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Sheedi Community of Sindh, Pakistan

A research Thesis to complete M.Sc (Anthropology)

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1	PAGE NO
INTRODUCTION	01
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	01
1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM.....	02
1.3 SHEEDI: AS A COMMUNITY.....	02
1.4 ETYMOLOGY OF SHEEDI.....	03
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	03
1.6 EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS.....	03
1.6.1 ETHNOGRAPHY.....	04
1.6.2 ETHNOMUSICOLOGY.....	04
1.6.3 FOLK	04
1.7 LOCALE.....	05
1.8 METHODOLOGY.....	05
1.8.1 RAPPORT BUILDING.....	06
1.8.2 PARTICIPATION OBSERVATION.....	06
1.8.3 INFORMAL AND UN-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS.....	06
1.8.4 NON PARTICIPATION OBSERVATION.	07
1.8.5 KEY INFORMANTS.....	07
1.8.6 SOCIOECONOMIC CENSUS SURVEY FORM.....	08
1.8.7 PHYSICAL MAPPING.....	08
1.8.8 PHOTOGRAPHY.....	08
1.8.9 TAPE RECORDING.....	08
1.8.10 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION.....	10
1.8.11 INFORMAL GROUP DISCUSSION.....	10
1.8.12 DAILY DIARY.....	10
1.8.13 FIELD NOTES.....	11
1.8.14 JOTTING.....	11
1.8.15 LOG.....	11

1.8.16 CASE STUDY.....	11
1.8.17 SAMPLING	11
1.9 PROBLEM FACED.....	12
1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	12

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 ETHNOGRAPHY.....	14
2.2 ETHNOMUSICOLOGY.....	17
2.3 MUSIC AS PART OF CULTURE.....	21
2.4 SEHARAS (WEDDING) AND CERMONIAL SONGS.....	22
2.5 THE SHEEDIS.....	23

Chapter 3

LOCALE PROFILE	25
3.1 NAME.....	25
3.2 LOCALE.....	25
3.3 HISTORY OF LOCALE.....	25
3.4 TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN.....	26
3.5 PHYSICAL FEATURES.....	28
3.6 CLIMATE.....	28
3.7 FLORA AND FAUNA.....	28
3.7.1 FLORA.....	28
3.7.2 FAUNA.....	29
3.8 AREA BOUNDARY OF LOCALE.....	29
3.9 RIVER INDUS OR PHITO.....	29
3.10 LANGUAGE.....	30
3.11 TRADITIONAL SINGING.....	30
3.12 DRESS PATTERN	30
3.13 HOUSING PATTERN.....	30

3.14 FOOD PATTERN.....	31
3.15 RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.....	31
3.16 RELIGION	32
3.17 VISIT OF SHRINE.....	32
3.18 BASIC AMENITIES OF LIFE.....	32
3.18.1 MEDICAL FACILITIES.....	32
3.18.2 EDUCATION.....	33
3.18.3 TRANSPORT SYSTEM.....	33
3.18.4 ENTERTAINMENT.....	35
3.18.5 ELECTRICITY.....	35
3.18.6 SUI GAS.....	35
3.18.7 WATER SUPPLY DRAINAGE SYSTEM.....	37
3.18.8 POLICE STATION.....	37
3.18.9 GRAVE YARD.....	37
3.18.10 COMMUNICATION	37
3.19 WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS.....	37
3.19.1 SACHAL YOUNG WELL FARE ASSOCIATION.....	37
3.19.2 ALHABASH WELFARE ORGANIZATION.....	38
3.20 THE PEOPLES.....	40
3.20.1 MAJOR CASTES IN THE VILLAGE.....	40
3. 20.1.1 SHEEDI.....	40
3.20.1.2 NIZAMANI.....	41
3.20.1.3 QURESHI	41
3.20.1.4 DARS.	41
3.20.1.5 UNAR.....	41
3.20.6 KOHLI.....	42
3.20.2 OTHER CATES.....	42

Chapter 4

SHEEDI AS A UNIQUE COMMUNITY	43
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	43
4.2 ORAL HISTORY OF SHEEDIS.....	43
4.3 SHEEDI: AS DISTINCT CASTE GROUP.....	44
4.4 SHEEDI: AS FUNCTIONAL CASTE GROUP.....	44
4.5 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SHEEDI COMMUNITY.....	44
4.5.1 KINSHIP.....	44
4.5.2 FAMILY SYSTEM.....	45
4.5.2.1 JOINT FAMILY.....	45
4.5.2.2 NUCLEAR FAMILY.....	46
4.5.3 AUTHORITY STRUCTURE.....	47
4.6 RITUAL OF PASSAGE.....	47
4.6.1 BIRTH.....	47
4.6.2 CIRCUMCISION.....	48
4.6.3 MARRIAGE.....	48
4.6.4 DEATH.....	52
4.7 ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS.....	52
4.7.1 MALE ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS.....	52
4.7.1.1 HARI (FARMERS).....	52
4.7.1.2 DUKANDAR (SHOP KEEPER).....	53
4.7.1.3 BOWERCHI (COOKS).....	53
4.7.1.4 GOVERNMENT JOBS.....	53
4.7.1.5 SEASONAL WORK.....	53
4.7.2 ROLE OF FEMALE IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.....	54
4.7.2.1 SINGING.....	54
4.7.2.2 GOVERNMENT JOBS.....	55
4.7.2.3 WORKING IN HOMES OF WADERAS (LANDLORDS).....	55
4.7.2.4 WORKING IN FIELD.....	55
4.7.2.5 BHART BHARAN (EMBROIDERY).....	56
4.7.2.6 SALE OF SANDHANO (PICKLE).....	56

4.8 CHILD LABOR.....	57
4.9 FOLKLORE	57
4.9.1 THE LEGEND OF SHEEDI MUHAMMAD SADIQUE MUSAFIR.	57
4.9.2 THE LEGEND OF HOSH MUHAMMAD SHEEDI.....	60
4.9.3 THE LEGEND OF KHAMISO KHAN SHEEDI.....	60
4.9.4 THE MYTH OF NASEER SHEEDI.....	60

Chapter 5

WOMENS TRADITIONAL SINGING AND DANCING	61
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	61
5.2 HISTORY OF WOMENS TRADITIONAL SINGINGS.....	61
5.3 INHERIT TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL SINGING.....	63
5.4 CHANGES OF TRADITIONAL SINGING PROFESSION.	63
5.5 TRADITIONAL DANCE.....	64
5.6 SAD (INVITATION).....	65
5.7 KAAJ (GATHERING).....	65
5.8 TADO (MAT).....	65
5.9 SEHARA (CEREMONIAL SONGS).....	65
5.10 GHOR (SHOWERING OF RUPEES).....	66
5.11 SINGING AND DANCING GROUPS.....	67
5.12 SINGING OF SEHARAS ON DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS.....	69
5.13 LASS BELLA SONG.....	69
5.14 USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.....	70
5.14.1 MUGGARMAAN (MASINDO).....	70
5.14.2 CHIER.....	70
5.14.3 TALION.....	71
5.14.4 DHOL.....	71
5.14.5 DAFFLEY (DAFF) AND THAALEE.....	71

Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 73

BIBLIOGRAPHY 77

GLOSSARY 81

APPENDICES

APPENDIX-I SEHARA SUNG BY SHEEDI WOMEN

APPENDIX-II MAP OF THE VILLAGE

APPENDIX-III SOCIO ECONOMIC CENSUS AND SURVEY FORMS

LIST OF TABLES

3.1 HOUSING PATTERN	31
3.2 LITERACY RATE OF SHEEDI COMMUNITY	33
3.3 POPULATION OF SHEEDI COMMUNITY	41
4.1 FAMILY SYSTEM OF SHEEDI COMMUNITY.....	47
4.2 DISTRIBUTION OF MALE ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION	54
4.3 NUMBER OF WOMEN WORKING IN FIELD.....	55
4.4 DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.....	56
5.1 NAMES AND AGES OF YOUNG SINGERS AND DANCERS.....	67
5.2 NAMES AND AGES OF OLD SINGERS AND DANCERS.....	67

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE 1.1 RESEARCHER WITH OLD WOMEN (IMRAAN) IN INFORMAL DISCUSSION.....	09
PLATE 1.2 RESEARCHER WITH KEY INFORMANT (GULZAMAN).....	09
PLATE 3.1 GATE WAY OF DISTRICT TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN	27
PLATE 3.2 ALFTAH CHOCK	27
PLATE 3.3 VIEW OF VERNACULAR SCHOOL.....	34
PLATE 3.4 VIEW OF VILLAGE HOSPITAL.....	34
PLATE 3.5 MASJID SHEEDI PARO AND GATE WAY OF PARO.....	36
PLATE 3.6 SHEEDI DURING KODI KODI TRADITIONAL GAME.....	36
PLATE 3.7 OFFICE OF ALHABASH WELL FARE ASSOCIATION.....	39
PLATE 3.8 HAZRAT BILAL SHEEDI CHOCK.....	39
PLATE 4.1 RELATIVES IN A MARRIAGE CEREMONY GIVE GHOR BY PUTTING MONEY ON THE HEAD OF BRIDE GROOM.....	50
PLATE 4.2 WOMEN'S ARE PERFORMING THE SAWAN (RITUAL) OF LAOUN.....	50
PLATE 4.3 BRIDE FAMILY WOMEN ARE TAKING THE SAEJ (BEDDING) OVER THEIR HEAD TO GROOMS HOUSE.....	51

PLATE 4.4	RELATIVES HAS GIVEN THE DAAJ (DOWRY) TO BRIDE.....	51
PLATE 4.5	WOMEN'S WHILE DIGGING GRASS FROM THE ONION.....	58
PLATE 4.6	YOUNG WOMEN WASHING DISHES IN HOME OF LANDLORD.....	58
PLATE 4.7	CHILDREN'S ARE BATHING THE BUFFALOES.....	59
PLATE 4.8	CHILD TAKING THE FOOD TO HIS FAMILY WORKING IN THE FIELDS.	59
PLATE 5.1	WOMEN'S ARE SINGING WEDDING SEHARAS, WHILE YOUNG MAN (HASHIM) PLAYING DHOL.....	62
PLATE 5.2	JANIB ALI SHEEDI FAMOUS SINGER IN THE COMMUNITY, SINGING IN VILLAGE RAJO NIZAMANI ON EID SHOW.....	62
PLATE 5.3	WOMEN'S ARE SINGING WEDDING SEHARAS.....	68
PLATE 5.4	WOMEN'S SINGING WEDDING SAHRAS WHILE OTHERS IN TRADITIONAL DANCE.....	68
PLATE 5.5	MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS DAFFLY AND CHIER.....	72
PLATE 5.6	MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS DHUL, DAFFLY AND CHIER.....	72

MAPS

MAP # 1 DISTRICT TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN

MAP # 2 GUIDE MAP OF SHEEDI PARO (NEIGHBORHOOD)

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There are two groups of Sheedis found in Pakistan, Arab-originated (*Makranis*) speaking Balochi language that live in Southern Balochistan, while others Africa-originated living in Sindh speak Sindhi language and are called as “*Ghar Java*”. Current study was carried out on the later group. This is an empirical study conducted in Sheedi paro village Rajo Nizamani in District Tando Muhammad Khan. Sheedis are Muslims by religion but they are very different from other ethnic groups in Rajo Nizamani due to their particular historical background.

Sheedis have their own cultural characteristics and can easily be distinguished from the mainstream culture. They have particular belief system and exclusive aesthetic and artistic expressions. Another major peculiarity is their economic mode as they are considered as the descendents of the slaves brought to this area either directly from Africa or indirectly through European invasion. Sheedis as a community are a potential source of anthropological interest due to their traditional way of living and artistic traditions.

The present ethnographic study deals with a Sheedi community living in Sindh and aims to know who the Sheedis are? and what is their culture? It also focuses on women’s traditional singing and dancing among Sheedis and its significance in their culture practices and economy as well. Singing is not just technique to produce beautiful sound but is informed and mediated by rich cultural norms and value system. Traditional singing and dancing is the way to produce and reproduce explicit and implicit cultural codes. Through this study, lot of information about Sheedi community and their cultural patterns can be obtained.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Sheedis as a community are very traditional and they represent the typical features of their culture in different aspects of their daily life. Traditional music and folk dance is the identity of Sheedi women, interest in the folk singing is day-by-day diminishing. This research focuses to find out the history, culture, socio-political and economic organization of Sheedi community in Sindh in general and Rajo Nizamani in particular, and to draw the continuity and change in women's folk singing in Sheedi community.

Five questions are being addressed in this research. First question is about their ritual, norms, customs, second is about the history of Sheedi community and history of women's traditional singing, third is about kinds of ceremonies where traditional songs are sung by the Sheedi women, fourth is about the instruments used during singing traditional songs and the last question is about the significance of dance during singing folk or traditional songs on different ceremonies.

1.3 SHEEDI: AS A COMMUNITY

Academic Dictionary of Anthropology defines the "community" as:

"A group of persons who share a common sense of identity and interact with each another can sustained basis. In a community all persons have social standing. Standing entails the right and responsibility to produce culture in its manifold forms. A person share community with another when the can not disengage from his social relationship with other. A good test for this is if a person can ignore another person's trouble then those who don't share community".

(2005: 53)

Here I have used the word community for Sheedis because they have their own distinct identity, musical recognition, and they live in a shared socio-cultural organization. In Anthropological sense, the term is restricted to mean a local community, generally fairly small scale and often described as a traditional isolated or semi isolated groups, united by a common social and occupational category.

1.4 ETYMOLOGY OF SHEEDI

Sheedi women are traditional singer and dancer in Sindh and their main occupation is singing and the major source of earning is *Ghor* (money earned through traditional singing and dancing). *Ghor* is being taken over from the heads and hands of people to people through dancing or showering over the people. Sheedis are known as singing and dancing occupational caste group in Sindh due to their major profession of singing in different ceremonies. In a way, as folk musician caste group, it is inheritor of music tradition of Sindh over generations.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the main objectives of my research before going into field:

1. To find out the history of Sheedi community in Sindh
2. To record the indigenous customs and values of Sheedis
3. To find out social organization of Sheedis
4. To know the concept of folklore or oral tradition in Sheedi community
5. To find out the history of women traditional singing in Sheedi community
6. To identify the way of women's traditional singing in Sheedi community
7. To describe the occupation of Sheedi women as traditional singers
8. To know the inherited transformation of traditional singing and use of traditional instruments in Sheedi community

1.6 EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS

The basic explanation of all anthropological research is ethnography and the current research is a problem-focused research as well. It is based not only on collection of descriptive ethnographic data about Sheedi community but also emphasizes on women's traditional singing, dancing and inherited transformation of this singing and dancing from generation to generation. Thus, before proceeding any further the following terms needed to be defined.

1.6.1 ETHNOGRAPHY

Whatever we see, observe or get first-hand data while doing fieldwork about society's customary behaviors, beliefs or attitude we describe them according to research objectives. This is why it is also said that ethnography is an art of description of culture.

1.6.2 ETHNOMUSICOLOGY: (study of music with culture)

Ethnomusicology is the study of music in its cultural context and is the main theoretical approach to study music with its relationship to culture, society, history and folk tradition. Ethnomusicology is an integral part of indigenous knowledge system.

Ethno-musicological perspectives are increasingly social, linking the structure and practice of musical performances and styles with music, deep embeddedness in local and trans-local forms of social imagination, activity and experience. So this is a theoretical approach, which applies not only on men but also on women's traditional singing in Sheedi community.

1.6.3 FOLK MUSIC

Folk music is the music of masses, when a layman sings a song he knows nothing about the intervals used in it or about the rhythm structure. Folk music has its own charms even among the illiterate masses, though it does not contain the flavor of language, idioms, similes, imitation sentiments; but it is full of natural simplicity, factual events and touching emotions. Each folk song is the reverie,

the frame of mind in which a man sings, in the words of old songs. Folk songs is the open place of villages, it represent the certain historical events, and have great influence over the making up of custom and manner.

There are two main characters of Sindhi folk (traditional) music, one is called *Wae*, and other is called *Seharas*. The *wae*s, as drawn from the Sindhi word *Dohiro*, as still the Fakirs sing it at the shrines and the *Seharas* are still singing by different ethnic groups in Sindh, Sheedi women are famous in singing *Seharas* and they sing *Seharas* on different ceremonies.

1.7 LOCALE

The locale, which I have selected to conduct research, is Sheedi *paro* in village Rajo Nizamani Taulaka and District of Tando Muhammad Khan.

As my topic is ethnography to document the culture of Sheedi community, so I selected Sheedis of this area because there are very traditional and their women use to sing in different ceremonies on professional basis. There are other communities and castes in the village with which Sheedis have economic and social relationships, so it becomes interesting to study them. Their women are traditional singers and they specially sing on the marriages, so it will be special focus of this study.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

While discussing scientific methodology Russell says:

“Each scientific discipline has developed a set of techniques for gathering and handling data but here is, in general, a single scientific methodology. The method is based on assumption s: (a) that reality “out here”, (b) that direct observation is the way to discover it, and (c) that material explanations for observable phenomena are always sufficient, and that metaphysical explanations are never needed.”

(1994:3)

The aim of methodology lies in seeking answers to questions and finding true and useful information about a particular domain of phenomena in the universe. At many point of time in any discipline there are many techniques and methods available for collecting the required data. I used qualitative as well quantitative methods to collect data.

1.8.1 RAPPORT BUILDING

Going to new community or group to get information from native point of view it is not so easy, especially when the targeted population is the stigmatized groups, who have their own way of living. For my course of data collection the rapport building was major and initial techniques, which I used, going in Sheedi community, through which I become a community member.

1.8.2 PARTICIPATION OBSERVATION:

In the anthropological research participation observation is considered to the most important techniques for data collection. According to the Russell:

“Participant observation involves establishing rapport in new community; learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you show up; and removing yourself every day from cultural immersion so you can intellectualize what you’ve learned, put it into perspective and write about it convincingly”.

(1994:137)

By using this technique I became a part of the community and observed them as being their member. This was direct way for me to get information from them. It helped me in getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with my presence so that I could observe and record information about there lives. I lived according to the native’s customs, participating in the most activities that they perform in their daily routine.

1.8.3 INFORMAL AND UN-STRUCTURED INTERVIES

Conducting formal interviews and asking questions from people is a difficult task. In situations of formal interviewing people or respondents get conscious of their interviewee status. Informal interview method allows questions to be framed in the course of conversation outside a structured format. This is an informal and comparatively less restrictive way of extracting information from the interviewee.

I used this type of interviewing during my research. This method proved very helpful in establishing good rapport with informants and also gathering important relevant information in a systematic manner. This method was used to get in depth information about women's role in decision-making as well as information ceremonies and ritual. This technique provided me information about income related issue and it was also helpful in terms of me getting to know family attitude towards women. In formal discussion, people feel more comfortable to discuss their personal issues.

1.8.4 NON PARTICIPATION OBSERVATION

Non-participation observation is also an important source of data collection. This technique is used not within community when you do your fieldwork but out of the community for knowing the community and their behavior. In the beginning I would sit in the different *Otaks* (place for men's guests). Where the Sheedis community people would come and have tea and I also visited different public places like shops, streets, meeting and chatting with people who are not part of that community but who interact with them.

1.8.5 KEY INFORMANTS

Good informants are people to whom you can talk easily, who understand the information you need, and who are glad to give it to you or get it for you. Key informant is a respectable and trustworthy person who connects a researcher to respondents and provides him with a lot of reliable information. He/she is a person with whom a field researcher has intensive interaction for extensive period of time.

In order to get valid information I selected two people and developed close relationship with them and made them as my key informants. They were persons who had cordial relationship with every one in the community, one of these key informants was a lady who had close relationship with singer and dancer, she is also singer, other is male member he had close relationship with community members as well as out community.

1.8.6 SOCIOECONOMIC CENSUS AND SURVEY FORMS

Census was used to create village profile. It helped me in getting basic information, such as number of singer, dancer, male, female, age, religion, castes, sub caste, occupation of males and females and their source of income and level of income.

1.8.7 PHYSICAL MAPPING

This technique was used to get information about the physical structure of the locale and its surroundings. This technique helped me to locate the main spots where people collected for various purposes. It also allowed me to pin point the residences of members in the community.

1.8.8 PHOTOGRAPHY

This technique is used to create a visual record of any community. For me it was a great task to get their photos. It was usually thought very bad to have photos of females but as time passed I developed intimacy with the natives and won their trust. When I got close to them, they allowed me to take their photos.

1.8.9 TAPE RECORDING

With the use of this technique in short period time a researcher can collect large amount of data. This technique was useful to record songs, which women sing on different ceremonies. These songs help me to know the image of Sheedi

women as singer and dancer in the different ethnic groups as well as among Sheedis. After then these songs, I transferred in the English language.

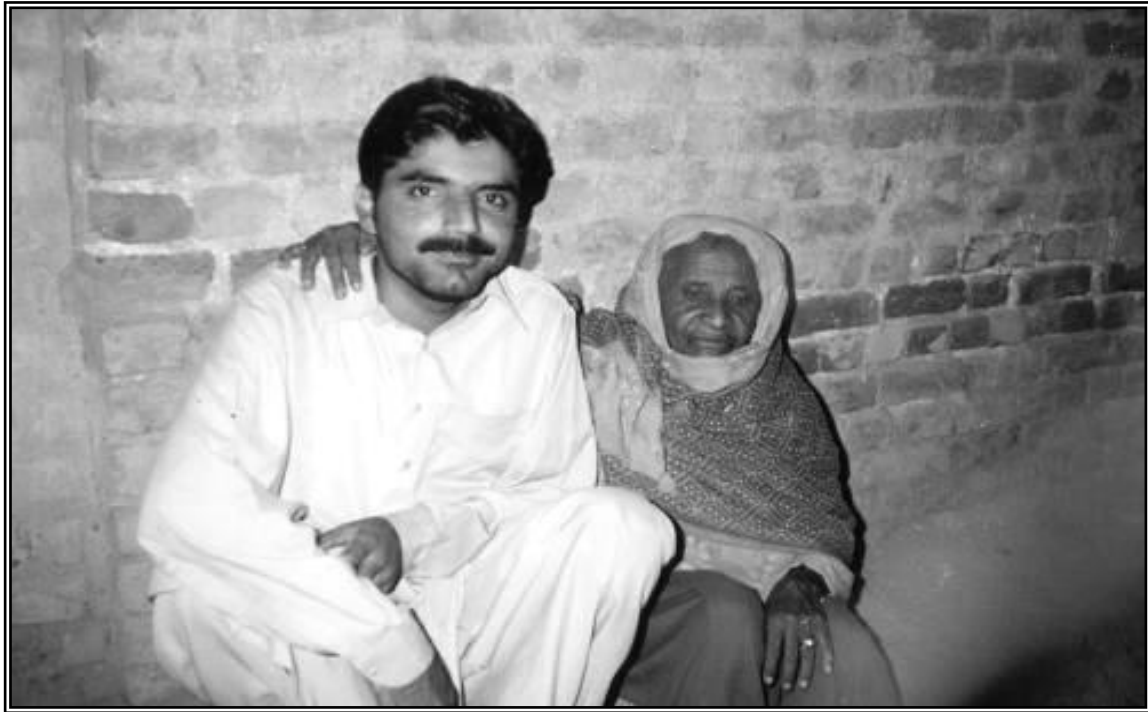


Plate 1.1: Researcher with old women (Imraan) in informal discussion

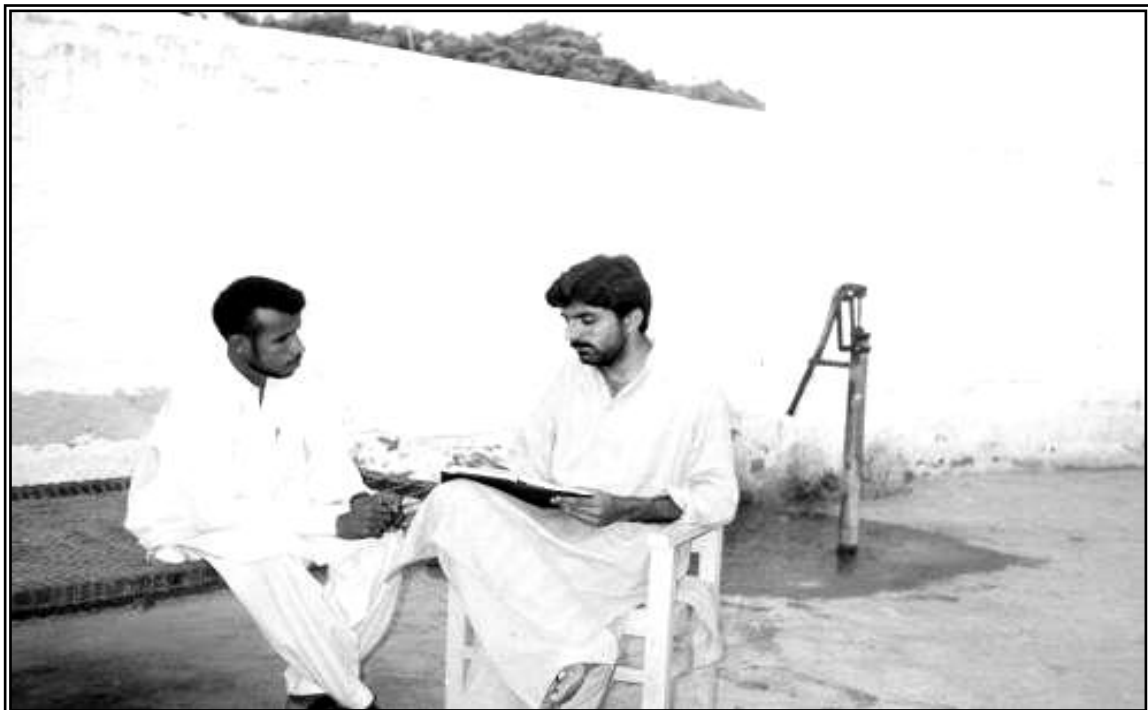


Plate 1.2: Researcher with key informant (Gulazman)

1.8.10 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are very helpful in getting different peoples opinion on selected issues in a time efficient fashion. A Focus Group Discussion is an informal discussion in which usually moderator or facilitator (researcher) interviews a group of 6 (at least) to 12 (at most) people suitable for getting knowledge so that if one member hides or forgets the information the other tells it. The group should be heterogeneous in which the respondents ideally should not know each other.

I conducted three focus group discussions for one and half-hour each approximately, during my field stay. The first focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on oldest male people (above 60 years of age) of the community. Other focus group discussion was conducted with oldest females (above 60 years of age) as well as from middle age (40-50 years old) females of the community, this focus group discussion helped very much about women's traditional singing.

1.8.11 INFORMAL GROUP DISCUSSION

During informal discussions a researcher has not made any format of what to ask and what not to ask. During informal discussions on various occasions I was able to eradicate their suspicious about me. These discussions helped me to gain their trust and cooperation. These discussions are also an important source of data.

1.8.12 DAILY DIARY

Daily diary is effective means of keeping the record of a researcher activity. It is a personal thing and most important is just to have one and to keep it separate. It keeps a researcher to deal with loneliness, fear and other emotions that make

field difficult. During data analysis, diary becomes an important professional document.

1.8.13 FIELD NOTES

For a field worker, field notes are of utmost importance, I used to write my field notes daily and regularly by arranging the data. Whereas field notes serve as a mean to store the daily information, so, we can say that field notes are the core tools of research.

1.8.14 JOTTING

As we know that human memory is a very poor and we cannot remember things for long period. So jotting is a best technique to remember things because these are in written form with us. I kept a not pad with me at all times in the field and, make field jotting on the spot.

1.8.15 LOG

Anthropologist plan to spend his time on the field, it is always you do systematic; you spend one day in the field and made planning for the next day that what will you do tomorrow according to your first day data.

1.8.16 CASE STUDY

Case study method is widely used in anthropological research and is an important source to know the in-depth analysis of community's perceptions about different phenomena. I have done case studies of 4 marriages as sample, two young women to study their life history, three families as sample for knowing their belief, marriage patterns, family history and other customs and traditions.

1.8.17 SAMPLING

Bernard defines sampling as:

“Samples are used to estimate the true values or parameters of statistics in a population and to do so with a calculable probability of errors.”

My target population in this study was Sheedi community in Sheedi *Paro*. After conducting socio-economic census from all the households. Stratified random sampling was used to draw the representative sample of the population. Whole population was divided into two strata were made on the basis of age and gender. Age was further divided into three sub-strata of children, young and olds. From each sub-stratum 16 people were taken as sample by dividing them into two strata of 8 individuals each from either gender, which were another sub-strata. These 48 peoples were thus selected for in-depth interview, and 4 case studies to find out the cultural aspects of Sheedis' life and to collect information about the women traditional singing and dancing.

1.9 PROBLEMS FACED DURING FIELD WORK

Entering in the new community, it is difficult to get the first hand data. So every anthropologist faced some problem. The first day of my research day of my research was so interesting and strange when I visited the field. Every one looking me strangely, asking and whispering different questions, I faced this kind of situation till four days, then after I met with Gulazman. He was educated person and respected person In the Sheedi community. Then I introduced myself that I came for research but most of community members thought that I was journalist and I will print their knowledge and their pictures, so they were afraid from me. I clarified that I was not journalist but a researcher and said to them that I would write about your culture, as you will provide me.

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is very much anthropological that will help to know about the Sheedi community and their culture, and will find the underlying meanings of traditional songs in Sheedi community with reference to their specific cultural context. This will also help to know the social status of women in Sheedi community. The study

will also contribute in to anthropological literature on music by providing a lot of information about the traditional music and dance in Sindh.

As this research describes the life organization of Sheedis and also indicates their problems, therefore, this will help government and other organizations to make policies or launch development programs for Sheedis. By focusing women's singing and dance and their relevant importance in Sheedi community, this study has also become a well worthy note on the gender issues in a traditional community. The political and economic scenario in the Sheedi community is a typical example of a traditional community, so this study will help to understand the root-causes of poverty, illiteracy and other major problems in such a community by suggesting their solutions through native perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the review of literature, I will discuss the ethnography and ethnomusicology. I will also discuss the traditional music of Sheedi women, the historical background of the traditional music and will review the literature about history of traditional music of Sheedi community.

2.1 ETHNOGRAPHY

The ethnographer participates fully in peoples daily lives for an extended period of time watching what happens, listening to what is said and asked questions and collecting data what ever data is available to throw light on the issues with which he is concerned. Encyclopedia of cultural anthropology concludes:

“Ethnography literary means portrait of people. It is a cultural description with regional reference. It refers to a special strategy of anthropological research and to its product. The basic concept of ethnography developed out of stress on field. Knowledge of humanity rests on the description of various life ways and that field work is an indispensable element in the education of cultural anthropologist and in the collection of basic information upon which other conclusions are based field work is the process of observing and participating in the life ways of people and the result are reported as ethnography.”

(Hunter 1976: 147)

Above definition of ethnography indicates that ethnography is about recording the culture of people as they indicate it. While looking at the distinctiveness of terms of ethnographic research and monograph what the ethnography is, Macmillan dictionary of anthropology defines it as:

“This term (ethnography) is used with two distinct senses: that of ethnographic research (fieldwork) and that of an ethnographic monograph (ethnographic

writing). As a category of anthropological research, ethnography is characterized by the first hand study of a small community or ethnic group. Such studies combine to varying degree descriptive and analytical elements, the central characteristics of conventional ethnographic are that they focus on one specific culture or society and consider the theoretical or comparative generalizations from the stand point of ethnographic example.”

(Seymour-Smith 1986: 98)

Regarding the strategy of ethnography David L. Sills in international Encyclopedia of social sciences rightly says:

“The ethnographer tries not only to rely upon published outlines and questionnaires, he shuns interviews with informants carried out in artificial setting, and he avoids premature quantification and over differentiated measurement. Initially at least flexibility, curiosity, patience and experimentation with many alternative devices and procedures are desirable.”

(1975: 175)

Frake and Goodenough in Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology writes:

“Ideally ethnography constitutes the rule for producing anticipating and interpreting appropriate culture behavior in given setting”.

(1996: 17)

Ethnography, Geertz says,

“ Ethnography interprets the flow of social discourse and fixed it as a historical document”

(International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, 1979: 419)

As for Felix M. Keesing is concerned, he regards

“Ethnography as description of customs or specific culture that is local way of life”
(1958:5)

Haults words here that has defined it in a very layman’s term:

“Ethnography is descriptive study of particular societies, usually those that are non literate and underdeveloped in technological sense.”
(A Modern Dictionary of Sociology: 135)

Russell says:

“Ethnographic field work is foundation of cultural anthropology.”
(1994: 136)

Spradely describe ethnography as that:

“As most professional writers will affirm, the only way to learn to write is to write. In the same way that learning to swim cannot occur during classroom lectures on swimming, discussions of principles and strategies to follow in writing do not take us very far in learning to write. It is best to observe other swimmers, get in the water yourself and paddle around, and then have own experienced swimmer point out ways to improve your breathing and stroke.”
(1979: 204)

Tylor characterized ethnography as:

“Anthropologist up to that time as being so concerned with constructing unitary system to explain the cultures internally or their development through time that they spent much of their effort classifying ethnographic observations into typologies and abstract definition of types and sub types.”
(1969: 418)

In the book of ethnography principles in practice Pelto said as:

“Even in anthropology, where ethnography has always been the staple research method, a similar, if milder, tendency, to the establishment of distinct research traditions can be found”

(1978:10)

History of anthropology reveals that initially it was based on ethnographic account of different cultures and societies, which were exotic and intrigued the Europeans. Franz Boas first articulated the central place of ethnography and its major tenants in United States Bronislaw Malinowski did the same Britain. Malinowski established a widely, quoted and read example of ethnography in his writing about his two years of field work in Trobriand Island which he commenced in 1915. Malinowski advocated that anthropologist must spend long time in one place and remain in close contact with people. Every day life details should be collected through minute detailed observation and should grasp native’s point of view (Malinowski 1915).

2.2 ETHNOMUSICOLOGY:

The beginnings of ethnomusicology are usually traced back to the 1880s, and 1890s, when studies were initiated primarily in Germany and in the United States. Early in this development there appeared a dual division of emphasis that has remained through history of the field.

Encyclopedia of international social science (1976.p: 562) defines the two polar positions definitions “ethnomusicology” are most frequently enunciated. The first is embodied in such statement as “ethnomusicology is the total study of non western music,” and the second in “ethnomusicology is the study of music in culture”. The first derives from a supposition that ethnomusicology should concern itself with certain geographical areas of the world; those hold this point of view tend to treat the music structurally. The second stresses music in its

cultural context, no matter in what geographical area of the world and is concerned with music as human behavior and the function of music in human society and culture. Consequently, its emphasis on musical structure is not as great, although it does use objective techniques of detailing a musical style to effectuate comparison between song bodies and to attack problems of diffusion acculturation, and culture history.

This emphasis on ethnomusicology concerns the description and analysis of technical aspects of musical structure. In early writings this aim tended to be coupled with attempts to use the concept of social evolution to establish basic laws of the development of music structure through time. Particular attention was also directed toward the problem of the ultimate origin of music and later, with the rise of kulturkreis theories and particularly in connection with the study of musical instruments; detailed reconstruction of music diffusion from supposed basic geographical centers were attempted.

The second emphasis in ethnomusicology was directed toward the study of music in ethnologic context, and research in this area was influenced by American anthropology. As a result, extreme theories of evolution and diffusion were strongly discounted.

While reviewing the literature about this term, Mcleod says:

“Relationship between musical and linguistic approaches to culture would be crucial to a future of more rigorously contextualized ethnographic descriptions of musical behavior.”

(1994: 25)

Meyer describes the relationship of melody and rhythm as:

“Music has tendency, it seems to be headed some where. This is evident in the function of the tonic as resting point to which melody returns. Expectations are

set up according to the various systems of melody and rhythm (dance pattern). Emotions and a sense of meaning are created by the way these expectations are teased out and finally satisfied.”

(1956:826)

Meeriam defines the history of ethnomusicology as:

“In the history of ethnomusicology we have given undue importance and stress to musical sounds as things in them. That is, we have taken the sounds produced by any particular group of people as a phenomenon made up of inter-related parts, which behave according to certain principles and regularities inherent in them. We have looked at musical sound as a structural system i.e. in static synchronous terms, and we tended to make our analysis with out reference to the human behavior out of which the sound system arises.”

(1936:211)

According to Burckhardt Qureshi:

“Ethnomusicology is the study of music in culture, its basic assumption is that it is a system of sound communication with a culturally determined meaning. In order to understand the both forms and the meaning of any musical tradition ethnomusicologists propose to study it from two perspectives. One is the sound system itself; the other is socio cultural context of music.”

(1998:47)

Spencer defines the relation of music dance and participants as:

“Through music and dance, participants endow certain events with powerful affects. Such emotions can mobilize a group to action or keep them from acting, can create solidarity or dissension”

(1985. P: 697)

Burrows characterized the music as:

“The domestication of sound has enabled humans to dominate the planet by the manipulation of sound symbols. This expansion of contingency and provisionality beyond the here and now has a centrifugal effect on the self; there is much that can go wrong. Music, being no symbolic and non-referential, eases the strain. It creates a sense of undifferentiated awareness (the mystical experience) that has healing power.”

(1990:826)

In the Mestizo populations of central and South America Friedel described as:

“Musical influences from native civilizations are still evident in rural areas, while the Hispanic elements are stronger in the cities”.

(1993:822)

According to Pelinski:

“The differentiation of melody types, however, especially in archaic music, is rather complicated. It demands a very exact and detailed structural analysis and special melodies. This is reason why the problem of musical typology of folk melodies on international scale has not been solved yet. Several attempts have been made, based on different material and while using different methods.”

(1981:132)

Ruutel define the historical development as:

“The length of basic structural unit shows foremost the stage of historical development, while the length of the melody has a strong positive correlation with the melodic range.”

(1986:345)

2.3 MUSIC AS PART OF CULTURE

Hornbostel (1994:28) says that the place of music in the framework of the human mind. Kolinski described the relationship of music with culture as:

“Music was so similar from culture to culture at least in respect to pitch that it could be explained by, basic similarities in the psycho-physical constitution of man.”

(1926:6)

Lomax describes his stapes as:

“The blues is just revenge, like you will be made at the boss and you can't say any thing that's the way with the blues, you sing those things in a song when you can't speak out.”

(1974:7-8)

Kiel defines the relationship of music and culture as:

“A similar theory of culture and music, but showing another side of theory holds that a nonhierarchical music and dance can create a mindset that resists oppression. This view had led to workshops in cultural egalitarianism through music and dance, a society- musician united for superior education (MUSE) and a journal devoted to ameliorating, the mass produced echo-castrophy cultural confusion and extinction (of humankind) as a species.”

(1989:826)

According to Schneider:

“The style of music is determined by the culture, but the manner of performance, vocal techniques, and so forth, are determined by race, and there have been attempts to associate specific traits with certain racially defined group.”

(1938:290)

Soblin define the music as cultural representation:

“The development of musical super cultures, within which sub cultures and inter cultures (mixture) shift and interact.”

(1993:827)

2.4 SEHARA (WEDDING) AND CEREMONIAL SONGS

Ranade defines the folk music as:

“Folk music does not employ any musical device as the result of conscious knowledge or the study of science of music. It does not seek its theme or emotional content from music, but starts with one of its own choice, in the form of poetic peace or song and music serves as but a guide or groove for the over flow of poetic emotions.”

(1951-89:53)

According to Malik folk music is usually transmitted by word of mouth:

“A folk song can change as a result of the creativity of those who perform it or of their particular musical style or of their faulty memory, As it is handed down from generation to generation.”

(1983:105)

Rizvi said about folk songs as:

“Folk song is an occasion-token. It may be a work song, love song, wedding song, and song of sailing in or out, cradle song, patriotic song, harvest and dance song, song of mourning, a marching song, narrative and the matic song.”

(1982:130)

According to Tedre:

“A number of epic songs with methodological contents”.

(1969:7)

2.5 THE SHEEDIS

Written history of the Sheedi community as, the Richard Barton in his book “Sindh and the races that inhabit the valley of the Indus” also wrote the history of Sheedis in Sindh.

“The African slaves in Sindh were two kinds; the Ghara-jao, or serf born in the house, and those imported from Muscat, and other harbours on the eastern coast of Arabia. The former were treated as inmates of the family; praedial, or rustic labor was not compulsory in Sindh, as in India, where great numbers were attached to the soil, so as to be sold or inherited with it. Hence it was that when emancipation came, the boon was to them a real evil. Under the Ameers from six to seven hundred Zangibari, Bambasi, Habshi (Abyssinian), and other blacks were annually imported from Africa: of late years the traffic has all but entirely ceased. Their value was from forty to one hundred and fifty rupees; girls were more valuable than boys, and were imported in greater number”.

(1981: 211)

khair Muhammad Buraro defines Sheedi community as:

“Word Sheedi, it is Arabic word means black in color and this Quom mostly were slaves and there are two types of Sheedis in Sindh. One Ghar-Java and other they came from Muskat and Arab cities. Ghar Java Sheedis mostly they were slaves of Talpurs”.

(2005: 515)

Sheedis call themselves as lovers of Muggarmman that is kind of vertical drum use by Sheedis on different ceremonies to play music. Sheedis say that the tradition of Muggarmman in Sheedi community started since the time when they used to live in Africa, and this tradition gave birth of singing traditional *Seharas* in women of Sheedis.

Musafir said about the history of Sheedi music as:

“With the sound of *Muggarmman (Masindo)*, Sheedis come to sing and dance (*lasbela*) on the Muggarmman even Sheedi may be in any where in the world.”

(1954:89)

According to Dr. Baloch:

“*Muggarmman* is played to the accompaniment of vocal music as well as folk dances. Of these, ‘ketvorovo’ (a word of African origin) and ‘lasbela’ dances are more popular and more prominent.”

(1982:126)

Ahmed wrote in his article “word for word” in daily times about Sheedis as:

“Sheedi’ may be a misused word today but it comes from the same root as Syed. The question is. What is the root of Syed? The root (swd) actually means black. When ‘Sheedis’ of Sindh were named, it simply meant ‘black people’ Sheedi is from Sidi. Some Sidis must have taken to bad ways. But the root of Sidi does mean black. It is another way of saying Habschi (Negro).”

(23: October: Sunday: 2005)

Now this literature describes about the migration of Sheedis and the origin of music in Sheedi community and its continuity by telling why Muggarmman is still famous in Sheedi community, this musical ancestral instrument also tells the history of Sheedi community as they themselves call as the African Sheedis.

LOCALE PROFILE

3.1 NAME

This is an ethnographic case study of Sheedi community in Goth (village) Rajo Nizamani with special emphasis on women's traditional singing and dancing. Goth is used for such kind of village where there is a *Wadero* or *patel* (leader) who takes decisions on behalf of the local population. Name of village is after name of a person Rajo, who is the founder of this village.

3.2 LOCALE

The locale of the study was Sheedi *Paro* (settlement) situated in Village Rajo Nizamani in Taulaka and District Tando Muhammad Khan. Rajo Nizamani is 12 km away from the city Tando Muhammad Khan. Rajo Nizamani comes in the rural union council Tando Sian Dad and Deh¹ Sing.

3.3 HISTORY OF LOCALE

The history of locale goes back to eighteen-century period; in the beginning only Manghwar caste resided in the village. Rajo is the name of the person who made this place as his *chara ghan* (hunting place), this land owned by Rajo. Madad Khan Pathan² attacked on Sindh, at this moment he also attacked on the village Tando Bahdur Pur and he destroyed the village, killed the peoples. Which they were secured their life they came to lived in the village Rajo Nizamani for their livelihood. Rajo also secured his and his parent's life came to live in his village or *Charaghan* for the livelihood. His name was Rajo so this place was called *Rajo Jo Goth*; means village of Rajo then after this name transferred as Rajo Goth or Rajo Nizamani, Nizamani was his caste. Still today there are some buildings, which indicate the history of this village. In the beginning this village came in the Taulka Mohabat Dero, then after this transferred in the Taulka Matli and then

¹ Deh basically small units of union council, in one deh there are three or four villages considered.

² According to Raja Akash Kumbhar Madan Khan Attack on Sindh in the period of 1194-95 AH.

after this village came into the Taulaka Tando Muhammad Khan and district Hyderabad but today the district of this village is also Tando Muhammad Khan.

There are three villages in the Sindh, with the same names that are called Rajo Nizamani, Rajo made these villages. One village, which is in the district Badin and other, are in the District Thatta and in Taulaka Jhirkan, and the last or third village Rajo Nizamani, which is the locale of my study. The village Rajo Nizamani was the greenery area of district Tando Muhammad Khan and still we found some forest district as well as in Sindh. The village comes in the Deh Sing of union council Tando Sain Dad in taulaka and district Tando Muhammad Khan.

Sheedis came in Sindh in late 18th and 19th century, they came to settle in village Rajo Nizamani after 1830 and inhabited a separate *paro* (neighborhood).

3.4 TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN

Tando Muhammad Khan is taulaka and district in the *Laar*³. It is situated on 68.36647000 Longitude North and 25.12170999 Latitude East. In the east there is district Tando Aliar and in the West River Indus crossing with district Tando Muhammad Khan. History⁴ of Tando Muhammad Khan is also very old as the history of Sindh. In 1790, Mir Muhammad Khan Shahwani constructed a new Tando (a settlement having distinct boundaries around it) in period of Talpur government for the Trade system called *Muhammad Khan Jo Tando* after his name, which still occupies a special place among the major business and trade centers of Sindh. After Pakistan came into being in 1947, it was developed into a big town and later on in 1970 it became Tehsil or Taulka and is known as Tando Muhammad Khan now a day. Currently in 2005 it became district, separated from Hyderabad.

³ Lower or southern Sindh

⁴ Source city survey office documents Tando Muhammad Khan



Plate 3.1: Gateway of District tando Muhammad khan



Plate 3.2: Alfatah Chowk

3.5 PHYSICAL FEATURES

The district Tando Muhammad Khan is a part of the lower Indus plain. Geographically district may be divided in different parts, there are three main canals of river Indus are across with the district, Guni, Pinjari, channel canal. River Indus also across from the upper part of the city called as MuLakatiar, Mulakatiar came in the Taulaka bulari Shah Karim, in the east there is hill called Ganjo takkur.

3.6 CLIMATE

The climate of the village as it like district is on the whole is moderate. The months of May and June, July, August are very hot during the day with maximum and minimum temperatures of 41°C and 26°C. This follows by an abrupt fall in temperature during the night with pleasant breeze which makes night comfortable. December and January are the coldest months with maximum and minimum temperature of 25°C and 11°C. Some times cold winds from Balochistan make the winter severe. Highest about the end of August this is much less in May when the air is uncomfortable by dry; Fogs are common in the cold season.

The district lies in rain shadow area. Heavily laden southwest monsoon clouds rising from the Arabian Sea pass over this area without any shower. Except occasional shower in the month of July, in winter the district get some rain cyclonic winds blowing from the Persian Gulf.

3.7 FLORA AND FAUNA

3.7.1 FLORA

The flora of an area depends upon soil and the amount of moisture available. District Tando Muhammad Khan is being agricultural district of Sindh and alluvial plain. Therefore plants suitable for agricultural products like banana, Mango, sugarcane, carrot (specially white carrot), onion, cotton, wheat, rice, *mirchi* etc. most common trees are *ber* (*Ficus Indica*), neem (*Azadirachta Indica*), *khaji* (date

palm tree), and some bushes. Rose, sunflower and Jasmine are the mostly grown flowers in the area.

3.7.2 FAUNA

The existence of all forms of fauna primarily depends upon the vegetation available in the district. The constant and rapid colonization has deprived the area from vegetation, which has resulted in the vanishing of wild life. At present, wolves, *sahairs* (rapids) are hardly ever seen: jackals are fairly common and foxes are seen in the rapid contracting area of dry waste. The other animals are *Gauon* (cow), *Mainh* (buffalo), *Bakri* (goat), *Ridh* (Sheep) etc these are use for milk; there are lots of *waraas* in the district as well in village. *Gadh* (donkey) used for taking grass from the agriculture land for other animals, which they gave milk.

Kang (crow), *Toto* (parrots), *Kabutar* (peacock) *Parail* are common and *Bulbul* (night angle) are also found on the trees, mostly the mangoes trees.

3.8 AREA BOUNDARY OF LOCALE

Area boundary of this village is about one hundred acres and this village divided in different *Paros*; the research is conducted from the Sheedi *Paro* (neighborhood). The area boundary of Sheedi *Paro* is round about nine acres.

3.9 RIVER INDUS OR PHITO

There is a legend that is famous in the village over generations about the history of river Indus. According to this legend *Sindhu Dariya* (river Indus) used to pass from this village about four centuries before. Peoples of the village believe that two children of a *Bibi* (woman) were drowned in the Indus (here name was *Bibi Asia* and She was Syed) and she said that *Aey ALLAH Hin Dariya Khey Ta Phita* (O' God destroy this river). So this *Bad Duaa* (malediction) made river Indus as *Phito* that means something which has now changed its original face or nature. While some People told me that it is used (river Indus) to change its route after some years. *Phito* now a day is the backbone of drainage system in the village.

3.10 LANGUAGE

There are four dominant languages spoken by the peoples of village that are Sindhi, Siraiki, brahvi and blochi but the major or common language is Sindhi. Sheedis speak Sindhi language but ancestral language is African due to long time living in Sindh, they forget their ancestral language and adopt Sindhi language.

3.11 TRADITIONAL SINGING

Traditional singing is not only the singing but it is also the cultural identity of any community, Sheedis women are very famous in singing the traditional *Seharas* in Sindh and now singing of traditional *Seharas* is the identity of Sheedi community.

3.12 DRESS PATTERN

The most common dress use by the male members of Sheedis that is *salwar* and *kamis*, people also use the *kod*, *kamis* due to the hot season and they also use the Sindhi *topi* (cap) and *ajrak* in the locale. Young generation is used cotton clothes and design *Salwar* and *Kamis*. White cotton *Salwar*, *Kamis* are used on special occasion like on *Eid*.

Among the ladies, the most common are *Salwar* and *kamis*, ladies also use the *bhart bharial Gaj* (embroider clothes) in clothes. Women have not concept of *pardah* (conceal), young girls also use the modern styles of clothes for instance cotton dress, *Sarhi*, *cholo* and young boys wear the pant and shirts its all due to Modern change. Modernization brought the development in dress pattern.

3.13 HOUSING PATTERN

Housing pattern is generally of two types in my locale, one that is "*Pakka*" and other are "*Katch*". *Pakka* houses are made up with the cements and have couple of rooms and *warandas*, rooms are used for different purposes but one room commonly called *bethaq* which is used for guests. In other *Paka* houses there

two *madarsas* are also in the village where religious education is given. The village has also a *Mundir* (temple) for the Hindu communities.

3.16 RELIGION

According to my key informant, Sheedis by religion are Muslims. There are two *Firqas* (sect) among Sheedis one belongs to Sunnis and other belongs to Shias, only three households are Shias while rest of all households are Sunnis. They are living in the same *paro* (Neighborhood) and do not feel any different from each other because both believe that they are from the same descendent that is Hazrat Bilal Habshi.

3.17 VISIT OF SHRINE

My key informant (Gulzaman) said that Sheedi are actually *Khalifas* (followers) of Syeds⁵ (Syed are descendents of Holy prophet) and Jani Shah was the first Pir of Sheedis but usually owe respect to syed family. They visit the tombs of Shah Abdul Latif, Saman Sarkar, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, according to them, they are the stairs to reach the God.

3.18 BASIC AMENITIES OF LIFE:

3.18.1 MEDICAL FACILITIES

There is one medical center in my locale, which provides health facilities to the people. The medical center also provides ambulance service for emergency cases. There are three private clinics in my locale, which serves for the people in different illnesses; medical stores are also available in the locale that provides the medicine to people. There is one homeopathic (private) clinic in the locale, which serve for people.

⁵ Pir Aman shah was a syed whose tomb is in the village. It is said that this village was built due to prayer of Pir Aman Shah. That 's why people go visit his tomb with great respect

3.18.2 EDUCATION

There are two high schools in the village, one is Boy's high school and other is Girl's high school. British government in 1875 made the Vernacular School for the servants, in 1972 Pakistan government made a primary School. There is one vocational school in the village that was made for the girls of the village. There is one private school in the village it is called, as Ghazali Public School there is also a private library whose name is Sachal library where eight hundred books are available in the library. The literacy ratio in Sheedi community is only 1.5 because they mostly do not want to send their children's to School. They send their boys for the *mainh Charaian* (Cattle grazing) and the young girls work in the elite houses, so their children find no way to go to schools.

TABLE # 3.2 LITERACY RATE OF SHEEDI COMMUNITY

	Population In sex	Literacy Ratio	Population In %
Male	596	0.1%	46%
Female	657	0.5	54%
Total	1253	1.5%	100 %

Source: Socio-economic census survey forms

3.18.3 TRANSPORT SYSTEM

In my locale, local transport buses are available till evening, private taxis are available 24 hours. There are two bus stands in the village, one has direct link to the old district city Hyderabad, and other is linked with new district and city Tando Muhammad Khan. Mini buses and vans are common in the transport system.



Plate 3.3: View of vernacular school



Plate 3.4: View of village hospital

3.18.4 Entertainment

Television and Radio are the major sources of entertainment here. Mostly people possess VCRs and CDs. Almost every household has cable network. Old people pass their time in gossips and chatting in streets. This gossiping is a major source of entertainment for them. They openly talk about politics and other important issues of local interest.

Most of people sit in the hotels where they watch Indian movies and songs on cable system. The game of cock fighting is also major source of entertainment for them and is very popular. Boys play cricket, football and *kodi*. Boys usually goes to *phito* to play different games because it is the major play ground.

The only source of entertainment for women is T.V, Radio, VCR as well as gossiping. Sindhi newspapers like Kawash and Ibrat and Sindhi *Risala* (news magazines) are another source of entertainment for both male and females.

3.18.5 ELECTRICITY

Village Rajo nizamni has the availability of *bijli* (electricity). *Bijli* came village in 1972 this was the period of Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhuto. He was Prime Minister of Pakistan. *Bijli* (electricity) made important to this village in different fields; there are different little industries working due to electricity like *Ata Chaki* (flour mill), *boring* (Tube well) for land water.

3.18.6 SUI GAS

Sui gas is also available in the village now, when sui gas was not available people used to collect woods or buy *anghar* (coal) for cooking the meal and sui gas came in 1997. Still the poor people they collect the woods and also buy Anghar (firewood) for cooking of meal.



Plate 3.5: Masjid of Sheedi Paro and gateway of Paro



Plate 3.6: Sheedis during kodi kodi traditional game

3.18.7 WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Water is available in the locale, people get water from the land and hand pumps are available in every household and in some houses there is also facility of electric motors for water but Sheedis are poor, so they mostly use the hand pump. Water of land is so safe for drinking. Village is facilitated with the drainage system.

3.18.8 POLICE STATION

Police station is also working in the village; in the Staff members there is one *Sobedar* (head constable) and three *Sapahi* (constables). They have a bike and a Mazda, Police working here for the safety of local peoples.

3.18.9 GRAVE YARD

There is one graveyard in the village covering a large area that is approximately half a kilometer in its length. The graveyard is more than century old.

3.18.10 COMMUNICATION

Communication is a basic need of life, so roads are available to link with every city of Sindh. Telephone facility is available in the village but only middle class families use this facility most of Sheedis do not use the phones because they are too poor to afford. Upper class and middle class families also use Internet and of Internet are means of fast communication system and many are using regular at homes.

3.19 WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS

3.19.1 SACHAL⁶ YOUNG WELFARE ASSOCIATION

The students of the village Rajo Nizamani established sachal young welfare association. In this association students from every caste like Sheedi, Nizamani, Dars, and zangeja are involved. The main objective of this organization is to

⁶ Sachal basically is the name of famous Sufi saint in Sindh

promote education, organization mostly organize the seminars and the lectures program on the education.

3.19.2 ALHABASH WELFARE ORGANIZATION

Alhabash welfare organization is not only working in the locale but also in Sindh. There are three rooms of the Alhabash office building one is main room that is called library room and other two rooms used for office purpose and seminars. The main purpose of the Alhabash welfare association is to educate the Sheedi community, the founder of this organization is Muhammad Sadique Musafir, and this organization was established in 1954.

The main function of Alhabash organization is regularly organizing the seminars, lectures programs and to promote the Sheedi community in fields of education.



Plate 3.7: Office of Alhabsh welfare association



Plate 3.8: Hazarat Bilal Sheedi Chowk

3.20 THE PEOPLES

In the village people from different casts are living in the village and they called as *Laari* or *Dhandhi*. The *Laaris* (lower part of Sindh) use their local accent in the Sindhi language; they speak Sindhi language with different style from those of people in *utar* (upper part of Sindh) Sindh.

3.20.1 MAJOR CASTES IN THE VILLAGE

Caste identity is very important because people's relations, behavior patterns and social/ economic status are considered through its group identity. Caste is the basic identity and without it your history is incomplete. There are so many differences among them on the matter of interpretation of caste history. Every one gives its own definitions, reasons, logics and background. There are different castes groups living in the village.

3. 20.1.1 SHEEDI

Sheedis, there are two types of Sheedis in Sindh, one they are Arab and speak *Balochi* language and other they are African and speak Sindhi language. The research was conducted on African Sheedis called as *Ghar java* and they are mostly peasants.

There are four sub castes of Sheedis in the village *Hoshiani* who are considered as descendents of Hosh Muhammad Sheedi, *Molvani* the descendents of *molvi*, *Dayani* whose women's are mostly *Daie* (Traditional Birth Attendants) and *Ganja* (bald) in that caste most people are bald that is without hair.

TABLE # 3.3 POPULATION OF SHEEDI COMMUNITY

Population	Absolute	Percentage
Male	596	46%
Female	657	54%
Total	1253	100%

Source: Socio-economic Census survey forms

3.20.1.2 NIZAMANI

Nizamani came originally from Iran and firstly settled in Dera Ghazi Khan. They themselves called the son of Mir Nizam Khan; they are Baloch and are *Jagirdar* (land lords). They got *Jagirdari* in the period of Kalohras rule in Sindh. Nizamani are very interested in the *Shikar* (hunting), animal races and cock fighting.

3.20.1.3 QURESHI

Qureshis came from Arab Quresh Qabila, with the arrival of Islam in Sindh. Local people call them Wadha due to their occupation, which is carpenter.

3.20.1.4 DARS

Dars are very famous in business now days in the locale but local people call them as kori because they are very famous in the history by making *garbi* (type of local carpet). They are also called as Duri, which is basically derived from the word kori.

3.20.1.5 UNAR

Unar is one of famous caste of village they are familiar by making of *Tal* (horse jacket) which is their main occupation. *Tal* is basically used for create comfortable to horse riding.

3.20.1.6 KOHLI

Kohlis basically are Hindu and came from Gujarat (India). The main occupation of Kohlis is agriculture; they are mostly *Haris* (peasants) in the locale.

3.20.2 OTHER CASTES

The other castes, which are living in village, are Syeds, Zangejas, Khaskheili, Hingora (Gamora), Sheikh, Lohar, Manghwar (Hindu), Warian (Hindu). Mostly castes have their own cultural values and specific professions due to specific profession people's relations, behavior patterns and social/ economic status are considered through its group identity.

Syed are considered as the descendents of Holy prophet and migrated from the Arab countries and came in Sindh and in locale with Muhammad Bin Qasim. Zangeja are originally the sub-caste of Jatoi, the main caste and have migrated from upper Sindh. Khaskheli is a recent caste that was basically started during the era of Talpur (Mir's). They were the renowned as the 'special servant' of Talpur (i.e. Khas= Special, Khely = Servant). Sheikhs are also the converted from Hindu to Muslims and are actually native of the locale. They are professionally businessman from generation to generation. Lohar are the ironsmith, so they called as lohar because lohar give the sense of ironworker. Manghwar and warian are the Hindu castes and native of the locale.

SHEEDI AS A UNIQUE COMMUNITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The current chapter focuses on the history, origin, migration and settlement of Sheedis in Sindh especially in village Rajo Nizamani in district Tando Muhammad Khan. This chapter also includes the causes of migration through oral and written history, lineage and their family structure. The chapter will also interpret the cultural traditions of Sheedis and their politico-economic organization.

4.2 ORAL HISTORY OF SHEEDIS

Where from Sheedis came in Sindh? It was major question for me during the field research, so I firstly tried to know about their history. According to my Key informant Gul Zmaan, there are two groups of Sheedis live in Sindh. One which speak Balochi language and they came from Arab countries like Muscat, Iran and now they are living in Karachi and in upper Sindh and they call themselves Makarani Sheedi. Other speaks Sindhi language and they call themselves as *Ghar Java Sheedis* or African Sheedis (research carried out from the later group). They came from Africa and firstly lived in the Badin and Tando Bagho City and then they spread in the various cities of lower Sindh. Now they are living in the cities of Badin, Mirpurkhas and in Tando Muhammad Khan. According to an old person (Manu) we (Sheedi) came from African city that is Ranjbar and were brought as slaves by *Goras* (British white people). It was not our own interest or will to come in Sindh and live there but it was the interest of British government; the British brought us as slaves. In the locale, they migrated from the district Badin and inhabited separate *paro* (neighborhood).

4.3 SHEEDI: AS A DISTINCT CASTE GROUP

Sheedis are also called as *Dada* but according to the most of literature studied in this context, *dada* is misused word. People call them *dada* due to their black color and curly hair. According to Sheedis, word Sheedi was basically the word *Habashi*, they said that this is not Sheedi but originally word is Sidi. Sheedis call themselves as descendent of Hazrat Bilal⁷, in anthropological sense they show their genealogy.

4.4 SHEEDI: AS FUNCTIONAL CASTE GROUP

Malinowski argued that the existence of any custom, social institution or social relation should be interpreted in terms of its function. Sheedi cultural institution of music has been a functional necessity for ages to a large section of rural people who live face to face in small villages. Also, Sheedis as a caste group is a serving caste that performs its functions in socio-cultural set up.

4.5 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SHEEDI COMMUNITY

4.5.1 KINSHIP

Kinship literarily means relatedness and in broader sense includes marriage, alliance and relation of affinity. Encyclopedia of Anthropology defines the kinship as: “the links connect parents to child in a chain that extends back to ancestors and forward to descendents” (1976:226).

The Sheedis carry recognition of kin relationships much further than is common in other societies. Genealogical connections can be established with almost every body no matter how much they are isolated. Even if no direct link can be traced all members, suppose to be fictive sisters and brothers in heir own generation.

⁷ Companion of Hazarat Mohammad (PCBU), Hazarat Bilal was also black in color and his hair was curly

Relatives are expected to be friendly and helped to one another in time of crises. There for a man expects hospitality assistance and support a man usually relies upon his close kins, parents, siblings along with their spouses and children are his wives parents siblings who are also supposed to advise and help facing the problems, whenever any Sheedi arranges any sort of ceremony, his close relatives bring gifts of food and commodities according to their status.

The membership of Sheedi is determined by patrilineal descent that is traced through the male line. Property and the social role of the father transmitted to his sons after having the communal feast of the deceased father. Patrilineal relatives are remembered genealogically more than the mothers relatives. Father is the responsible to advise, support, look after and protect their children carefully. All brothers maintain friendly relationship and expected to build the close relationship with each other. Brothers also help their sisters in the time of need and troubles. Elder brother is respected highly by the youngsters who also take care of the youngsters just like a father.

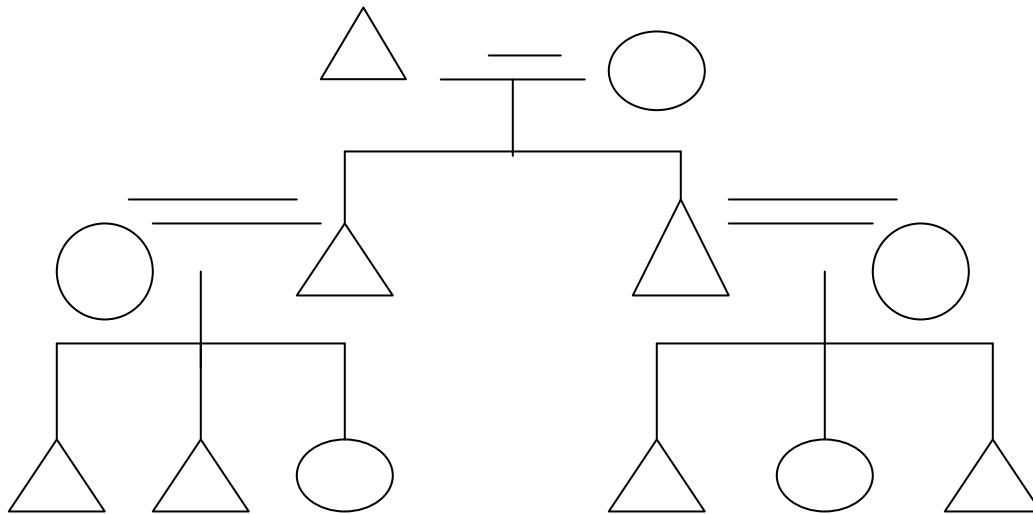
4.5.2 FAMILY SYSTEM

Sheedis live as patriarchal society and the concept of joint family is very common in their community, mostly they live in Joint family system but some of them are living in nuclear as well 4.1 table shows the percentage of Sheedi families according to their living style.

4.5.2.1 JOINT FAMILY

Among Sheedis most of families are living in joint families, only a few families are living in the nuclear families.

Joint family



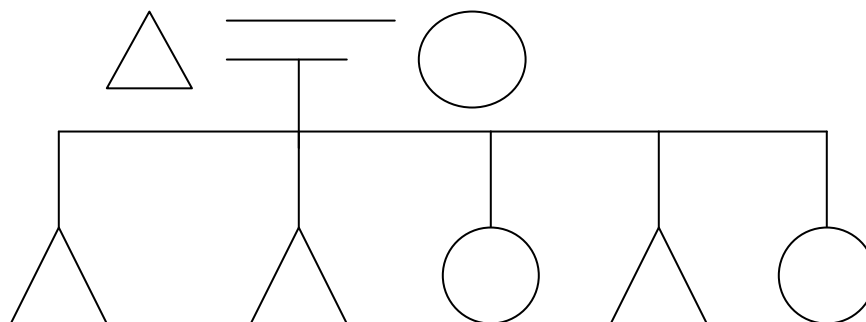
The above diagram shows the joint family

4.5.2.2 NUCLEAR FAMILY

It is defined as a unit consisting of a man, his wife and their children. In the Macmillan dictionary of anthropology, Murdock defines nuclear family as: "Composed of mother, mother's husband and their children" (1949.p.111).

Nuclear family is a simplest family unit and a common form of the nuclear family consists of husband, wife and their children.

Nuclear family



The above diagram shows nuclear family

TABLE # 4.1

FAMILY SYSTEM OF SHEEDIS

Family structure	Number	% Of family
Nuclear	87	33.08
Joint	176	66.92
Total	263	100

Source: Socio-economic census survey forms

4.5.3 AUTHORITY STRUCTURE

Anthropologist can find concept of authority in every community during ethnographic field research. Among Sheedis, in the past Patel was (Respectable head of the community) solved all the community problems. He was also called *Khalifo* or *Kotar*, *Qazi*, *Jamadar (Prio Muras)*, *Wazir*, *Charedar*. They had one place as *Ottaq* (meeting place) to solve problems of the community, which were mostly social problems. Now Alhabash Welfare organization solves all the community problems, Khalifo Ayub is the in-charge of the organization. But at the family level authority rest with *Wado* (Respectable head of family) who solves the entire family problems, the concept of *wado* is usually found in the joint families.

4.6 RITUAL OF PASSAGE**4.6.1 BIRTH**

On the birth ceremony they distribute the *Mithaee* (sweets) and every household convey the *mubarki* (congratulations) to the mother, father and the grand parents. After then *Molvi* (Priest) gives Azan (call for prayer) in the ear of child and give name. *Chatti* celebrate after the six-day of childbirth, in which grandfather of the child give the sweet milk with his finger to the child. *Jhand* is a ritual performed after the seven days of birth that is first shave of newborn child hair at the head. *Aqiqqa* is celebrated when mother takes her first bath after delivery, usually on the 40th day after delivery.

4.6.2 CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision or *tohar* ritual is very common in Sheedis like any other Muslim society. At the day of circumcision the boy wears white *Kameez*, and red Goad (Dhoti) and tied decorated strip around his *mor* (fore head) and a strip on his gano (wrist) new shoes and articles of fragrance are used. On this ceremony they make singing and *Sarkas*, *Sarkas* is kind of musical function. *Sarkas* usually celebrated before *tohar* that is boy who sits on horse and visits the village with different singers who sing traditional songs like *Seharas* for him.

4.6.3 MARRIAGE

The marriages (*Shaadii*) ceremony they celebrate with music, the first of all boy family came to the girl's family for the *Magani* (engagement), after engagement there is concept of *Dhein Badhan* (settlement of days for marriage). After *Magani* there are different rituals that are called as *sawans* performed by Sheedi community on marriage ceremony. Here I am writing these all rituals of sawan in the steps. The first ritual of *sawan* is performed the marriage, which is *Wanwah*, that is Bride sits in a one room for a week and nobody is allowed to meet her except family members. She gets gifts from the groom's family and other things; they make *Bhogaro* (sweets). They gave corn flour for bride from that they prepare *Batan*, *Mehandi* (hydrate) and bride will apply *batan* (hydrate) on her body.

Wanwah mostly performed on the Sunday, marriage ceremony performed on the same day after one week. Now bride's *Chachi* (aunty) takes the *Mehandi*, for groom and he apply on his hands and feet, on the night of marriage ceremony girls sing songs on the groom's home. Women's take the *Daaj* (dowry) and every one watch that *daaj*, which is given from relatives to the bride, after that ritual of *Nikkah* performed during *Nikkah* three witnesses are compulsory for the *Nikkah* to legitimize and use these person sign on the documents of *nikkah*.

After the Nikkah other ritual of *Sawan* will be performed, first of all groom goes to Masque and pray, then after *Sarkas* will be celebrated, in *Sarkas* different Sheedis sing songs and have *Las bella* dance during *Sarkas* that is called hambasha dance. After the *Sarkas* groom will go to the home of bride, one plate put on the door and below there they take rupees, Groom will smash that plate. Then after groom sits in front of bride and *Chachi* of bride brings the milk for the groom, he drinks the milk.

Then after special ritual of *Sawan* will be performed whom they call the *Dawan* aunty of bride takes one black thread, which is called *Taweez* (amulet) to wear groom for the sake evil eye. After then plate of rice is put between bride and groom, after that *Kharks* are mixing in rice, bride and groom exchange rice and *kharkhs* from their hands.

Then other ritual of *sawan* to performed, which is called *Ghathi* in that bride strongly hold a golden ring (which is given by groom) in her right hand and bride challenges the groom to open my right hand with your left hand and snatch that golden ring. It means this is matter of ego for groom, because bride wants to know how strong he is.

After all these ritual of *sa wans* there is very special ritual of *sa wan* will performed that is called *laun* and performed at night in that bride and bride groom set on the *Khat* (cot) then relatives and friends of groom are invited to come one by one and they touch head of bride and groom. After that special ritual of *sawan* groom take the bride along with him to his house and also take the *Saej* (bedding), which is given by bride's relatives. Then after one week bride will go to her parents for a visit with her husband, which is called *Sataro*.



Plate 4.1: Relatives in a marriage ceremony give Ghor by putting money on the head of bride groom



Plate 4.2: Women's are performing the *Sawan* (ritual) of lauon



Plate 4.3: Bride family women are taking the Saej (bedding) over their head to groom house



Plate 4.4: Relatives has given daaj (dowry) to bride

4.6.4 DEATH

When a Sheedi is nearly death, a few drops of honey or *Ab-e-zam zam* are dropped in his/her mouth and relatives standing around him/her recite passage from the Holy Quran and, pray for the forgiveness of the soul, after death, the eyes and lips of deceased are closed and then the body is carefully and thoroughly washed by *Ghasaal* or *Mulla* (priest), after washed the body is cropped in *Kafan*. Rose water and perfumes are sprinkled over it, and put the dead body in grave near to village's *Mukam* (graveyard). After buried they offer meal to the people who were present at the time of burial, it is called *Kandhpo*. It is offered for the sake of departed soul. After three days they held *Quran Khani* and offer meal to all participants and on that occasion they give oil in every ones hand and every ones rub oil in hair because it is consider as sacred oil and it will bless to the deceased soul as well as person who apply that oil on his head. After *Quran khanis* they offer charity to all the villagers. *Daho*, after ten days, again they family of a dead person had charity ritual in which they cook seven types of dishes, these all rituals are performed for the sake of departed soul, the ritual of mourning common among them.

4.7 ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Although economically Sheedis are poor but have different sources of income to earn money for livelihood.

4.7.1 MALE ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

4.7.1.1 HARI (FARMERS)

They are work on the land of other communities as *Haris* (farmers). As Sheedi were come in Sindh as slaves, so still they are slaves of elite's but the concept changes now days, usually they work in the land of elite's. They get money not at the time but after the time (it gives according to crops season but elite's class peoples they do not give them on time). Actually Sheedi do not feel that they are

still slaves but they feel now as their honor. This is the major source of earning in Sheedi community, they take not only the rupees but things of daily are.

4.7.1.2 DUKANDAR (SHOP KEEPER)

In my locale there are ten shops of Sheedis, there are two hotels one is the hotel of Nisar Sheedi and other is called the hotel of Papo Sheedi. One *pakor* (Pisces) shop and twelve are *reski* (miscellaneous) shops.

4.7.1.3 BOWERCHI (COOKS)

Sheedis are also cook in my locale, they are famous in cooking and they are mostly required to cook on the occasions, such as, birth, circumcision, marriage, and death, they earn 100 Rupees on per *Deg* (big pot for cooking). They always went on different ceremonies; not only in the village ceremonies or occasion but also out of village they have their own identity as *Bowerchi* (cook).

4.7.1.4 GOVERNMENT JOBS

There are three government employees in my locale, there are two primary teachers and one is *Tapedar* (government agents for land revenue).

4.7.1.5 SEASONAL WORK

Sheedis, they also working on seasonal wages on different work, like work of *Khotai of Gajar* (digging of white carrot), by digging white carrot they earn up to 50 Rupees per *bori* (sac), so this work is depend on luck. Peoples go to work in Mango garden on monthly bases as well as they work on the daily wages. According to them, individual earn maximum 5 thousand Rupees and minimum 3 thousand Rupees in these two months.

TABLE # 4.2 DISTRIBUTION OF MALE ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Occupation	Distribution in no:	Distribution in %
Farmers	139	11%
Cooks	26	2%
Shop keeper	15	1.1%
Government jobs	3	0.1%
Others	20	1.5%

Source: Socio-economic census survey forms

4.7.2 ROLE OF FEMALE IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

According to Rezig in the book of women in Islamic societies:

“ In the eyes of men, a women working outside the home’s an intruder in the male world, and she will have to suffer the vexations directed towards a person who has disobeyed the social norms”

(1983: 204)

Women’s of Sheedis have large amount of contribution in the household economy. Women’s of Sheedis are working in the different fields, which is given below:

4.7.2.1 SINGING

Singing is the profession of Sheedi women, they sing on different occasion and on ceremonies and earn rupees, they earn in sense of *Ghor* (rupees showering over the people), and *Ghor* is their occupation. According to their own point of view they earn above 25 thousands Rupees.

Womens get formal *sad* (invitation) to attend the ceremony likes the other relatives, before any occasion or ceremony. Islamic months Zulhaj and Rabi-al-

awal is considered as the most busy months for the singers and they receive advance payment from the party who invite them. Generally, singers attend the ceremony on the payment of *Ghor* but in these months, they also charge the fix fee that consists like the transport.

4.7.2.2 GOVERNMENT JOBS

There are only three lady government employees in the community, in which two girls are the lady health worker and one working as a maid.

4.7.2.3 WORKING IN HOMES OF WADERAS (LANDLORDS)

Women of Sheedi community are also working in the houses of elites on monthly wages. Their monthly pay is four to five hundred Rupees. Women also get the meals from their home (break fast, lunch, Dinner).

4.7.2.4 WORKING IN FIELDS

Women of Sheedis also help to their household out side their home by working in the fields in different activities. They work with their males *Chund* (cotton picking), (chilies picking) and *Gudd* (clearing crops from grass) on daily wages as well as on contract basis. The contract may be of 5 to 10 days, their earning comprises up to Rs 80 to 100/ day. The work of *Gudd* is more because they can earn Rs 1000/ for 4 to 5 days.

TABLE # 4.3 **NUMBER OF WOMEN WORKING IN FIELD**

Sr	Profession	Number of women involved in Profession	%
1	Cotton picking	42	3.4%
2	Chilies picking	39	3.0%
3	Clearing crops from posture	42	3.4%
4	Total	123	9.8%

Source: Socio-economic census survey forms

4.7.2.5 BHART BHARAN (EMBROIDERY)

Sheedi women also make traditional clothes and earn a good money from this business. These clothes are mostly wearing by women of elites on the different occasion. The art is called *bhart*, women make different kind of *Gaj* (traditional form of embroidery). Women in Sindh always like to wear this kind of traditional piece of work on different occasions and ceremonies. Sheedi women earn good income from it; nowadays this kind of work is very much liked by women of urban area. The women of Sheedis send these traditional forms of embroidery into the urban areas like as city Tando Muhammad Khan.

4.7.2.6 SALE OF SANDHANO (PICKLE)

Women of Sheedis, prepare different kinds of pickle like as chili, onion, red carrot and mangoes and sale in other communities. It is major a source of income for the Sheedi women's; make the pickle of. The pickle of mangoes is the most favorite pickle in other communities but Sheedi themselves usually eat the pickle of chili with meal.

TABLE # 4.4 DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Occupation	Distribution in no:	Distribution in %
Singing and dancing	56	4.4%
Government jobs	3	0.2%
Working in the homes of landlords	81	6.4%
Working in fields	123	9.8%
Embroider	45	3.5%
Sale of pickle	32	2.5%
Others	19	1.5%

Source: Socio-economic census forms

4.8 CHILD LABOR

Sheedis don't like to educate their children. According to one old person (Manu), Sheedi they send their children for different local works. Mostly boys went for *mainh Charindar* (animal grazing), *Gah karan* (grass cutter), *Bero* (wetter) these all works they done on the monthly bases. The boys mostly earn 15 to 20 hundreds Rupees. The minority of people sends their children in the fields and help to their family on the land as *Hari* (farmer).

4.9 FOLKLORE

The concept of folklore or oral tradition is also part of this ethnographic research and Sheedis they are too much interested legends.

According to LIMON define the concept of folklore as that:

“Folklore performances and performers as artful products and producers of historical and contemporary resistance to structural and cultural domination”

(Annual review of anthropology vol. 15, 1986: 443)

Sheedis are too much interested in their legends that is a to tell about their cultural heroes, so I collected the three legends and one myth.

4.9.1 THE LEGEND OF SHEEDI MUHAMMAD SADIQUE MUSAFIR

He was the great poet of Sindh, he wrote lot of books about the poetry and about the Sheedi community. He made the *Alhabash* welfare organization in 1954 for Sheedi community to inform about their rich cultural norms. He also wrote book about the slavery of Sheedis, name of that book *Ghulami Ja Ebrat Nak Nizara*. His tomb in the Tando bagho, it is his native village and Sheedi they came still on his tomb for pray and they believe that he gave them way for the success. He was famous poet of Sindh. Muhammad Sadique Musafir in his poetry praised to the Sheedis and saying that Sheedis are the member of Heaven.



Plate 4.5 Women's while taking grass from onion



Plates 4.6: young women washing dishes in the home of landlord



Plate 4.7: Children are bathing the buffaloes



Plate 4.8: Child taking the food to his family working in fields

4.9.2 THE LEGEND OF HOSH MUHAMMAD

Hoshoo Sheedi, he fought against the British Army with bravely during the Talpurs government in Sindh, in the battle of *Miyani or Dubo* in 1843. During the fighting Hoshoo said that

“Mar waisoon par Sindh na desoon”

“Ever though we’ll die but we’ll not give you Sindh”

Hosh Muhammad to became *Shaheed* (martyr) during the battle. He was the general of Talpurs Army; he was buried in the *Pakka Qila* in hyderabad.

4.9.3 THE LEGEND OF KHAMISO KHAN SHEEDI

He was very brave in Sindh during the Talpur government, when the British they came in Sindh they listen about bravery of Khamiso. British they arrested to him and gave him punished, which was the higher punished of that time. Soldier gave him one *Tob* (tank) and said that you have take over the building and take gold stone from the stair one by one; the building had one hundred stairs. khamiso reached on the building but his knee was not working at the time. Still Tob is indicating that event and Sheedi told me this legend with the honor and said that they always fought for Sindh.

4.9.4 THE MYTH OF NASEER SHEEDI

Sheedis told me one famous myth about the Naseer Sheedi and this myth is also famous myth in village Nangh that is some five kilometers away from the city of Tando Bagho. Naseer lived in this village and he was very brave and strong person. One-day landlord of the village was angry with Naseer. He prepared one *Khuhu* (well) and Naseer was put in the well by the landlord and asked villagers to put stones in the well over Naseer. Naseer died but after one year, an illness was spread out in the village Nangh. Some people left the village and some of them died due to illness. Village was destroyed but still the ruins of the village give the evidence of destroyed village.

WOMENS TRADITIONAL SINGING AND DANCING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The current chapter describes the second part of my thesis that is the women's traditional singing and dancing. The first part of the chapter focuses on the history, continuity and change of the women's traditional singing and dance. The second part comprises on the key concepts *sad*, *kaaj*, *tado*, *sehara* and *Ghor* that are related to singing and dance. Third parts describe the groups of womens traditional singing and dancing and singing on different ethnic groups. The part last part describes the types of musical instruments, which Sheedi women played on different occasion and ceremonies.

5.2 HISTORY OF WOMENS TRADITIONAL SINGING

The history of singing in Sheedi is as old as old the Sheedi are. Waziran (Key informant) told that they adopted this profession of singing since four generations. They inherited an instrument "Muggarmman" from their ancestors. Mostly male members of the community used to play this instrument. As time passed, the male members took off their interest from this instrument and this instrument was adopted women's. She further told that in the beginning, they only used to sing within community but their males sung out of the community on the different occasions and ceremonies, especially at the *Ottaq* of the *wadera* (landlords). With the passage of time, the female members of the community also followed the tradition. Now different communities invite Sheedi women's on the different occasions and on ceremonies such as: *Shaadi* (wedding ceremony), *Tohar* (Circumcision), *Chhatti* (Six day ceremony), *Aqiqqa* (The function celebrated when mother takes her first bath after delivery, usually on the 40th day after delivery) and on *Sukh* that is first Thursday of new month.



**5.1: women's are singing wedding Seharas,
While young man (Hashim) playing dhol**



**Plate 5.2: Janib Ali Sheedi famous singer of the community Singing in
village Rajo Nizamani on Eid Show**

5.3 INHERIT TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL SINGING

According to Dunn:

“To speak clear, to sing clear, rather, we was always taught that at school. We had a school master at school who used to take great interest in singing, and the words had to be exact and distinct, so you could understand what you were talking” (1980:209).

According to Aamina, traditional singing transfers from generation to generation. Senior women, mostly forty years old women used to teach the new generation about music. The senior female singers take young girls together on the different occasion and ceremonies to observe and participate in the activities to carry out the profession when they reach at the age of maturity. She also told that this traditional way of singing is now diminishing because of the media influence. Now a day, Sheedis Women mostly sing the modern songs on the different occasions and ceremonies.

5.4 CHANGES OF TRADITIONAL SINGING PROFESSION

Nowadays popular singing is taking the place of traditional singing. However, there are few communities that are continuing this profession as an identity and for their spiritual need.

During the interviews when I asked the reason of shifting the profession, most of the females replied that because of education, they are adopting other professions such as teaching, nursing and getting jobs into other formal and informal sectors, so new generation is not taking much interest in the traditional profession. Mostly females told that the main reason of changing profession is less income. While the old generation is busy in singing and dancing as their past generation were busy.

5.5 TRADITIONAL DANCE (NACH)

Saleem described the relationship of folk songs and folk dance as:

“Hundreds of folk-songs sung as a tradition on the occasion of birth, betrothal and wedding etc, are all full of prayers and relate to old customs and traditions. On marriage and other festivals, the people often perform their traditional folk-dances. While they dance, they sing their folk –songs also as matter of fact, folk-songs and folk-dance are closely related” (1982:95).

The other famous feature of Sheedi women is the *nach* (dance) during the singing. Sheedis are very much famous due to their typical dance that is called hambasha dance, the hambasha dance that is not only perform by the women but also the male members. The hambasha dance is only played with the Muggarmman that is ancestral instrument of the Sheedis; the hambasha dance is also called the *jhumar*. Kali told that we perform *nach* (dance) on *dhol* and get more applaud and *Ghor* (money) rather singing only.

Usually two women *nach* (dance) together and give pleasure to the audiences and have its own charm and aesthetic. Mostly the women play the *jamalo nach* (Circle dance), the circle Nach (dance) perform by group of womens it is perform by young womens. One women told that *nach* (Traditional Hambasha Jhumar) is in the nature of Sheedis that is when we listen songs we start to dance spontaneously.

The womens of Sheedis wear the simple dress during the dancing but some times womens wear the *Gaj* that is traditional form of embroidery clothes, especially when they invite on the special ceremony or occasion by the elites of the area.

5.6 SAD (INVITATION)

Sad means the invitation, Sheedi women get invitation for the different occasions and ceremonies of the different castes. The Sheedi women get formal *sad* (invitation) to attend the ceremony like the other relatives, before any occasion or ceremony. Islamic months Zulhaj and Rabi-al-awal is considered as the most busy months for the singers and they receive advance payment from the party who invite them. Generally, singers attend the ceremony on the payment of *Ghor* but in these months, they also charge the fix fee that consists like the transport allowances and *Bakhshish* (charity) as well.

5.7 KAAJ (GATHERING)

Gathering of the singing and dancing groups on the any ceremony is called kaaj, it represents that ceremony is to be celebrated either in home or on the ottaq (gathering place). Whenever the singers and dancers join the ceremony, *kaaji* (inviter) become conscious because they have been waiting for listening their attractive voice and traditional *Seharas* (wedding or folk songs).

5.8 TADO (MAT)

Mat is sacred for the singers and dancers. As they join ceremony bring the mat with them to make the sacred place for singing and dancing. Mat also symbolizes the movement of the Sheedi women's for singing of traditional *Seharas*.

5.9 SEHARA (FOLK SONGS)

Folk song is a verbal expression of ideas or feelings of individuals or folk group, in musical and poetic manner. The term folk song is often used to characterize songs that are traditional, orally composed through the use of memorized oral formulas. It is expected to be orally transmitted rather than through formal instruction and written notation. *Sehara* (folk song) is a song of people no creator no particular performer. Normally people sing these songs on marriage, on the occasion of cultivation of crops, welcoming guests, etc. Basically *sehara*

represents people's feelings, sorrows, happy moments, love affairs and relationship with certain things or areas.

Seharas are also known as *Geech* or *Ladaa*, the purpose of Seharas is not based on poetic expression or technical aspects but it is simply the expression of happiness. According to Fahmi (group leader) Sehara is very simple expression of rural people to express their happy moments. He gives the example of following.

Hathian gul mehandi, parian gul mehandi,
Hydrate on hands, hydrate on foot,
Aii lal linghan khey laio raey,
Put hydrate on the body of the dear,

The above sehara sung by the Sheedi women on the ceremony of the Mehendi (hydrate or hina) that represent the happiness of bride and bridegroom on their marriage ceremony.

5.10 GHOR (SHOWERING OF RUPEES)

Ghor (Showering of rupees) is the money that they get as *Mubariki* (congratulation) from the people who attend the *Shaadi* (marriage). One proverb that Aashi told that "*Jaitri Ghor Ootro Maazo*", it means that as you shower the money so you will get more enjoy, *Ghor* is also as the source of motivation. There are many ways of *Ghor*, one way is to put money on the head of the *Ghot* (groom), second way is to give into the hand, and third way is to expel through the money in the air. The Sheedi women have the typical way of collecting the *Ghor*, especially it gives a fine and massive look when they go to receive money by dancing from the peoples which they attending *Shaadi* (marriage) especially from the relatives of bride and groom.

5.11 SINGING AND DANCING GROUPS

Within the female singers, there are two groups one is known as the dancing group and other is called as the singers. As they have the different identity within the group. Each group has its own *ustani* (lady teacher), who supervises and leads the group and select the members for the function. One group having young members and is called the 'Fahmi' group because the name of their teacher is Fahmi, and the other group, whose leader is Shahru is called 'Shahru' group. The difference between young and old group is that youngsters perform the fast and an older, the slow one. The young group mostly transfers into an old one at the age of 40s and the new group comes ahead at 20s. See Table nos: 5.1 and in 5.2.

TABLE #5.1 NAMES AND AGES OF YOUNG SINGERS AND DANCERS

Sr	Young groups			Age	Dance styles
	Name of singers	Age	Name of dancers		
01	Haseena	24	Fahmi	25	Hambasha
02	Nasareen	26	Kari	19	Jhumar
03	Sali	28	Kali	23	Jamalo
04	Aashi	21	Razia	20	Jhumar
05	Aaishan	23			

Source: socio-economic census survey forms

TABLE #5.2 NAMES AND AGES OF OLD SINGERS AND DANCERS

Sr.	Old groups			Age	Dance styles
	Name of singers	Age	Name of dancers		
01	Wazeeran	39	Pathani	43	Hambasha
02	Sharreefan	51	Imraan	51	Nach
03	Hurmat	46	Malookazadi	45	Jhumar
04	Shaharu	60	Qaisar	36	Nach
05	Ameena	45	Khairan	32	Jamalo

Source: socio-economic census survey forms



Plate 5.3: women's are singing wedding Seharas



**Plate 5.4: Women's are singing wedding Seharas
While others in traditional dance**

5.12 SINGING OF SEHARAS ON DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS

There are few major castes in the area, such as Talpur, Nizamani, Memon, Dars and Syeds. Talpur are the *Waderas* (landlords) of the district of Tando Muhammad Khan; they think themselves as king of city Tando Muhammad Khan. Talpur are also responsible of bringing Sheedis in the area as well as in Sindh. Sheedis are still slaves of Talpur. All these castes invite the Sheedi for different function and ceremonies, they are known as the symbol of *laar* (Lower part of Sindh) due to their singing.

5.13 LAS BELA SONG

When Sheedis came from Africa, they brought singing culture with them; they have typical songs that are known as the identity of being a Sheedis. The song that signifies the Sheedis is known as “*the Las Bela song*”. The *Las Bela* song is the ancestral song of Sheedis. Even though, they forget their ancestral language but they still identify themselves as African Sheedis. They sing the *Las bela* song, when they are in happy mood; there are two lines of the *Las bela* song:

Sheedi basha

Ham basha

Sheedis are kings

Sheedis are kings

Sheedi ba

The above song indicates to the African-originated Sheedis, they only sing *las bela* song with their ancestral instrument on *Muggarmman* and with the *Muggarmman* they also use two *Dhol* to create the aesthetic and charm in the singing. Usually three women sing *the las bela* song, during singing *las bela* song male members dance in the group that is called the *Las bela* dance.

5.14 USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Sheedi women use many musical instruments for melody, harmony as well as giving rhythmic form to the poetry. The women's of Sheedi use their own instruments means that they have own instruments, which they play on the different ceremonies and occasions. They play the instruments like *Muggarmman*, *Dhol*, *Daffley (daff)* or *Thaalee*, *Chier*, *Talion*.

5.14.1 MUGGARMAN (MASINDO)

According to Dr. Baloch in the book of folk Music of Sindh that:

“It is kind of vertical drum, which is played in a standing position by the thumping and strokes of both hands. It is the traditional drum of the Muslim communities of Africa's origin locally known as Sheedis (i.e. Sidi or Sayyidi) settled in Sindh for centuries” (1982:126).

Sheedis are very much interested in the Muggarmman or *Masindo*. It is also ancestral musical instrument of the community. Muggarmman consists of two drums is played with master. The other tradition making of wood fire considered compulsory to play Muggarmman. The Muggarmman is played by Sheedis and tell that it is not only the skin of drums but also is the source of light in the circle, and also considered as a source of protection from cold. In the beginning a group of women sing the *las bela* song and then sing the traditional *Seharas*.

5.14.2 CHIER

The *Chier* is a musical instrument used in dancing; *chier* is worn by a dancer in the leg from knee to foot. Dancer creates charm and aesthetic from the *chier* through dancing, *chier* is made up of copper. *Chier* creates rhythm for dancers due to its beautiful sounds.

5.14.3 TALION

Talion (clapping) is also major source of rhythm and stimulates the singer. *Talion* considers as instrument in community, According to them *talion* gets full concentration by the audience in the songs, during singing.

5.14.4 DHOL (Drum)

The experts consider *dhol* as the heart of music. Sheedi women play *dhol* in every ceremony, there are two women's consider as *bhalion* (experts) from old group and one consider from young group. From old group Shaharo and Shareefan consider as expert and from young group Haseena consider as expert, but all women's can play easily *dhol*. *Dhol* provides charm in singing the *Seharas*. It is always made in oval and circular shape, both sides are covered with the skin of goat, especially treated for the purpose, which is fixed by placing around the rims two circular elastic sticks, one inner and thicker called *kunnir* and other outer and thinner called *bacho*. *Kunnir* and *bacho* folding the skin in between and then it is tightened around the rims by means of *kashsha* (strong and thick cotton yarn strings which go all over the body of the drum). It is played with the help of small sticks.

5.14.5 DAFFLEY (DAFF) AND THAALEE

Daffley, it is small drum and both sides are covered with the skin of goat it's used with hand just like *dhol*. The *thaalhee* is made up of copper dish. Women's usually use these *daff* and *thaalhee* in every ceremony like marriage ceremony, birth and during the *dhmaal* (a folk dance).



Plate 5.5: musical instruments Daffly and cheir



Plate 5.6: Musical instruments Dhol, Daffly and Chier

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This is an ethnographic study of Sheedi community with special emphasis on women's traditional singing and dancing. The locale of study is Sheedi *paro* in village Rajo Nizamani in district Tando Muhammad Khan. Sheedis came in this village after 1830 from Africa and started to live in a separate *paro*. Sheedis still have emotional attachment with their African ancestors. The History shows that Sheedis were brought as slaves by the feudal of the area. Still, they are very poor and work as bounded labor of the *Zamindars* (landlords) and mostly work in the lands of *Zamindar* (landlords) as peasants.

When Sheedis came here, they brought old African culture but with the passage of time certain changes came in their indigenous behavioral patterns due to the process of cultural assimilation. Despite of their distinguished physical appearance from rest of the communities in the area, they share common cultural characteristics like language, dress patterns, marriage and other ceremonial rituals, economic and political organization.

As the current study documents different aspects of their cultural life, but the focus of this research was the women's traditional singing and dance. Sheedi women sing the traditional *Seharas* and perform dance while singing. People other than Sheedis invite them on their ceremonies and occasions, so they work as professional. So, this demand and interest in Sheedi musical tradition has made this tradition as an occupation in which I focused on the historical background of Sheedi women traditional singing and the transformation of women's traditional singing over generations was discussed.

For data collection, I used the different techniques of research as rapport building, participation observation, informal and un structured Interview, non

participant observation, key Informant, Socio-economic Census Survey, tape recording, focus group discussion, informal group discussion, daily diary, fields notes, jotting, log, case study and sampling.

Other communities call Sheedis as Dada due to their specific physical features. By religion they are Muslim but have two sects *Suni* and *Shia*, only the three households belong to *Shia* and other all belong to the *Sunis*. Sheedis usually live in joint families but some are living in the nuclear families as well. Economically, Sheedis are very poor people and their economic system is dependent on the decisions and policies made by the landlords as no one from Sheedi community occupies the agricultural land. So, they have to serve the rich people for their livelihood as bounded labor as they find no other ways of earning. They are working in the land of landlords as peasants, their children and females help them during cultivation. *Sad* and *ghor* are major sources of earning for the women linked with the profession of singing and dance. Folklore or oral tradition is very common among Sheedis. They have their own ways to celebrate birth, circumcision and marriage ceremonies and to participate in death rituals.

The concept of authority at community level is very similar to most of the studies done by different ethnographers. According Alan Beals (1962), in Gopalpur, there is one man who is the head of village called Gauda who is wise and admirable in every way superior to the ordinary men. The Gauda is wealthier and better educated than from any one else, in an essential part of the social order. As Joe. E. Pierce (1964) described in his study that the villagers made one headman that is called *Muhtar*, he is the headman of the community or village, who takes the decisions on the behalf of local population and the same concept of traditional authority can be found at village level in Sheedis where the *patel* makes the decision on behalf of the community. They have also the concepts of *Jamadar* and *Qazi* who take the decisions on behalf of the community in the past but a significant change can be observed in the village as this authority is no more traditional now and Alhabash welfare association takes the decisions.

There can be seen continuity and change in traditional singing and dance in Sheedis. Certain traditional dances like *jamalo* are still in practice. The *las bela* song shows their African ancestry. The musical instruments like *Muggarmman*, *chier*, *talion*, *dhol* and *daffley* (daff) and *thaalee* are traditional instruments having their roots in centuries back. They sing the traditional songs on marriages like *seharas* that is also an old tradition. But, there can be seen a great change as well in their music tradition, for instance, they play their instruments for new popular and foreign songs' tunes, and they dance on the modern music on ceremonies. This may be due to the reason that they are supposed to do so as people like the modern music more than the traditional music now and all they do is for sake for income and not for sake of their spiritual or aesthetic satisfaction.

It is concluded that Sheedis have their own distinct cultural norms, values and traditions. In modern times, they educate their children and going away from their traditional profession and they now realize that they have the right to do so in contrast to their thinking in past when they used to take education as if it would only for the elites. But, there is great hurdle in the way of educating their children because they have no proper income resources and that is why their boys are mostly shepherd and working on the land to support their families, on the other hands girls are working in the homes of rich landlords of the village.

The reason behind their poor economic conditions shows that the land ownership in such an agrarian area is in the hands of certain communities and Sheedis are deprived of this right only because they are considered as inferiors and not the original native people of the area. So, they have been kept in a deliberate "false consciousness" (Diamond 1979: 15-16) as in most of the feudal and capitalist societies and they were exploited as bounded labor.

Sheedis have great love for music and they have rich traditions of music. But, it would not be the total fact that their love for music is the only reason behind choosing it as profession, but the aesthetics of other communities living along

them, economic indications as discussed above are also the source of making music as way of income generation and all this lies in the scope of ethnomusicology.

It is obvious that Sheedis have great aesthetic and artistic sense of music particularly. The practice of this music tradition as a profession by the women of Sheedis is the women's contribution to the household economy to maintain the "social order" (Mestrovic 1992:43) and is part of the division of labor.

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GLOSSARY

Abanoo Saz	Ancestral instrument
Ajrak	Shoulder, colorful sheet
Ameers	Land lord
Anghar	Small piece of burned woods
Aqiqa	A Ritual that is performed by the parents when child is off six days
Ata Chaki	Small industry of wheat
Azan	Call for prayer
Bad Duaa	Malediction
Bajali	Electricity
Bakri	Goat
Bakhshish	given rupees
Balochi	Language
Bazi	Gambling
Ber	Ficus Indica
Bero	Wetter
Bhang	Drugs
Bhart bharan	Embroider
Bhart bhariial Gaj	Traditional clothes name
Bhogaro	Sweet dish
Biri	local cigarette
Bori	Sac
Boring	Tube well
Bowerchi	Cook
Bulbul	Night Angle
Chachi	Auntie
Chanawar ji Maani	Bread made of rice flour
Chawal	Rice
Chara ghan	Forest area
Chiki mati	Especial mud

Chund	Picking
Daaj	Dowry
Daal	Pulse
Daies	Traditional birth attendant
Dawan	Amulet
Deg	Big pot for cooking
Dhandhi	Peoples of lower Sindh
Dhein Badhan	Settlement of days for marriage
Dohiro	Name Folk Music
Dudh	Curdle water
Eid	Religious ceremony of Muslim
Eid Gah	Masque, which is for annual pray of Eid
Firqa	Sect
Gadh	Donkey
Gah karan	Grass cutter
Ganjas	Bald
Ganjo takkur	Name of hill
Gauon	Cow
Garbi	Traditional clothes, which is made with traditional way
Ghar Java	Ancestor living
Ghathi	Golden ring
Ghor	Showering of Rupees
Goad	A peace of cloth used by males to cover the lower part of their body
Gora	White people (British)
Gud kadhan	Taking of grass from crops
Guni	Name of canal
Hari	Farmer
Ibrat	Name of Sindhi newspaper

Jageerdar	Land Lord
Ketvorovo	Name of African Lasbela song
Jamalo	Sindhi folk dance
Jhirkan	Name of village
Jua	Gambling
Kabdi kabdi	Name of traditional game
Kabutar	Dove, Pigeon
Kamis	Shirt
Kandhpo	Meal which used after buried death body
Kang	Crow
Karank	Wheat
karank ji Maani	Bread made of wheat flour
Katcha	Muddy
Katchi siroon	Bricks made up of mud
Kawish	Name of Sindhi newspaper
Khaji	Date palm tree
Khalifas	Successors of pir (saint)
Khotai of Gajar	Digging of white carrot
Laari	Peoples of lower Sindh
Lasbela song	Ancestral song of Sheedis
Las bella dance	Traditional dance of Sheedis
laun	Touching heads of bride and grooms
Loroho	Hedge, Fence
Maani	Bread
Madarsas	Institutions in which children get religious knowledge
Mainh Charindar	Shepherd
Mehandi	Hina/ hydrate
Mithai	Sweet

Mohalla	Name of settlement
Molvi	Priest
Mubark	Congratulations
Mugarmaan or Masindo	Name of instrument
Mukam	Graveyard
MuLakatiar	Name of City
Mundir	Prayer place for Hindus
Naswar	Drugs
Nim	Neem tree
Nikah	formal Agreement Between two pouses
Otaq	Male guest room
Paka	Concrete
Paki sirron	Bricks
Pan	Drugs
pakorras	Pisces
Paro	Settlement
Patel	community head
Patewali	Peon
Pati	Drugs
Pinjari	Name of canal
Pir	Saint
Qabila	Tribe
Quom	Ethnic group
Quran Khani	Recitation of Holy book (Quran)
Rabi-al-awal	Name of Islamic month
Radhnoon	Kitchen
Rajo	Name of person
Reski	Miscellaneous shops
Ridh	Sheep
Shaadi	Marriage
Sabzi	Vegetables

Saej	Bed
Sahair	Rapid
Sehras	Traditional or folk songs
Salwar	A piece of cloth, which is, wears to cover the lower part of body
Sarkas	Singing and dancing party
Sataro	Bride visit to home
Sawan	Traditions
Shias	Sect of Islam
Shikar	Hunting
Sindhi	Language
Sindhi topi	Sindhi traditional cape
Siraiki	Language
Sukh	Happiness
Suni	Sect of Islam
Tal	Especial kind of clothes that take over horse in race
Talion	Clapping
Taulaka	Administrative unit
Tohar	Circumcision
Toto	Parrot
Wadero	Land Lord (Head of Village)
Waeë	Name Folk Sur
Wanwah	A way of marriage, bride sit in one room for a week
Waraas	Settlement of animals

Ustad

Teacher/Leader

Zamindars

land lard

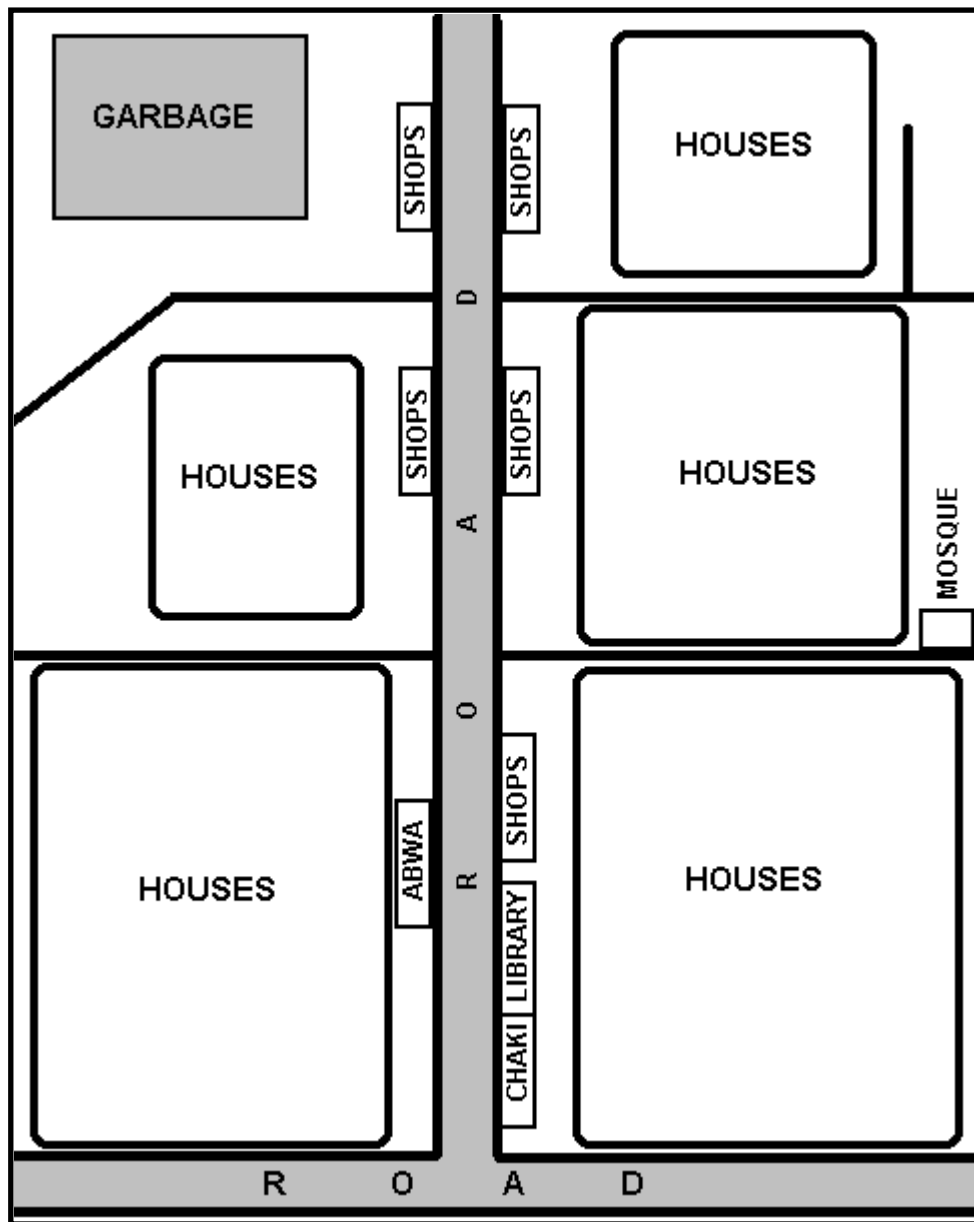
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Caste

Zulhaj

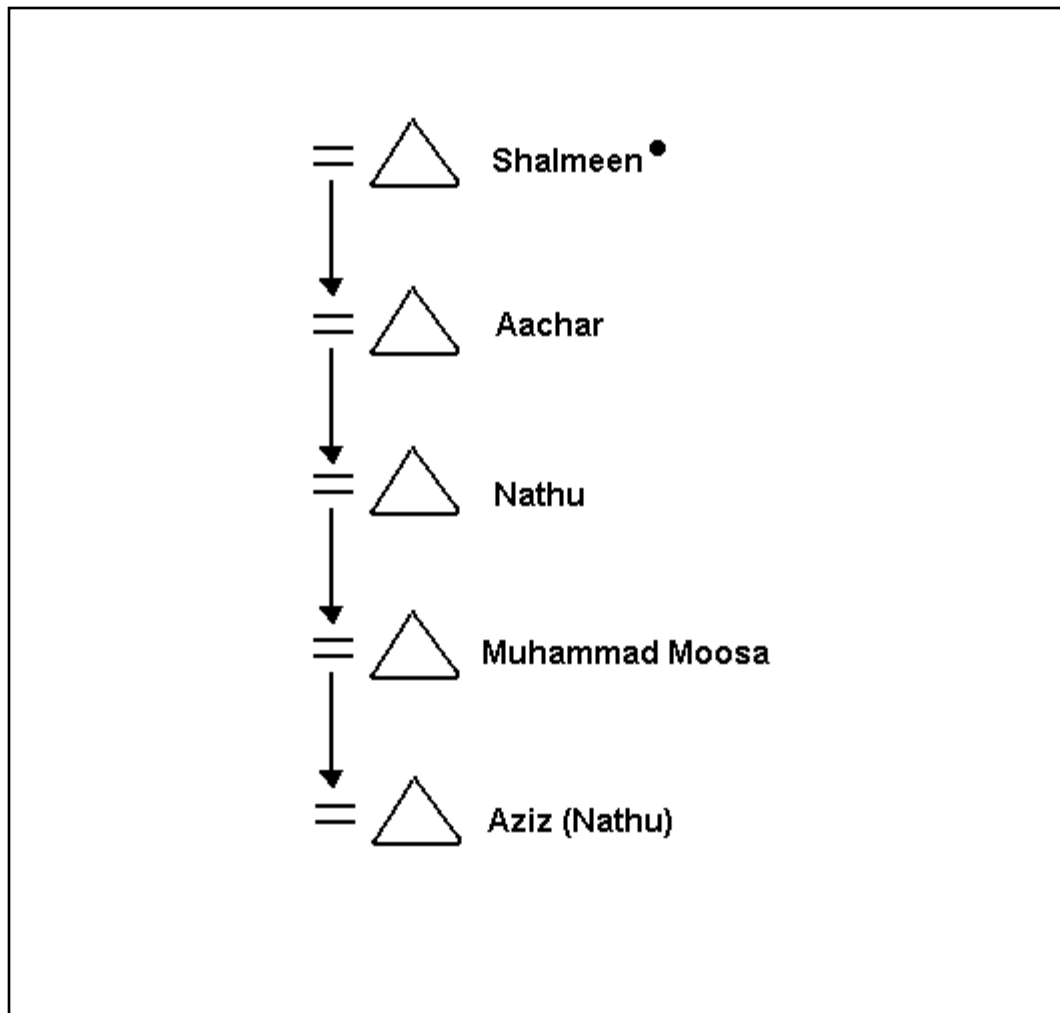
Name of Islamic month

MAPS



GUIDE MAP OF SHEEDI PARO (NEIGHBORHOOD)

**THE LINEAGE OF A SHEEDI FAMILY
(EXAMPLE FROM A CASE STUDY)**



^{*} According to Sheedi, Shalmeen was first person, Syed Pir Ali Shah brought from Goras (British)