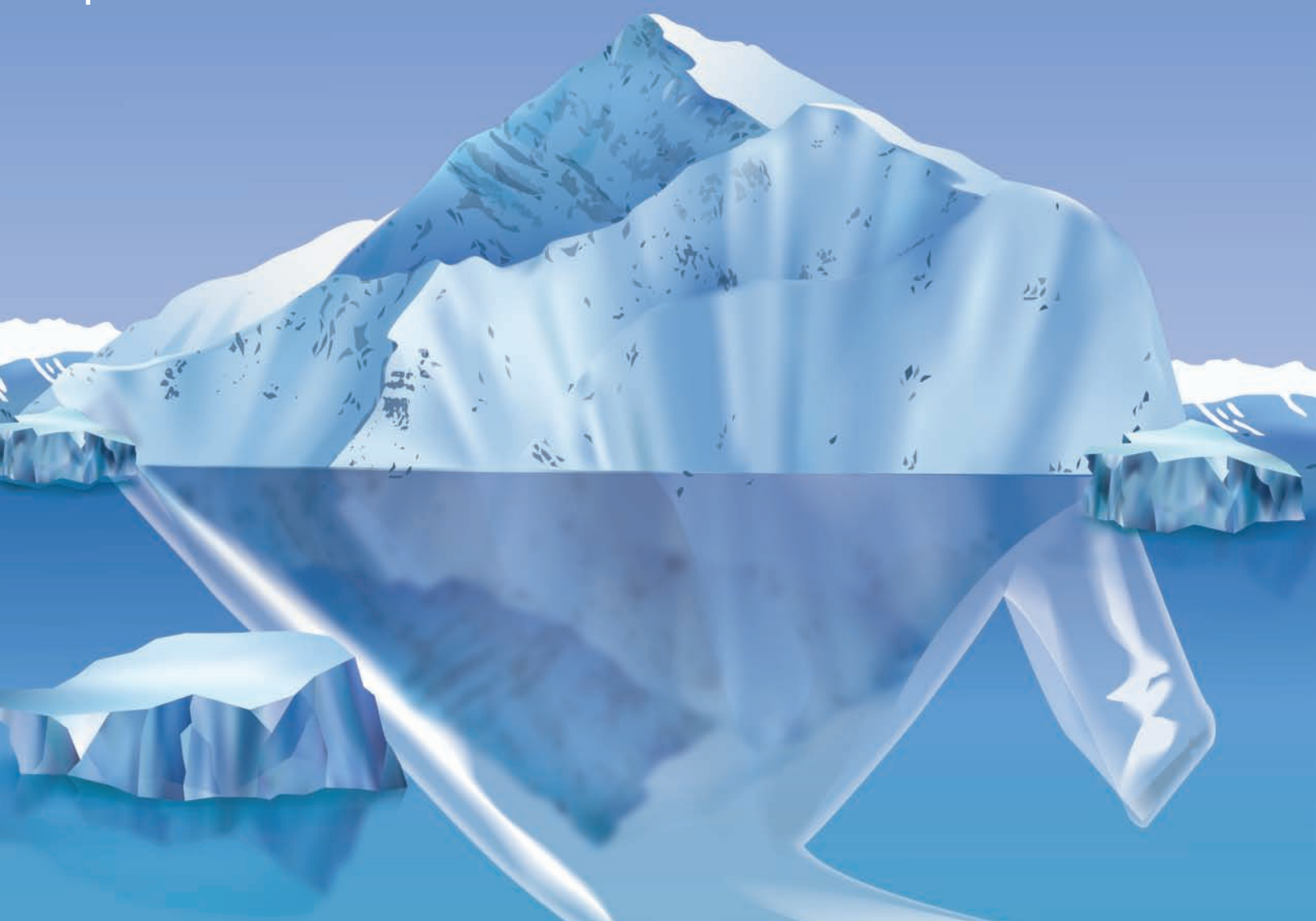


# THE KARAKORAM

Monthly Magazine of Karakoram International University, Gilgit

Plastic Ban in **Gilgit-Baltistan**

*The need for a Sustainable Policy*



Potential of  
Gilgit-Baltistan's  
**Gemstone  
Industry**

**Gilgit-Baltistan,  
Ladakh,  
and China**

**Homestay  
tourism model  
for G-B**

**Kargah  
Buddha**  
Relics of Buddhism  
or Yatchini?

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# Editorial

## Plastic Ban in Gilgit-Baltistan: The Need for a Sustainable Policy

Owing to the rising threat of climate change to vital sources of fresh water that the region possesses, a ban is in place on using plastic bags across Gilgit-Baltistan. Although the success of such initiatives depends on the administration to provide affordable alternative means, the impoverished masses have been cooperative, thus already using indigenous techniques to cope with the rapid changes made by global warming.

In several places, the adaptation of techniques like glacier marriages and ice stupas remain instrumental, not only to provide the communities with an alternate source of water, especially during dry seasons but also to help extend the overall lifespan of glaciers. However, these efforts are marred by the rising air pollution in the region due to wood burning for heating purposes.

On the one hand, massive tree-cutting activity is a primary source of the degradation of forests, thus adding to climate hazards like soil erosion and floods. On the other hand, wood burning has been an imminent cause of glacier melting and health-related issues. Additionally, unplanned urban development and immense population growth pose an enormous challenge to the ecologically sensitive region of Gilgit-Baltistan. Haphazard construction of concrete jungles in the cities of Gilgit and Skardu without proper drainage and sewerage systems, while becoming a chief cause of the rise in warming, adds to climate hazards and wreaks havoc on the quality of soil, polluting rivers and streams.

That said, the plastic ban initiative, a step in the right direction, would be tested during the summer when a sizeable number of tourists visit the region, thus straining its resources, warming the environment, and increasing pollution. To make this initiative successful in the long run, the administration needs to incentivize, train and empower local communities.

Encouraging community policing would regulate summer tourism, and placing community-wise plastic recycling plants and training local masses to use those machines would certainly prove effective. Considering the major elements, there is an urgent need to declare a climate emergency in Gilgit-Baltistan. The need to devise a comprehensive sustainable policy (keeping energy policy a priority) and highlight the region's vulnerabilities in national and international forums to attract investment for policy implementation is now crucial.

### Kashif Hussain

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## KIU CORNER

- Page No:
- 08 Book on mountain studies launched by KIU, Gilgit.
  - 22 NFTP KIU, Gilgit
  - 54 China Study Centre KIU



## CURRENT AFFAIRS

- Page No:
- 24 Gilgit-Baltistan, Ladakh, and China
  - 34 China's Regionalization process in the context of Asian Century



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Page No:
- 46 Potential of Minerals and Gemstones in G-B



## YOUTH

- Page No:
- 52 Shaista Jabeen Munawar



## CLIMATE CHANGE

- Page No:
- 10 Plastic trends in G-B
  - 28 Hydro meteorological hazards in Zoodkhun Village
  - 42 The Sinking Titanic
  - 16 GB Green Business Development Initiative





Kafar Kote – The ruins of primitive clans of Tangir Valley  
Kargah Buddha: Relics of Buddhism or Yatchini?  
Romanticism in Gilgit: Past and Present

Page No:  
32  
19  
56

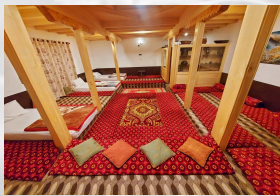
## ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE



Incubation to Innovation

Page No:  
52

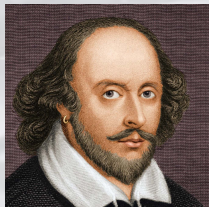
## TECHNOLOGY



Homestay tourism model for G-B

Page No:  
12

## TOURISM



No Shakespeare without Islam

Page No:  
60

## LITERATURE



Distribution Status and Habitat  
Assessment of Blue Sheep in G-B

Page No:  
38

## WILDLIFE



Harmonising Sectarian Cacophonies  
The Invisible women of Gilgit-Baltistan

Page No:  
63  
40

## OPINION



# A book on mountain studies launched by Karakoram International University, Gilgit



## Dr. Zafar Khan

The writer is a Ph.D. in environmental sciences and specializing in ecology and conservation is an Associate Professor/head of the department of Forestry, Range and Wildlife Management, Karakoram International University, Gilgit

Islamabad, January 9, 2023: Karakoram International University (KIU), Gilgit published a book entitled Mountain Studies: Understanding and Managing Mountains for People and Nature. The book was an outcome of a project under the U.S. – Pakistan University Partnerships Grants Program, funded by United States Government through the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP). The

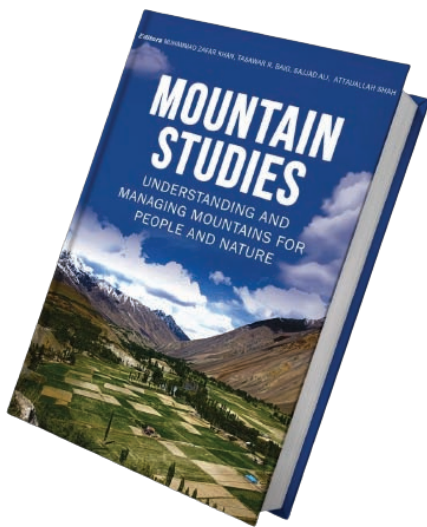
project aimed to promote education for sustainable mountain development through curriculum enrichment and capacity-building.

The project engaged six universities – COMSATS University Islamabad Abbottabad Campus and Women University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Bagh from Himalayas; University of Baltistan, and Karakoram International University Gilgit from

Karakoram; and University of Chitral and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Sheringal Dir Upper from Hindu Kush.

The book is intended for those with an academic, scientific, and practical interest in mountains, particularly the Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalaya (HKH) region of Pakistan. Primarily, it serves as a resource book for those engaged in teaching and learning





about mountains and associated resources. It provides an overview of the key aspects or resources of mountains from a background information to, classification, current status. It also highlights the likely challenges and future directions for

conservation of mountain resources.

The book will be a useful resource for teaching as a core course in the mountain universities of Pakistan's HKH region or in similar geographical settings elsewhere, where possible, or by integrating it partially into existing curricula of relevant subjects.

Following an introduction to the HKKH region of Pakistan, this book contains 14 chapters, arranged under three broader thematic areas:

- Physical landscapes and associated challenges – covering mountain geography, glaciology, land use land cover changes, mountain hazards and climate change;
- Life and resources – describing mountain ecosystem services, mountain forests, rangelands, wildlife, medicinal and aromatic plants and agroecology; and

- Governance, markets, and common goods – sustainable mountain tourism, socioeconomic transformation, governing the commons and resource management systems in the highlands

Sixty co-authors representing numerous disciplines from the six partner universities in the HKH region of Pakistan contributed to the chapters. A considerable number of images have been used across all chapters to portray important elements. More than 650 references provide the reader with an invaluable resource to gain first-hand knowledge of mountains in the Asian highlands.





# Plastic Trends in Gilgit-Baltistan

## - The Need to Combat the Consequences of Climate Change



### Salima Aman

The writer is teaching at hining Light Academy Gilgit and is associated as an intern with WWF-Pakistan Gilgit Office.

The world is threatened by the consequences surfaced by climate change. The rising temperatures, shifts in weather patterns, erratic rainfall, loss of agricultural land, displacement, loss of biodiversity, and so much more have challenged humanity to rethink its ways of life. Recently, the 27th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) was held in which the representatives of 100 states and governments participated. The conference concluded after intense negotiations on establishing a fund to compensate vulnerable nations for 'loss and damage' from climate-induced disasters.

Parallel to climate change, the use of plastic products and plastic waste has

far-reaching social, environmental, economic, and health consequences. Plastic has many valuable uses which have made us addicted to single-use products. The use of plastic products, and plastic waste is a complex issue because of its non-biodegradable nature. If the matter is not taken seriously, our oceans will be filled with more plastic than fish by 2050. Not only this, but human health will be suffering from multiple serious diseases.

In recent years, Gilgit-Baltistan has become a brand due to its unique landscapes attracting tourists from various corners of the world. Where the tourism industry has brought economic benefits, it has also provided platforms for environmental pollution in the region.

Globally, one million plastic bottles are purchased every minute for single use and then thrown away. The single-use products include water bottles, shampoo bottles, food

“

It's time to be the change maker, the way we produce, consume and dispose-off plastic.

”



packaging film, potato chip bags, cutlery, plates, cups, etc. Historically, from 1950 to 1970, a small amount of plastic was produced, which was easy to manage. From 1970 to the 1990s, the production of plastic tripled, and in the early 2000s it grew more in a single decade than it did in the last 40 years. If this historic growth continues, global production of primary plastic is forecasted to reach 1,100 million tons by 2050.

In Pakistan, more than 3.3 million tons of plastic waste are produced each year, making the country one of the highest percentages of mismanaged plastic waste in South Asia. The 250 million tons of garbage



in Pakistan include plastic bags, pet bottles, and food scraps. Plastic pollution has not only affected human health but is also affecting marine life due to unmanaged dumping of plastic waste.

Unfortunately, the Indus River, which was once the source of fresh water, has been declared the second most polluted river in the world. The main cities of Pakistan are already wrapped up in plastic dumps and are traveling toward the North at a high pace. Most plastic items never fully disappear; they just break down into smaller and smaller pieces. Microplastics can enter

the human body through breathing and accumulate in organs. A recent study has shown the presence of plastic in human organs including the



placenta of newborn babies, lungs, spleen, and kidneys.

The people of GB are suffering from multiple diseases, microplastics could be one of the reasons, although it is not proven. Plastic has become our addiction because it is easily available at cheap prices. Gilgit-Baltistan is a place of natural beauty with a lot of tourism hotspots. However, in recent years, environmental pollution has become a complex issue in the region.

The garbage dumped along the roadsides and rivers has curtailed beautiful views while inviting health-related issues to the region. Different organizations, including WWF-Pakistan, Environmental protection Agency, UNDP, UNEP, KADO, and AKRSP have previously conducted studies on plastic use and its management.

WWF-Pakistan, along with other organizations, has worked for the elimination of plastic from the environment, but the results are unsatisfactory.

Previously, WWF-Pakistan actively participated in local and global campaigns focusing on mitigating and eliminating plastic pollution. Some of these include the "No Plastics in Nature" campaign, the "Beat Plastic Pollution" campaign, and the "Plastic Diet" campaign. WWF-Pakistan and Coca-Cola Foundation, in 2018, conducted a study in major cities of Pakistan, including Gilgit, to spread awareness about the recycling of PET

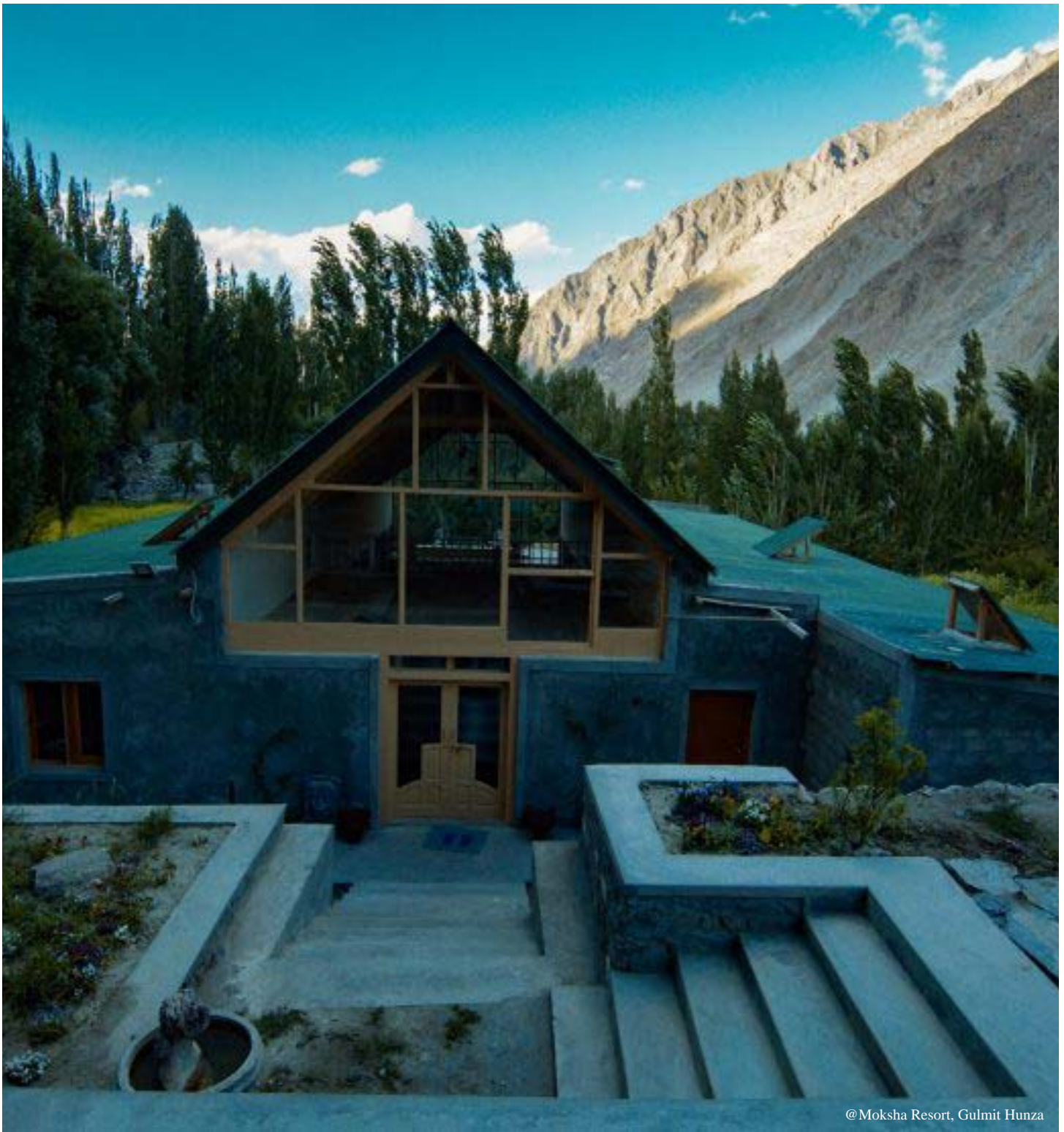
bottles. In the year 2020, Hunza district was declared the first plastic-free district in the country, but due to a lack of interest and inconsistency, the initiative has now failed.

The world is waking up to the problem, and government, industry, and other stakeholders need to take immediate steps to save our planet.

Government can also promote innovation so that the plastics we need are designed and brought into the economy in a way that allows for their reuse. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Gilgit has taken a step forward to eliminate plastic from the region. It has provided alternative and eco-friendly solutions in the form of the Green Businesses initiative. The green business and circular economy initiative provide interest-free loans up to PKR. 96 million to local enterprises. To make it successful, every individual in society will have to participate responsibly.

### **Bringing Change: Taking Action Against Plastic Pollution**

Several alternatives can be followed by the plastic industry, such as making a product that can be reused. For example, the cloth bags. The production of cloth bags will also provide platforms to empower women in the region as well. To turn off the tap on plastic pollution individuals can also play their role by pressuring the local authorities to improve waste management in the region. We can bring change from basic levels if we teach our younger generations to manage the garbage and clean up the surroundings in which we live. We all need to bring change in our behaviors and adopt new habits to limit plastic footprints. Importantly, rather than depending on others, why don't we take initiative personally, the little acts can contribute to bringing a positive change, so why not be the first change makers?



@Moksha Resort, Gulmit Hunza

# Sustainable Mountain Tourism: Developing an Alternative Tourism Model for Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan





## Amjad Ali

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**T**ourism development in rural mountain regions of the developing world has distinct characteristics but at the same time, it has operational difficulties in terms of subsistence economics, fragile ecosystem services and high poverty and unemployment rates. Communities living in the mountain regions mainly depend on farming activities for their livelihoods and these resources are highly susceptible to climate and environmental changes. Diversification of non-farms livelihoods sources needs immediate policy attention in the mountain regions so that well-designed policy formulation and implementation is ensured well in time. The current growing tourism activities in the rural mountain regions of the world

indicate that the tourism sector could be the leading livelihood source for the local community.

Gilgit-Baltistan has unique tourism attractions offering all types of tourism activities. This part of Pakistan has plenty of mighty mountains and it hosts the junction point of the world's three famous mountain ranges-The Karakoram range, the Himalaya range and the Hindu Kush range. This region has also diverse culture and rich biodiversity. Currently, the flow of tourists is increasing exponentially. To tackle such huge demand, the supply side of tourism needs to be ready on a sustainable basis. However, at present, tourism services are grown without any proper planning. The most

pressing issues are the ill-planned construction of hotels, guest houses and restaurants which in turn posing threat to sustainable tourism development in the region. In order to avoid such ill-planned construction and to manage the growing tourism demand in Gilgit-Baltistan, there is a need to develop alternative tourism that ensures sustainable tourism development while ensuring the three main aspects of sustainable tourism-preservation and promotion of culture and heritage sites, ensuring local economic development and protecting the fragile mountain ecology.

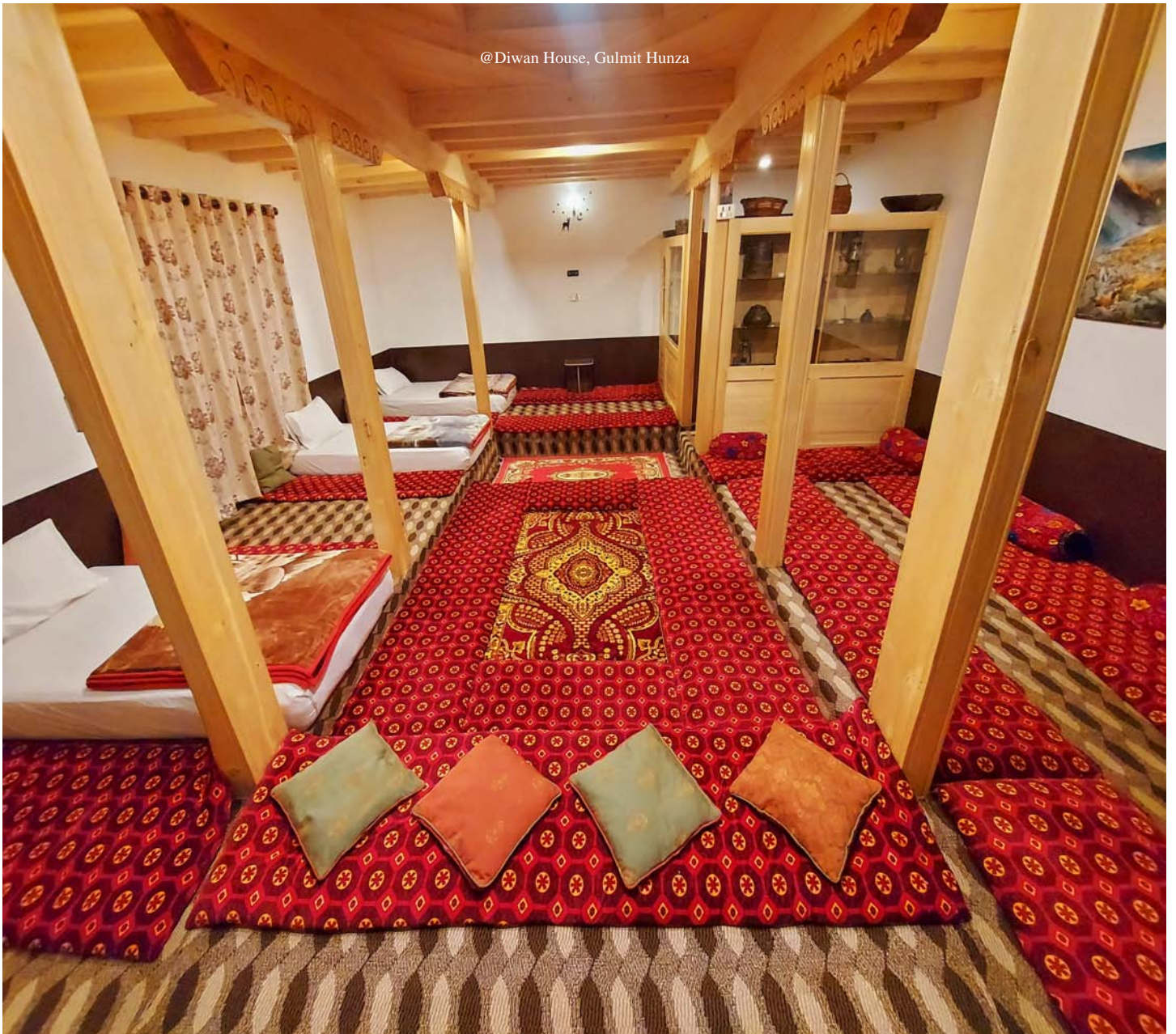
The most relevant and appealing alternative tourism model can be of Community Based Tourism (CBT)



@Moksha Resort, Gulmit Hunza



@Diwan House, Gulmit Hunza



model which takes into account the sociocultural, environmental and local economic development aspects of sustainable tourism. It as a form of tourism that is “owned and managed by the community for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life”. One of the practical examples of CBT is the homestay tourism model that allows tourists to reside with the local community and enjoy local cultural activities and way of life of the host community. It is argued homestays are not buying and selling of ‘just a bed’ but it is all about lifestyle hosted by the local community. The promotion of community-based tourism is a low-impact and environmentally sensitive way to travel. Scholars argued that such type of tourism helps to reduce poverty, social equality and environmental conservation and it also helps to ensure sustainable tourism in the region. Homestay tourism may offer cultural and natural attractions to tourism as indicated. This may create pressure on the sociocultural and environmental fabric of the region

however, such pressure can be handled by the sensible management and such cases have already been seen in the case of Thailand, India, Nepal and Malaysia where codes of conduct at the community level were developed while taking necessary inputs and cooperation from all the stakeholders.

Keeping in view the growing tourism demand and fragility of the mountain ecology in Gilgit-Baltistan, the homestay model can be a successful model if implemented with its true spirit. The development of the homestay model for Gilgit-Baltistan should be based on the principles of sustainable tourism development. It should serve the three main pillars of sustainability - economic sustainability, sociocultural sustainability and environmental sustainability. Under the economic sustainability pillar, economic diversity, job opportunities and economic equity must be ensured for the local community and in the case of the sociocultural pillar, the preservation and promotion of local culture and quality of services

provided by the local community must be intact. Under environmental sustainability, the local community needs to be sensitized about the environmental impact of tourism, ensure the conservation of natural resources, reduction in environmental harm and integration of homestay with the local environment. Furthermore, local communities should be trained and empowered through the technical skills required for the homestay model so that they can directly manage the homestay model in line with the principles of sustainable development. The success of the homestay model in Gilgit-Baltistan will mainly depend on how the local community is able to understand the modalities of the model. For this purpose, a comprehensive research study on the feasibility of the homestay model, an understanding of the local community towards the homestay model, and the expected sociocultural, economic and environmental benefits to the local community are immensely required.

### Models of Homestay in the world

Country	Homestay Model
Canada	Culture homestay, Heritage homestay, Farm-stay
USA	Education Homestay, Agriculture homestay
Indonesia	Leisure homestay, Culture Homestay
Singapore	Urban homestay
Thailand	culture homestay, student homestay, volunteer homestay
New Zealand	cottage homestay, farm-stay
Japan	educational homestay, home visit
Australia	Farm-stay
South Africa	Leisure homestay
South Korea	educational homestay





## Eco-Friendly Alternatives: Gilgit-Baltistan's Green Business Development Initiative



### Imran Ali

The writer is associate editor of The Karakoram Magazine and a nuclear scholar fellow at the Centre for Security Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR). He can be reached at [aleee.imran@gmail.com](mailto:aleee.imran@gmail.com).

**P**lastic waste has become a global crisis, and Pakistan is no exception. According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan is among the top countries in the world that are most affected by plastic pollution. Pakistan has one of the highest percentages of mismanaged plastic in South Asia.

More than 3.3 million tons of plastic is wasted each year in Pakistan. In Gilgit-Baltistan, plastic waste is a significant problem, especially in the

tourism industry, where a huge number of tourists visit every year and often leave behind plastic waste. Besides this, plastic waste occupies a major portion of solid waste in G-B due to its wide use. This waste is openly dumped or burned for heating purposes, especially in winter which is responsible for emissions of obnoxious gases, posing a threat to vegetation, human and animal health, and the environment as a whole.

It increases the risk of heart diseases, aggravates respiratory ailments such

as asthma, and emphysema, causes rashes, nausea, or headaches, and damages the nervous system of human beings. Gilgit city is grappling with a significant environmental and financial burden due to the excessive use of single-use plastic shopping bags. Every year, the city consumes an alarming 11 tons of these bags, costing an estimated 60 million rupees.

On a per-kilogram basis, these bags cost anywhere between 450 to 500 rupees, adding up to a staggering 4.95 million rupees in monthly



consumption alone. Annually, the cost of these bags is a staggering 59.4 million rupees, which is roughly 60 million rupees.

But the financial burden is just the tip of the iceberg. The environmental cost of these bags is even more staggering. Approximately 20.46 million tons of these bags are discarded into the environment, causing severe damage to the ecosystem.

The ultimate fate of this huge chunk of plastic waste is “Bukhari” traditional heating stoves or open dumps in water channels, streets and open fields.

It's time for us to come together and make a change by reducing the use of these harmful single-use plastic bags in Gilgit city and opting for more eco-friendly alternatives for a sustainable future.

### **The Role of EPA**

But there is hope. Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in collaboration with Line departments, NGOs, Communities, and the private sector has taken a step forward to eliminate single-use plastic from the region under the project named “Phasing out Plastic Bags in Gilgit-Baltistan through Promotion of Smart Shopping Bags” by introducing the Green Businesses Development Initiative. The aim of the project is to preserve the natural environment of G-B by phasing-out polythene bags and by promoting local entrepreneurs to promote cloth, paper and other eco-friendly bags. In this regard, the

ban on single-use plastic shopping bags has been implemented in Gilgit city from 1st January 2023. To maximize the social and environmental benefits of the project interventions, “Green Businesses” would be incubated by supporting existing entrepreneurs by providing interest-free loans. The initiative, which is currently in the implementation stage, aims to provide interest-free loans of up to PKR 96 million to local enterprises that will work to make Eco-friendly bags i.e., cloth, paper, and nonwoven bags. This initiative is not only a response to the plastic waste problem but also a response to the challenges posed by climate change in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Green Businesses Development initiative is a major step forward in the fight against plastic waste in Gilgit-Baltistan. Once the loan initiative is implemented, the local enterprises will be required to use eco-friendly materials, and also have to comply with the regulations set by GB-EPA in terms of waste management, energy consumption, and emissions. Furthermore, the initiative will also provide training to the enterprises for the implementation of circular economy principles and to promote sustainable production methods.

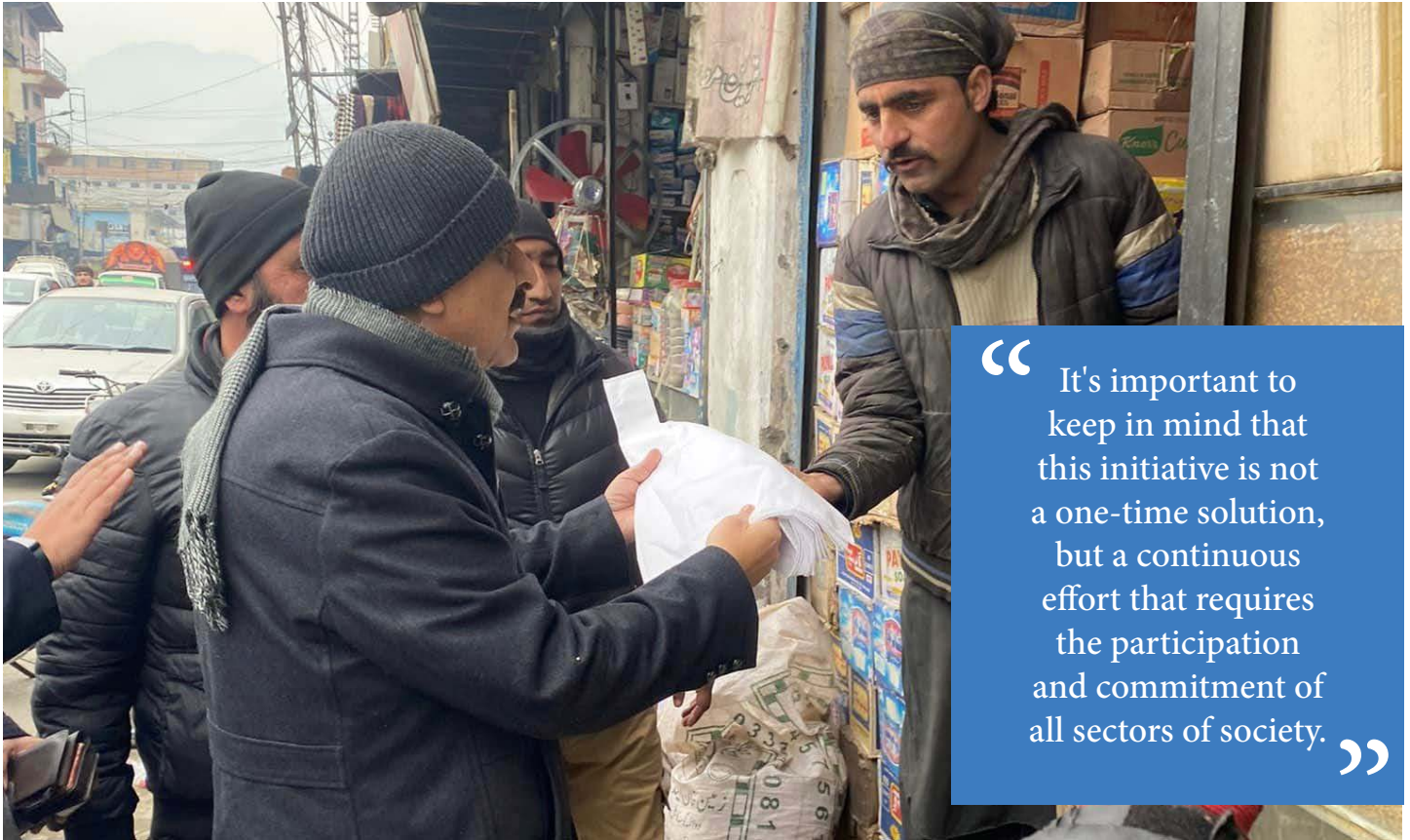
### **Say No to Single-Use Plastics: Switch to Reusable Alternatives**

Plastic bags made from petroleum or natural gas are a major contributor to pollution and take hundreds of years

to degrade. Nonwoven bags, also known as reusable bags, are a sustainable alternative that are biodegradable, compostable, and made from recyclable materials like polypropylene. It is evident from the studies that nonwoven bags consume less energy and materials and release less greenhouse gases (GHG) than other types of shopping bags. Reusable plastics, like water bottles and food storage containers, have a lower impact on the environment than disposable plastics when used responsibly and recycled properly. To minimise the environmental impact of plastics, it's important to reduce single-use plastics and promote reusable alternatives, as well as education on proper disposal and recycling.

**A Circular Economy Approach Towards a Sustainable Gilgit-Baltistan**  
The use of plastic in Gilgit-Baltistan was almost non-existent before the 1990s. Instead, locals relied on traditional materials such as cloth or willow bags. Implementing a plastic ban in the region would have numerous benefits, both economically and environmentally. It would support local businesses by promoting the use of locally-made alternatives such as cloth or paper bags and encourage a circular economy. Additionally, it would save the region an estimated 60 million rupees that would otherwise be spent on importing plastic. The





“ It's important to keep in mind that this initiative is not a one-time solution, but a continuous effort that requires the participation and commitment of all sectors of society. ”

environmental benefits would also be substantial. With an average of .5 million tourists visiting Gilgit-Baltistan each year, if each visitor were to use just three plastic bags, that would amount to 1.5 million plastic bags ending up in the environment. By implementing a plastic ban and promoting eco-friendly alternatives, the local economy would be supported and the region would become more attractive to tourists. The Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is also taking steps to hold multinational companies accountable for plastic pollution and require them to give back to this initiative through Corporate Social Responsibility.

This initiative can prove to boost the concept of a circular economy within an otherwise unsustainable environment. Supported by the fact that the region of Gilgit-Baltistan does not encompass any manufacturing of plastic products, the amount of plastic found within the region is unreasonable. This concept of circular economy can prove to be beneficial for employment purposes across the

region by the adoption of sustainable and environment friendly alternatives. Furthermore, Gilgit-Baltistan receives more than its residential capacity of tourists within the span of a few months each year, thus bringing in a whole new hoard of plastic bags adding to the already humongous numbers. If sustainable solutions are adapted across the region, this issue can be fixed, however, for this to happen the Plastic Ban has to be implemented rigorously.

The circular economy approach promotes reusable materials, closing the loop on the use and disposal of plastic products. This model has been successful in many countries such as France, where a law was passed in 2016 that ban disposable plastic plates, cups, and cutlery. It also put into place an extended producer responsibility, obligating manufacturers to finance the collection and recycling of their products.

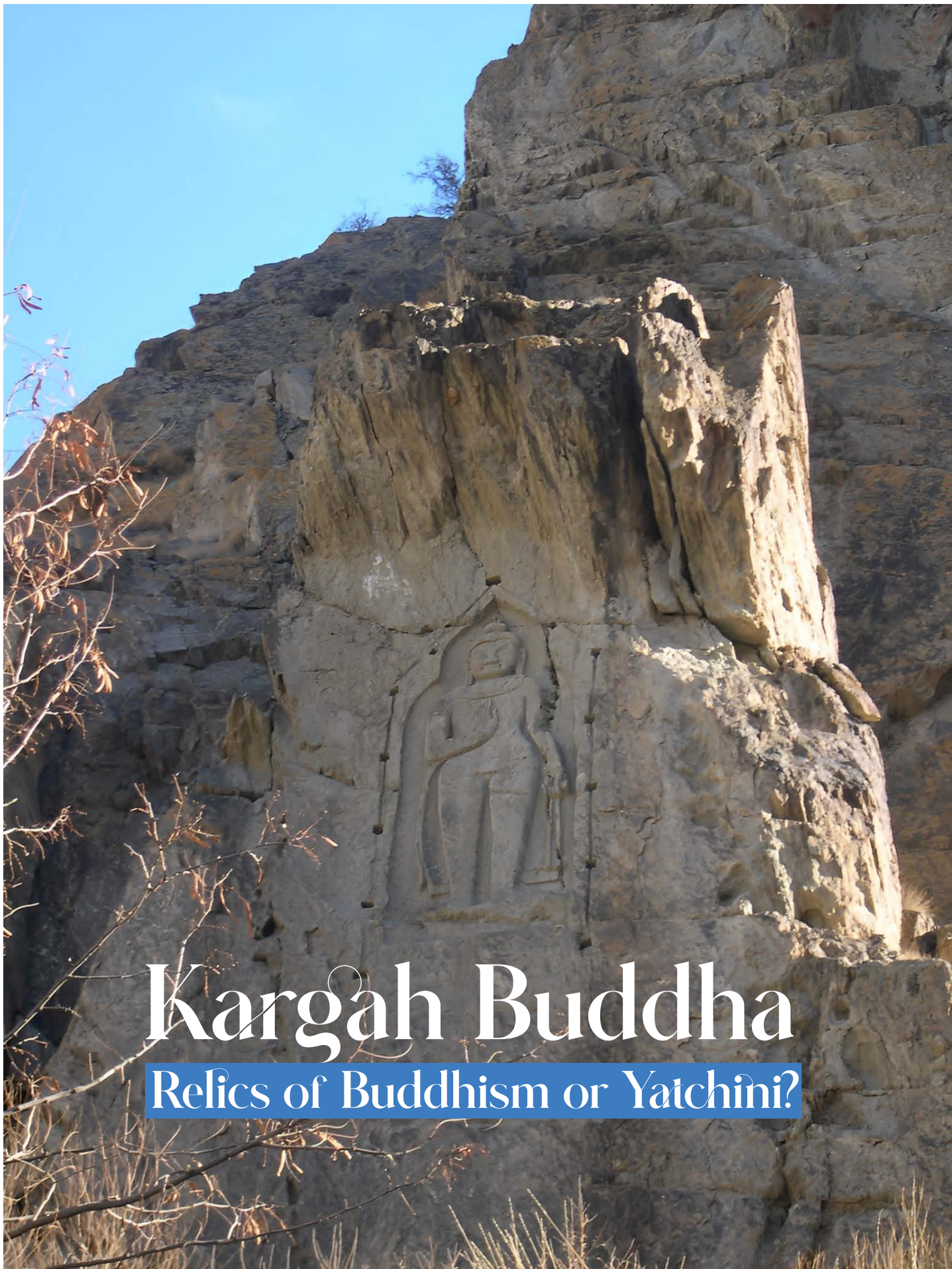
#### Conclusion

But the fight against plastic waste is not just the responsibility of local

businesses. Each and every one of us has a role to play. By choosing to use reusable water bottles, shopping bags, and containers, we can reduce our own plastic waste. Supporting local businesses that use eco-friendly alternative options is also a great way to make a difference. By working together, we can build a cleaner and more sustainable future for Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Green Businesses Development Initiative is an important step towards addressing the plastic waste complexity in Gilgit-Baltistan and addressing the challenges posed by climate change in the region. The initiative is currently in the implementation stage, and with the support of local businesses and the community, it has the potential to make a significant impact on reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable practices. It's important to keep in mind that this initiative is not a one-time solution, but a continuous effort that requires the participation and commitment of all sectors of society. With this initiative in place, we can work towards a greener and





# Kargah Buddha

Relics of Buddhism or Yatchini?



## Sadia Jamil

The writer is a graduate of the Department of Politics and International Studies, Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

A gateway for traders from India, China, and Central Asia during the ancient Silk Routes, Edward Frederick Knight rightly titled his fascinating travelogue “Where Three Empires Meet” referring to the geostrategic importance of this place. A place with more than 50 peaks higher than 7,000 metres, the world’s three longest glaciers, the Baura, Baltoro, and Biafo, as well as a meeting point for the three mightiest mountain ranges in the world—the Karakoram, the Himalaya, and the Hindu Kush. A place with a vast range of habitats and abundant flora and fauna that is home to many different types of animals, including the Ibex, the Markhor, the Snow Leopard, and many other animals. A region that has produced brave people who have made world records with their resilience and heroism like Nazir Sabir, Ali Sadpara, Samina Baig, and Ahsraf Aman. As John Biddulph mentioned in his book ‘Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh’ in the times of immemorial this place was called Sargin, with time another name Gilit became popular among the ancient dwellers of this region. It is pertinent to mention that the Sikh and Dogra vanquishers coined a new name Gilgit by altering the existing name Gilit. Interestingly, the name Sargin-Gilit or Gilit is still popular among the dwellers. He further accentuated the existence of primitive structures in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan. However, this place is known for its vibrant lakes, snow-clad mountains, green-carpeted valleys, and cascading waterfalls, even the inhabitants have a modicum of knowledge about the rich historical and archaeological splendour. Owing to the significance of history Robert Heinlein stated that “A generation which ignores history

has no past and no future”. Given that let’s explore one of the most fascinating historical sites of GB named Kargah Buddha, a statue of Buddha carved on a mountain which is approximately 150 feet from the ground and 9 Kilometres (Km) away from the main city of Gilgit. It is posited that the statue of Buddha has been carved during the 4th century AD. Nonetheless, archaeologists discovered and excavated karagah Buddha during 1938-39. The sculpture of Buddha vividly depicts the message of peace, Buddha’s hand on his chest symbolises harmony, goodwill, and tranquillity. Archaeologists discovered three stupas and a Buddhist monastery which entails Sanskrit manuscripts and chronicles. As per the findings of John Biddulph, Buddhism spread in this region more or less 300 years after the nirvana of Buddha or around about 150BC. Buddhism originated from Hinduism and spread across the world. Historical records have revealed that in the year 563BC a son was born to suddhodana who was given the name Siddhartha. Over the years Siddhartha turned the page of history and became Gautama the Buddha. A young ambitious ruler of the Mauryan Empire Ashoka adopted Buddhism as his religion and proclaimed Buddhism as the official religion of the Subcontinent. Several Stupas and monasteries were erected during the reign of Ashoka, meanwhile, carvings on the colossal rocks also became popular. It was the period of influence of Ashoka when the route between Kashmir and Gilgit opened. Eventually, the region of Gilgit became the religious hub of Buddhism. It was the Silk Route which played a crucial role in spreading Buddhism from India to China, at that

time China was ruled by emperor Ming-Ti, and under the command of the emperor, several envoys were sent for garnering information regarding the origin of Buddhism. In the same vein, several pilgrims and Buddhist monks made their way toward India via the Silk Route for gleaning information from historical annals, chronicles, holy sites, and scriptures of ancient Buddhism. Some studies have demonstrated that pilgrims who were in the search of early sources of Buddhism journeyed through Karakoram and Pamir passes to reach Gandhara. This place is the second holiest place for the followers of Buddhism. Adding on, an erudite archaeologist Sir Aurel Stein highlighted the significance of conducting in-depth research on the ancient roots of the region, he voyaged through unspoiled lush green valleys of Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan whilst his odyssey to Central Asia and China. In the reports of his four voyages, he pinpointed famous ancient sites. He jotted down infinitesimal details about his travel and expedition in the areas of Gilgit, his list encompasses ancient sites such as Kargah Buddha which locates in Gilgit, Stupas in Naupur, Taj Moghul knoll in Jutial, ruined hummocks in Gilgit, and around 20-feet high Stupa in Nagar. It is worth mentioning that he discovered ancient trinkets, engravings, and inscriptions while voyaging through the enthralling parishes of Yasin valley. In the year 1931, he discovered ancient manuscripts in Naupur near the main city of Gilgit. These ancient sites attract a number of Buddhists from diverse parts of the world like Korea and Japan. Particularly, Kargah Buddha has got much credence and attention from the admirers of





Buddhism. On the flip side, there is a legend of Yatchini which is emblazoned on the board at the entrance of the Kargah Buddha site, in the olden days, there lived a fiend woman named the Yatchini, she was accustomed to devouring men who vamoosed to fetch wood, if two men set off for fetching wood she spares one man's life while the other man becomes her meal. Bit by bit, she devoured nearly all the dwellers of the countryside. To save the lives of other men the inhabitants from surrounding areas put forth apt solutions to kill the ogress. They all agreed to seek help from Daiyal Khimito to bind Yatchini. On the request of the dwellers Daiyal Khimito bound the ogress, he told them to entomb him at the foothills of the rock where the ogress was bound. A few decades ago, it was a common practice among women to articulate this folklore to their kids as a lullaby when the kids refuse to sleep. I was taken aback by harkening to this horrible folktale from the natives. To give another specimen of the Yatchini

folklore, DLR Lorimer, a former political agent of the British who was stationed in Gilgit between 1920 AD and 1924, gleaned the oral traditions and penned the Yatchini narrative in his renowned book "Gilgit, Chitral, and Yasin." Though it is quite intricate to agree upon this mythology, viewpoints vary from person-to-person. Folklore is an integral part of portraying historical events that are not recorded in historical annals and traditional stories should be passed down from generation to generation to comprehend history from varied perspectives. Moving forward, as per the stats of the Tourism Department of Gilgit-Baltistan released during 2018-19, marginally over half a million tourists visited Gilgit to travel around Kargah Buddha. The tourism industry significantly contributes to the economy of Gilgit-Baltistan, according to a ballpark estimate nearly around 50% of tourists visit Pakistan to see sighting Gilgit-Baltistan. Given that, the significance of ancient sites and

picturesque places cannot be undermined. Especially, historical sites such as Kargah Buddha needs special attention from the local government particularly, the archaeological department of Gilgit-Baltistan should have to take corrective measures for the restoration and preservation of the aforementioned valuable historical site. The statue of Buddha needs to remain unspoiled and unblemished so that future generations can see the relics of Buddha. To take some palpable actions for the preservation of this archaeological site is the need of the hour; it should be made accessible for residents and tourists. One of the major pitfalls is the security and protection of holy sites of minorities, stringent laws should be enacted to mitigate the security risk for minorities and their sacred places. The site should be repaired and made accessible for both local and foreign tourists by the local administration and community members working together. If not the site seems to disappear into oblivion.



# Evolving Freelance Gravity Nexus in Gilgit-Baltistan, NFTP KIU, Gilgit



**Zia Uddin**

The writer is a student of business management at Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

The world is now deliberately shifting from a typical economy toward a more surging digital economy. The freelance market currently contributes to the world's economy through the direct and indirect inflow of revenue ascertained to uplift subsistence economies and open a new corridor for futuristic work and job paradigms.

Keeping in view this fact, the Ministry of Information and Technology (MoIT) ensued a vision to procure a self-sustainable and self-empowered youth by acquainting them to the new realm of the freelance marketplace that has now exponentially amplified within the country and abroad.

An inclusive National Freelance Training Program (NFTP) was

designed to make that happen. It is operational in all provinces across Pakistan, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, with 20 state-of-the-art centers across the country. It offers youth a great opportunity to unleash and anchor their skills on firm grounds with the help of exceptionally skilled trainers. This would allow a person to enter a new market and sell his work using his newly acquired skills and knowledge. Not only this, but it connects to a global network of freelancers with different skills with miscellaneous customers. Not only amateur freelancers but also students with no skills can benefit and learn various skills from the opportunity. This free-of-cost training program entails 2000 charges at admission and is

completely refundable with 80% attendance.

The main objectives of the program are as follows:

- Reducing Unemployment
- Youth Self-Sustainability
- Create merit-based equal opportunities for all, notwithstanding gender, sect, or religion, especially for underprivileged areas.
- Contribute to increasing the influx of foreign exchange through trained youth working on international platforms.

NFTP provides its students with a three-month training program that includes a variety of elements organized into three distinct domains:

1. **Technical**
- Web development basics



- A brief intro to programming languages
- Introduction to databases
- Theme building and development of websites through WordPress

## 2. Content Marketing and Advertising (Non-Technical)

- Creating engaging and intensive content
  - Digital Marketing
  - Blogging
  - Lead generation and SEO
- ## 3. Creative Design
- Creative logo design
  - Corporate identity kit
  - Adobe Suite

Students of the partner institution and individuals with 14 years of education are eligible to apply for the 3-month program (3 cohorts per year).

National Freelance Training Program, KIU, – fostering creativity, innovation, skills, and entrepreneurship National Freelance Training Program, Gilgit is among the NFTP's 20 state-of-the-art centers in partnership with the Karakoram International University, the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, and the Special Communication Organization (SCO), providing a chance for the students to enable themselves to elevate their financial tier in the current rampant

inflation streaks.

One example of the program's success is Muzaffar Faqir, a student of the Economics Department from KIU who completed his training in the second batch from the National Freelancing and Telecommunication Program (NFTP). Just 8 months ago,



he took the leap and started freelancing. He faced many challenges as a freelancer, but he was determined to succeed. Through hard work and dedication, he quickly established himself as a top-rated freelancer on Upwork, earning \$15,000 till now through his projects, which included working with international clients. But his success didn't stop there, as he also landed a job as a Marketing Manager for a Canadian company. He has completed over 80 projects with international clients, proving that his skills and determination have led to his success. "I am very grateful for the training and opportunities provided

by the NFTP, it has been a stepping stone for my career," he said. This success story highlights the impact of the program on the lives of the students who complete it, providing them with the skills and opportunities needed to succeed in the freelance market.

Moreover, with 155 fresh trainees in the current cohort and 315 graduates, an estimated revenue of \$63,836 USD (Rs 11.8 million) has likely been generated so far. Since its inception, it has triggered the interest of many students to get enrolled and polish their skills. Contrary to other companies, the institution is unique of its kind in many aspects;

- It provides quality and exceptional service and facilities to students at a minimal cost.
  - KIU stands out as the primary beneficiary of the services and protocols.
  - Digitizing and skill enhancement opportunities for the students of KIU
- It is indeed nourishing a more self-reliant youth while also encouraging youth to earn an income to support themselves and their families. A prognosis in terms of fair socio-economic conditions for the entrepreneurial regimen is foreseeable with the current endeavors of the initiative.





# Gilgit-Baltistan, Ladakh and China



**Masud Ahmed Khan**

The writer is a retired brigadier from Gilgit-Baltistan and a defense Analyst.

Ladakh was a British frontier post on the land route to China through the Karakoram Pass. Ladakh was under Wazir Wazarat, who was also responsible for Baltistan and had three tehsils, namely Skardu, Kargil and Ladakh. In winters Wazir Wazarat used to reside in Skardu, Baltistan. Historically, Skardu held a strategic position towards Ladakh (IOK) on one side and the other beyond Karakoram Pass in Yarkand valley in China. The Ladakhi belong to the Mongolian race, mostly of short height and the people of Baltistan are

also of Tibetan origin and differ from the Ladkhi, being taller with different social habits and being Muslims.

At the same time, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan also have close religious, ethnic links with the people of Kargil. The main languages spoken are Shina and Balti, the languages of Gilgit-Baltistan. During the liberation war of 1948, the liberation forces occupied Dras and Kargil and were also knocking the doors of Leh. The areas were re-occupied by the Indian army when liberation forces retreated

“ People of Gilgit-Baltistan have close religious, ethnic links with the people of Kargil. The main languages spoken there are Shina and Balti.



“

The misconception often quoted by some pseudo intellectuals that Karakoram Highway is close by. It is Karakoram Pass which connects Ladakh with China, 8 miles north of Daulat Beg Oldi. Karakoram Highway is almost 300 kilometres west of Daulat Beg Oldi.

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to Olding for regrouping when ceasefire was announced. Today, the Pakistan army has strategic superiority where it threatens the line of communication to Siachen through Kargil.

The Siachen glacier is situated in Baltistan west of Daulat Beg Oldi is of immense significance. India started occupying key peaks in April 1984 in a major airborne operation “Meghdoot”. From the Indian occupation sites, the terrain slopes down to positions held by Pakistan army which leads to major towns in Baltistan. The longest river of Pakistan Indus originates from Manasarovar lake in Tibet, flows through Tibet, Ladakh enters Skardu, flows to Gilgit and to Terbella. Shyok river originates from Rimo glacier and joins Naubra river at Disket flows through Chalunka, Turtuk, Tyakshi and Thang (Pakistani villages occupied in 1971 war) and enters Baltistan at Fraono village. The Shyok

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If India gets hold of Galwan Valley, this will give her access to the Askai Chin plateau through which the Xinjiang-Tibet Highway passes.

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river joins Indus river at Keris short of Skardu.

On March 3, 1963, the China-Pakistan border agreement was signed amicably; contrary to rumours/reports by Indian media that an area from 2000 to 13000 square kilometres was ceded to China is totally unfounded and baseless. The





fact is that Pakistan has not ceded even one square inch of land to China, rather it has gained 750 square miles of territory which was under Chinese control in the area of Shimshal and K2. Article 6 of the agreement envisages its revision after conclusion of the Jammu and Kashmir settlement.

Pakistan did not have any border dispute with China rather we have serious issues with India on the Line of Control (LoC) and the Working Boundary. Similarly, China did not recognise the Johnson Line in Ladakh, but agrees to the Macartney-Macdonald Line, which puts Askai Chin in Chinese territory. China also did not recognise the length of the border with India from 4056 kilometres to 3488 kilometres as claimed by the Indian ministry of defence and the Ambassador to China respectively. According to Chinese officials, the length of border is 2000 kilometres, 1600 kilometres less than what is believed by India's ministry of external affairs. This is the total length of boundary which separates Kashmir from Xinjiang and Tibet which is not recognised by China.

On August 5, 2019 India revoked the special status of Indian Occupied Kashmir by abrogating Article 370 and 35 A of the Indian constitution. India issued a new political map where Azad Kashmir was shown as part of a newly-created union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan and Askai Chin as part of the union territory of Ladakh. With these developments, India has destroyed all the agreements, treaties and boundaries which are now null and void like the Simla agreement, the Line of Control and the Line of Actual

Control.

On May 5, 2020 in a brilliant military manoeuvre, Chinese landed its troops in the Galwan Valley, Pangong Lake area and Nathu La. A bloody military confrontation took place on June 15, 2020 where 23 Indian soldiers were stoned to death without firing a bullet by PLA in the area of patrol point 14 in Galwan River Valley.

According to the PLA, this was the result of a provocative attack launched by the Indian army in the valley. According to PLA, Indian army crossed the LAC and launched a physical attack on them. Galwan River is named after Ghulam Rasul Galwan, the son of a Yarkandi while his mother was Kashmiri from the Galwan tribe who found the source of the Galwan River. The river originates from Askai Chin and joins Shyok river on the road to Daulat Beg Oldi. The significance and importance of Galwan Valley is that control of the ridges (now under Chinese occupation) dominate the newly constructed 255-kilometre road in eastern Ladakh, Sub-Sector North (SSN). At the same time, if India gets

“ The Siachen glacier is situated in Baltistan west of Daulat Beg Oldi is of immense significance.





hold of Galwan Valley, this will give her access to the Askai Chin plateau through which the Xinjiang-Tibet Highway passes. During the recent talks at Corp Commander level a buffer was agreed and created between the LAC and the junction of Shyok and Galwan river where it was agreed that both sides will go back one kilometre each. This was violated by the Indian army by sending a raiding party under Colonel Santosh to capture Chinese post to improve ground posture in the Galwan valley. The Chinese were alert and Indians never expected the response from Chinese who responded with iron rods, batons wrapped in barbed wire and reportedly some soldiers of the 16th Bihar regiment jumped into Galwan River in a desperate attempt to escape. At least 23 soldiers, including the commanding officer were killed and the toll will likely go up. During the 1962 war, 36 Indian soldiers of 5 Jat regiment were killed by PLA in the Galwan area, many were taken prisoner and the post was captured.

These are the worst losses since 1967 when 88 Indian soldiers were killed in Nathu La. According to PLA

spokesperson the sovereignty over the Galwan valley has always belonged to China. China claim line is to the west of Galwan River along the mountain ridges joining Shyok river valley. The capture of Galwan river valley and ridges provides the PLA dominating

“ The Indians are constructing a series of tunnels, roads and railway links to connect Srinagar with Ladakh.

position over looking Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi road which connects Leh with Karakoram Pass. The traffic on the road has been cut at the mercy of PLA. Let me also clear the misconception often quoted by some pseudo intellectuals that Karakoram Highway is close by. It is Karakoram Pass which connects Ladakh with China, 8 miles north of Daulat Beg Oldi. Karakoram Highway is almost 300 kilometres west of Daulat Beg Oldi. At the same time, the Indians are constructing a series of tunnels, roads and railway links to connect Srinagar with Ladakh. These infrastructural developments will facilitate logistic supplies and the shifting of troops to Ladakh against Pakistan and China. The talks at Corps Commanders level have failed without any headway. The recent standoff at Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh is another indication of increasing tensions between the two countries. The Indians are fearing a joint operation by China and Pakistan in Ladakh, Siachen, and Kargil. Any miscalculations by India can lead to a full-fledged war which can be disastrous for India.



# Hydro meteorological Hazards Posing High Risk to Human Settlements and Community School at The Zoodkhun village



## Sadat Bakht

The writer is a native of Zoodkhun village and currently associated with WWF-Pakistan, Gilgit office as internee.

### Introduction of Zoodkhun village

**Z**oodkhun village is the last village of Chuprison valley, situated in Gojal upper Hunza. It starts from Sost and ends at Irshad pass, where it connects Pakistan with Afghanistan and Tajikistan via Wakhan Corridor. Zoodkhun village is located at an elevation of 3,300 meters due to which the climatic conditions of the area are

extremely harsh. The language spoken in Zoodkhun village is wakhi. According to the native people of the area, these wakhi speakers 'migrated from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, China, and the lower part of Hunza. In summer this area has to face some threats in the form of flash floods, which will be highlighted in the latter sections.

Climate change is one of the main environmental hazards that we are facing globally and it has completely altered the ecological and hydrological cycle of Chipurson valley. If we talk about the past few years, no environmental hazard with drastic effect has been observed by the residents of the two villages. But since 2014, unpredictable and vast damaging flash floods are randomly



observed by the residents. We know heavy rainfall with thunderstorms is the core cause behind such bank falls or mudflow. As the stream is the main irrigation source and small channels are constructed in different directions for both villages. About 7 km of irrigation water channel constructed from Yeshkuk river water enters Zoodkhun village, Shitmarg, and Ispang. This 7 km water channel is passed through Zoodkhun Shitmarg Nalla through a pipeline between the two villages. Moreover, there is a plantation and vegetation area on both sides of the Zoodkhun Shitmarg Nalla, if we talk about households there is 87 house in Zoodkhun village. And in Shitmarg village there is 60 household. Then there are about 23 households on the right side of Shitmarg village and about 59 households on the left side. The number of total people who will be affected in Zoodkhun is 358 and in Shitmarg village 140 people will be

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Zoodkhun Nalla is the core pasture for both of the villages; some wild animals and avian species also inhabit the area. like Himalayan Ibex, Snow Leopard, Grey Wolf, lizards, Himalayan Hare, Chakor Partridge, and insects.

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affected because of the flash flood in the area.

Around the Nalla, Zoodkhun and Shitmarg are bisected by a narrow area called Zoodkhun Shitmarg Nalla, which lies on the right side of the valley in between the two mountain peaks. There are small areas within the two peaks locally called Ghor Gose on the left, Shue Sar on the right side, Puzav Goz at the Center, and a rocky area on the top with a snow cap. The two mountain peaks on the top region are covered with a snow cap, but such a snow cap is not permanent throughout the year. It's dense and covers the entire mountain during the winter months (October-March) and during summer (April-September) snowcap persists on the top only. During the months of summer, the rise in temperature causes snow to melt, which is the main source of stream water formation. During winter the temperature is mostly in



@taseerbegy



the minus, leading to ice formation. Zoodkhun Shitmarg Nalla stream is the main source for irrigation purposes for both villages, and almost 60 percent of agricultural practice depends on snow-melted water. Moreover, concerning domestic animals, Zoodkhun Nalla is the core pasture for both villages. Some wild animals and avian species also inhabit the area, like Himalayan Ibex, Snow Leopard, Grey wolf, lizards, Himalayan Hare, Chakor, and insects.

#### **Environmental Damage by Flash Flooding at the Red Zone Area of Zoodkhun Nalla:**

Damages have been caused by flash flooding since 2014, greatly damaging specific areas and manmade constructions every time it occurs. Flash flooding can be more easily predicted than other natural disasters, such as earthquakes, as we can identify the place, time, and causes that lead to it, and also predict its outcome. Aga Khan Agency for

Habitat (AKAH) had previously worked on protective bunds that were completely damaged by the 2020 flash flood and are now working on debris removal from the nullah. The Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) is restoring roads and water channels by developing dozers and excavators. A suspension bridge of 180 feet span is being constructed as an emergency work so that it will not be easily damaged by floods in the future. The bridge is currently under construction and is projected to be completed by April 2023, although work is currently suspended due to extreme weather conditions. The GBDMA has proposed restoring the damaged water channels through the water management department. The most severe destruction caused by flash floods was at Zoodkhun Shitmarg Nalla, where the longest Yeshkuk water channel was located. This channel was essential for irrigation across three villages. The flash flood destroyed the area, making it

“ The major destruction of the flash flood in this area included the main road and bridge connecting the villages to Hazrat Baba Ghundi Mazar, pastures to the northern side, and Sost in lower Gojal to the south. ”

impossible to construct a water channel to connect the villages. The major destruction of the flash flood in this area included the main road and bridge connecting the villages to Hazrat Baba Ghundi Mazar, pastures to the northern side, and Sost in lower Gojal to the south. The same





catastrophic flash flood event occurred on 16th August, from 4:00 pm to midnight, causing similar destruction to the event of 25th July. The ZoodKhun Shitmag Link Road, on the right side of the main road, was also destroyed.

### **A Way Forward**

Natural disasters are unpredictable and sudden events that lead to extensive damage to the land's ecosystem, man-made structures, and biodiversity in the area where they occur. There are many reasons behind them, but we can also implement techniques and methods to minimize such disasters and enable people to protect themselves and their assets against such accidents. This can be achieved through collaboration between the public, NGOs, and the government.

### **Early Warning System:**

Introducing a better flood warning device would give people more time to prepare and take action during flash floods.

### **Awareness about such catastrophic events:**

It is very important to inform individuals about natural disasters and their proper management; this will help the public to take the correct actions and decisions after any such natural disaster.

### **Capacity building on Disaster Risk Management:**

People must be aware of disaster risk management. Local people need to inspire sharing of data, ideas, and training, gaining knowledge of the effects of climate change.

### **Concrete Embankment/Levees:**

To mitigate the effects of flooding, the government or NGOs should start

building concrete embankments or planting trees in the affected areas.

**Shifting of school:** The D.J. High School is close to the red zone, and there is a 100% chance of damage by the flash flood. Therefore, the school should be shifted to a safe place.

**Construction of Suspension Bridge at Zoodkhun Main Road:** The importance of this bridge is that it connects Zoodkhun with other villages; secondly, it is the only route for the Zoodkhun D.J. School students; thirdly, after Zoodkhun, all remaining areas are the only summer pasture for the residents of Chipurson Valley, who visit these pastures daily; and lastly, several families from Lower Gojal and Hunza visit Hazrat Baba Ghundi Mazar, so this bridge is the way to connect the shrine with lower areas. A suspension bridge is the only solution to such a hazard.





# Kafar Kote

## The ruins of primitive clans of Tangir Valley



Jan Azhar

The writer is student of literature.

**T**angir is a valley rich in terms of archeological sites. Among these sites, the most prominent are the relics of ancient population living in mountains. The valley harbored very limited population in the past. People used to live together in the form of hamlets locally termed as Kote (singular). Remnants of a number of such KOTES can be observed at different places in the valley. The pictures attached show remains of the pre-Islamic 'Kote' that now in the

local 'Shina' language is called 'Kafar Kote' or 'Kufaari Kote' which means the Hamlet/abode of The Pagans. Most probably the word kafar/Kufaari is an addition to the actual word KOTE after the population of the valley converted to Islam in 17th century AD, and this very addition vibrantly suggests that these KOTES are very ancient. Timespan passed since they came into existence can be better determined by someone who has expertise in archeology or the one

who is well versed in anthropology but a common observer like me won't hesitate to assume these KOTES to be thousands of years old. Something very interesting and important about these KOTES is to know the hidden reasons behind their location that why those ancient people chose to settle in mountains or on hills instead of making their homes in the planes below. Unfortunately, we don't have any written history to find authentic





information regarding this matter. As for the local oral historians; they in one way or another agree to these three most dominant assumptions:

1- The Pagan tribes most probably Buddhists were barbaric people by nature. They always kept enmity alive with the Parallel tribes. Therefore, they had to reside on hills or in the mountains for security purpose. The location of all these KOTES supports this hypothesis to be true.

2- Although all the individuals living in the valley collectively formed a small population but they being belonged to different tribes or sub tribes didn't prefer to live together at one place rather they lived far apart from each other. Nevertheless they had to gather at one place on marriage, funeral or on other events related to collective cause, after all they were human beings.

They used to call each other to a general gathering by lighting huge fire and producing smoke in large amount. The huge fire at night and high rising smoke in day time could be noticed by other tribes.

This was considered to be a deadly important call to be assembled at the location of the fire and smoke. This was the reason behind their making abodes on high places so that they could easily see the signals from each other.

One can't deny this explanation too, as today standing at any of these KOTES, one can easily see all the other KOTES, if not KOTES, at least rising smoke can easily be observed.

3- The third point that people stick to

is that all the planes in the valley were under water at that time, therefore the ancient people were forced to live in mountains or on mounts. With the passage of time the river became able to unfetter itself from the chains and blocks lying at different intervals across the whole valley. Thus, the plane areas got rid of the long lingered standing water forever.

After observing geography of the Valley and the path of its river and seasonal watercourses, one has to agree to this point as well.

However, it's yet to be dug out the reasons behind their settling down on high altitudes.

For the last few years, local people who deal in antiques have been searching every single inch of these olden KOTES. They have been able in digging out things made of gold, silver; idols, costly beads, necklaces, axe, file, pottery and many other instruments of daily use. Many of these items especially necklaces and beads have been observed lying in graves vertically dug up. Most of the beads found in these graves are partially burnt-out, sometimes with little ash found around. It seems that either these beads had been overworked to the point of exhaustion or the primitive tribes used to burn their dead ones as Hindus do. But one thing is for sure that they weren't Hindus by belief. Different historians are of the view that they were Buddhists or they had some other belief system of their own.

Darel and Tangir may be well named as twin Valleys. In Darel Valley,

remains of Buddhists' worship place or university at Phoguch even today are quite alive. This place is considered to be the hub of Buddhism. People familiar with history say that Buddhist pilgrims from across the world used to visit there.

Keeping this in view, one can opine that the ancient people living in the KOTES of Tangir Valley were also Buddhists.

Decaying walls of this ancient KOTE located near Gali Pine village of Tangir can be clearly seen in the pictures.

Honestly speaking these are very well built, brave and strong KOTES who for thousands of years have been continuously competing with different powerful changes of nature. With regard to not let themselves completely wipe out by mounting ups and downs, they have been victorious to date but now they are facing very cruel creature called human beings who pursuing their unquenchable thirst of gaining more and more wealth have deformed their shape and this is continue. Presumably this creature claiming itself to be the crown of everything that exists will certainly defeat and permanently eliminate these long standing monuments if pragmatic measures not taken to preserve them.

Government of the region and The Department of Archeology must step forward and play their positive role to save these KOTES in whose bosoms buried is the wealth (history) of olden days.



# The Rise of China:

China's Regionalization Process In The  
Context Of Asian Century





## Ashiq Hussain Raki

The author is working as a visiting lecturer at Department of Politics and International Studies at Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

Francis Bacon has rightly remarked in one of his famous essays that China has done great many yeoman services to mankind, like, its main contributions to human civilization are paper, print, deep-sea navigation and gunpowder. These Chinese massive inventions became a decisive factor and breakthrough in revolutionizing and modernizing humanity. Since its inception in 1600 B.C China remains a country of rich history, civilization and was also epicenter of global economic activity. From antiquity China was an economic powerhouse and an increasingly influential global power. After the ouster of colonialist from mainland China and winning the civil war within in 1948 under the great

leadership of Mao Zedong Chinese nation has gone through tremendous political and economic transformations, while on the other hand, the actual Chinese economic

ascendency started after the famous reforms introduced by the then premier of China Deng Xiaoping, who famously stated that, it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, if it catches the mice it is a good one. This principle introduced by premier Deng brought a great transformation in Chinese economy and China once again ensured itself as a major player in global economic arena. Since the end of cold War China is usually considered as an engine of economic growth, however, the most important development of post-Cold War era is the increasing importance of Chinese economic boom at the global and regional levels respectively. China is not only shining on the global economic horizon but it

“ Since its inception in 1600 B.C China remains a country of rich history, civilization and was also epicenter of global economic activity. ”





is also becoming bigger economic players in its neighborhood as well. Arguably, once Napoleon rightly remarked that Let China sleep, for when China wakes, she would shake the world. Presently, China's awakening is reshaping the economic and political setting of the adjacent region and it is pushing her and other neighborhood stakeholders towards a cooperative economic integrated regional zone. Meanwhile, China is working day in and day out for proliferation of its comprehensive economic planning and networks

“ Once Napoleon rightly remarked that Let China sleep, for when China wakes, she would shake the world. ”

throughout the adjacent region and beyond, in the shape of, Pakistan China economic corridor, central corridor, northern corridor, southern corridor, Trans Pacific partnership and Trans Eurasian partnership and much more. Last but not the least China is adhering to the famous proverb “Charity begins at Home” and she is primarily focused on building and developing its neighborhood and adjacent region, while keeping in view its core principle of peaceful rise and Five principles of peaceful coexistence prescribed by the then premier Hu Jintao.

People Republic of China, generally known as the Middle Kingdom, now a day is the locus and focus of global economic activities in general and regional economic activities in particular. China is a great country in terms of its economic potentials and resources, that's why China has many opportunities to attract and mold the behavior of all regional powers. Thus, China would be the harbinger for a peaceful regional integration. China in one sense, we can even say that this country is the jugular vein of Eurasia

“ The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), envisions regional integration as a major goal in this twenty first century. ”

and which is of enormous geo-strategic importance, just because of its central placement and geo-politico-economic potentials. Additionally, China is situated at the junction of Eurasia, Central Asia, South East Asia and South Asia. Besides, being an intersection, since ancient times, China has been strategically instrumental as a transit route which brings forth adjoining and bordering states respectively.

People Republic of China (PRC) commonly known as the Middle



Kingdom has remained at the crossroads of great power politics for the last couple of centuries. However, Geopolitical developments at the turn of the twenty first century and the global shift in power dynamics in the context of the Asian Century has revitalized the geo-political and geo-economic importance of China. The need of the hour is to investigate this resurgent geo-political and geo-economic importance of China in a historical and contemporary perspective. The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), envisions regional integration as a major goal in

this twenty first century. China, a geographical pivot in the Eurasian region, has reemerged as a lynchpin for regional and extra-regional integration. Moreover, China is situated at the junction of Central Asia, South Asia, and South-East Asia through the Chinese ancient silk route and can play a significant role in the attainment of this goal. Besides, being an intersection, since ancient times, China has been strategically instrumental as a transit route, connecting the adjoining and bordering landlocked states of Asia like, Afghanistan, Jammu Kashmir

and Gilgit-Baltistan and Central Asia respectively. Notwithstanding, its geo-political status, the strategic importance of China demands considerable analysis, more importantly because it is located at the intersection of continental crossroads, amongst the three Continents of the globe. With all potentials, China is a vital arena for the consolidation of regional integration, which by extension can dampen the growing animosity amongst the competing regional Asian states.





# Blue Sheep (Pseudois Nayaur)

## Distribution Status And Habitat Assessment in Shimshal Valley



### Hassan Abbas

This article is a part of MS Thesis accomplished by Mr. Hassan Abbas under the supervision of Dr. Shaukat Ali Associate Professor and Chairperson Department of Environmental Sciences, KIU, Gilgit

**P**seudois nayaur (Blue sheep) is native to Asia, and it characterizes as the "Least Known" by IUCN in the world and "Endangered" in Pakistan. This study aims to assess the distribution status and habitat assessment of the specie in Shimshal Valley, District Hunza Gilgit-Baltistan.

A Fixed-Point Direct Count Method has been used to assess the population trend of the species, while the Line Transects and Quadrat method was used to figure out the floral diversity in the habitat range of blue sheep. Blue sheep, commonly known as Naur or Bharal, is a central Asian ungulate

native to Asia. It is a constrained geographical distribution showing unclear phylogeographic and morphological structure variations. Among the most crucial habitat of the blue sheep are the Hindu Kush, Karakoram, and Pamir Landscape. In the IUCN Red List data, the Blue Sheep is placed under the status of "Low Risk/ near threatened". However, in Pakistan, the species is considered Endangered.

The study area was Shimshal valley, located in Tehsil Gojal (Upper Hunza), with the nearest (62 km) town Passu, in District Hunza of Gilgit-Baltistan. The valley is spread

over an approximate size of 3,800 km<sup>2</sup>, having around 2000 inhabitants living in 250 houses. The valley is divided into three different settlements - Aminabad, Center Shimshal, and Khizarabad.

During the field survey, 625 Blue sheep in 24 herds at 13 different locations with a mean group size of 26 animals were sighted in Shimshal valley, district Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The highest number of blue sheep herds were sighted at Maydur Gojarab (7 herds), followed by Ghendez (4 herds), and Shemedor and Arbab Pyrain (2 herds each), while at the other sites, only a





single herd was witnessed. The biggest herd with 103 individual blue sheep was found at Shojerab. In comparison, smaller herds with 5 individual blue sheep were recorded at multiple locations including Maydur, Gojarab, and Ghedenz in the valley.

In the case of blue sheep, all male species are considered Trophy size animals, who fall under the category of Class IV, and their ages range above 8 years with a minimum horn size of 25 inches. In the current study at

“ Trophy hunting is similar to sport hunting that has been practiced for a long time in human history. Wild animals based on their large horns, tusks, or antlers are selected as a trophy animal. A male blue sheep reaching an age of at least 8 years and having horns measuring at least 25 inches is considered a trophy size animal. ”

Shimshal, valley figures show that all the surveyed sites contain at least a single trophy-size animal. Further statistics show 105 (i.e., 16.32 % of total sightings and 41% of the male population) are trophy-size animals. A higher number of trophy-size blue sheep were sighted at Ghedenz and the lowest number was at Shimedor. Assessing for floral diversity ten different flora species from the habitat range of blue sheep were identified which include *Ephedra intermedia*, *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Artemisia maritime*, *Pennisetum flaccidum*, *Salsola nepalensis* Grubov, *Kobressia capillifolia*, *Anaphalis acutifolia*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Chesneya depressa*, *Carex viridula*.

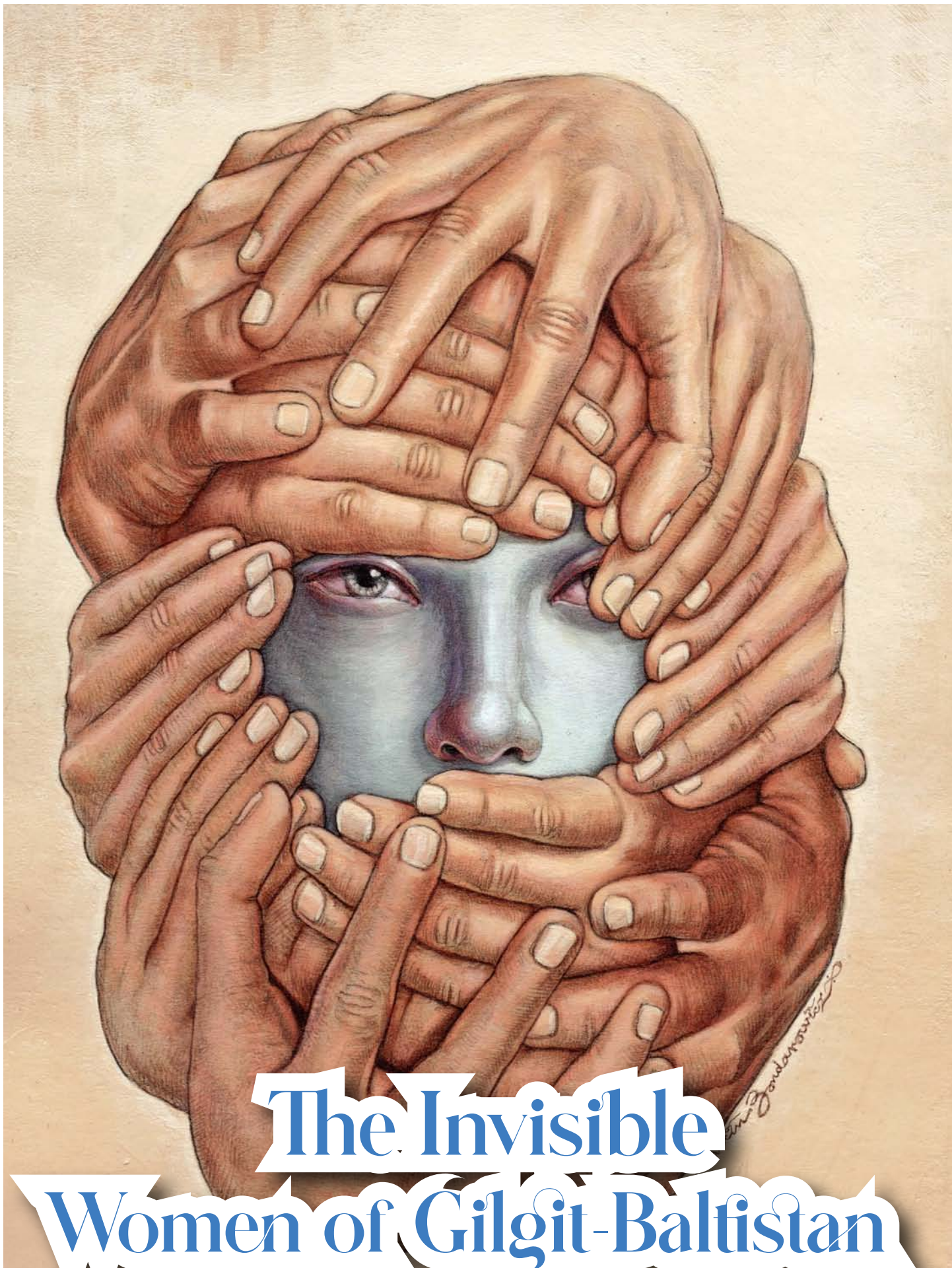
Blue sheep in Shimshal valley are perhaps the westernmost isolated population of sheep in the Himalayas. Moreover, the species is amongst the most preferred prey species for snow leopards. Wild ungulates are among the indicators of habitat quality, of their role in maintaining ecosystems and affecting the diversity of plant species.

#### Suggestions For the Conservation of *Pseudois nayaur*

“ Eighty percent of the revenue that is generated from trophy hunting is shared with the local community of the area, and twenty percent is a government share. ”

For the conservation of this species of ungulate, community-based conservation should be strengthened across its habitat, for this awareness should be raised among the local community regarding the importance of the species towards ecology and also its esthetic value of it. Moreover, the trophy hunting program which is a key conservation tool that is being applied across Gilgit-Baltistan for the conservation and sustainable harvesting of wildlife should be revised in the case of blue sheep on scientific bases.





# The Invisible Women of Gilgit-Baltistan



## Shakira Zainab Sheraliyat

The writer is a student of the Department of Politics and International Studies at Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

“But a story was invisible, infinite, it had no size or shape. Information. It could fill the world or fit inside a fingernail.” (Jennifer Egan)

**W**e live in a world closely weaved into a global village. Anything happening in one part of the world gets to the farthest end of Earth in a matter of seconds. In a world thoroughly interconnected by invisible strands of connectivity, stories related to any gender or field can't be hidden or cloaked from the rest of the world.

But the stories that aren't written due to socio-cultural constraints and for the preservation of status quo cannot be known to the world. The reluctance of the writers in documenting the stories that challenge the social fabric and aim at unshackling the chains of social burdens/hurdles is a dilemma in itself. The amazing stories of Gilgit-Baltistan are yet to be written, documented, published or posted. It is also because the writers like to keep their stories hidden. Let's take these two stories as the lore of some wandering mystique in a far off land. The vile observation Virginia Woolf made in the early twentieth century which said, "For most of history, Anonymous was a woman", still persists in some unfortunate parts of the globe and has been kept alive by keeping the anonymity intact by giving fictitious names to women.

One such story is Ms. Zaiba which has been shrouded in obscurity by society. A short but powerful story with the potential of shaking the roots of society. Ms. Zaiba demanded equal opportunity and rights for all men and women in all fields of life. A woman belonging to a setup where the tribal setup has recently loosened. The shackles haven't been released all in

all. Her ideology about life and society wasn't the same as others which made her an outcast, a social rebel. Being considered a black sheep by her family, Ms. Zaiba was shot dead by her family for bringing shame to her family. Unlike Zaiba, Rehana has kept her story hidden and herself invisible. Rehana is too intelligent to die. She has evaded life threats; and more importantly she has preserved her honor in society. Survival! Survival is so easy; it just demands invisibility. Her struggle was to end her marriage because it had become a routine suffering for her. Rehana was severely punished by her family for her decision and any legal means were denied to her. Her family deemed it dishonorable to help her find peace in ending marriage. Ironically, their honor lay with her perpetual suffering in a toxic relation which consumed her day in, day out. Being a divorcee in a society like ours where marriage is a milestone, an accomplishment is a taboo. Hence, she decided on merely existing and surviving instead of living. “She lost but still alive, the thing about life is always survivability.”

There are thousands of inspiring stories living amongst us. The stories that haven't been revealed to the world. Every woman is living a struggle of her own. Stories that can have a lasting impact on society. An inspirational story which challenges the vile and hypocritical standards of the society are considered dangerous to story makers and the very fabric of society as well; whereas, invisibility, so secure. Fortunately, that's not always the case. Many stories have happy endings too. For instance, people like Zaib Un Nissa also exist in society. Let's read the story of Zaib Nissa. Hailing

from a far off village of GB, Nissa's story is no less than a tragedy but too normal to become a story. Yet, like every story, it needs a writer too. They remain alive decades after when people die.

Zaib Un Nissa is a woman deprived of formal education, a housewife and a mother of three daughters. Her husband is a labour providing them with his hard-earned income. Nissa a patient and hard working wife, does her household chores, works hard in farms, helps her husband to sell vegetables, fruits and poultry. Like a thrifty housewife, she saves money like a magician. Nissa educated both her eldest daughters before marrying them off so that they can live a better life than she had, a life of safety and security. Nissa is in her 50's now. Hers is a story in the making.. Her youngest is still studying and aspiring for a high post. Home, farms, animals, husband, families of daughters. Ms. Nissa's story may sound ordinary but it is an inspiring story still going on and a lot more than what words can do justice to.

These seemingly unexceptional stories need readers to analyze and see the unexceptional in them. They are ready to change, critically condemn cultural taboos, and appease religious patriarchy. The society today has ripened and matured enough to welcome young women in leadership roles. These invisible protagonists and gradual change makers need to be lauded and talked about in society. The readers and encouragers will now steer the story genre. In this case, the readers are the guide; and the writer, the needy.

Are you ready to read a new story?



# The Sinking Titanic





## Zarina Baig

The writer is a climate change activist, and enrolled in the M.Phil. Program in environmental sciences at Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

It was happening while many of them considered it a joke. “Captain! Several compartments are replete with water enough to get us all drowned”, reported the second in command of the captain. “If not now then, none of us is going to make it. It’s now or never since we have no time left”, pleaded the second in command to Captain.

The captain was now well aware of a life threatening event that was set to take everyone’s life. He mustered up his courage to beat the fate right in his face and geared up to save hundreds of lives on board oblivious of all that awaiting them. They were not destined to meet a tragedy on end yet they had to pay the price for someone else’s mistake and prognostication of a

pleasant odyssey that belittled the odds, more or less overestimating the

“As Churchill puts it, “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” ”

potential of a newly man-made ship. 1912 marked the sinking of the mighty Titanic that killed many a number of passengers on board with a handful of them surviving to pass down the oral history of such a hair erecting tragedy. History witnesses this devastating tragedy leaving clues behind for those who must learn from it.

Today, even those nations fail to understand the lessons that past holds for human beings. As Churchill puts it, “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

This is fairly understandable for the third world nations yet quite unfortunate for the highly developed





nations. They are setting examples parallel of the Captain of Titanic who kept going while overrating his ship without taking into account the mysteries that the vast stretches of the

mighty ocean had in store for testing the grandiosity of this human invention.

Being Pollyanna amidst chaos is nonetheless a blessing yet overconfidence devours the destiny. Such was the fate of Titanic whose shipwreck lays on the benthic zone of a vast ocean housing aquatic organisms while lamenting its fleeting grandiosity in the past.

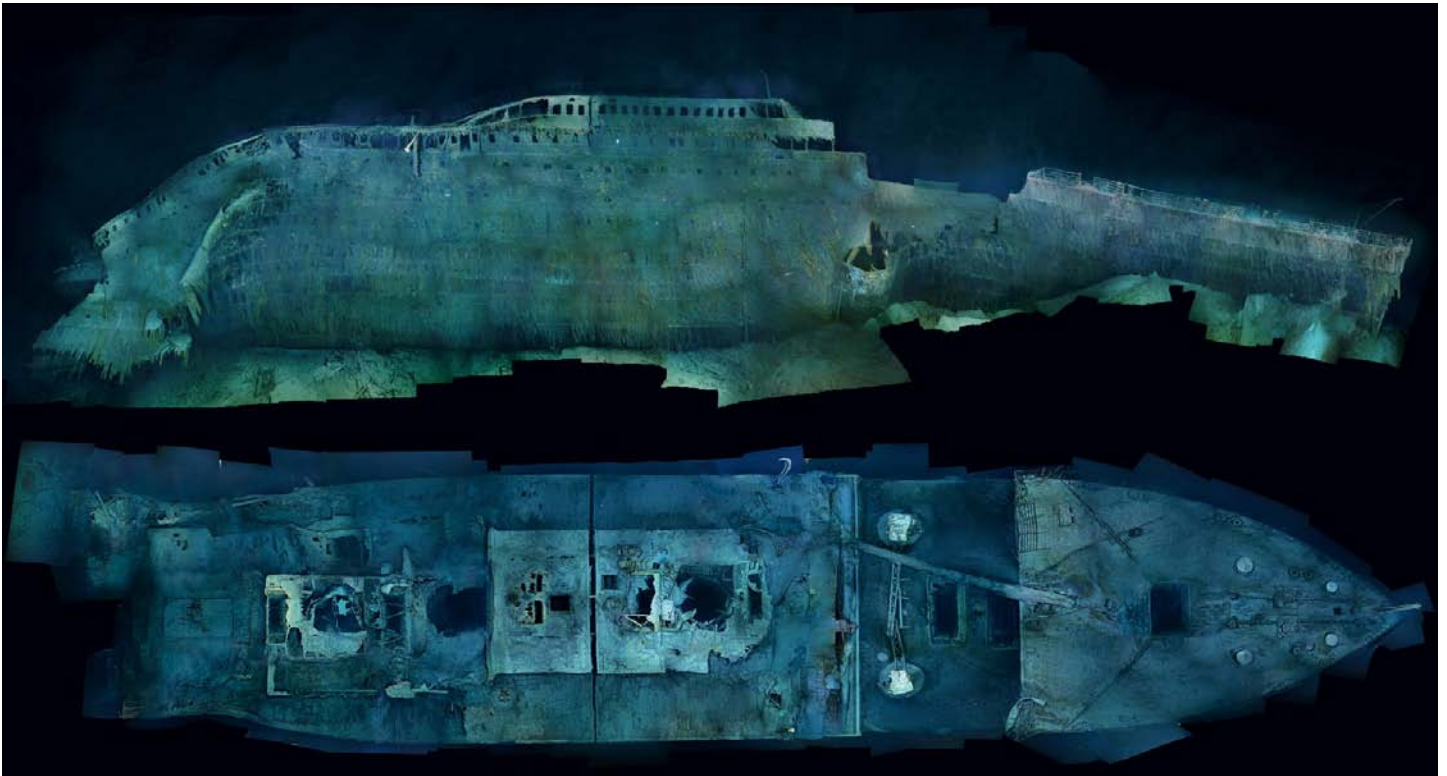
Today, less than a half of compartments have been flooded while the ship is again being set to sink gradually with the only difference that it is not a real ship this time but our beautiful planet Earth. Half of Pakistan is underwater, India has just started getting submerged whereas the countries outside Subcontinent fortunate of not having monsoon yet equally unlucky to be influenced by the climate change, are oblivious of a similar fate awaiting them. The fact remains that if you are a passenger of this ship then you are destined to witness the shipwreck hitting the iceberg which is climate change in this case.

Climate change has started taking toll in the form of floods and various disasters as such. Pakistan and India being little compartments have been filled motioning to other countries (compartments) to avoid inundation beforehand so that the sinking planet could be saved. Pakistan is swarming with millions of climate change refugees also known as flood affected victims having no food and shelter while pleading for the mercy of developed nations to inject relief funds.

Sure! It must since Pakistan is paying for the mistakes of the developed nations for its contribution to the GHGs (Greenhouse gasses) emissions doesn't amount to even 1% while the main contributors to Climate Change like USA did not agree to Kyoto Protocol. Pakistan and other third world countries could not really rehabilitate the victims without the mercy of developed nations yet injecting funds or establishing climate change funds could not do it alone. Climate change is the iceberg that planet has already hit while unlucky compartments like Pakistan and India

“ Pakistan is swarming with millions of climate change refugees also known as flood affected victims having no food and shelter while pleading for the mercy of developed nations to inject relief funds. ”





“ Climate change needs to be addressed now or we won't be able to make it ever. It is now or never. It is not addressed with funds only for nature does not need money to be healed. It needs collective efforts to undo the reversible mistakes while trying to mitigate the impacts of the irreparable and irreversible mistakes. ”

have been filled doesn't mean that it is not going to reach the other compartments (countries). The very same fate awaits rest of the countries. Climate change, if not considered now, will devour all the countries leading to the sinking of planet just like the mighty Titanic, in its own waters. Hence, turning a deaf ear to this grave issue will consequently lead to the destruction of us all. For the captain of the ship overrated the grandiosity of ship and got all drowned thus, developed nations must not repeat the same mistake to get doomed overestimating their adaptive capacity based on their resources since floods, wildfires, GLOFs and many other disasters as such do not discriminate whether the part of Earth in which they are likely going to happen, is in a third world country or in a developed country. Disasters hit the poor and rich all alike.

Climate change needs to be addressed now or we won't be able to make it ever. It is now or never. It is not addressed with funds only for nature does not need money to be healed. It needs collective efforts to undo the

reversible mistakes while trying to mitigate the impacts of the irreparable and irreversible mistakes. Before the planet sinks, countries must fairly work to the well being of the planet rather than counting to the Individual interests and gains for individual interests will never lead to the survival of even a handful of human beings to pass down the oral history whereas, the well being of the planet will drain the water out of compartments back into the waters. It means the glaciers need to be saved from melting, the temperatures need to be brought down while sweltering hot planet needs to be cooled down. This is only possible if all the individuals, all the regions, all the countries on the planet join hands in hands. Only then the beautiful planet could survive. Weighing the wrath of nature with money will only result in devastation for planet is mourning to the pain that humans have inflicted upon it. We have to heal the planet and lessen its pain by contributing to its wellbeing. Only then this ship could be saved from a shipwreck.



# Potential of Gilgit-Baltistan's Gemstone Industry





## Rahat Ali

The writer is lab Supervisor in Mining Engineering Department, KIU and student of MS Geology at Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

Given the abundance of mineral treasures and other—few discovered and mostly untapped—natural resources in their gigantic mountains and unique terrain, it would not be an exaggeration to call the region of Gilgit-Baltistan a 'jewel in Pakistan's crown'.

The Gilgit-Baltistan region, despite being a resource-rich region with an ample amount of minerals and precious stones like marble, gemstones, and numerous other minerals, cannot attain a complete economic dividend due to its remoteness from Pakistan's center and southern commercial market.

Gemstones of GB found in its various locations, especially areas like Skardu, Haramosh, Nagar, and Hunza, are of



export quality and world renowned. Unfortunately, GB's comprehensive information on its supply of mineral

data has not been available lately. Notwithstanding this, an overview is provided in this report.

GB's topography is immensely mountainous, making it a suitable region for mineral wealth. This is substantiated by the fact that the world's second-highest mountain, K2, is located in GB.

As a field geologist, I have attempted to gather some information regarding this that I consider an onus to share with you all. GB is a region that has territorial and geographical importance on the world map for both its diversified culture and distinctive landscape. It is a region where the confluence of the world's three





renowned mountain ranges—the Himalayas, Hindu Kush, and Karakoram—meet.

Topographically, GB is one of the richest regions of the world in terms of natural resources. This is corroborated by the fact that many of its places have been designated as containing gold deposits. Among other resources, metallic and non-metallic metals, precious and semi-precious gemstones of high quality and high monetary value are found in an ample amount here.

The Map of Pakistan for gemstones and jewelry resources covers regions of GB and AJK as well as some adjoining areas of KPK. The Skardu Division includes Shiger, Israel, Tormiq, Kashmal, Bashu, and Saltoro, that are well-known for producing gemstones. Whereas, Yasin and Gupis Valley are known as potential gemstone-founding areas of District Ghizer in Gilgit Division. Likewise, Hunza, Nagar, and parts of the Diamer Division have constantly attracted investors and businessmen in the stone industry. The Pakistan

Gems Corporation was set up to develop this industry, however, due to its poor management and function, it could not bear the desired fruit. Although some other businesses and organizations are operating in this field, Pakistan Gems and Jewelry Development Company (PGJDC) also could not properly harvest and utilize its fullest potential to gain mileage.

It is heartening that recently, the local government of GB has taken some positive steps to attract foreign traders to the gemstone industry. It has organized two-day events in both Baltistan and Gilgit Divisions pertaining to various gemstones. This was followed by an exhibition in Centaurus Mall Islamabad to draw attention and raise awareness about GB's rich mineral resources worldwide. Similarly, the opening of the Gemstone Market on Riverview Road beside the twin bridges in City Gilgit is another laudable effort to promote GB's mineral resources. People of GB are looking towards developed countries like Great Britain with an eye of hope that those

countries would take more steps to help promote and develop this local industry of GB and its betterment of this sector with even more generosity. Speaker GB Assembly, Secretary Mines, and Minerals GB and Director Mines and Minerals visited and observed different gemstone stalls and exhibitions recently organized across GB. Such exhibitions are largely contributing to the development of this sector.

Once, Karachi was the biggest market for gemstones. But now, the shift is towards Peshawer in KPK. Also, PGJDC has been established in major cities like Karachi, Peshawer, Lahore, Quetta, and Muzaffarabad along with Gilgit. The major purpose of PGJDC is to promote gemstone trade in the country. PGJDC asides, other private labs are also available for gemstones identification and testing.

Some areas of KPK which are rich in economic trade gems include FATA, Swat, Dir, Kohistan, Mohmand Agency, Bajaur Agency, Khyber Agency, and North and South Waziristan.







S.No	Gemstones	Mining Area
01	Aquamarine, topaz , Tourmaline, Apatite, Sphene, morganite and quartz	Skardu, shigar, shengus, stak nala and tormik nala
02	Apatite, zoisite,rutile quartz, epidote and morganite	Shigar dist.
03	Aquamarine, emerald, color tourmaline, apatite, morganite, topaz and quartz	Kashmal and yuno (Shigar Area)
04	Topaz, aquamarine tourmaline, morganite, rare earth minerals, apatite quartz and emerald	Dassu, tahirabad Hyderabad, gyungo (Shigar area Bln)
05	Tourmaline, garnet, aquamarine , Diopside, ruby pargasite,emerald, topaz, amethyst, scheelite and quartz	Baraldu, bashu, and karma (Shigar dist.)
06	Aquamarine, amethyst, and fine golden rutile quartz	Khapolo, Saltoro near siachen glacier (district Guanche Baltistan)
07	Topaz,aquamarine,pollucite,rutile,spinel,pargasite and ruby	Hunza, Nagir and Shiger-

# From Incubation to Innovation: THE SUCCESS STORY OF IDEO METRIX

ideate - design - develop



## Sara Alam

The writer is a former student of Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

Starting and growing a successful business is a challenging but incredibly rewarding endeavor. IdeoMetriX, a company founded in December 2020 by Mohsin Amir and Muhammad Iqbal, is a shining example of how entrepreneurship can drive economic growth and make a positive impact on the community.

IdeoMetriX's journey to success began at the SCO Incubation Centre in Gilgit, where the NIC has created an entrepreneurial ecosystem that provides access to fast internet, workspaces, and uninterrupted power

supply, all essential for starting and growing businesses. The company was able to take advantage of government-funded programs such as the National Freelance training Program and E-Rozgar Program by the Government of Gilgit Baltistan, which helped to provide the necessary resources and infrastructure to get the company off the ground and grow.

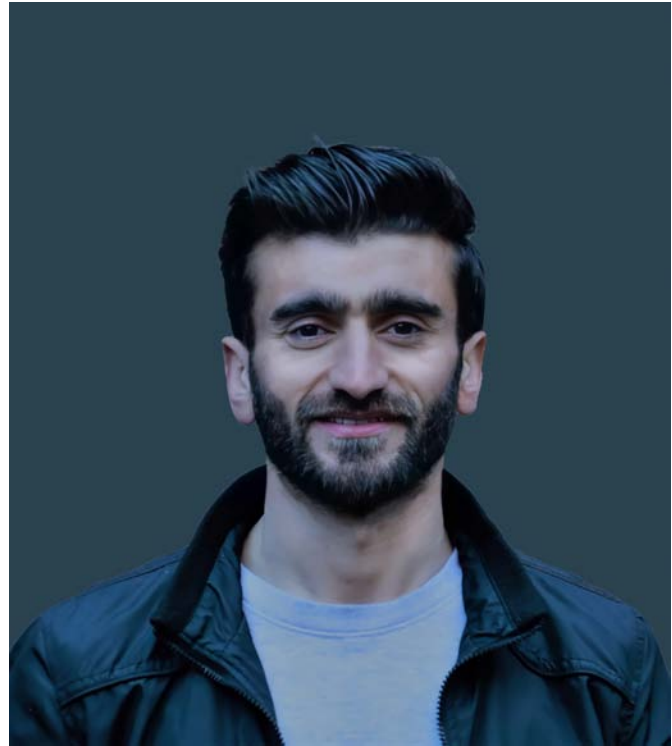
In just two years, IdeoMetriX has been able to create job opportunities for over 50 individuals, with 50% of them being women, creating a gender-inclusive work environment.

This emphasis on diversity and inclusion is not just limited to gender, but also includes creating an atmosphere where all individual ideas are heard and respected, which is essential for a successful and creative work environment. They have completed more than 500 projects, launched their own training program and trained over 200 students in just a year, provided internships under its talent growth program to 25 individuals, showing a deep commitment to supporting the community.





Mohsin Amir - CEO & Co-Founder



Muhammad Iqbal- COO & Co-Founder



Additionally, the company is also launching two of their own products this year, demonstrating their focus on innovation and forward-thinking. One is DigiHunar a distance learning platform aimed to provide Youth in Gilgit Baltistan access to advance skill development trainings and freelancing and the other is Hotela a creative and client oriented solution for Hotel Management and Bookings. IdeoMetriX in collaboration with the Technoknowledge is also introducing coding and Robotics enabled IT curriculum for early ages from grade 1 to 8th to enhance the critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and coding capabilities at younger ages. Under the project the team has trained more than 150 Tech fellows of Government Schools.

IdeoMetriX's success is not just a result of hard work and dedication, but also a result of their focus on client-oriented and human-centric

design. By understanding the needs of their clients and designing solutions that meet those needs in a user-friendly and intuitive way, the company has been able to establish a reputation for providing high-quality services. Additionally, their approach to design also emphasizes the importance of empathy and understanding the human experience, which has helped them to create designs that are not only functional but also emotionally resonant.

The company's commitment to innovation is also a key factor in their success. By continuously pushing the boundaries of what is possible and experimenting with new technologies and techniques, IdeoMetriX has been able to stay ahead of the curve and offer services that are truly unique. Their development of in-house products is a great example of this. The company culture is also a significant contributor to their

success, by fostering a work environment that encourages creativity, collaboration, and continuous learning, the company has been able to attract and retain top talent, and has built a team of individuals who are passionate about their work and dedication to achieving the company's goals.

The success of IdeoMetriX serves as a powerful motivator for other entrepreneurs, highlighting the potential of government-private sector collaboration in promoting entrepreneurship and economic development. It's a reminder that with a clear vision, willingness to take risks, and a commitment to hard work, anything is possible. Entrepreneurship is a powerful tool for creating positive change, and the success of companies like IdeoMetriX is a testament to the impact that one person, or a group of people, can make in the world.



# From KIU to PAS The Inspiring Story of Shaista Jabeen Munawar





Shaista Jabeen Munawar, a recent alumna of Karakoram International University (KIU) in Gilgit, Pakistan, has achieved a significant accomplishment by qualifying for the Civil Superior Services (CSS) and

opportunities for personal growth, making her more confident, wise, and better equipped to face the challenges of life.

Munawar's story is not only an

“ The university administration, including the Vice Chancellor and Director of Public Relations, have congratulated Munawar on her achievement and praised her hard work, dedication, and the quality of education she received at KIU. ”



earning a spot in the prestigious Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) group. Munawar graduated from KIU in 2018 with a gold medal in MSc Economics, and she attributes much of her success to the education and opportunities she received at the university.

According to Munawar, KIU played a critical role in her success. The institute provided her with all the necessary academic insights on economics that were invaluable when preparing for the CSS exam. Furthermore, the university offered

inspiration for those who are aspiring to clear CSS, but it also highlights the importance of education, particularly higher education, in shaping an individual's career and personal growth.

She has shared some tips and tricks with readers of The Karakoram magazine to help CSS aspirants from Gilgit-Baltistan crack the Civil Services Examination (CSS). Munawar emphasises the importance of reading newspapers as a critical step for every CSS aspirant. Additionally, she advises candidates to

familiarise themselves with major international and national events taking place around the world, and to develop a deep understanding of world geography and history, including major events

Munawar also stresses the importance of patience, consistency, discipline, and determination in the long, arduous journey of preparing for CSS. She encourages candidates to stay focused and motivated, as the rewards of passing the exam are significant. The university administration, including the Vice Chancellor and Director of Public Relations, have congratulated Munawar on her achievement and praised her hard work, dedication, and the quality of education she received at KIU. Her success serves as an inspiration to current and future students of the university and all those who aspire to qualify for CSS.



# Pak-China Cultural Ties China Study Centre (中国研究中心) KIU







## Dr. Khalid Mehmood Alam

The writer is Assistant Professor at China Study Centre, Karakoram International University, Gilgit.

The China Study Centre (CSC) at Karakoram International University (KIU) is funded by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Government of Pakistan, which frames the core objectives to value the foreseeable consequences of the establishment of this centre with special reference to the benefits that will achieve from creating a social space, which facilitates to study and research on diverse arts, culture, history and polity of China, GB-Pakistan and surrounding mountainous region. Hence, there is a deep understanding that the study or promotion of culture, history, society, and polity is a shared objective of the proposed China Study Centre at KIU and other partner institutions.

The establishment of the centre aims to provide a base to learn not only Chinese society, but a window of opportunity to take advantage of this platform via developing research collaborations in Xinjiang and mainland China. These collaborations are key to conduct research with high relevance to G-B. As mentioned above, historically the G-B (Pakistan) and Xinjiang (China) offer much in common to share, which includes languages, heritage sites, oral and documented traditions, religious traditions, socio-political and economic pacts, ethnography mapping of mountain communities, cultural diplomacy, etc. The commonalities of these wide range areas are significantly important to consider as an opportunity for collaboration between KIU, Chinese Universities and beyond.

### 1. Mid-Autumn Festival

The China Study Centre (CSC) at Karakoram International University celebrated a Mid-Autumn Festival on September 12, 2022. The main objective of the event was to acquaint the participants about importance of Mid-Autumn festival and enhancing cultural exchange between the two friendly countries. Mooncakes are the specialty food for Mid-Autumn Festival. Their round shape and sweet flavor

symbolize completeness and sweetness. At the Mid-Autumn Festival, people eat mooncakes together with family, or present mooncakes to relatives and friends, to express their love and best wishes. An interesting video was also shown to the participants to highlight the significance of the Mid-Autumn Festival and how people celebrate it in China. Specially prepared mooncakes, first time introduced in Gilgit-Baltistan, were presented to all the participants and guests and they liked the delicious mooncakes.

This event has been generously supported by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan. We are deeply grateful to their ongoing support and cooperation with China Study Centre – Karakoram International University.

### 2. Tribute to Chinese Teachers of Confucius Institute at Pak-China Border

The China Study Centre (CSC) at Karakoram International University paid tribute to the martyred teachers of Confucius Institute Karachi at Pak-China border, Khunjerab Pass on September 23, 2022. The main objective of this event was to pay tribute to teaches of Confucius institute, where three Chinese teachers Prof. Huang Guiping, Ding Mufang and Chen Sai were killed in suicide terrorist attack on April 26, 2022, at University of Karachi.

The worthy Vice-Chancellor Engr. Professor Dr. Atta Ullah Shah led a delegation consisting of students and faculty from China Study Centre (CSC) and KIU Hunza Campus on the Pak-China border in Khunjerab Pass. The Vice-Chancellor expressed his sincere condolences to the Chinese people, condemned this terrorist attack, and paid tribute to the teachers who died in the incident. He further added that “The three martyred teachers were messengers of cultural exchange between China and Pakistan”.

The worthy Vice-Chancellor Engr. Professor Dr. Atta Ullah Shah said that Pak-China friendship is higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the Arabian Sea, stronger than steel, and Sweeter than honey and no terrorist force or conspiracy can undermine the great friendship and cooperation between China and Pakistan. The enemies failed in their immoral design to stop teaching activities in Pakistan and in less than a month, teaching and cultural activities are resumed.

This event has been generously supported by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan. We are deeply grateful to their ongoing support and cooperation with China Study Centre – Karakoram International University.

### 3. Chinese National Day Celebration

The China Study Centre (CSC) at Karakoram International University celebrated the Chinese National Day on October 04, 2022. The primary purpose of the event was to educate attendees on the significance of the Chinese National Day Celebrations and to promote cultural interaction between the two friendly nations.

The national anthems of both nations were performed, and then attendees watched an informative movie that discussed the significance of the Chinese National Day and demonstrated how the Chinese National Day is observed in China. Dr. Alexander Wang, Director of the Center for China's Overseas Interests from Shanghai International Studies University participated in the event as special guests.

This event has been generously supported by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan. We are deeply grateful to their ongoing support and cooperation with China Study Centre – Karakoram International University.



# Romanticism in Gilgit: Past and Present



## Zameer Abbas

The author is an alumnus of Institute of Development Studies, UK. He is currently associated with the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan and tweets @zameer\_abbas21

Cinema goes in Pakistan nostalgically look back at what's called the Vintage Era of Pak cinema starting from early fifties till the end of 1990s. Pakistan film industry watchers maintain that the Lollywood studios in Lahore and Karachi produced epoch-making blockbusters in that golden period. Arif Waqar, a veteran Pakistani journalist associated with BBC Urdu did a series named "Lollywood aaj or Kal" (Lollywood present and past), archived at the BBC Urdu's website(www.bbc Urdu.com). He has chronologically analysed the glorious times of Lollywood. The fact that Pakistani films could vie with Indian movies at the box office (when

Pakistani cinemas could parallelly show Indian movies before being disallowed in 1965) is a testament to the once-flourishing film industry. Starting with General Zia's islamisation/censorship project, the film industry experienced a steady slump from which it's still struggling to come out.

Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) in those thriving years of Pakistani film industry had a vibrant cinema culture. In Gilgit, the headquarters of the region, three cinema halls were located within a radius of less than 10 Kms. The cinemas screened two to three shows daily to jam-packed viewers. On Eid days, long queues

could be seen outside the box office. The cinema halls have now given way to commercial plazas.

Side by side with the cinema, Gilgit an upsurge in composition of Shina songs and audio dramas which covering a gamut of social and cultural issues. These were aired weekly from the newly established Radio Pakistan Gilgit. In a way, Radio Pakistan Gilgit was to the local artistes what was PTV to the stalwarts in Pakistani drama and music industry for decades when it came to grooming of their artistic skills.

Shina is the lingua franca of G-B spoken by roughly 60-70% population



of around 2 million people. The poets/lyricists in late 1980s and 1990s made singers out of many ordinary men and a few women too. However, what made the artists stand out from their counterparts in the rest of the country was that a majority of them wrote, composed and sang their own kalam or poetic lyrics. In a way, the period of late 1980s and 1990s can be called the era of Romanticism in Gilgit, resembling the shifting of literary interest towards fine arts in 18th and 19th Century Europe. Like Europe, the overriding theme of the poetry of the time centered around the melancholy of a heart-broken lover's travails. Some artists used sarcasm to criticize the government's public service delivery in hospitals and provision of electricity.

One might wonder as to what exactly caused the growth of art in Shina music and poetry in that time? It is, indeed, astonishing how an area perched in the mountains could get affected by a booming film industry in the main land Pakistan with whom it shared little or no cohesion in terms of culture, tradition, identity and social values except that the partition had banded the region (by its own choice) to the newly formed country of Pakistan. Perhaps the ideas found it easy to penetrate in the region after the construction of Karakoram

Highway (1968-79). However, to say that introduction of the audio-visual media of radio, TV and Pakistani movies didn't impact the cultural expression in G-B would be an understatement.

While the opening up of the mountainous region brought about an interface of ethos with the mainland, it encouraged the growth of Shina music and drama. The influence of mainland milieu is evident from the fact many singers sang about "Nizam e Mustafa" of General Zia's era while others shunned singing altogether and started reciting Naat and Hamd. A case in point was the famous singer Neemat Wali (just like the late Junaid Jamshed of the now defunct Pak music band Vital Signs who abandoned singing after Maulana Tariq Jameel preached him). Mr Neemat Wali reportedly requested Radio Pakistan Gilgit to stop broadcasting his oeuvre of songs as he had undergone a change of heart about singing and music terming them haraam (against Islamic law). Some singers of that vibrant era of Shina music and poetry are Jan Ali, Abdul Khaliq Taj, Amin Zia, Neemat Wali, Salahuddin Hasrat, Iqbal Parvana, Bahram Khan Shad, Aurangezeb Alamgir, Nazeem Dia, Sayyan Chodhary, Naseem Shaedai, Khadim Hussain, Aqil Khan etc.

To capture the mood of that time a few verses are translated from Shina.

1) Iqbal Parvana: Thai mohbatai khayalur gay school ga phat thiganus (Lost in the reveries of your love, I have dropped out of school)

2) Neemat Wali: Jake khair any donater Thai gamer laeejin maat (Nothing good came out of my wailing in your love's grief)

3) Jan Ali: Jagot mootu dhudh khaeray mat cha thainay powder gini (You serve other guests with yogurt while present me merely tea made of powder) { In GB "mootu Dhudh" or Yogurt was considered healthier and socially more valuable than the powdered milk sold in the market }

4) Salahuddin Hasrat: Aasmanai taares maat khojainen, aye gitay daizi yaad tharainen (stars of the sky question me and remind me about the bygone days)

5) Aurangezeb Alamgir: Na thay o Yar zalimi razaali zabaaner (don't be a cruel to me in sweet words)

6) Salahuddin: Ispitaal Hin Ispitaal sirf nomai ispitaal (The hospital exists for only the name (it doesn't provide any services))

The sample lyrics here above paint the picture of an era when air waves of Radio Pakistan Gilgit and the audio cassette recordings in music centres of Gilgit resounded with these popular lyrics. How and why such themes gave



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The sample lyrics here above paint the picture of an era when air waves of Radio Pakistan Gilgit and the audio cassette recordings in music centres of Gilgit resounded with these popular lyrics. How and why such themes gave way to Islamism (and sectarianism) is a moot question beyond the scope of this article.

However, a revival of sorts can be observed in the poetic and musical landscape of G-B. It is partly brought about by social media and partly because the region seems wary of the hatred and division centered around sect, ethnicity and language. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and music-hosting sites such as SoundCloud, Audio Boom, Mix Cloud and YouTube share and transmit the songs recorded in remote regions of G-B to the national and international diaspora. These transnational viewers/listeners feel more attached to their mother land

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once they are out of it for jobs and education. On these sites a search with words like "Shina songs" gives results of songs and playlists in hundreds.

As times change, the old guard of poets and singers is being replaced by a new group of singers, poets and musicians who prefer to blend the modern music and instruments e.g. harmonium, piano and other mixers with the traditional musical instruments of G-B like Dadang (Drum), Sorunai (Flute) and Daamal (a local drumbeat) etc. Modern Shina singers, if they can be called so, include Jabir Khan, Sher Khan, Majeed Ahmer, Salman Paras, Sajjad ur Rehman, Iftikhar ud din, Imtiaz Shehki, Mubarak Ali Sawan etc. Pleasantly enough, some female singers have sung duets. Perhaps the difference between the old and new guard is that the latter legion of poets and singers focus mainly on romantic or regionalistic themes unlike the former who lampooned social issues besides the love lines e.g., the famous album of Salahuddin Hasrat highlighted the service delivery issues at the DHQ Hospital Gilgit, doctors who ran clinics, the members or local election candidates and load shedding during those days. A popular modern poet of Shina, Mr. Zafar Waqar Taj, has penned a couple of lyrics expressing his love for Gilgit, his birthplace as follows:

1) Shina Mai Baash Hin Ma Gileto

hanus (Shina is my mother tongue and I am a Gilgiti)

2) Masaat wala Yar wala bay bone la Tom Giltet bujun (Oh companion let's return to Gilgit) {addressing the diaspora away from their home for education and employment)

3) Mas sochuu raam to Tujh bay mai Giltet ga khosh waan jeel (To be honest, I love Gilgit more because you live here)

The revival of art has been left to either artists or so-called "arts councils" which arrange shows at the behest of the bureaucracy to mark the regional and/or national days. Given the cultural diversity of the region, it is necessary that the government supports the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage. This assumes more importance as the government, both at the national and regional levels, showcases the area to the outside world as a region which is traditionally peaceful with world class natural beauty in terms of mountains, valleys, glaciers and lakes. A government sponsored promotion whereby traditional art is studied (e.g., by opening a cultural Centre in Karakoram International University, Gilgit) thus providing institutional protection could very well keep the forces of division at bay which have earned a bad name for the region by exploiting the sectarian differences among the otherwise closely-knit people.







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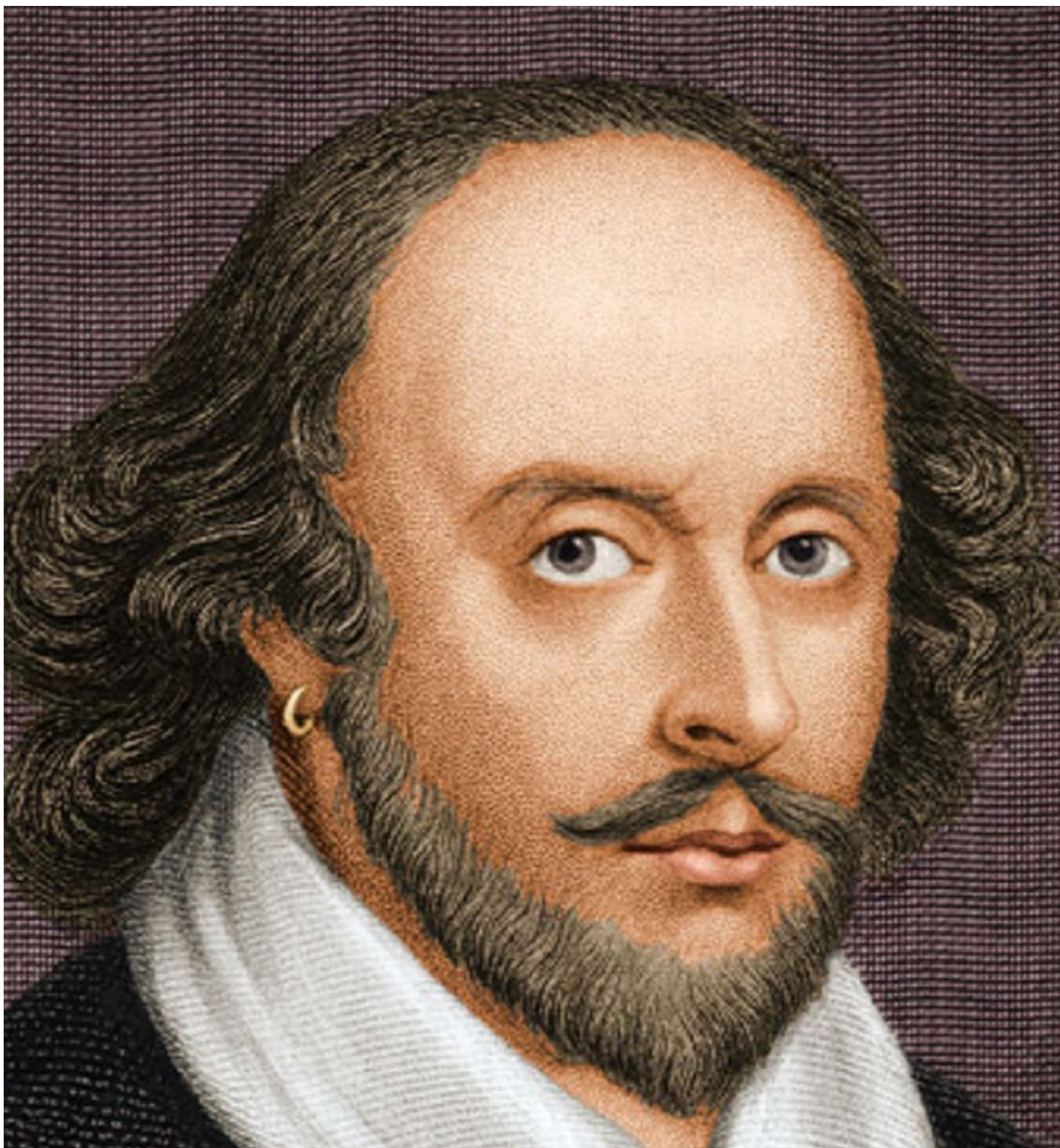
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# No Shakespeare Without Islam





## Syed Ziaullah Shah

The writer is Lecturer at the Department of Linguistics and Literature, Karakoram International University, Gilgit-Baltistan and scholar of PhD English Literature at International Islamic University, Islamabad.

**D**r. Dimmock is professor of Early Modern Studies at the University of Sussex and the author of a number of books on English encounters with Islam. In an article titled Shakespeare and Islam written for the Oxford University Press blog, he claims “without Islam there would be no Shakespeare.” This was surprising or even controversial to those who imagine a ‘national bard’ insulated from the wider world.” The bard of Avon had got the maiden impetus for twittering literature mostly from the Early Modern Anglo-Islamic encounters.

There had been rich and complex engagements of English with Islamic cultures during the Tudor (1485-1603) and Jacobean (1603-1625) England. The literary era of Shakespeare (1585 to 1613-14) when he remained active literary had been during the Elizabethan and Jacobean era. This is very much likely that the first theatre performance that Shakespeare would have watched in London might be Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great*, a Turk play about the Central Asian Muslim warrior. The plays written by William Shakespeare would either not existed at all without the Islamic influence or else would be very different from how they are. “There are around 150 references to Islamic motifs in 21 plays – to Turks and Saracens, to ‘Mahomet’, Morocco and Barbary – and the corpus looks very different. Take away *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*, both of which foreground encounters with Islam, and two of the best known and most frequently performed of the plays are lost.”

Throughout the history plays, for instance, Shakespeare embeds rhetoric of crusade, of fighting for

‘Jesus Christ in glorious Christian field’ against ‘black pagans, Turks, and Saracens’, in order to define typical martial Christian valor and to demonize enemies. Alternatively, the apparently casual references to silks, taffetas, ‘bags of spices’, ‘Turkish tapestry’, and ‘Turkey cushions bossed with pearl’ that litter his drama are intended to signal a particular kind of opulence, but they simultaneously reveal England’s expanding commercial horizons as the material products of Islamic cultures were increasingly brought into English homes.

Such developments were the result of Elizabeth I’s alliances with Morocco and the Ottoman Empire, and Shakespeare need only have looked around the places he lived and worked to encounter Islamic worlds. English moralists were routinely astonished at how the English luxuriated in Muslim fashions like ‘Morisco gowns’, ‘Barbarian sleeves’, and criticized the apparently insatiable appetite of English women for ‘Turkish trifles’ – jewellery, fabrics, trinkets and spices – and the tendency of English men for the infernal Turkish ‘moustachio’. It is hardly surprising that Shakespeare became fascinated and brought them onto the stage.

Jerry Brotton in his book *The Sultan and the Queen: The Untold Story of Elizabeth and Islam* relates how Britain of the Elizabethan Tudor had initiated diplomatic ties to cope with the challenges of her reign. “We think of England as a great power whose empire once stretched from India to the Americas, but when Elizabeth Tudor was crowned Queen, it was just a tiny and rebellious Protestant island on the fringes of Europe, confronting the combined power of the papacy and of Catholic Spain. Broke and

under siege, the young queen sought to build new alliances with the great powers of the Muslim world. She sent an emissary to the Shah of Iran, wooed the king of Morocco, and entered into an unprecedented alliance with the Ottoman Sultan Murad III, with whom she shared a lively correspondence. The Sultan and the Queen tells the riveting and largely unknown story of the traders and adventurers who first went East to seek their fortunes—and reveals how Elizabeth’s fruitful alignment with the Islamic world, financed by England’s first joint stock companies, paved the way for its transformation into a global commercial empire.” Brotton goes to the extent to say that the whole London had “turned Turk” means becoming an Ottoman Muslim.

Although England’s Islamic alliances had brought Muslims and their goods into England, it was the interconnected popularity of what is known as the ‘Turk play’ on the Elizabethan stage that pushed Islam and Islamic cultures to the fore of the English imagination. The caricatures, splendor, and bombast of such plays dominated London’s stages as Shakespeare began to forge a career, and had begun with Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* (1587). Within a few years every playing company in London had its ‘Turk play’.

Shakespeare initially satirized Turks in his plays but then returned to the matter of the ‘Turk play’ in *Othello* (1603). Partly he did so to capitalize on the continuing currency of Islam and Islamic themes in England – a Moroccan embassy had been established in London in 1600-01. An audience is presented with a protagonist from beyond Christendom, a Moorish

warrior-convert, and given expansive Mediterranean geographies across which they expect to see him battle the Turkish foe. At the very least they would have anticipated an enactment of the great siege of Cyprus (conquered by the Ottomans in 1570). The overwhelming engagement of English literature and England with the eastern warriors has also been due to the legend of Prester John apparently. He was a legendary Christian king who lost amid the pagans and Muslim in the Orient. The Christian world had the hope that he

shall revive Christian rule upon returning. For that reason, whenever any warrior appeared from the east and troubled the enemies of the British Empire or European Christendom at large was taken for Prester John. This list of martial included Indian warriors; Mongols; Persian kings and central Asian war hero Tamburlaine the Great beside others. Everyone was taken for the savior John of the Christianity rising from the east.

To summarize, Shakespeare had travelled seventy miles to reach

London from Stratford and by 1592 he had well established himself as an actor and as a dramatist to make a living. The contemporary trends of the theatre appealing to the audience were well into his knowledge. He found content and created such literary pieces of drama that earned him fame no one else could earn. The references to Islam in 21 out of 37 dramas that he had written speaks in volume that how much he was influenced by Islam. He thus owes a lot to Islam and Islamic culture for his literary genius







# Harmonising Sectarian Cacophonies



## Abid Ali Baig

The writer holds an MA in Education (Muslim Societies and Civilisations) and a Master of Teaching from University College London. He can be reached at [baigabid786@gmail.com](mailto:baigabid786@gmail.com)

Sectarian discord has become a real challenge in many parts of Pakistan including in Gilgit-Baltistan. In fact, Gilgit-Baltistan, resided by several Muslim communities of faith, has been susceptible to sectarian conflicts for last many decades. In this regard, among other factors, religious education is generally seen as responsible for social divides along sectarian identities. Therefore, it necessitates an effective educational response through some curricular and pedagogical transformations pertaining to teaching about Islam.

The purpose of religious education, as Andrew Wright precisely proposes in *Religious Education in the Secondary Schools: Prospects for Religious Literacy*, is to produce 'religiously literate individuals' who demonstrate commitment to their own traditions while respecting fellow citizens' religious worldviews. In Pakistan generally and in Gilgit-Baltistan particularly, religious education offered in public schools or in denominational settings, with a few exceptions, does not seem to serve this essential purpose because of its exclusive bent to the teaching of Islam. In a religiously diverse society, a sectarian approach to religious education may not produce positive results as it tends to generate unsustainable generalisations based on one particular interpretation of Islam. Consequently, the sectarianised religious education appears to promote what is called 'religious illiteracy' among learners who neglect the rich diversity within Islam. More disturbingly, religious illiteracy readily renders itself to condemnation for diversity, intolerance, and violence that cause sectarian polarisation.

In Pakistan, the curricular and pedagogical methods usually incline to present Islam from a particular

theological lens while masking parallel Muslim traditions. For example, the curricula around religious education depict Islam, as Madiha Afzal in her *Pakistan under Siege: Extremism, Society and State* notes, from a narrow theological point of view in an erroneous attempt to create a uniform national identity. Unfortunately, such a content, as Hussein Rashid argues, creates 'a normative Islam against which other Muslims are measured' and results in sectarian controversies. In Gilgit-Baltistan, for example, this kind of a curriculum has created the 'Textbook Controversy' in early 2000 that further harmed a precarious social cohesion in the region. The problem with such curricula about Islam is that they cultivate mutual misunderstandings among students by creating strict binaries of 'true' or 'false' and 'right' or 'wrong'. These problematic binaries morph into sectarian bigotries that eventually disturb sectarian harmony in the society.

In addition to the sectarian curricula, most religious educators, as Javed Ali Khalhoro and Alexander Cromwell maintain in *Teaching Peace and Conflict*, are unable to rise above their personal devotional prejudices and

therefore project an essentialised notion of Islam through their classroom teaching practices. This teacher-centered pedagogy, unlike the student-centered and problem-posing methods, leads to a homogeneous and ahistorical representation of Islam. Here, students are presented a simplified version of Islam by inaccurately equating it with a certain politically dominant narrative. Thus, the existing teaching about Islam serves the purposes of power rather than facilitating a critical engagement with Muslim traditions.

So, the sectarianised religious education forms, according to Tariq Rahman, a rejectionist mind-set among learners who display intolerant, un-critical, and self-righteous attitudes that usually damage interfaith harmony. Therefore, it can be argued that the prevailing religious education about Islam normally engenders religious illiteracy about various Muslim communities among the educated people in the country.

Here, one may inquire: what kind of curricular and pedagogical models towards education about Islam may benefit our societies? In this respect, some scholars of education about religion maintain that it depends on how religious education is conceptualised, developed, and implemented.

In order to promote sectarian harmony, a cultural studies approach suggested by Dianne Moore may be beneficial as it adopts a non-sectarian and multi-disciplinary methodology towards Islam as a civilisation. Unlike the sectarian approach, it emphasises not only the devotional aspects but also covers the socio-political,





economic, artistic, cultural, and intellectual endeavours of Muslim communities historically as well as in the contemporary times. By doing so, the cultural studies approach attempts to present Islam in terms of unity as well as diversity. For example, it highlights the fundamental beliefs that all Muslim communities of interpretation share and situates notions of authority and leadership that mark them distinct from one another.

Historically, Muslim communities have developed some distinctive interpretations around leadership after Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). In this connection, initially two major communities emerged over the succession to the Prophet (PBUH). Gradually, within these main communities, further divisions emerged based on the question of succession and leadership. Hence, Muslims' different understandings of leadership in the post-prophetic age resulted in diverse expressions that informed their respective devotional practices over times. Therefore, education about Islam should reflect these similarities as well as distinctions among Muslim schools of thought to celebrate the

commonalities and to appreciate the differences.

In addition, a cultural studies approach tries to portray Islam as a dynamic religion instead of one frozen in a certain time and place. In contrast to the sectarian approach, it does not remove Islam from the flows of history and human agency. Instead it endeavours to demonstrate that Islam has emerged and evolved in relation to varying socio-political and historical contexts. In this way, Islam can be understood historically, critically, and contextually in order to better situate it in the contemporary times in terms of its diverse expressions.

Furthermore, pedagogically, a cultural studies approach towards teaching of Islam enables students to question, critique, and contextualise religious ideas and institutions in an informed manner. In this process, it strives to nurture historical thinking skills, critical analysis and positive attitudes such as tolerance, appreciation for diversity, and openness for discussion. In the meantime, students are empowered to understand and appreciate diversity as something to be lived with and negotiated

creatively. Thus, instead of masticating prejudices, students should be allowed to process religious perspectives by reflecting upon them from multiple dimensions.

Indeed, promoting religious literacy is one of the effective ways to address the prevailing challenges of sectarian dissonance in our respective contexts. This requires a robust religious education system. In fact, the desired religious literacy can be attained through a pluralistic representation of Islam as a civilisation in conjunction with educators' professional development. These transformative curricular and pedagogical improvements can create favorable learning opportunities that will help learners grow positively as individuals, as members of their communities, of society, and of humanity at large.

Most importantly, in the process of harmonising sectarian cacophony in Gilgit-Baltistan, Karakoram International University can play a central role in terms of conducting research, curriculum development, and designing teacher education pertaining to education about Islam as a faith as well as a civilisation.





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### Proposed Admission Schedule

1- Issuance/acceptance of online Admission Forms.	16th January, 2023
2- Last date for submission of online Admission Form.	10th February, 2023
3- Display of Applicants List for Interviews.	14th February, 2023
4- Interviews/documents verification.	21st to 23rd February, 2023
5- Display of 1st Merit List and Fee Deposit.	28th Feb. to 4th March, 2023
6- Display of 2nd Merit List and Fee Deposit.	9th March, 2023
7- Admission on Reserve Seats.	10th March, 2023 (if required)
8- Display of 3rd Merit List (if required) and Fee Deposit.	13th March, 2023
9- Start of Classes.	13th March, 2023
10- Appeal Cases (if required).	Subject to availability of seats

### Instructions for Admission

- Admission Form can be submitted **only online**. Admission fee of Rs. 1000/- can be paid in any branch of HBL. Bank challan can be generated after submission of application form at [www.kiu.edu.pk](http://www.kiu.edu.pk)
- Candidates are advised to keep on checking the KIU website for the eligibility criteria, date of interview, fee deposit & other updates regarding admissions at Main Campus.
- Candidates with third division in AD/BA/BSc are not eligible to apply for admission.
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