the State has abdicated its responsibility of providing quality education and related services, the only viable substitute is madrassas, irrespective of their quality. These madrassas are, in fact, the closest to any educational system at all in some of the Pashtun areas, which makes them an exclusive option of education for parents. They are like emergency structures operating in areas where the State is either unwilling to extend its social services or has shrugged off its role altogether (2001: 4). It can therefore be asserted — by way of concluding this section — that the principal factors for decision making in education, providing an indication for the reason madrassa/religious education, is the following:

• the economic position of the family meaning: rich and poor with the same theoretical choice nonetheless whose decision-making operates with a variance in criteria composition.

• the religious character combined with the spiritual and gains anticipated in the life after (inflected by the composition of parents' religious beliefs, heavily inflecting the decision-making away from the immediate material welfare of the individual child.

• the purported interweaving of Islamic and Pashtun socio-cultural and political ideals as induced as a consequence of the 1980s era of Islamization in Pakistan (in which religious education featured prominent, both socially and spiritually and is now embedded in the social psyche).

• the void left by the federal Government of Pakistan in catering to the educational needs of the people by building schools in all localities (filled by small-scale local efforts in the form of madrassas or even private scientific schools charging fees).

This in no way to implies that other variables are not factors in any decision making (such as location, siblings, family tradition, and so forth), nonetheless, the factors above inform the rationales whose impact is starkly evident in the Pashtun majority areas of Baluchistan.

Part 3: Thematic assessment of interviews

In the last part, the factors internal to decision making on educational preference (on the part of parents in Pashtun society in Baluchistan, Pakistan) were identified. This part is analysis emerging from interview material, of people from the Pashtun region. There are a total of 12 districts or administrative units of Pashtuns (as shown in Fig-1), every care has been taken to select at least one interviewee from each one, aiming for a comprehensive if not authentic account (at least, in terms of representation). Semi-structured and qualitative interviews were undertaken with informants concerning Pashtun parents' choice of education. After a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the content of interviews, some major themes and sub-themes are identified and discussed in sequence.

A: *Socio-historical Relevance and Dominance of Religion/socio-religious indoctrination*

Many respondents attributed the bifurcated choice of education to the social and historical role of religion in Pashtun society, which is hardly a mystery. Some also alluded to the influence of family and society on parents' choice and the multiple number of children per family. One respondent remarked that decisions on education are influenced by 'the strong social role of religion, the role of State in manipulating it, and the lack of awareness of science'. This observation is in line with the idea that there is a great similarity between the Pashtun socio-cultural and tribal codes and the Islamic principles and injunctions because of which Pashtun families have a slant towards religious education (Dürr, 2016). In addition to that, there has been considerable research that links the increased planned religiosity of Pashtun society with the rise of Afghans against the invasion by the Soviet Union. The purpose of all of this was to train a breed of Pashtun youth along the Pakistani border with Afghanistan that could go and fight as 'holy warriors' and defeat the Soviets (2016: 94). The worst affecters of this Islamization by the then Pakistani dictator, General Zia-ul-Haq, were the refugees from Afghanistan who settled in the Pashtun areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan (2016: 94) – which also happens to be the setting of this study.

One informant also said that "some of the more subtle factors, for the preference of religious school, are ingrained in history, and a detail discussion of historical contexts will give a more thoughtful understanding" touching upon the way the history of Pashtuns and the spread of religious education tie together. Another one noted "Unenlightened Pashtun society is not conversant with the importance of natural and social sciences. To them, the only knowledge to be acquired is religious one" pointing to the poverty of educational choices and the availability of madrassa or religious education as the only way to educate the young generation in Pashtun society at large.

Many interviewees also expressed their view on the incompatibility of scientific or school education with the values and customs of Pashtuns. They cited this as a pushing of people in the direction of madrassa education, which is not at odds with the norms and ways of the society. One interview participant stated that, "after having contextualized the correlation between the two, it explicitly depicted that both stand poles apart because of the contradictions in morph and values. Modern education has been considered a threat to the Pashtun society because of its Westernized structure and divergent factors that eventually would transform the fundamental strata of Pashtunwali, specifically the cultural transition and lingual revamp-ment".

'Trend hysteria' was also presented as an essential ingredient in educational decisions, particularly in relation to modern education. It was revealed by one of the people interviewed that '"this 'Me Too' trend has not only influenced independent thinking and decision-making, but it has also turned certain fields like art and music irrelevant and certain fields like engineering and IT overburdened" lamenting the fact that most of the youth go for the subject that is opted by the majority and is in vogue. Besides, one participant also responded by saying, that it is not necessarily the economic condition of a family that impacts upon their choice of education, rather "there are few well-to-do families who send their children to madrassa merely to have the presence of a religious person in the family. This trend also has a 'social acceptance' in Pashtun areas". This contributor suggests that acquiring religious education can result in the earning of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) for the family and their upholding of the social order.

B: *Political Motives and Interests of the Mullahs by Portraying Religious Education as Superior/Rewarding*

Another dominant stream of thought that appeared in the responses of interviewees is the part the 'mullahs' or religious clerics have played in the popularization of madrassa education. An informant elaborated this as follows, "[the]… political motives and interests of the Mullahs make the parents of the kids to send them to madrassa education". This same proposition of the power of religious personnel in formulating

the mind-set of the youth also echoes in Yaar Muhammad & Peter Brett (2015),

> Textbooks reflect the ideas which scholarly, political and – in the case of Pakistan – religious authorities have decided are important to write into the nation's cultural memory and can be key instruments of political influence and social control. (Muhammad & Brett, 2015: 75)

As stated above, the reason why the religiously influential people interfere with syllabi and paint concepts and ideas of their liking in a favourable light can be explained by their desire to aggrandize their control over the masses. The extent to which Pashtuns in Baluchistan are hostage to the social control of religious leaders is aptly reflected in these comments of an informant: "the Pashtun belt is dominated by religious Orthodox Mullahs and their teachings. They have their strong roots especially at the local level. These mullahs also propagate their teachings among the people so that it will also help them in the Hereafter".

In the relatively liberal and moderate era of General Pervez Musharraf's dictatorship in Pakistan (1999-2007), there was an attempt at purging the syllabi of conservative religious imprints. However, this was met with strong retaliation by the Islamic groups, who saw it as an attempt to instil Western and secular ideals in the minds of students; they even went so far as "declaring it *ladiniyyat* [secularism] or paganism and sometimes went so far as to depict the new curriculum policy as an American and Zionist conspiracy" (2015: 78). Apart from that, the religious oligarchy in the political and legislative circles in Pakistan have ensured that only one monolithic image of religious and sectarian identity of Pakistan is perpetuated or taught, i.e. Islam as State religion. And, that too, the Sunni version only, ignoring the aspirations and beliefs of Shia Muslims, Ahmadis, and other religious groups like Hindus and Christians (2015: 94).

C: *The Role of State in Patronising Religious Education*
Some interviewees criticized the way government

in Pakistan has been indulged in sponsoring religious education of the citizens, more than it should. They held that the dearth of State's attention, or importance for humanities and scientific education, is one of the crucial shaping factors of citizen' educational choices. A respondent threw light upon how the dedication of the government in the sphere of religious indoctrination has led some people in the Pashtun areas to '"believe that Madrassa education is foremost a 'license' for earning themselves admission to heaven. Given such preoccupation with Jihadi 'gung-ho', Pashtuns look down on so-called Western scientific education"'. This viewpoint was corroborated by the opinion of another participant on "the role of the State in empowering" religious aspect of education more than the humanities and scientific education. Speaking in the same vein, a third interviewee mourned the lack of funding from the State for humanities and arts education in the whole of country in general and, especially, in Pashtun areas by proposing "the state also needs to make these disciplines as more lucrative".

This observation complements the available evidence that the Pakistani State has always relied on education as one of its instruments in educating citizens in certain ways:

> All successive governments since the foundation of Pakistan in 1947 – whether civilian or military, Islamic or socialist, elected or otherwise – have had the common objective of using the educational system to promote the inculcation of Islamic values into future generations (2015: 77).

D: *Material Resources and 'Spiritual' Rewards Affecting Choice of Education*
As emphasised above, the common theme emerging out of the interviews was the way financial and material resources, along with the belief of rewards in the afterlife, affect people's choice of education. These two factors — symbiotic, we may surmise — have also been discussed in the previous chapter. As for the 'economic' factor, in the socio-political environment so described the term 'economic' is

not simply material status, professional prospects or starkly monetary, as it can be in the West. At the same time, interviewee statements ranged from "a majority of people sending their kids to madrassas do so only because they have to do it, because they can't afford English medium school for their kids", and "all well-to-do families are more inclined towards sending their children to institutions imparting modern education whereas the families facing financial constraints end up sending their children to madrassa as its education is almost free" to "Economic insecurity leads the parents to send their kids to madrassas". Poverty and insecurity are, perhaps, more substantive material factors than monetary wealth itself.

In the context of rewards in the afterlife, interviewees noted that "the abstract love for a good life in the after world gives preference to a religious school compared to a modern school" and "the desire for eternal bliss (the myth in Muslim societies that a Hafiz/Hafiza will take ten members of their family to heaven)" heavily weigh in the decision of parents regarding the education of their children.

E: *Encouragements for the Choice of Non-religious or Scientific Education*
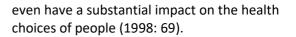Interviewees also noted the factors in the rationales for a Western, modern or scientific education. Within the interview question, under the theme parents' choice, the sub-themes given were identified as pivotal:

i.   better status and future.
ii.   Constructive and productive role of children in society.
iii.   Up to date; and having solutions to health, economic and other problems.

In this context, one of the respondents claimed, "better future and status leads people to send their kids to modern scientific schools. Constructive and positive role of the kids in their families and society compels the parents to send them to modern schools". Education can yield many positive outcomes in the form of better lifestyle and way of thinking for self as well as others apart from the obvious economic betterment that it brings (Stacey, 1998). It can

even have a substantial impact on the health choices of people (1998: 69).

In the same manner, one informant replied, "nowadays the modern education has higher social status than madrassa education as the former is guarantor of better job opportunities" which points to the linkage between education and social capital and to the fact that "human capital, especially schooling, contributes to social well-being and economic growth is an important question, and has been addressed in numerous research studies". (Wolfe & Haveman, 2002: 97). These findings were reiterated by another respondent who associated people's acquisition of modern education with "the desire for social change, progressive environment etc."; in other words, the ways education can bring about changes 'external-to-oneself' and 'public-good-type' (2002: 103).

There also were some emphatic utterances from the people who were interviewed e.g. "I don't think picking one of these for your kids is more of an option anymore. In the past people used to be more inclined towards religious education wilfully but now I don't think it's more of a choice".

Hence, as mentioned previously, the most common themes seen through the remarks made by the participants were the ways in which education can improve upon the economic and material condition of families, along with the salvation that religious education is expected to deliver in the world hereafter. However, respondents also expressed their views on the role of state in promoting and funding one type of education – madrassa education – so as to establish a grip over public ideology-formulation. Questions of the overarching socio-cultural role of mullahs (or religious personnel) and their presentation of religious education as panacea for all the problems prevalent in Pashtun society, and the constant social and historical reverence of religion, were also raised by the interviewees as formative factors in educational decision making: prior to factors responsible for religious education choices, there are tendencies to understanding or philosophical sympathy with scientific or modern education. Better lifestyle, economic gains, and a

good civic sense, were projected benefits that served as incentives in this latter case.

Part 4: Policy Implications

This final part serves to propose policy actions on the basis of the above: the aim is not for there to be one dominant preference or rationale, or to enforce a State equity, but to perceive that a condition of balance can be attained — of enrolment between religious and modern education, reducing the compulsion and antagonism of difference of syllabi and skills imparted by either the scientific or modern schools or the madrassas. In doing so, this section draws upon suggestions and responses given by the interviewees.

a: In Pakistan, because of the unequal distribution of political and legislative power between the different ethnicities, a syllabus can be easily moulded in favour of the majority (and the representation of minorities, and their interests, both religious and ethno-social, can be mishandled). 'Under-representation and misrepresentation appear to be the unequal distribution of political power, which places the Punjabi and the refugee groups in higher-level decision-making positions leading to unilaterally biased decisions' (Kazi, 1988: 160). Too often the minority ethnic groups (i.e. Sindhi, Baloch, Saraiki and Pashtuns) have complained about the mistreatment and distortion handed to them at the hands of the majority and ruling Punjabi ethnic groups (1988: 167).

If the Government wants to see propensity in Pashtuns, sending their kids to scientific schools in as substantial numbers as they do to religious, a representation of Pashtuns that is authentic and arrived at in consultation with Pashtun academics and historians needs to be incorporated in textbooks.

b. There is an imbalance in the educational system when it comes to the inclusion of local social and ethno-national heroes and myths. Most of the heroes, poets and other luminaries enshrined in the current syllabus hail from the early days of Islam, non-local conquerors of pre-partition Indo-Pak Sub-continent, and poets from central India

like Mirza Ghalib, Dagh Dehlvi, Meer Taqi Meer. This utterly ignores the rich and culturally more relevant poets like Khushal Khan Khatak (1988: 154), Rahman Baba, Ghani Khan, and countless others.

In political content, likewise, none or very little space is afforded to 'indigenous national leaders' (1988: 158) like Zarak Khan, Palay Khwastai, Sher Jan, Sawan Musakhel, or the duo of great visionaries and social reformists, Khan Abdul Samad Khan, popularly known as Khan Shaheed, and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, or Bacha Khan. Textbooks, on the contrary, disingenuously present Muhammad Ali Jinnah "as the sole founder of Pakistan" (Yarlagadda, 2012: 18). It is surely high time that native Pashtun freedom fighters, social philosophers, literary figures and the like, are awarded their due space in the curriculum so that pupils can engage imaginatively with the values, aspirations and attainment that these figures represent. In this way, they will also absorb an original account of their socio-political history, folklores and myths, and cultural memories and consciousness.

c. Similarly, at the moment, there is a dangerous divide between the sort of syllabi taught in religious schools and the one offered in non-religious schools (Pakistan, 2009). This state of affairs can render the students of respective education systems different from one another or even antithetical in character, values and worldviews widening the already unmanageable 'social exclusion' (2009: 6) and defeating the aim of achieving 'inclusive development' (2009: 6) through education and curriculum.

Thus, the 'need of the hour' is to educate the future leaders of Pashtun society in both religious and traditional wisdom, while building their capacity in the realm of modern sciences, politics, philosophy and economic and other social sciences.

d. Educational institutions in multi-cultural settings might have, as its purpose, the appreciation of different languages, dress codes, cuisine, symbols and songs. By the students, they should make available the variety of cultural choices so that they do not lose sight of their

identities and cultural knowledge (Kennedy & McDonald, 1986). The motive is to inculcate a meaningful appraisal, rather than a fear of, cultures other than one's own.

Some interview participants for this study expressed that most Pashtuns feared prospective changes made to the material aspects of their culture, like the Pashto language, dress code and tribal conventions, by the Pakistani state school system. One such observation was "modern education could be compatible if it doesn't end up into a transition just on the pattern of demographic change; for instance, if Pashtuns are allowed to get the modern education in their own mother tongue; the sanctity of their culture is revered; the curriculum is compatible with their religious and socio-economic values; they are allowed to wear the dress code as they wish to; their religious values are respected; their separate identity is taken on board".

It can, therefore, be recommended that the more the education system, especially scientific education, edges closer to instructions in local languages, adoption of local dress as uniform, and reverence for tribal code of life, the more will be the number of Pashtuns in these educational institutions.

Part 5: Conclusion

From our synthesis of existing knowledge and thematic extrapolation of interview narrative, we can infer that the transference of values, customs and traditions from one generation to the next is a critical feature of Pashtun society. Of course, in some societies, it may take place in a well-planned, formal and structured way; in others, it happens as unstructured and spontaneous. In the Pashtuns of Baluchistan the education of young minds has historically taken place in a relatively informal environment – in mosque, town squares, guest rooms, village hall, and this education has been mostly of social and religious nature. The teachers have not necessarily been trained and qualified, at least in the modern sense; they have rather been defined by their position, as family, elders or religious and social leaders. The purpose, of course, has been to equip students with the

normative arrangements of life in the society so that they are prepared for life among their fellow Pashtuns. As has been detailed above, for a long time there had been only one choice of education in the form of traditional madrassas or religious seminaries, teaching basics of Islamic faith and ethics of social behaviour. With the introduction of modern education among Pashtuns in the wake of British colonialism in India, another choice in the form of scientific or modern education emerged and presented an immediate conflict. With that, the dilemma of decision-making appears — factors, trajectory, implications, and the conditions or horizon of expectation for choices (mythical or economic); the two types of education represent a structural feature of modern Pakistan.

Of these, Islamic education maintained a synergy with the foundational values of Pashtun society and so emerged as a significant phenomenon in understanding our research subject: its synergy with its social context facilitates further enrolments in religious madrassas. Coupled with that, that madrassas provide basic amenities free of cost, appeals to a poverty of choice that can remove important stages in a decision-making process. The desire of one generation to see its culture and heritage perpetuated, remains an ethical obligation at a deep level, and madrassa education has facilitated that. The intensity and doctrinal composition of parent (or guardian) religious beliefs, along with the State's generous funding to religious organisations and institutions, ensures successive cohorts of citizens that are cognitively and morally inclined to work within a political ideology advantageous to established practice.

In relation to modern or Western education, a prime attraction is the understandable desire on the part of parents to see their children improve upon their lives in an emphatic social and civic sense. That is accompanied by Pashtun parents' aspiration for upward social and economic mobility, and an improvement in the material conditions of life of the whole family, which modern education can bring about in a linear, pragmatic and often predictable way (like an economic 'investment and return'). This

predictability offers security, and of course, does not in itself preclude a commitment to religion, or Islam, or even the ethical responsibility to continue inherited culture (something that can be done in a number of other ways, like cultural participation). Educational preferences are also made for broader, and often vaguely defined, purposes — in being of good standing, of doing some good to the society at large, or the belief that scientific education is the need of the hour and can offer solutions to the manifold problems of Pashtun society.

Even so, there remains a structural tension and a socio-demographic imbalance in the number of people being recruited by either system of education – with larger proportion ending up in madrassas, and so a social bifurcation deepening in Pakistan society – and this renders madrassa graduates in a relatively disadvantaged position, with few marketable skills to show in the shrinking and competitive employment market. That provokes the issue of just government and its political orientation towards the two spheres of educational life.

An investment is required in making modern education and syllabi socially and culturally relevant, and easily identifiable for the Pashtun youth. The differences between the curriculum of religious seminaries and non-religious schools are disparities in values, conduct and aspirations. Broadly, it is about time the educational establishment also celebrates the richness of Pashto language, culture, dress code, and other social capitals rather than pushing the Pashtuns to the fringes by presenting these aspects negatively. But before all this could be materialised, in depth research needs to be conducted concerning the educational sociology and psychology of Pashtuns. Answers also need to be found to questions of psycho-social and existential importance of religion and religious education in the lives of Pashtun community. Another important area that needs to be explored deeper, is the overlapping of modern education and sciences and Pashtun intellectual and literary history. Likewise, efforts also need to be directed at how can madrassa education be reformed and updated so as to make

it more compatible and demand-driven within the context of problems and requirements of the day.

Once these questions are answered and afore-mentioned recommendations implemented, one can hope for a type of education in the Pashtun lands of Baluchistan that fulfils the full development of human personality, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Part 6: Lexicon

Aalim: The Arabic term *ulama* (singular Ālim, 'scholar', literally 'the learned ones'), according to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2000), in its original meaning 'denotes scholars of almost all disciplines'. More specifically, in the context of Sunni Islam, *ulama* are regarded as 'the guardians, transmitters and interpreters of religious knowledge, of Islamic doctrine and law'. By longstanding tradition, *ulama* are educated in religious institutions (madrasas). The Quran, sunnah (authentic hadith), qiyas (analogical reasoning, for Sunni Islam) or 'aql ('dialectical reasoning', for Shia Islam), ijma (juridical consensus) are the sources of traditional Islamic law.

Hafiz, Hafiz or Hafez: A term used by Muslims for people who have completely memorized the Qur'an

Pashtun: The Pashtuns; also Pukhtuns, and also in Pakistan as Pakhtoons, or Pukhtoons), historically the exonyms Afghans (Persian: Afğān), and Pathans (Hindustani: Paṭhān), are an Iranian ethnic group who mainly live in the Pashtunistan region of southern and central Asia, in Afghanistan and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KPK), located on the North-Western part of Pakistan. They speak the Pashto language and adhere to Pashtunwali, which is a traditional set of ethics guiding individual and communal conduct. The origin of Pashtuns is unclear, but historians have come across references to various ancient peoples called Pakthas (Pactyans) between the 2nd and the 1st millennium BC, who may be their early

ancestors. Their history is mostly spread amongst the countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan, centred on their traditional seat of power in that region.

Modern/scientific/formal education: wherever these terms occur in this article, they represent generically all education that teaches the subjects of science, mathematics, social sciences, and humanities, in a formal and institutionalized manner in schools, colleges and universities.

Madrassa or religious seminary (or madaari, transliterated as madrasah or madrassa): in this research, madrassa education is meant to stand for the mainly religious teachings imparted in a religious setting/building completely devoid of any scientific or humanities subjects.

Non-religious schools: as modern/ scientific/ formal education as defined above.

Deobandi Islam: Deobandi (is a revivalist movement within Sunni (primarily Hanafi) Islam. It is cantered in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, has recently spread to the United Kingdom and has a presence in South Africa. The name derives from Deoband, India, where the school Darul Uloom Deoband is situated. The movement was inspired by scholar Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1703–1762) and was founded in 1867 in the wake of the failed Sepoy Rebellion a decade earlier.

Pashtunwali: Pashtunwali or Pakhtunwali is a non-written ethical code and traditional lifestyle. It is a system of law and governance that is preserved and still in use today, mostly in rural tribal areas. Its meaning may also be interpreted as 'the way of the Pashtuns' or 'the code of life'. Pashtunwali is widely practiced among Pashtuns, especially among the non-urbanized Pashtuns in the country. In addition to being practiced by members of the Pashtun diaspora, it has been adopted by some non-Pashtun Afghans and Pakistanis that live in the Pashtun regions or close to the Pashtuns, who have gradually become Pashtunized over time. During the Pashtun-dominated Taliban regime, Pashtunwali was practiced throughout the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in conjunction with the Taliban's interpretation of Deobandi Islam.

Note: The research for this study was mostly conducted during the years 2016-17 when engaged in postgraduate studies in the UK, after which (in part from the vantage point of my public office) I have maintained a professional interest in the issues therein. It must be emphasised that the research conducted was largely empirical and synthetic, and, given the paucity of academic debate on the specific geo-cultural area under consideration, the research of academic publication was only supplementary to the empirical field work and to my own individual thoughts on the subject. And in the last few years, some further research has emerged: (by way of example, Ali, Lodhi, & Umar 2018; Anwar, Kelly, & Gray 2022; Hameed, 2022; Kakar, Saleem, & Sarwar 2022, cited in the Bibliography section below). And the University of Balochistan must be acknowledged, along with its *Journal of Education & Humanities Research:*
http://web.uob.edu.pk/Journals/jehr/articles2-2018.php

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