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**A blessing or a curse? Education in the changing agrarian
landscape of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan**

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List of Acronyms

ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
AKCSP	Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKESP	Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
DJ	Diamond Jubilee
ECD	Early Childhood Education
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GB	Gilgit Baltistan
KKH	Karakorum Highway
NA	Northern Areas
NKMA	Nasir-e-Khusraw Model academy
SCO	Special Communications Organization

Glossary

<i>Baich</i>	Uncle
<i>Baqila</i>	Fava Beans
<i>Chiz</i>	What
<i>Ek-fasli</i>	Single crop
<i>Farman</i>	Decree
<i>Hale</i>	Pasture
<i>Halghisht</i>	People
<i>Kadeem wakht</i>	Old times/ Earlier times
<i>Keryar</i>	Collective work
<i>Khak daalna</i>	Apricot drying process
<i>Pai</i>	Yoghurt
<i>Patek</i>	Shawl
<i>Qurut</i>	Cheese in liquid form
<i>Rougan</i>	Butter
<i>Sakeed</i>	Women traditional cap
<i>Saram</i>	Do
<i>Shini</i>	Plot of land
<i>Shmaran</i>	Polo Ground
<i>Xun</i>	Traditional Wakhi home
<i>Yark</i>	Work
<i>Zameendor</i>	Farmer/ person who perform all the aspects of work around agriculture
<i>Zameendori</i>	Work on the land

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Abstract

This study examines how education has influenced gender and generational dynamics of agrarian change in Ghulkin, Gojal, Pakistan. Gilgit Baltistan has witnessed tremendous increase in education in recent decades. The areas particularly dominated by Ismaili communities such as Gojal valley, due to the directives and guidance of Ismaili Imam and its institutions has experienced high education expansion and high gender parity. Due to the rise in education, young male and female are migrating to other cities of Pakistan for education. I analyze the change in agrarian landscapes due to education expansion. The new emerging landscapes paint a grimly picture which is depopulated and usually shows an “ageing” population of farmers. Young people visit the family and the farm for two months in a year, moreover, a clear shift in terms of gendered attitude toward farming was also observed. Young educated males have withdrawn themselves from farming, whereas young educated women still contribute to farming and care work during their two months stay. Due to the absence of the young men, the sophisticated and intricate oasis water irrigation systems are under threat. The practice of women going to pastures has been abandoned mainly due to the new demands of education to be sedentary and to be at home. Education has been equated with social mobility but is being experienced as a contradictory resource due to uneven outcomes in terms of employment, social and cultural values.

Relevance to Development Studies

The crisis of “generational succession” in agriculture has been noticed around the world, though it remained unnoticed earlier in research and policy. As it is gaining significance these days, there are debates about who will own the farm and what will be the future of small-holder farming. There is plethora of research which argues that young people are not interested in taking up agricultural work as it is laborious, backward and unattractive. However, it remains less clear that why and how young people develop such sort of understanding? Why agriculture has been looked down upon by the youth needs to be explored to answer who will be the future farmers? Moreover, should generation be looked at in a homogenous way? Generation itself is gendered, so it is important to look at the future farmers also in terms of gender and not to put a blind eye to it. What is the importance of education in this changing picture of agriculture and the mindset of the youth, what role does it play? More importantly, the abandonment of farming by rural youth also point out towards the debate around small scale agriculture vs large scale agriculture.

For developing countries, such as Pakistan, which has a youth bulge, as 60% of its population is aged between 15-24, and is more educated as compare to their previous generations, the question becomes more crucial about the future of farming. I attempt to understand the tension and relation between education and agriculture and their incompatibility and hope that it will contribute in understanding the issue of abandonment of farming by the rural youth in more critical manner.

Keywords

Education a contradictory resource, Gender and Generation, Agrarian change, Rural youth, Ismailism, Northern areas of Pakistan, Gilgit Baltistan, Gojal Valley, Middle peasant

Chapter 1

Introduction: A remote Pakistani village and the education revolution

“If a man had two children, one a boy and the other a girl, and if he could only afford to give education to one, I would say that he must give preference to the girl.” (Karim al- Husseini, Aga Khan IV cited in Felmy 1996: 79)

“The literacy rate in Hunza and Gojal is over 90%. It’s a step forward for everybody, especially for the young generation. They have become more smart and are going in different fields all over the world. You can see, we are not only in Pakistan but going everywhere in the world, US, Canada and London. Yes, from this village, students and families are going everywhere in the world. Not for visiting or for visas but for education, on scholarships. Ismaili people give lot of importance to education. (24-year-old- male from Ghulkin Village¹)

During my research field work in Ghulkin village, in summer 2019, I went to meet Zahra², in her home at 11:00AM in the morning. Zahra a 26-year-old female, doing her masters in sociology from a renowned public university in Lahore had returned to the village during her summer vacations. On reaching her home, I met Maria, the younger sister of Zahra. Maria was dressed up in black baggie T-shirt (with a logo of music rocks) and faded blue jeans, half up top knot bun in her hairs and a warm welcoming smile, which exposed her back teeth of the upper jaw. We greeted each other in the traditional *Wakhi* style. I took her hand and kissed on top of it and then she kissed on mine in return. Maria is in her teens and studying in the high school in Gulmit, a nearby village. I inquired about Zahra from her, she said, Zahra is busy and will come in a while. We sat and waited for Zahra but meanwhile, we started conversating. I asked Maria what she liked to do? Maria replied, that she really liked to sing. After appreciating her, I questioned her, what else she likes to do, then she answered, she likes to play football. I was impressed and could not resist asking her further, what about agriculture? How much do you like it? Maria said, she did not like farming, cutting the grass or any other chores linked with agriculture. I asked her why? Maria said: “When I cut the grass, it leaves the green colour on my hands and the hands stay dirty for days. It does not go away immediately, no matter how many times one washes the hand. After this, when I go to school then my fellows get to know that, I had been cutting the grass and doing farming. I feel ashamed. That’s why I don’t like agriculture.”

The two quotations above and the small vignette capture the context and puzzle of my research and took me on the research journey which I embarked on Gilgit- Baltistan. The first quotation is a decree from the current Ismaili Imam, who heavily emphasized education and particularly female education. The second quote is from a young male, in the small village Ghulkin, who moved to the US for his studies. His quotation highlights the education expansion among young people and its importance. The brief encounter with Maria brings out social and cultural context of the modern education which highlights young generation’s aspirations and attitude toward farming.

¹ 2nd FGD on 06.08.19 in Majeed Ben, Nakhcharay Diour.

² To facilitate confidentiality and ethics, the names of the individuals have been changed.

I hear and read over and over in Pakistani newspapers “the success story”³ of high literacy rate and education expansion in Hunza. I was so curious and tempted to learn about this place and the educational revolution over there. When I started reading and researching about this back in 2017, I found that in the global development literature, Gilgit-Baltistan has been symbolized as the ‘successes of development’, an example of ‘progress’ and ‘modernity’ on achieving high literacy (Varley 2015).

The educational landscape of Gilgit-Baltistan stands “paradoxical and an exception to the rest of the Pakistan” in terms of educational achievements, particularly in terms of high literacy, regional rates of female school enrolments, and attendance (Benz 2014). The region shows an educational transition from “illiteracy to master’s degrees.” (Beg 2009, Benz 2013a, Felmy 1996, 2006). This has not been the case for the rest of the Pakistan. How had this educational achievement been accomplished, is not the aim of this paper as it has been extensively researched (Benz 2014, Benz 2013a, Felmy 2006). Neither, it is an ethnography of schools and examination of classroom practices, dynamics and syllabi.

Rather, this research is an attempt to understand the consequences of high literacy and education expansion on a society which was based on subsistence farming – irrigated agriculture and animal husbandry in high pastures, as recent as 1980s when the Karakorum Highway (KKH) was formally opened. This research intends to investigate the impact of higher education on agriculture. How education has influence gender and generation dynamics of agrarian change in Gojal? The research puzzle deals with the contradictions between, on one hand, “progressive results in education” and on the other, the migration of educated youth from the area.

Gojal valley is experiencing very high rural-urban migration. A large proportion of the population has either moved or are absent from the village for educational, employment or business purposes (Benz 2013a). The World Bank (2011) also observed a strong and fast trend of outmigration from Gilgit-Baltistan, which is equally true for the Gojal region. How are young people are engaging with farming? What is the importance of education in changing agrarian landscape⁴? To what extent education so progressive? Since, young people are busy and involve with the education then who is doing agriculture? This paper aims to critically investigate the changing dynamics in farming because of education and its relationship with gender and generation.

Although education is deeply and thoroughly entrenched in social and physical landscape of Pakistan but its critical examination and role in social and economic terms remains unstudied (Bashir 2013). The shortage of critical examination of education and its societal relations in post-colonial countries, has also been highlighted by Levinson and Holland (1996). This research attempts to contribute to critical understanding and role of education in social and economic terms.

Education has been put at the heart of the development by the Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen, first through human development approach measured through human development index (HDI) and later it has been rearticulated in much more sophisticated and

³(<https://www.dawn.com/news/844384/education-in-hunza>, <https://www.youlinmagazine.com/story/stories-from-the-roof-of-the-world/NTQw>)

⁴By agrarian landscape, I am referring to social relations of production in and around farming. I am not using the term landscape in geographical and spatial sense.

philosophical manner in terms of “development as freedom” (Sen 2000). Both frameworks suggested by Sen, argues that through education, choices of the individuals expand. It is not the choice only which expand but also the ability to turn these choices into reality. As mentioned in the book “... the freedoms that people actually enjoy to lead the kind of lives they have reason to value” (Dreze and Sen 1995:13).

In the contemporary era, where mass education is expanding, and while neoliberal policies are simultaneously constraining the opportunities for social mobility through formal employment and in context of my research (high mountain farming and pastoralism) bases for social reproduction are increasingly difficult to maintain. These contradictions around education have pushed me to question the optimism of education as a pathway to development. Jeffrey et al. (2008:3) critiqued Sen’s approach, as it did not pay attention to “... how power and culture mediate people’s access to the freedom that education provides.” The idea, that education is inherently beneficial has been critiqued by Illich in his seminal work, *Deschooling Society* (1972). As per Sen’s idea that social change and empowerment are embedded in education and can be easily “unlocked” if given the right conditions has been questioned by Morarji (2014a: 20) “what kind of change is envisioned and experienced. To what end does education enable agency and choice? What kind of lives people have reason to value?” How education is acting as a ‘freedom’ and increasing the ‘capability’ of the young people by migration to the city are questions of interest to this research. It also seeks to understand the social reproduction of young farmers, the gendered relations and attitude of young people toward farming.

For these tasks, I draw my theoretical framework from Marxist political economy of agrarian change that focuses on “the social relations and dynamics of production and reproduction, property and power in agrarian formations and their processes of change, both historical and contemporary” (Bernstein, 1: 2010). For understanding the agrarian formation and agrarian change in relation to gender and generation dimension, the four key questions of political economy by Bernstein (2010), “who owns what? (social relations of property both in terms of gender and generation), Who does what? (social division of labour), Who gets what? (social division of the fruits of labour), What do they do with it? (social relations of consumption, reproduction and accumulation)” are also infused in conceptual framework.

The theoretical framework will further be built up on the issue of gender and generation dimension. Bridget O’Laughlin (2009) argues that in critical agrarian studies, issues linked to class, political economy, accumulation and distribution are embedded in gender dynamics. Without incorporation of the gender dimensions understanding of the agrarian question remains highly partial or wrong.

In context of this research, the conceptualization “education as contradictory resource” (Levinson and Holland 1996:1; Jeffrey et al, 2008:210) is very useful, as it helps in capturing the lack of correlation between education and employment. However, it also denotes the ontological break, change in socio-cultural norms and values brought by education, and how they resonate and contradicts with changing conditions of rural life (Vasavi 2006), and local negotiations of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ (Lukose 2005) differently experienced in present-day South Asia in relation to class, caste, gender, place and age.

1.1 Research Question

How **education** has influenced **gender and generation dynamics** of **agrarian change** in Gojal, Upper Hunza?

1.1.1 Sub-research questions

1. How were gender relations before the rise of education and how have they been changed by education?
2. What is the role of education in fostering social mobility or social reproduction across generations?
3. What are the aspirations of students related to farming? Why are they aspiring to other business but not agriculture?

1.2 Situating the research problem – Background and context

Gilgit Baltistan (GB) formerly known as Northern areas (NA) of Pakistan are uniquely situated geographically between China, India and Afghanistan. The area covers three mountain ranges: the Karakorum, the Himalayas and the Hindukush. GB covers an area of 72,496 sq.km. This region has a unique status in political constitution of Pakistan. It does not have any legal identity as it is considered as the part of the undivided Jammu and Kashmir that was taken by Pakistan during the war with India in 1947. Even it is clear from the name, “Northern Areas”, as it does not signify any particular region. The people of GB do not have the legislative rights to vote and elect their representatives in National Assembly of Pakistan. During the 1990’s a council named as Northern areas legislative council was formed, which used to elect body of 24 elected representatives for all five districts. The speaker of the council held the position of Provincial Minister, whereas the power still remains with federal government regarding budget or any decision making (Serin 2010: 354-355). The status of the region was changed into a province in 2009 and renamed as GB but was not given the full autonomy to this day.

This area has extreme and harsh climate with different climate zones and known as cold desert because of very low rainfall, below 150mm (Kreutzmann 1993). This area is famous for its scenery, adventure tourism, ethnic and linguistic diversity (Kreutzmann 1993, Ochiai 2009) and has been advertised for tourism through different facts such as “the largest glaciers outside polar region”, “home of world’s second highest peak (K2)” (Sökefeld 2014).

This region has witnessed interesting sociohistorical and socio-political times from precolonial to postcolonial (Kreutzmann 1993). Earlier *Mirs* and *Rajas* use to rule the small princely states in the region, however, in 1974, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto abolished the small state system and the region became part of federal government of Pakistan (ibid). These areas were integrated into Pakistan through the construction of the Karakoram Highway colloquially known as the KKH. It was officially opened in 1978 for all sort of transportation. Since the opening of KKH the area has gone through tremendous changes such as change from subsistence economy to market economy, fast growing tourism, higher education expansion (Benz 2013a, 2014) high number of NGOs and rapid changes in people’s way of life

(Allan 1989, Kamal and Nasir 1998, Kreutzman 1991, 1993, 2006,) along with socio-ecological (MacDonald 2010) and religiopolitical changes (Mostowlansky 2016).

The opening of the region has been called an “ethnographic museum”, it was assumed that culture, nature, and environment had been kept somewhat intact because of its long isolation (Sökefeld 1997). However, the focus of this research is not to look into “intact cultures”.

GB is administratively divided into three divisions. This research focuses on Hunza district of the Gilgit division. Within Hunza, it particularly looks into small village Ghulkin, Upper Hunza, Gojal valley. In the upper part of the valley lives the Wakhi⁵ community who migrated from the Afghan Wakhan to Hunza in quest of refuge; they speak Wakhi language, which is an Eastern Iranian dialect (Kreutzman 1993). The number of inhabitants in Gojal are 20,000⁶ and are dominantly Wakhi speaker, belong to Shia Ismaili sect of Islam and follow Aga Khan IV Shah Karim al Hussaini as their Imam (Sökefeld 2012).

NA of Pakistan are experiencing a very high and rapid education expansion as compare to rest of Pakistan (Benz 2013a, 2014). Benz (2014) mentions in his monograph that Gojal show an adult literacy rate of 69.1%, which not only cross the average literacy rate of Pakistan (43.9%). This is even higher than the many big cities of Punjab. Such as the average literacy rate for Lahore is (63.4%), Faisalabad (63.9%), Gujranwala (60.4%), Multan (57.8%) and literacy rate for Islamabad the capital of Pakistan is slightly higher (72.4%) than Gojal, upper Hunza. Moreover, the current net enrolment (NER) for primary level is 66%, whereas for Gilgit-Baltistan it is 83 percent. It has also achieved the goal of universal primary education (Benz 2014). Another important aspect to highlight is, it is not only high literacy rate, but also high gender parity has been noticed in Gojal (Benz 2013a:130, Sökefeld 2012). The region has also produced extremely high number of university graduates apart from the fact, that there was no single university until 2002 (Benz 2014: 7). Student have been going to down country⁷ (Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad etc.) to enrol in universities. Butz and Cook (2016) notes that Gojal is one of the most literate area in Pakistan.

Benz (2016) argues that Gojal is experiencing very high level of development “virtually unparalleled in Pakistan’s other mountain areas and rural periphery”. However, at the same time, Gojal is experiencing very high rural-urban migration. Higher proportion of the population has either moved or are absent from the village for educational, employment or business opportunities (Benz 2013b).

The expansion of education and ability of the community to send children to school is crafting a different reality and changing the agriculture (means of livelihoods). Hemani and Warrington (1996:12), in their research find out that, women who were educated and earned a living are excused from the farming. It shifts the burden on the shoulders of older women. Similarly, young men are also turning away from the farm labour, which adds the burden on the older men, who helped the women in farming tasks. Moreover, young educated men and women show less interest in farming which puts the burden on older generation and leads to “ageing” of agriculture sector (Gloekler and Seeley 2007: 131). These facts about the

⁵ “Wakhi are the descendants of the Afghans. Wakhi community is found in the four countries of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, China and Pakistan.”

⁶ Some documents give a figure of more than 25,000, inhabitants but this probably includes people who have migrated from Gojal and now live in different cities of Pakistan.

⁷ “This term was used in colonial times to distinguish the in-group of Hunzukuts and neighbouring mountain people. Nowadays the inhabitants of the NA subsume the rest of Pakistan under the term 'down country'” (Kreutzmann 1991).

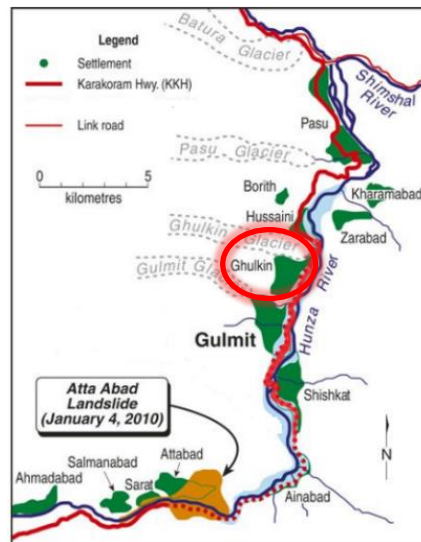
region sets the stage for this research. Rather than just celebrating education, it is important to investigate how traditional society and the fate of agriculture is changing in NA of Pakistan due to increase in education.

Map 1.1
Location of NA of Pakistan, Gojal valley is highlighted



Source: Adapted from Ochiai 2009.

Map 1.2
Location of Ghulkin Village



Source: Adapted from Butz and Cook 2016.

1.2.1 Research Site

This research has been conducted in the small village Ghulkin located in Gojal, Upper Hunza. It is located at a distance of 138 kilometres from Gilgit city. It is linked with KKH through a 3 kilometres metalled road. The village is surrounded by two glaciers, Ghulkin and Gulmit Yaz (Jaffer et al. 1998). It's a small size village with 1300 people in 185 households (Social committee Ghulkin 2019) and is mainly dominated by Ismaili community. Ghulkin

has been chosen for few reasons; mainly it is slightly off road from the main KKH and apparently, do not have similar road and tourist traffic as Gulmit (nearby village on the main KKH), secondly in literature, it has been argued that it holds a share of 7% master's degree holders (Beg 2009: 62, Benz 2014). So, I wanted to know how education (with such high tertiary levels) is causing social differentiation and influencing gender and generation dimension in agrarian change.

1.2.2 The Ismaili Community – Who are Ismailis?

Ismailis or Ismailiyya is a sect of Shia Islam. The one's who believe Jafar al- Sadiq the sixth Imam [by Nizari Ismaili reckoning], when his son and heir Ismail died before him, the dispute arose who will be the successor. Those who believed that it was Ismail, become the Ismailiyya (Daftary 1990:1). The followers of Ismailism are called Ismailis and they follow Aga Khan as their social, political and spiritual leader. The official Ismaili views states that the Aga Khan, as “a direct lineal descendent of the Prophet Muhammad, through his daughter Fatima and her husband Ali bin Abu Talib, the Prophet's cousin is the 49th hereditary Imam” (University of Central Asia 2004: 17 cited in Steinberg 2011). However, the historical record remains inconclusive on the issue (Daftary 1990). The current Imam Karim al-Hussainin also known as Aga Khan IV lives in Aiglemont, near Paris, where his secretariat is located. The Aga Khan issues regular farmans (decree) that guides and advise his followers. Farmans are issued once in a week and can be spoken or sometimes in written form. Ismailis in Canada and in Pakistan may hear the same farman (Steinberg 2011: 104).

The religious discourse in Ismailism, in the last century, has been deeply concerned with modernity and “responding to its perceived social exigencies” (Steinberg 2011: 11). Farmans have been characterized by Boivin (2003) as constituting “*par excellence l'instrument de la modernisation* [the signature instrument of modernization]”. All the Ismailis are expected to pay a tithe of 12.5 percent to the Aga Khan. Another important and central thing in Ismailism is *Jamaat Khana*, it's a place where both women and men offer their prayers and all the matters and issues are discussed here, non – Ismailis are not allowed inside *Jamaat Khana* (Steinberg 2011:10). The *Jamaat Khana* in Ghulkin village was built in 1964 by the community (Jaffer et al. 1998) but it remained a black box for me as I never ventured into it as per the rules.

Figure 1.1
Welcome our Beloved Hazir Imam, Ghulkin



Source: Fieldwork 2019.

This picture was taken in *Shawaran* (polo ground) during my fieldwork. On the mountain, it says in English: “Welcome our beloved Hazir Imam”. This statement was written down on the ceremony of Imam day, which is a big event for Ismailis and particularly for Nizari Ismailis. It is celebrated on the 11th of July every year to mark the day that present (*Haziri*) Imam succeeded in taking Imam from his predecessor. The purpose of showing is that Ismaili identity and Ismailism plays a significant role in development and education of the community. This statement was written in English not in local (Wakhi) language because the Imam repeatedly emphasize on the importance of English language and ask the followers to acquire proficiency in English. In a farman Aga Khan Announced:

“... the first point with regard to your careers that I would make is, when you are taking English as a subject, work hard at that subject, read in English, learn in English, think in English. Because although Urdu is necessary for your overall communication, it is not a language which will allow your continuous professional growth in medicine, or in sciences or indeed in banking or finance or whatever it may be. The specialized vocabularies of the English language today are important for any Jamat in any part of the world. So, I would suggest that you look at English as being a very important subject for the future. (cited in: Harlech-Jones et al. 2003: 198-199)”

This religious dimension of Ismailism not only creates a particular identity but also shapes their vision and understanding of development.

1.3 Research Methodology⁸

As Batool (2019) mentions, “the research question deals with a social phenomenon, social relations and lived experiences, so, this complexity can be well captured by qualitative methods. Under the umbrella of qualitative methods, I include interviewing (in-depth and semi-structure interviews, open ended questions), focus group discussion, participant observation and an ethnographic orientation. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:1) ethnography is referred as an “integration of both first-hand empirical investigation and theoretical and comparative interpretation of social organization and culture”. The choice of employing ethnography comes from the fact that the social world and relations are based on complex reality and cannot be understood in simple causal relationships or under universal law. The human relations develop on social and cultural basis meaning there are values, beliefs, rules, intentions and discourses (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:7). Ethnographic approach assumes that production of knowledge is situated, embodied and partial (Huijsmans 2019, Turner 2010)”.

The choice of employing ethnographic orientation in place of full ethnography is due to the time constraint. However, ethnographic orientation guides and provides with rich and thick descriptions and depthness to understand the research puzzle. Ethnographic orientation refers to incorporation of “principle underpinning of ethnography” (Huijsmans 2019), active participant observation of the researcher and full immersion into the field. Understanding rhythms of life and knowledge production from people’s experience. According to Robson, (2002:186) ethnographic orientation explains “the terms that the participants themselves used to describe what is going on”. Ethnographic orientation implies that ethnographic method is not just a tool for data generation but a form of social interaction which informs the researcher that how the research participants or research subject understand various issues (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 14).

One of the main research techniques used was participant observation, which means researcher itself is a tool for collecting and analyzing the data with its own experience (Bernard 2011: 270). Participant observations requires involvement with the people under studying, in form of going out and staying out, learning the language and culture of the community and building rapport with them. Building the rapport in such a way that “people go about their business as usual when you show up” (Bernard 2011: 258).

Primary and empirical data was collected through a short fieldwork (2 months July – August 2019). I lived in a small traditional *Wakbi* house with a local family. I conducted 20 interviews (10 with males and 10 with females) who were still engaged with farming, along with that 6 FGD (3 males and 3 females in each group), mostly who were studying in universities or just finished their university degree, were conducted. The purpose of choosing the university student was basically to know their professional choices and why were they opting that but not agriculture. The time of the fieldwork was also important, because this is the only time when young people returned to the village from the cities. Otherwise they live in other cities entire year because of their studies. I also conducted interviews with teachers in the DJ and NKMA school. I had informal conversations and discussions with important stakeholders

⁸ Some parts of this section draw from my own final essay written for ethnography class, cited as (Batool 2019) used for Ethnography class assignment (unpublished work).

in the village. Secondary data was collected from the study of relevant literature and reports produced by AKRSP, AKESP and AKDN.

A daily ethnographic journal was maintained throughout the research which recorded the notes from the interviews, participatory observations and reflections on the research process. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. I tried to learn the *Wakhi* language as suggested by (Bernard 2011) to build the rapport with the community. I spent 2 hours daily in the morning with my host for learning the language. It helped me in gaining the trust of the community and easily getting along with them. The elders who could not speak Urdu language felt happy and had encouraging attitude that I have tried to learn the language.

Because of employing ethnographic orientation and staying in a local *Wakhi* house for 6 weeks, I was able to build an “intimate” connection not only with the family I stayed with, but also with the village community. The purpose was to understand the transforming agrarian landscape and changes in society from women, men and young people’s perspective. What are their aspirations regarding agriculture? How education is helping or obstructing their path toward taking up agriculture as a profession. To engage with the research participants on a closer level, the particular form of ethnography such as “everyday context” was taken as noted by (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 3).

The “everyday context” and the habit of journal keeping informed me about the routine and life of a *Wakhi* household and small farmer, their interaction not only within the household but also with the community. My host acted as an important gatekeeper in Ismaili community. As there were many weddings in summer, it was also an important opportunity to introduced myself to the community and integrate with them. I was able to build a strong bond with the village people and had an in-depth exposure and insider knowledge of the community. I went out with young people (both male and female) to know their way of socialization and participation in the village life and work, and later conducted FGD with them to learn their perceptions about social changes taking place because of education and its effect on agriculture and their daily life.

However, having time from young people was really challenging. They were always busy with different activities. For example, during my stay in the village, there was a cricket tournament in the village for more than 4 weeks and after that there was futsal tournament for 10 days. Both events were for males, so all the males of the village stayed busy with the organization and participation in the games. Girls also participated in organization and administration but they were also helping the mothers in picking the apricots and collecting the grass. Figure 1.1 below shows the landscape of the village with Passu peaks in the background.

Figure 1.2
Landscape of Ghulkin village



Source: Fieldwork 2019.

1.3.1 Positionality

I am a 29-year-old, middle class, urban, Muslim woman, who has studied and worked in one of the top private university in Lahore, and after that had a privilege to study in Europe and have no experience with farming. My presence in the village was identified as “educated”, “stable in terms of social status”, and as an outsider. All these things indicate that I envisioned and embodied a “particular vision of educated accomplishment”. I had difficulty sometimes in discussing the nature and importance of education, employment and withdrawal of young people from agriculture. Because, my presence in the village itself was presenting a form and power of education. To address this difficulty, I attempted to learn the *Wakhi* language and adopted *Wakhi* way of life in terms of greeting village fellows (elders and youngsters), food habits and also participated in all household and agricultural chores (cutting and transporting the grass on the back, picking apricots, watering the fields) not only with the family I lived but also helped the village community. The intention of doing this was first to experience the hard labour associated with agriculture but also to draw attention away from my position of “an educated, accomplished outsider”.

1.4 Chapter Overview

This research paper is structure into five chapters, including this introduction and followed by a conclusion. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework which combines the critical education studies, critical agrarian studies with gender and generation dimension. Chapter 3 gives the context of agricultural practices and division of labour. It also covers the educational landscape while tracing the historical background of education in GB. Chapter 4 analyses the changes in gender relations because of the rise of education, the role of education in fostering social mobility and social reproduction across generations which is further followed by aspiration related to farming. Finally, Chapter 5 covers conclusion.

Chapter 2

Theory: Weaving the frames with threads of critical education, agriculture and gender and generation...

“I was educated for the wrong place” (Wallace Stegner 1962:24, quoted in Creed and Ching 1997:10).

“A crisis in farm succession? will there be a next generation of smallholder farmers?” (Leavy, J. and N. Hossain 2014)

The first quote is from famous rural Western American novelist about his education experience. Corbett (2007) argues that education is “key disciplining force in modernizing rural people and place” and is an investment in “mobility capital” which prepares them to leave. However, the second quote highlights a wider dilemma of young people not taking up farming. This chapter tries to look into the debate that education creates modernity, inequality and take young people out of farming. All over the world, smallholder farming populations are ageing and many of them appear to have no successor, suggesting a potential crisis in the social reproduction of agrarian communities (FAC 2010). The question arises why there is no successor and why are the educated youth turning away from agriculture?

Leavy and Hossain (2014) in their extensive research in three different continents, Asia, Africa and Latin America in 23 peri-urban, urban and rural communities, with 1500 people find out that dominantly young people aspire to work in formal sector employments and acquire modern urban lifestyles and are generally “reluctant” in opting farming as a profession, it tends to show a “generational break” because of acquisition of formal education which creates a rapid change and “break in family and community traditions of small scale farming”.

White (2012) argues that young people are increasingly less interested in staying in countryside. Because of this, there are less people to work in rural areas as the able bodied and working age groups have migrated to the cities (Juma 2007). The current rural youth is much more educated than their previous generations and their age prolong as they remain enrolled in education for long (White 2012).

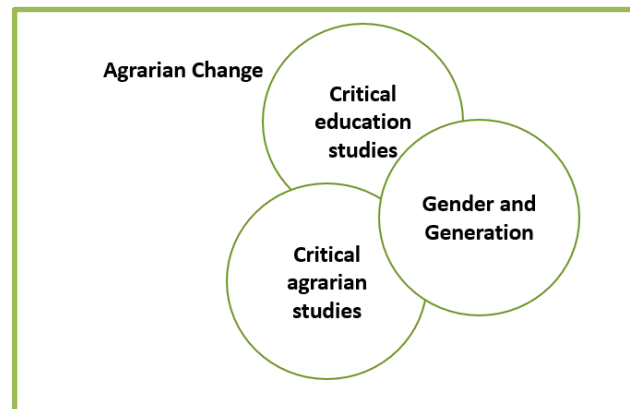
White (2012: 10) highlights that:

“Various studies have noted how education as currently practised (particularly secondary education) contributes to a process of ‘deskilling’ of rural youth in which farming skills are neglected and farming itself downgraded as an occupation.”

Biriwasha (2012) argues that formal schooling system does not encourage young people to become farmers, it adds to the downgrading of rural life and is an “assault on rural culture”. Similarly, Katz (2004) in her fifteen yearlong field work in Sudan’s blue Nile region found that those children who had gone to school and are trained by modern education found themselves “ill-prepared for the kinds of work available locally, and inadequately educated for other kinds of employment”.

Why do educated youth not want to engage in farming? Why are young people, both women and men reluctant and shy away from the farming needs? This needs to be unpacked. White (2012:9) suggests that young women and men need to be researched in their own right not as mere objects. To understand this shift of young people from agriculture, importance and role of education in changing agrarian landscape requires combining the critical education studies with critical agrarian studies and including gender and generation dimensions for a holistic understanding of the issue (White 2012).

Figure 2.1
Combination of theoretical approaches to understand agrarian change



Source: Author's own (2019).

2.1 Critical Education Studies

2.1.1 Education – “A Contradictory Resource”

In the literature of critical education studies there has been long standing concerns about the uneven relationship of education and social reproduction. Levinson and Holland (1996: 1-54) in their introduction to the edited volume of *“Cultural production of the educated person”* argues, that modern school education reproduce inequalities of capitalism. The bases of contemporary critical education studies find its roots in the Marxian theories of reproduction in 1970s, such as the work of Althusser (1971) on “ideological state apparatus”, similarly Bourdieu’s (2010) seminal work on cultural capital and Willis (1977) critical engagement with “cultural production”. Rousmaniere et al. (1997:6) identify education as a contradictory project, that

“State schooling in capitalist societies form an important set of sites where inclusionary invitations are differently ordered, and where “freedoms” are made available in ways that claim generality and equality, while producing and reproducing relations of power and difference”.

Education has been framed as a social project and experience with a vision of “being” and “becoming” or the desire to “become somebody” meaning, associating one’s self with certain values which confuse and obscure the links between what society offers and what individuals choose (Luttrell 1996:93). Morarji (2014a: 4) argues that education has a “longstanding vision of individual accomplishment and social progress”.

The history of modern education in Pakistan can be traced back to the colonial times, a project which was deployed by the British to turn the governed subjects into “modern subjects”. Under the rule of the *Raj*, indigenous and traditional educational institutes were replaced with modern education (Mir 2010). Dharampal (2007) in his collected writings on indigenous education in India: volume 3, writes that central project of education was “civilizing” the subjects and keeping the equilibrium between inclusion and exclusion by “selective socialization into Western political and economic cultures”. Education was fundamentally used for the state formation during the colonial time and continued to work on the same lines during the postcolonial times as well.

Education is strongly tied to state led vision of modern development, socio economic progress and nationalism. In contemporary Pakistan, education and particularly English language has been seen as a key to social mobility and access to middle class lives of expanded ‘choices’ (Coleman 2011). In words of the World Bank, “education is development” (cited in Jeffery et al. 2008: 207). This is built on the idea of modernization and formation of ‘human capital’ through curriculum and the policies build on the dualism of “developed” and “backward” and aims to equip with such set of skills, attitudes and values which are necessary to “achieve material and cultural modernity” (Morarji 2014a). Education also trains people with “moral narratives of educated distinction” (Jeffery et al. 2008) as a “set of ideas how to think and act” (Ahearn 2001).

Development as freedom (Sen 2000) and its relation with education presents a so-called critical narrative in comparison to “mainstream, market centred view on development” however, this perspective take the link of education, employment and development positive and for granted and not pay serious attention into the contested practices and varied results of the process (Jeffery et al. 2008, Morarji 2010). Sen’s idea of freedom as development and education as a passport to social mobility and employment has been critiqued by Morarji (2014a: 24), she argues that education not only fails to provide the desirable employment but also builds a vision, attitude, skills and values which are contradictory and odd to the rural agrarian context.

Gupta (1998) in his seminal work, also makes a similar comparison that, “the rationale of the modern education devalues the agriculture in material and cultural terms”. Moreover, it creates a “backward” image of rural space and rural work. Processes like these reproduce and strengthens the assumptions regarding the “obsolescence of peasantry and small-scale agrarian production as a part of the trajectory of modern development” (McMichael 2008).

Creed and Ching (1997:10) highlights the importance of “educational displacement” and its impact on the situation of the rural communities. They describe education as “tantamount to urbanization of the mind”. One of the major effects of modern education is, the division it creates between mental and manual work, where mental work is highly desirable and manual work and labour as highly undesirable (Kumar 2000, Balagopalan 2002 and Sarangapani 2003).

As per the discourses and promises of education, it seems as a way out from “rural backwardness” and a direct entry into the modern economy. However, Morarji (2010) argues in her ethnographic research in North India that, education cannot only failed in fulfilling the desirable choices but also cause a rural decline by “closing off cultural and material options for rural community”. She further argues that, there are particular expectations which are

embodied in education, it looks for *particular kind of change*, it gives an imagination and vision of modernity and development and in contrast to a way of life which is linked to the past is “backward”. The educated person and its culture do not only come from disciplining and domination but also from everyday practices and experiences which resembles with the colonial history.

Educations embodies the vision of development and progress. Successful person is conceptualized as an educated one involved in non-manual work, which has serious implications in sustenance of agrarian economy. Due to the change in evaluation of work not only the aspirations changes but also the gender and generational relationship in rural agrarian context where engagement in household and fields is central to maintaining social relationships. Morarji (2014b) describes in her research that young people have strong desire for employment – *Naukri ka craze* and aspire a future without manual work and farming. People value education and look at it as means of social mobility.

Through this research I am taking a critical examination of education looking at how education involves contradictory experiences and evaluations, unevenness and tensions which are usually missing in the dominant discourse of education and development. While being critical, I am not discrediting the knowledge, skills and cultural capital linked with modern education as it can be valuable in people’s lives.

2.2 Gender and Generation

Why gender and generation as a theoretical frame?

The dimension of gender and particularly generation has been neglected in the literature on agrarian and environmental transformations (Park and White 2017: 1103). Gender and generation are two key intersecting dimensions of rural social differentiation and inclusion/exclusion alongside class and ethnicity. Gender and generation are one of the two main structuring dimensions of rural households. Both are essential for understanding processes of social reproduction in rural society. In order to understand the agrarian change with respect to the change young women and men experience, it is important to take into account gender and generations. Alanan (2001:13) explains generation as:

“the social (or macro-) structure that is seen to distinguish and separate children [and youth] from other social groups, and to constitute them as social category through the work of particular relations of division, difference and inequality between categories.”

Alanan’s definition of generation, it points toward understanding youth’s lives and problems in terms of their relationships with *other* generations. In doing so, social organization of generational relations needs to be explored as well. Morarji (2014a, 2014b) shows the narratives of educated youth, that demonstrate gendered and generational tensions around economic and moral aspects of social reproduction.

White (2012:2) raises the question about the farming futures and increased lack of interest of young women and men in farming and asks for the deconstruction of this aspect of rural youth. This dimension of gender and generation means looking at the relations and tensions

which play out not only in smallholder farm and households but also in relation to class and labour regimes (Park and White 2017: 1105). Looking at generation and gender not only helps in understanding agri-food sector but also the debate around small scale agriculture vs large scale and intergenerational tensions.

The assumption that “local communities” and “local people” are homogenous with same interests, identities and aspirations brings serious issues and limitations in analysis (Borras and Franco 2013). The local communities are far from being homogenous, as they are differentiated on the basis of social differences such as age, gender, sexuality, class and religion. Rocheleau et al. (1996: 4) highlights that processes such as access and control of land and ecological change, which further determine that men and women struggling for nature and environment are shaped and fundamentally being shaped by power relations which are embedded in intersecting differences (Harcourt 2018). Authors such as, Park et al. (2015: 587) argue that gender, age and ethnicity are the factors which determine if he/she will be included or excluded from the capitalist agriculture and how.

In spite of being on the forefront and the productive contributions of women, they are being discriminated in accessing, controlling and owning the land. These discriminations usually come from social, cultural, customary and statutory law. For example, in Gilgit- Baltistan women do not have any right to inherit the land and have no say in all the land transaction. According to the customary law, the land is directly transferred to the male decedent and in the absence of the male, it is given to the brothers or to the other male cousins (Yousuf and Assan 2018). This makes women not only vulnerable but also discourage and affect them negatively. It highlights that gender perspective is crucial to understanding of the agrarian change. The Invisibilization of women’s role both in production and social reproduction contributes to “commodification and appropriation at the service of the state” (Razavi 2007).

Cornwall (2007: 77) highlights that using gender as analytical category calls for “a closer analysis of the power relations that create and sustain social injustice – and on those social practices including those of developing agencies, that can offer liberating alternatives.”

Deere (1995: 53) presents seven prevalent assumptions in peasant studies mainly: “(1) the family farm as the basic unit of production; (2) the undifferentiated return to family labor; (3) peasant household strategies; (4) the competitive edge of peasant farms in capitalist markets; (5) peasant social differentiation; (6) the class analysis of peasantries; and (7) the determinants of peasant household reproduction.” She deconstructs all of them and presents the importance of gender analysis by arguing that this dimension reveals the social relations of production and reproduction. She further points out the care work in production and reproduction of the household. She argues that the persistence of peasant agriculture is also because of women’s contribution. Finally, Deere concludes that gender relations are of the same importance in understanding social differentiation as the class relations.

Park (2019) points out that it is important to consider gender and generation dimension to have a critical and coherent understanding of social, agrarian and environmental change and the struggles linked to it, this is not only for the sake of bridging the knowledge gap but because the failure to incorporate this dimension will lead to wrong and partial analysis about changes in “land access, control and distribution, production, social reproduction, livelihood strategies, and distribution of benefits” (p. 30).

2.2.1 The problem of generation in agriculture

Agriculture in the world is witnessing a serious problem of “generational succession” (White 2015:330) which went unnoticed for long in research and policy. Proctor and Lucchesi (2012) claims that young people are not interested in farming. Who are these young people and why are they not interested in farming, what are the reasons which push or attract them in farming, are the questions that lie at the heart of this research puzzle.

White (2012:11) gives following reasons of turning away of young people from farming:

“a) the deskilling of rural youth and the downgrading of farming and rural life, b) the chronic government neglect of small scale agriculture and rural infrastructure, c) and the problem that young rural people increasingly have, even if they want to become farmers, in getting access to land while still young”

Leavy and Hossain (2014) highlight that the narrative of “agriculture in peril” is equivalent to “youth in peril”, in this picture either young people are painted as “victims” of the economy being unemployed or as “villains” – lazy who are not prepared to do hard work. Mabiso and Benfica (2019: 11) in their recent work on rural youth narrative in Africa also came up with the finding that African youth are not interested in agriculture because it is “not attractive” or “not sexy”. Similarly, Juma’s research (2007:2) in Tanzania also finds that young people consider farming “dirty”, “undesirable” and that “agriculture is regarded as an employer of the last resort to young people.”

Research in India also find similar results and trends of young people exiting from agriculture, this phenomenon has been noticed across all size of farm holdings but with different motivations and explanations. Those who had large landholdings are investing on their skills of higher education to exploit opportunities in other sectors, whereas those with lower access to land are being pushed out because of no returns in farming (Sharma and Bhaduri, 2009).

Leavy and Hossain (2014:40) significantly contributed to the existing literature about the lack of interest of young people in farming and shows that, it is mainly due to the following reasons:

“a) lack of effective public investment in small holder farming and the public infrastructure needed to link to markets; b) declining access to land and uncertain access to inputs among young people, including decline in average farm size in many countries in past few decades but also c) social change resulting from rapid increases in mass education provision but which have often resulted in a perceived decline in the status of agriculture.”

I took from these findings and particularly focus on the decline in interest due to the social change resulting from mass education.

2.3 Critical Agrarian Studies – Marxist Political Economy of Agrarian Change

Marxian agrarian analysts have been mainly focusing on economic mechanisms like enclosures, debt, or market competition. But what is the role of education in social differentiation and to what extent education is a factor in it, remains unexplored. I argue and explore this, based on the case of Gojal, upper Hunza that education is an important factor which adds to the class differentiation.

The unique characteristic of Hunza region includes that after the abolition of Feudal rule in 1974, the restrictions on mobility and access to education were also removed. Every household has their own agricultural land for cultivation and the size of the land is relatively equal (1 ha for mixed cropping) for everyone (Kreutzmann 1993: 25). It was because of the fact that land was transferred directly to farmers with the departure of hereditary aristocracy in the 1970s. Village society was fairly egalitarian without great variations between rich and the poor (Van vugt 1991).

Settle (2011:393) mentions the absence of peasant landlessness, landlordism and other structures of power and inequality in the region (in and between villages), which are heavily visible in the rest of Pakistan and are crippling it. Wood et al. (2006: 42) also make a similar observation that “demographic differentiation was more significant than class differentiation” and “the society crudely comprised of a narrow elite (literate) of ruling families and their immediate kin and a large mass of undifferentiated peasantry/semi-pastoralists” (p. 57). However, after the intervention of AKRSP and AKESP in 1982 the picture of the society has changed, the education started to rise and now there is a “clearer differentiation”:

“there is a continuation of a narrow elite, though its power base has changed. But now there is a clearer differentiation of remaining population into: a small professional class based on expanded literacy and education; a larger ‘graduating’ class of successfully diversified farmers (with a significant proportion of off-farm incomes , sometimes through services and other skilled employment) and a class of continuing poor peasants, highly vulnerable with precarious off-farm diversification through casual manual labour” (Wood et al. 2006: 57-58).

It shows that the society is experiencing differentiation and inequality as it is “progressing”. I argue that, this class differentiation has emerged because of the high / tertiary education. Through high levels of education, the local youth is changing their class location and the value system that goes with it. So, transformation from middle peasant to middle class is happening not because of economic gains but rather because of “education capital”, which eventually translates into economic gains.

AKRSP and AKESP are the major development players in the region and has been successful in offering some rural clients passports to graduation out of what is now poverty. This education base created a clear differentiation, as education expanded and give rise to a larger “graduating” class of farmers (who diversified their jobs and started earning income from off-farm sources and other services or through migration).

Through combination of all three frameworks I intend to untangle the puzzle of young people leaving agriculture and the changing agrarian landscape in Gojal Valley.

Chapter 3

The context of Ghulkin village...

“Gbulkin diour gaafch baaf thay, Ghulkin hawa sur thay. Ghulkin Youpk sur thay, Ghulkin halghist baaf thay” (BG⁹ 2019)

(Gbulkin village is really good. The air is fresh here. The water is cold. The people of the village are nice)

3.1 The Agrarian Context

I went to meet Mr. Noor at his home on the 18th of July. He teaches at a local government school. As I entered the house, I saw a small kid with red rosy cheeks playing with his sports car, I looked at him and smiled, and I asked the kid:

“Baich Noor Xun thay?” (Is uncle Noor at home?).

The little kid laughed and ran away. Probably, he was laughing on my broken *Wakhi* language. But after a while, he returned with a tall man, holding his finger. This man introduced himself as Noor, he was in his mid-forties, wearing a traditional white *Hunzai* cap made of sheep wool. After greeting him, I introduced myself first and later about my research, I said “Gojal has been isolated from rest of Pakistan for long and was mainly dependent on subsistence agriculture till 1980s, however it is changing in many ways now. It is famous for its very high literacy and high gender parity. So, I have come to look at how education has affected agriculture here ...”

On hearing about my research, the reaction of Mr. Noor was: “You have selected a wrong place for your research. We are not “backward” living off the land. Everyone is educated here and works in different advanced sectors, only a very small population is associated with agriculture. Agriculture is not our main livelihood now, as it used to be. Maybe you should have chosen Shimshal¹⁰ for your research. As it is still really backward and people are still dependent on farming, raising livestock and Yaks and still go to pastures during the summer. However, it is not like that in our village anymore. There is very little agriculture here”.

On my inquiry about life in the past, *Kadeem wakht halghisht chiz yark saram?*, which meant: What did people used to do in earlier times? He started narrating¹¹ the story of the past.

“Zameendori Saram” meaning, worked on the land. The word *“Zameendori”* represents all the aspects of work and life that a person performed in the village (related to agriculture).

⁹ Personal interview on 24.8.19.

¹⁰ Shimshal village is located on the periphery of Gilgit-Baltistan in north-east side near Pakistan - China border and lies at 3000m elevation. It is a farming and herding community of 1700 inhabitants (Butz and Cook 2011: 356).

¹¹ Personal interview (18.7.19), his narration is infused into the literature to explain about the history and context of the area.

Traditionally the agrarian calendar determined the demand for workforce and the seasonal emphasis of activities. In earlier times this society was based mainly on subsistence and “mixed mountain agriculture”, which depended on oasis irrigation and animal husbandry using natural pastures in different ecological zones (Rhoades and Thompson 1975). This was common among all the groups and clans in Hunza (Kreutzmann 1993). An important characteristic of high mountain agriculture was high percentage of equal size landownership units. Kreutzmann (1993: 25) notes that:

“there is high percentage of equally sized landownership units that do not conceal an evident social stratification – the extreme positions merely lie close together. Farmers of all four ethnolinguistic groups in Hunza cultivate irrigated terraces that on average comprise a *land-holding of Iha* for mixed cropping, although they occupy different parts of the valley.” (emphasis added)

In terms of cultivation zone, Ghulkin village belongs to the single cropping (*ek-fasli*) agroecological zone. Ghulkin was self-sufficient in food, and was well known for its grass, animals and wheat. It provided food to the Mir¹² regularly, and to other villages during famine (Jaffer at al. 1998). People grew wheat, barley, fava beans (*Baqila* in *Wakhi*) (Felmy 1996: 46, Kreutzmann 2006: 331). Peter Whiteman narrates the story of success of an FAO project in 1980's a potato experiment from seed potatoes to the establishment of market, gave birth to the extensive potato cultivation in Hunza valley (Whiteman 1985: 100-101). Since then potato cultivation has become an integral part of cash crop production and caused reduction in traditional crops such as millet and buckwheat and fava beans (Kreutzmann 2006: 337 - 338). Alongwith crops there are fruit trees as well, such as apricots, mulberry and apples. Felmy (1996: 50) mentions in her account,

“the apricot is the queen of all fruits in Hunza, growing even in arid climatic conditions and in altitude above 3000m. There are at least eight different varieties that can be counted.”

However, orchards were of less importance in Gojal (Kreutzmann 2006: 333). In this picture of agriculture animal husbandry had an important role. It was not possible to do agriculture without animals, as they were used for ploughing, threshing, and their manure was a great source of fertilizer and their hairs and skin was a source for clothing, making winter cloths and carpets, not only this they were also provider of milk, cheese, ghee, butter and meat (Felmy 1996: 54, Kreutzmann 1993:23).

During the summers (from May till end of August or first week of September), animals were taken to the high pastures, it was one of the fundamental parts of subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry. Pastures are communal property and owned by clans or villages (Kreutzmann 2006: 335). In the villages every household used to send shepherds to the high pastures for grazing animals, hunting wildlife, and gathering fire- wood, birch-bark, and other natural products. In Gojal, the management of animal husbandry was mainly controlled by Wakhi women. They used to do milk processing and preservation along with taking care of the flocks in pastures. Women used to sing songs in the pastures, traditionally called *Bulbulik* (rhyming triplets). Animal husbandry was much bigger in mixed mountain agriculture in Gojal than in lower parts of Hunza. This interdependency between agriculture and livestock was of grave importance for the economic system because people were heavily dependent on subsistence farming over a long period (Kreutzmann 1993: 23).

¹² “Mir is a title used for the rulers of former princely state of Hunza”.

3.1.1 Agricultural Calendar and Division of Labour

Agriculture begins in February, peaks between March and August, and ends in October. There used to be traditional division of labour in different agriculture tasks. However, Lorimer (1939:102-103) observed that:

“There is no hard and fast rule about what is women’s work and what is men’s except that, for obvious reasons, the extra heavy loads are handled by the men; but a man will gladly take a turn at driving the threshing team or carrying the baby, and a woman will readily do a spell with the winnowing fork or shovel. No job is taboo for anyone able to tackle it, and the result is pleasantest possible family co-operation.”

There was an ideology that lied behind division of labour apart from practical needs. The physically demanding and heavy work which took long time was done by men. Mobility of the women remains limited particularly when they had children, so they were supposed to stay near the house, prepare food and look after the children (Felmy 1993: 202). There were some jobs which were assigned to men because it required muscle power; such as ploughing of the fields, making of water channels, sowing the seeds, irrigation of fields, carrying large bundles of wheat on the back and shaking fruit trees such as apricot. During the winter men used to collect *Zax* (thornbushes) and repaired the walls, fences and constructed houses. Women used to pick fruits in big shoulder baskets and dried the apricots. They also participated in weeding and picking up barley and wheat gleanings. Cleaning and storage of grains and vegetables was also included in their tasks. Women also cut the grass and turned it into big bundles and carried this home from far distances. Cutting, threshing of grain, planting and harvesting of potatoes was done by both men and women. All household chores were done by women. Children were an important part of workforce. Felmy (1996: 46) mentioned about their participation in these words:

“It is unbelievable how much children helped and how they seemed to enjoy it. They laughed all day long, stealing potato seeds from each other to be the fastest planter and working without extra breaks. They were often last to come to the feast which is held for all the helpers at the end of co-operative work (*keriyar*).”

Children were engaged with diverse activities and were helping hands of the family. In earlier times, before the ‘rise of education’, children were responsible for grazing the cattle, sheep and goats, collecting the firewood and dung and performed many other tasks. Children were a great relief as they took up a big chunk of workload (Beg 2009).

Jaffer et al. (1998) prepared a detailed seasonal calendar, particularly of Ghulkin village, highlighting different agricultural activities performed by men and women during the year.

The table below has been taken from their study. The table gives an idea about the activities which prevailed until as recently as 1998. The next chapter covers how activities have changed and why labour participation has also changed since then.

Table 3.1
Seasonal Calendar of routine activities (Men and Women)

Activity	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
Make compost (natural fertilizer)	■	■	■	■							■	■
Housework												■
Collect firewood	■	■	■	■								
Give animals fodder, water	■	■	■	■								
Sow maize, wheat			■	■								
Sow potatoes, vegetables					■	■						
Put fertilizer in potato, give water					■	■	■					
Graze animals in pastures, make buttermilk and butter					■	■	■	■				
Weeding					■	■	■	■				
Pick fruit								■	■	■	■	■
Dry apricots								■	■	■	■	■
Harvest wheat								■	■	■	■	■
Free grazing of livestock								■	■	■	■	■
Harvest and store potato										■	■	■
Sell potatoes										■	■	■
Sheep rearing											■	■
Marriage celebrations	■											

Source: Taken from Jaffer et al (1998).

3.2 The Educational Landscape

On inquiries about education, when did the education culture start and how did it spread to involve all children. Mr. Noor started narrating the days of educational revolution. The history of education in NA could be traced back to the colonial times when the first formal school was established in 1892 in Gilgit town as a primary school for boys (Dad 1995:188 cited in Benz 2014). Earlier education was available to local *Raja*, *Mir*, and *Tham* families only. The primary school in Gilgit was upgraded to middle school in 1911. However, education remained restricted to the ruling families (Dad 1995:188 (cited in Benz 2014), Felmy 2006: 373). For acquiring education, one had to seek a “special permission” from the local ruler (Felmy 2006: 373). These restrictions ended with the intervention of Aga Khan III in the 1940s. Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah (Aga Khan III) met Quadratullah Beg (an emissary of Mir Jamal Khan) in Bombay and discussed the issue of education in Hunza. A letter was sent to Mir Jamal Khan by Aga Khan III on the issue of education. In the letter he wrote:

“I have had a long discussion with your representative Quadratullah Beg in the presence of your other subjects who are in Bombay about the facilities or rather lack of them for education in your kingdom. From what they say it appears to me that some serious measures should be taken to improve education facilities in your Kingdom. I am sure you as a good ruler and good Ismaili will take to heart the matter of vital interest to your subjects and see that educational facilities are available to all your Ismaili subjects and also to Ismailis in and near Gilgit. I am sure that you will heed this advice of mine and immediately start at least two schools in such areas in your state as may be intimated to you by Quadratullah Beg with whom I have had long and earnest discussions on the matter. In these schools education should be imparted in English, Persian and Urdu. Religious education should also accompany secular education”

(Quadratullah Beg 1967: 59-62, cited in Felmy 1996:74)

Funds for education and these institutions were also allocated by Aga Khan III from the presents he received on his Diamond Jubilee. His followers in East Africa and subcontinent collected diamonds equivalent to his weight and presented these to him. A “Diamond Jubilee Trust” was created with the help of those funds. A large sum of money (1 million pounds sterling) was also allocated for education and health projects (Felmy 2006: 74). Thus, a major initiative for education was launched by Aga Khan III. There was a lot of emphasis by Aga Khan III, on liberation of women from the clutches of tradition through education. His farmans continuously argue that men and women are equal and ask his followers to pay attention towards women education (Rattansi 1981:36). A farman issued at Bombay in 1913 stated:

“we command the parents that they must send their daughters to school. We make this wajib (compulsory) upon you. These girls will be able to earn their living in future and administer better care and guidance to their children” (Kalam vol II: p. 128, cited in Rattansi 1981:36)

Thus, for the Ismailis in Pakistan, education has been a major concern as per the teachings of Ismailism. Another farman of Aga Khan III mentions:

“It is through education that modernization could be introduced to “equip” the Ismailis with capabilities to face difficulties. Education should be a means to go beyond “picking up facts” to the formation of sound character” (Speeches, part II Cited in Rattansi 1981: 119)

Again,

“strive to impart such education to the children that they may earn their rightful and proper place in the world because on it depends the success of their lives. It is an important requirement of life. So every effort must be made to impart to the Ismaili children the right type of education” (Speeches, part II Cited in Rattansi 1981: 119 -120)

Through these farmans Aga Khan urge the Ismailis to be educated, as that was the only way to be more “rational”, and “mobile” and to earn the “right place” in society. This mission of education has been continued by Aga Khan institutions such as AKESP, AKRSP and Aga Khan IV (Karim al- Hussein). The emphasis on women’s education has also continued as can be seen from the Aga Khan IV’s following decree:

“If a man had two children, one a boy and a girl, and if he could only afford to give education to one, I would say that he must give preference to the girl.” (Karim al- Hussein Aga Khan IV cited in Felmy 1996).

No wonder the mission of education and high literacy rate has been achieved through the teachings and institutions of Ismaili Imams.

The village of Ghulkin was not outside this educational revolution. The first DJ primary school in the village was opened in in 1957 on the demand of the community. However, the government run primary school was opened after 1974. Beg (2009) argued that before the inception of institutions such as AKRSP and AKESP the literacy rate of the village was zero and poor. Most males and females did not go to school. But in 1983 after the Ismaili institutions and according to directives of Imam everyone started sending their children both male and female to school. Currently, the village has three schools, DJ school which is run by AKESP, a primary school by the Government of Pakistan and NKMA which is run by the community. However, since 2007, ECD classes and secondary classes have also begun in DJ school.

In 2009 the village had 153 households with population of 1185 individuals, had a literacy rate above 75 percent and 100 percent net enrolment rate (NER) for both males and females (Benz 2014, Beg 2009: 61). Out of the population of 1185, 536 were students. Out of these students 249 were education migrants and 287, were pursuing their education in the village (ibid). After completing secondary school many students migrate to lowlands of Pakistan. Most of the students prefer to go to Karachi because of the presence of affluent Ismailis (Khoja community) which help and support Ismaili migrants from the North (Kreutzmann 1993: 35). The village had more than 7 percent master's degree holders in 2009 (Beg 2009: 62).

Figure 3.1
Government Primary School, Ghulkin



Source: Fieldwork 2019

Figure 3.2
NKMA, Ghulkin



Source: Fieldwork 2019

Figure 3.3

DJ School, Ghulkin



Source: Fieldwork 2019

3.3 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I gave an overview of the village setting, particularly regarding high mountain agriculture, subsistence farming, traditional crops, division of labour. Moreover, I also highlighted the educational history in the GB in general and its spread and expansion in Ghulkin village. Schooling and education have been a global phenomenon, but its expansion and embracement has happened in a very particular way among Ismaili communities. It shows literally a shift from “illiteracy to mass education”. The Ismaili Imam put serious emphasis on acquiring education [more on female] and indicates that it is the only way to be “modernized” and “to equip” with “capabilities”. Such guidance invites the people to the idea that where they are living and what they are doing is not a way forward and pathway to the progress. The push is toward the modernization of the Ismaili community through modern education and English language. Daftary (1990:526) mentions that Aga Khan III was “more concerned with modernist discourse”.

Chapter Four: Education – A paradigm shift in rural mountainous agrarian environment

This whole problem has arisen because of education. Earlier we were doing everything in a fine manner. Then education came, it allured (sabz bagh dikhaye) us and bungled everything. Education has turned us in this way, that neither we are here nor there. Education has played a pivotal role in changing the society. This is a paradigm shift. (ABM¹³, 30, male).

We are studying to “become something”, not to do agriculture. Education prepare us to go and explore other fields. (ATA¹⁴, 22, female).

Our daughters are sincere and caring. They help us with everything. They clean the house, cut the grass, pick and dry the apricots and prepare the food. The boys are totally spoiled, they wander all day long in the village, they play cricket and go to other villages for playing different tournaments. They stay out all night and did not help with anything. They even don't touch the shovel. (ZAB¹⁵, 70, female farmer).

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I intend to answer the following points:

1. Change in gender relations after the rise of education
2. Role of education in fostering social mobility or social reproduction across generations
3. Aspirations of students related to farming, why are they aspiring to other business but not agriculture?

The previous chapter notes the traditional gender relations, division of labour, role of children in farming, agrarian activities and calendar before the educational revolution. How these relations have changed due to the rise or introduction of education and the new routines and the activities in the village will be explored here. To answer the second point, I delve into the role of education, what sort of social mobility does education bring and the aspirations of the students regarding farming will be addressed.

4.2 Changes in Gender Relations

One of the most visible features of education has been the permanent long absence of youth from the village. Young males and females after completing their secondary education move down country for higher studies. They migrate to the big cities of Pakistan such as Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar. They spend most of the year on their studies in the cities and visit the village only during the summer vacations for two months (July and August). In their absence, all the work which they had previously done is shifted to women of all ages and to elderly men and families face a continuous crisis of manpower. Kreutzmann (1991:731) also

¹³ 3rd FGD: on 6.8.19 in Ghish-tik-Bishak, Aminabad.

¹⁴ 4th FGD: on 8.8.19 in Baqla Kash.

¹⁵ Personal Interview: on 23.7.19 in jingal.

finds out the absence of manpower while looking at the migration patterns in Hunza. All the respondents mentioned the abandonment of the practice of going to pastures and livestock is because of the lack of manpower. As mentioned earlier, women traditionally used to go to pastures, it was a privilege to live there in summers, and they enjoyed it as a leisure activity as noted by Felmy (1996: 56) in her detailed account of Wakhi culture and life.

A sixty-two-year-old female farmer mentioned:

“In summer of 1998, from May till August, I went to Khunjerab hale (pasture). There, I with other fellows, used to take care of animals and did milking, made qurut (cheese), rougan (butter) and pai (yogurt). I used to take sheep and goats with me. We used to protect them from wild animals in the pasture. We used to collect the herbs and flowers and sing songs. But those days have gone. These things are not there anymore. It was such an amazing time. I have been to Patundas and Khunjrab pasture. I spent three months in Khunjrab pasture.” (TAB¹⁶).

Another eighty-year-old female farmer mentioned:

“It was such a fresh and lovely time for us to be in pasture, because there was no shortage of food or anything. We had time for ourselves, being close to nature. When we returned to the village, we had so many milk products to spend the harsh winter easily” (BG¹⁷).

Because of the changing routines and patterns of life of the young people due to education and schooling women had to stay at home with the resulting tremendous decline in keeping livestock and abandoning of women’s practice of going to pasture. In fact, I observed that instead of women going to the pasture, two men were hired, who took the few animals of everyone to the pasture. The community paid 150,000- 200,000PKR (864-1152) EUR to the men for the three months from July till September. However, the practice of milk preservation, butter making and cheese which women used to do was not able to be done. In the words of 82-year old male farmer:

“There are two men from the village who have gone to the pasture. They have taken the sheep and goats to Khunjrab. We paid them almost 200,000PKR. They were arranged by the social welfare society. The number of animals have declined greatly. Patundas pasture is for cattles. But these days no one accompany the cows, they are left there on their own. People go and drop the oxen there for grazing. There have been some cases when wild animals has attacked them or some animals have fallen from certain places. Usually people send those animals which can take care of themselves.” (SAG¹⁸).

Women ascribed multiple values to the practice of going to pasture, such as they were relieved from the confines of the house and village, they had time for themselves and had relationships with ecological environment (Gururani 2002), moreover, they had an opportunity to socialize and build friendships with other fellows (Dyson 2010). Because of the expansion of education, the whole agrarian calendar and practices have changed, which is marginalizing and undervaluing women’s work. This is, an example of the invisibilization of women’s production and social reproduction through commodification and appropriation (Razavi 2007). Another significant loss is of local, traditional and intergenerational knowledge about different plants, flowers and herbs used for medicinal or other purposes (Dyson 2010).

¹⁶ Personal interview on 5.8.19 in Ghulkin.

¹⁷ Personal interview on 24.8.19 in Ghulkin

¹⁸ Personal interview on 24.7.19 in Ghulkin.

The other vital component in mountain farming is maintenance and construction of irrigation channels. It was the lifeline of agriculture. This was mainly done by the men previously, but as young men are now absent due to studies, employment and outmigration there is no active participation in construction and maintenance of water channels which is not only affecting the agriculture but also creating socio-hydrological problems as Nüsser et al. (2019: R10) and Parveen et al. (2015) shows in their study on cryosphere-fed irrigation networks in upper Indus Basin, their research shows the serious crisis of water management due to the labour shortage. Similarly, a female farmer ASP¹⁹ mentioned during the interview:

“Water channels are made at the end of Winter, in March. Either brothers or fathers used to clean and construct it. All the males of the village used to go for the construction and cleaning of the water channels, because it was preparation for agriculture in spring. But now as young males are away and absent from the village. This work is done by hiring labour and those who cannot afford to hire labour, their women go and participate in construction and cleaning process. I will give you example of Shu, he is 30-year-old, educated, active and healthy and most of all, he is living in the village. His father was martyred of 1971 war in Bangladesh. He attends all the functions, programmes and weddings in the village. You will see him everywhere. But he does not go for the construction of irrigation channels or any other farm related activity, even being free. His mother does everything all alone. In fact, she builds the irrigation channels with other males”

During the FGD a young woman (23-year-old) also highlighted:

“The problem is that youth has moved to the cities. The irrigation system is very difficult here. One has to go and cut the glacier and construct the water channels. It is really hard and labour intensive. In the absence of the young males it is difficult to sustain the existing system and the problem of water has arisen. Land has dried up and it is affecting agriculture. In face of this, those who live and work here on the land become helpless”. (Son²⁰).

Another shift that I observed and also highlighted by the respondents was watering the fields, earlier it was men’s job to water the fields. For the irrigation purposes, one has to go to open the water channels and divert the water to their *shini* (plot) or to the *jingal* (jungle). But in the absence of young men it is also being done by either old people or mainly by women. These days, women water the fields. Even when young men are home during the summer vacations. They hardly go and water the fields. Educated young men show least interest in anything linked to agriculture. I will quote two personal encounters where I observed their unwillingness toward farm related activities:

It was a pleasant afternoon of first week of August, I was sitting in the open area in front of my house, from there I could see the central field of the village and also the road, as my house was just on the main road. I saw a deep reddish-brown, short horns, stocky with small rectangular body cow venturing into the nearby barley fields. A young man, wearing shorts and a blue jersey was standing and looking at it as well. However, the cow kept going inside the field, after a while I saw a middle-aged man shouting from the next house, take the cow out of the field, she is ruining everything. Take her out. The young man kept standing and did not move a single step from where he was standing. In the meanwhile, a woman in her mid-sixties appeared on the scene and went inside the field and took the cow out. All this while the young man did not move or help. I was surprised and wondered at his disinterest.

¹⁹ Personal interview on 26.7.19 in Suri diour.

²⁰ 1st FGD on 29.7.19 in Shwaran.

August is the busiest month, because wheat and barley are ready for the harvest, and apricots, needs to be gathered. In earlier time, both men and women used to pick and dry the apricots together. Men used to shake the fruit trees, help in transporting the fruit from faraway places to the home and participated in drying process. However, I observed during my stay the sons of my host family never helped their mother in picking and drying apricots, no matter how many times she asked. The process of drying apricot is called (*kbak daalna*) in Wakhi language. I used to help my host family for two hours doing *Kbak*, since the 5th of August when the first apricot tree was ready. The eldest son saw me doing this everyday and always said: this year there is not much production of apricot it does not need lot of labour. As you are helping my mother, I don't need to do it.

Both these encounters show the alienation and withdrawal of educated young men from the agricultural work. Whereas, the educated young women were still helping and participating in cutting the grass, watering the fields, picking apricot and doing household chores. The change in division of labour shows that both household and farming is constructed as “work for women” and uneducated elders. Whereas, educated men were not engaging with any agricultural activity. In all my interviews, discussion, informal conversations and encounters young men neither touch the shovel nor showed interest in farm activities. They worked as tourist guide, or in the hotels and guesthouse but not farming. Similarly, Morarji's (2014b) finds the withdrawal of educated men from farming in North India. She argues that educated women do not reject manual labour but engage in “negotiations of dominant standards of educational success, and experiences of an often increased work burden that is economically and culturally devalued” (p. 233).

Young women emphasize that they were not being educated just to come back and do farming. However, when they do come to village for two months, they feel they need to help in the family. During one FGD a young woman said:

“we come in the vacations with the mind to cut the grass and dry the apricots” (MID²¹, 21)

“There is no pleasure in doing agriculture, neither we desire to do this work. It is so much hard work. One has to work under the scorching sun. When we go out, we don't feel good. But when we look at our parents, we feel bad and cannot sit and relax.” (FAR²²).

A key effect of education on these young women's self-positioning is their conception of desirable work, and, at the same time as dutiful daughters they do engage in manual work. Their gendered role as women means they continue to care for the family. As mentioned by Deere (1995) the care work in production and reproduction of the household and the persistence of peasant agriculture is largely women's contribution.

In contrast, the young men argue that “they were visiting the village after entire year and already made their mind that they were going to relax and meet the friends and cousins. They were not going to the village for farming”. Hence, the village becomes a “leisure site” to them not a place where they should care for others by helping in the family.

Due to the almost year long absence of both young male and female from the village, labour is hired to take up many aspects of farming such as for cutting the grass, making and picking

²¹ 1st FGD on 24.7.19 in shwaran.

²² 2nd FGD on 6.8.19 in Majeed ben, Nakhcharay Diour.

of potatoes and for construction of water channels. The labourers come from Ishkoman and Broghil valley and are paid (700-800 PKR) 4-4.64 EUR, along with the food.

4.3 Role of Education in Fostering Social Mobility or Social Reproduction across Generations

Katz (2001: 709) argues that, social reproduction is, “a critical arena, as yet unauthorized, within which many of the problems associated with the globalization of capitalist production can be confronted.”

Wells (2009: 78) define social reproduction as:

“social reproduction is a concept that refers to material and discursive practices which enable the reproduction of social formation and its members”

To understand the social mobility or social reproduction in case of Ghulkin, it is important to understand the historical situation. The society was traditionally based on subsistence farming and pastoralism, where everyone had the equal size of land, between 1ha-2ha (Kreutzmann 1993, Settle 2011, Van Vugt 1991) and had more of the demographic differentiation rather than the class differentiation (Wood and Malik 2006: 42). It was a tributary mode of production (Wolf 2010: 79), in which there was a control over labour rather than means of production. A ruling class existed and extracted the surplus from the primary producers and provided them with protection and security. These tributes were further paid to the far distant protectors in China and Central Asia. These ruling families hold prebendary titles to land and performed *patwari*²³ functions (Wood and Malik 2006: 44).

A Superior class existed but their superiority was more visible in terms of favored, dependent status, rather than expressed as significantly higher standards of living, education etc. (Ibid). In 1974, with the dissolution of power of the Mir system, the society was differentiated as vertical clan segmentation, as discussed above, instead of horizontal segmentation of a class exploitative kind. However, some clans enjoyed privileges because of their ties with princely ruling families or due to religious functions and reverence. There was no caste system as such to differentiate people horizontally (ibid). In this scenario, the educational opportunities provided by AKRSP and AKESP had a dynamic effect. Benz (2014: 355) mentions:

“the dynamic education effects on the social stratification were able to develop unrestricted and undistorted by predefined social disparities, therefore, education became the single-most stratifying driving force in the region”

For understanding the social mobility through education expansion Randall Collins’s theory of credential inflation is useful. He developed a model from comparison of educational expansion in different social, economic and historical contexts. Collins (1979, 2000) explains, the initial phases of education expansion is characterized by higher levels and higher participation of education by the people who were excluded earlier. During the rapid expansion phase when a “window of an opportunity” opens, these disadvantaged or earlier excluded people, on the basis of newly acquired education, use the opportunity for social advancement. In this period, social stratification becomes dynamic and porous, so the chances of

²³ Those who kept the records of landholdings, tax, labour and tributes paid.

social mobility are higher. After reaching the peak of the education, the population becomes stable and the growth rate declines, and the “window of opportunity” closes. The result is social advancement through this also stop and social stratification becomes difficult to breach. Because in this stage certain levels of education which were missing earlier, now becomes the norm for the mass population and lost their significance. Since majority of the individuals hold the same credentials, so its value is lost. Because of this, the entry requirement to different employment positions start increasing. This process has been named credential inflation. The result is, now those masses with higher credentials cannot move up on the social ladder and social disparity start to rise. The failure of this leads to either turning away from education or further acquiring higher levels of education which works on the same route of credential inflation.

Credential inflation theory explains the case of social reproduction and social mobility in Ghulkin well. As this society had a minor disparity in terms of the class differences, in the initial phase, there were no successful examples of role models and individuals who used education as a strategy for social mobility. So, people were unclear about the utility and outcomes of investment in education. They did not invest in it initially and thought of it a risky business. Everyone reacted to the new educational opportunities differently. Some people invested heavily in it while others paid less attention. Due to differences in early decisions, those who invested in it earlier, were able to use the opportunity to take the employment offered in the market with little or no competition even with certificates like middle and high school. They strongly benefitted through the formal jobs in government sector or even in Army. They were able to secure monetary income and also the upward social mobility.

In the second stage, education expansion picked up the pace as more and more individuals started acquiring education, the number of credential holders increased but then they started experiencing the credential inflation. And the job requirements both in government and Army started increasing. Later, there are so many individuals with degrees but without opportunities leading to an educational paradox. The credentials have lost their significance.

I argue that in this scenario, the middle peasant who used the earlier opportunity and invested in education initially was able to transform himself and moved from middle peasant to middle class. Their children secured stable positions and monetary benefits and settled in the big urban centers such as Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. They have taken their families with them and have settled there as observed by Felmy (1996:85). Moreover, they enjoy the “facilities” of good education for their children, proper healthcare and further exposure and opportunities. It can be seen from this quote of 69-year-old teacher cum farmer:

“In earlier days there was no concept and value of education. I went to school in Gulmit (a nearby village) and did my primary there. After that I continued with my education and went to Karachi for further studies. After finishing my studies, I came back to this village. I did teach for ten years. But I left teaching and started doing agriculture. In those days’ education was only for name sake. There was very little education. Even when children use to go schools, they did not have any vision. They did not know what they will become or what they want to do after their studies. Even during those days there were no such jobs or business after education. So, 90-95% children after their education used to do farming. There would be hardly 1-2 persons who would go out further for their studies”. (MUQ²⁴)

²⁴ Personal interview on 22.7.19 in Pasti diour.

“My education helped me in teaching my children. I educated my children and spent everything on them. Now one is doctor in a hospital in Islamabad. He has settled there with his wife. The other one has done his ACCA. He works for big companies in different places in Pakistan. My daughter just finished her degree in medicine” (ibid)

Whereas those, who missed out the early education and employment opportunities were so called “left behind” in the village and end up further being differentiated. It gave rise to class differentiation (Lenin 1982). Other young people suffer from diploma disease²⁵ (Dore 1976) and try to take further diplomas and degrees to use the smallest opportunity being offered. A young man mentioned:

“I have done my Master’s in Mathematics but there is no job opportunity. Now I have started doing M.Ed, which is master of education. It might create a chance for me to secure a job in government school as a teacher” (ABM²⁶,30).

In Ghulkin village, education is perceived crucial for social mobility both for employment and lifestyle, but it is not experienced in the same way for everyone. In fact, due to increase in education social disparity is being generated which is deepening the class differences and polarizing the community. Further, education act as a “contradictory resource”, it produces uneven outcomes in terms of employment and social mobility and also in relation to material and cultural conditions (Levinson and Holland 1996).

4.4 Aspirations related to farming – Why aspire to other business but not to agriculture?

During my research whenever, I asked young men and women, what they aspire to be and why, the only answer I heard was job and particularly a government job. Young men and women, equated education with employment, development, progress, moving forward, “progressive”, “social status”, “better income”, “good life/ easy life”. They mentioned that “those who are educated are being respected and praised” in the community. However, the desires of parents and grandparents were not different from the children. During the FGD, when I asked the groups about the importance of education in changing picture of agriculture, a young 26-year-old male student mentioned:

“Education has played a very important role. Basically, it has changed everything, back in days our parents were not educated, they got married and continued with what their parents did. Agriculture was their way of life. Their food, clothing, culture and language, everything was linked with agriculture. Now kids have grown up with education and are going to other cities and countries. Things have changed, now people have different mindset. Now they have open minds. Agriculture does not have to be a way of life. You can get a job and you don’t have to grow food. You can just buy it in the store” (SHK²⁷)

²⁵ Accumulation of qualification: The belief that more and more qualification may provide the chance of securing a job.

²⁶ 3rd FGD on 6.8.19 in Ghish-tik-Bishak, Aminabad.

²⁷ 2nd FGD on 6.8.19 in Majeed ben, Nakhcharay Diour.

“Education is something very important and big. We have this mindset that after the education, we have to do such a work where we go to office in a nice car with a nice briefcase in hand, wear nice cloth. You eat good food and when people look at you, they say “WOW” (KAD²⁸, 28, male student)

“for all of us, the motivation is that our living standard should be upgraded or become good. It should not give this impression that we are living in the village. Our living standard should look like people from the city. Our profiles should be technical. If we continue with agriculture than there will be no improvement in our life.” (SON²⁹, 23, female student)

A 22-year-old young man said:

“Why one studies, the expectation is, that at the end one will have a good job and good income”. (ATF³⁰)

Similarly, another female mentioned:

“Our previous culture, infrastructure, our way of living, our language and conversations, our thinking and understanding, this all has not changed on its own. It has happened through education and awareness which came with it. This has changed our thinking. If you go to the village in the down country in Pakistan, their way of life and income is still dependent on agriculture. But this is not how it is for us. We have progressed” (SSN³¹, 26)

“We have made an image in our mind that after our studies we will do jobs in offices. We will go to office in a car. This image start coming from our books, when we see an engineer has a comfortable life and a farmer has a tough life” (NLA³² 27, female)

“During our parents and grandparents time education was not there so they did farm work all day long and returned to home in evening. But now we are educated, and our lifestyle has changed” (ibid)

“I was working in NRSP (National Rural Support Programme), I saw an old couple who were not educated but had cattle, have they been educated they did not need to look after the cattle” (SHU³³, 30, Male)

All these quotations reflect the power of education as an aspirational experience, promotes middle class values, gives the idea of urban based work and identity, and enumerate the idea that manual and agricultural work is fate of “failures”, “uneducated” and “symbol of “backwardness”, this is similar to findings of (Balagopalan 2002, 2008, Sarangapani 2003) in India about aspirations of school going children.

When I asked, why they prefer other work but not agriculture?

One of the young males in an aggressive tone said:

²⁸ 1st FGD on 29.7.19 in Shwaran.

²⁹ ibid.

³⁰ ibid.

³¹ 5th FGD on 14.8.19 in Suri diour.

³² 4th FGD on 8.8.19 in Baqla kash.

³³ 1st FGD on 29.7.19 in Shwaran.

“We don’t want to do farming because we are educated, that is it. One doesn’t want to do work which is low class and low value. Farming is considered as an “uneducated job”, this is the point, we are educated, why should we do farming” (JNA³⁴, 28)

During the FGD a young female said:

“When we become educated, we feel we have become something, we know more than our parents. Doing agriculture means becoming a labour. We feel agriculture is a curse. What people will think when they will see us farming being educated. That’s why we don’t want to work in the farm. Another thing is we are not habituated with this work. We spend all our life with books and education. We are not fond of hardwork” (FAR³⁵,22)

“Agriculture is a hardwork, fields are small, and no one wants to work under scorching sun. it is a difficult task. Instead of doing farming, I will prefer to be a clerk, even if I earn less. Because I will sit in the office in an air-conditioned environment. That is much decent” (MID³⁶, 21, female)

“For all the jobs either they are small or big, the main benefit is continuous flow of money at the end of the month, this is not how it is in farming. One has to work 6 months and then money will come and there is no guarantee what rate I will receive” (KAD³⁷, 28,male)

“We want easy life. We don’t want to work with our hands. We want to work in places like banks, where we will sit on the chairs, no hard labour. But if there are jobs which are white collar even with less money, we will do it but will not do agriculture even if it has more money. Because it is hard labour. One has to stay out all day in the sun. one must water the fields on time. Everything requires physical labour and the hands. Who wants to do that?” (FHG³⁸, 24, female)

The educated youth builds an idea “to become somebody” which does not resonate with terms of value what society offers and what individuals want, further results in complicating the relations (Luttrell 1996: 93). Education is embedded in the model of “being” or “becoming”. It has power to give the vision of “change” and aspiration for “good life”. Modern education is built on values, skills, attitudes and aspirations which are often in contradiction with the local rural agrarian context. Gupta (1998) argues that rationale of modern education tends to reproduce the idea that rural agrarian spaces and manual work are backward, which devalues the material and culture of agriculture. The modern education creates a dualism of “developed” and “backward”, which equip youth with a ‘set of ideas about how to think and act’ (Ahearn 2001).

Balagopalan (2002, 2008) and Sarangapani (2003) argue that modern education creates a dichotomy between mental and manual work, which leads to the idea that mental work is respectable and desirable whereas manual work is undesirable and work of the failures. Kumar (2000) claims, this idea that mental work is linked with modern education and modern workplace, whereas manual work is associated with home, fields and backwardness. It tends to reproduce the colonial view of “modern educated subjects”, who are superior and socialize with knowledge and practices linked to the school in opposition to “backward ways of the

³⁴ 3rd FGD on 6.8.19 in Ghish-tik-Bishak, Aminabad

³⁵ 2nd FGD on 6.8.19 in Majeed ben, Nakhcharay Diour

³⁶ 1st FGD on 29.7.19 in Shwaran.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ 6th FGD on 18.8.19 in Shwaran.

home”. The notion of doing non- manual work is associated with educational success and with notions of being human.

During an informal conversation with the principal of DJ school, when I inquired her: how does school engage student with the agriculture? She replied:

“We used to have agriculture as a subject but than it has been few years, we have removed it from the course because it was not relevant to the students, it focused more on agriculture and crops of Punjab. Now we use the time of that subject on teaching English and science more rigorously”

It is a clear example which shows that, there is no “time” and “space” for agriculture in school curricula.

While expressing their aspirations, most of the respondents said that their ultimate desire is to move out from the village and settle in the cities. Village is not a place to “set up” one’s self. During the FGD, KAD³⁹ said:

“our grandparents have worked a lot and they have worked really hard. But also, they did nothing because they are still here.”

In response to this rest of the group members started laughing and started nodding their heads and said we agree with him.

He further elaborated and said:

“This is true that they did lot of hard work. They planted the trees, they plough the fields, they diverted the glacier water to irrigate the fields. They did everything. But they are still in the same place”

I asked him what he mean by this, “they are still there”?

He said:

“We just want to change that. We want to take a turn away from this. We want to do something BMW type.”

The young women in the FGD responded to this and said:

“Religion also plays an important role in what we do, for example one of the Farman of the Imam say: “go into different fields and be a global citizen”. So, everyone is thinking of that, we have to go abroad, and we have to go into different fields not to the “fields” where agriculture is done. We don’t have to live in the village. We don’t have to limit our lives in one village like our parents. We all have to be global citizens” (SON⁴⁰)

This clearly reflects the valourization of middle-class values acquired through modern education. Rural productivity is degraded by investment in education (both in economic and human labour). Absence of educated youth is significantly reorganizing not only the household and family life but in fact, the community life as well. For example, as Jaffer et al. (1998) highlight in their calendar that usually weddings used to happen in December because during wintertime there were no agricultural activities. However, these days the weddings have moved from December to summer because this is the only time when young male and females are free from education and returned to the village.

³⁹ 1st FGD on 29.7.19 in Shwaran.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

I claim that education is deeply a “contradictory resource” in numerous ways: in regard to uneven outcomes of employment and social mobility, moreover, also in relation to different material and cultural demands and rural moral economy. Experience and aspirations around education are linked to social change, reproduction in complex and uneven ways.

4.5 Conclusion

Expansion of education has changed the traditional division of labour, and more burden has been placed on the shoulders of women, increasing their workload as they take on the work of men and children. Education in the remote rural village is being experienced as “contradictory resource” (Levinson and Holland 1996: 1, Jeffery et al. 2008: 210) and is changing the rural social reproduction. The impact of educated youth is not only changing the familial relationships but also community relationships. Education is reorganizing the lifestyle and village life. Moreover, I argue that, the phenomenon of education while using theory of credential inflation (Collins 1979, 2000) is giving birth to class differentiation (Lenin 1982), changing the middle peasant into middle class and bringing inequality in the village. I challenged the assumption that social mobility and empowerment are inherent in nature of education as suggested by Sen (2000) by presenting uneven outcomes of education in terms of employment and social reproduction, changes in cultural outlook and lifestyle.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

In my research, I attempted to understand how education has influenced gender and generation dynamics of agrarian change, how the expansion of education is changing gender relations, fostering social mobility across generations and transforming the aspirations of the youth regarding farming. In terms of change in gender relations, it was revealed that, as education started rising, it has changed life routines and practices of agriculture. The women's practice of going to pasture has been abandoned and have made them sedentary, mainly due to the new needs of education to stay home to look after the children going to school, and later, the long absence of the young men and women from home for their studies. The abandonment of the use of the pasture has caused a tremendous decline in keeping of livestock due to the continuous crisis of manpower. The workload of children and the youth (both men and women) has also been shifted to the women's shoulder and elderly.

In regard to generational relations, I have found that the youth in Ghulkin village has internalized the values of modern education and follows the modernist vision of "being" and "becoming". Education equips them with the values, skills and attitudes which isolates them from local culture and environment and prepares them to leave their parents' lifestyles (Corbett 2007). This creates rural forms of dispossession and the depletion of the agrarian society in social, cultural and economic terms. Education creates a dichotomy between mental and manual work where mental work is seen as superior and more desirable and manual labour is associated with backwardness and failure. Due to this, agriculture and farming have become an undesirable, backward and low status job. After attaining higher levels of education, engagement with agriculture is equated with a step backward rather than "forward". In case of Ghulkin village, it was noticed that young men were not interested in engaging in agricultural activities and have withdrawn themselves from their traditional duties such as construction and maintaining of water channels, watering the fields and the process of drying of apricots, whereas, educated women still help and engage with the agricultural and household chores and the care work. Another interesting observation was that, in the egalitarian society of Ghulkin which was based on minor class differences and subsistence economy, the middle peasant is transformed into middle class through education as a resource and cultural capital. Education has brought clear class differences and inequality in the society. Those who invested earlier in educational opportunities were able to change their "fate" while participating in the opening of "windows of an opportunity" and moved up on the ladder of social mobility, whereas the latecomers in the decision-making and investment of education are struck with the newly created social, economic and cultural poverty. Now the new investments in education are not helping them as the credentials have become so common among the masses and lost their significance and the social mobility becomes impermeable. I argue that education is experienced as a "contradictory resource" with uneven outcomes in terms of employment, social mobility and degrading the material and cultural life of the village.

In terms of aspiration, young men and women expressed their desires of doing a government job or even work in the private sector as "*this is what education has prepared them⁴¹*" for, not for the farming. Young men and women also expressed their interest to "settle" in the cities or to move away from the village. Their vision of the "good life" includes "*a strong desire for a*

⁴¹ 2nd FGD on 6.8.19 in Majeed ben, Nakhcharay Diour.

*future without agriculture and the mooing of cows*⁴²". Success is now equated with less work and more income and farming comes as the last option.

⁴² Ibid.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Details of Focus Group Discussions (Conducted in Ghulkin Village)

Serial number	Males Profiles with destination of Studies	Females profile with destination of Studies	Date	Place																		
1 st FGD	<p>SHU</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>30</td> <td>B. A</td> <td>Karachi</td> </tr> </table> <p>ATF</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>22</td> <td>BS</td> <td>Gilgit</td> </tr> </table> <p>KAD</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>BS [Space Sciences]</td> <td>Karachi</td> </tr> </table>	30	B. A	Karachi	22	BS	Gilgit	28	BS [Space Sciences]	Karachi	<p>MID</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>Bachelor's in business accounting and finance</td> <td>Lahore</td> </tr> </table> <p>SON</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>23</td> <td>Bachelor's in psychology</td> <td>Lahore</td> </tr> </table> <p>IFT</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>Fine Arts</td> <td>Gilgit</td> </tr> </table>	21	Bachelor's in business accounting and finance	Lahore	23	Bachelor's in psychology	Lahore	21	Fine Arts	Gilgit	29.7.19	Shwaran
30	B. A	Karachi																				
22	BS	Gilgit																				
28	BS [Space Sciences]	Karachi																				
21	Bachelor's in business accounting and finance	Lahore																				
23	Bachelor's in psychology	Lahore																				
21	Fine Arts	Gilgit																				
2 nd FGD	<p>SHK</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>26</td> <td>bachelor's in business finance and management</td> <td>US</td> </tr> </table> <p>ZKA</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>27</td> <td>MSC in mass communication</td> <td>Lahore</td> </tr> </table> <p>AZK</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>Bachelor's in finance</td> <td>US</td> </tr> </table>	26	bachelor's in business finance and management	US	27	MSC in mass communication	Lahore	24	Bachelor's in finance	US	<p>HUN</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>19</td> <td>Engineering</td> <td>Rawalpindi</td> </tr> </table> <p>ANS</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>bachelor's in sports sciences</td> <td>Lahore</td> </tr> </table> <p>FAR</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>22</td> <td>Medical</td> <td>Gilgit</td> </tr> </table>	19	Engineering	Rawalpindi	21	bachelor's in sports sciences	Lahore	22	Medical	Gilgit	06.08.19	Majeed ben, Nakhcharay Diour
26	bachelor's in business finance and management	US																				
27	MSC in mass communication	Lahore																				
24	Bachelor's in finance	US																				
19	Engineering	Rawalpindi																				
21	bachelor's in sports sciences	Lahore																				
22	Medical	Gilgit																				
3 rd FGD	<p>ABM</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>30</td> <td>Bs in education</td> <td>Hunza</td> </tr> </table> <p>GHD</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>29</td> <td>B. tech</td> <td>Rawalpindi</td> </tr> </table> <p>JNA</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>BS (Physics)</td> <td>Abbottabad</td> </tr> </table>	30	Bs in education	Hunza	29	B. tech	Rawalpindi	28	BS (Physics)	Abbottabad	<p>RAB</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>26</td> <td>Master's in economics</td> <td>Gilgit</td> </tr> </table> <p>SEM</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>BS (Biology)</td> <td>Islamabad</td> </tr> </table> <p>SHT</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>26</td> <td>BS (Zoology)</td> <td>Karachi</td> </tr> </table>	26	Master's in economics	Gilgit	25	BS (Biology)	Islamabad	26	BS (Zoology)	Karachi	06.08.19	Ghish-tik-Bishak, Aminabad
30	Bs in education	Hunza																				
29	B. tech	Rawalpindi																				
28	BS (Physics)	Abbottabad																				
26	Master's in economics	Gilgit																				
25	BS (Biology)	Islamabad																				
26	BS (Zoology)	Karachi																				
4 th FGD	<p>SLM</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>27</td> <td>B. tech</td> <td>Islamabad</td> </tr> </table> <p>ASF</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>BS (Engineering)</td> <td>Faisalabad</td> </tr> </table> <p>JML</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>29</td> <td>BS (Mathematics)</td> <td>Gilgit</td> </tr> </table>	27	B. tech	Islamabad	25	BS (Engineering)	Faisalabad	29	BS (Mathematics)	Gilgit	<p>SMD</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>MPhil Psychology</td> <td>Rawalpindi</td> </tr> </table> <p>NIA</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>27</td> <td>MS (Psychology)</td> <td>Lahore</td> </tr> </table> <p>ATA</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>22</td> <td>BS (Animal Sciences)</td> <td>Gilgit</td> </tr> </table>	28	MPhil Psychology	Rawalpindi	27	MS (Psychology)	Lahore	22	BS (Animal Sciences)	Gilgit	8.8.19	Baqla Kash, Suri Jingal
27	B. tech	Islamabad																				
25	BS (Engineering)	Faisalabad																				
29	BS (Mathematics)	Gilgit																				
28	MPhil Psychology	Rawalpindi																				
27	MS (Psychology)	Lahore																				
22	BS (Animal Sciences)	Gilgit																				

<p style="text-align: center;">5th FGD</p>	<p>NSR</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">24</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS (Comp. Sci)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Lahore</td> </tr> </table> <p>JDA</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">23</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS (Eng Lit)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Abbot- tabad</td> </tr> </table> <p>AUB</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">29</td> <td style="width: 70%;">MS (Conservation)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">La- hore</td> </tr> </table>	24	BS (Comp. Sci)	Lahore	23	BS (Eng Lit)	Abbot- tabad	29	MS (Conservation)	La- hore	<p>SSN</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">26</td> <td style="width: 70%;">Architecture</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Lahore</td> </tr> </table> <p>NHA</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">29</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS (Dev. Std)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Gilgit</td> </tr> </table> <p>HSB</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">25</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS (Economics)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Islam- abad</td> </tr> </table>	26	Architecture	Lahore	29	BS (Dev. Std)	Gilgit	25	BS (Economics)	Islam- abad	14.8.19	Suri Diour
24	BS (Comp. Sci)	Lahore																				
23	BS (Eng Lit)	Abbot- tabad																				
29	MS (Conservation)	La- hore																				
26	Architecture	Lahore																				
29	BS (Dev. Std)	Gilgit																				
25	BS (Economics)	Islam- abad																				
<p style="text-align: center;">6th FGD</p>	<p>WHJ</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">28</td> <td style="width: 70%;">Graduation</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Gilgit</td> </tr> </table> <p>KAS</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">23</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS (IT)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Gilgit</td> </tr> </table> <p>NSD</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">24</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS (Physics)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Gilgit</td> </tr> </table>	28	Graduation	Gilgit	23	BS (IT)	Gilgit	24	BS (Physics)	Gilgit	<p>TBM</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">23</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS (Mathematics)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Gilgit</td> </tr> </table> <p>FHG</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">24</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS(Environmental Sciences)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">La- hore</td> </tr> </table> <p>SHM</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">22</td> <td style="width: 70%;">BS(Environmental Sciences)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Gilgit</td> </tr> </table>	23	BS (Mathematics)	Gilgit	24	BS(Environmental Sciences)	La- hore	22	BS(Environmental Sciences)	Gilgit	18.8.19	Shwaran
28	Graduation	Gilgit																				
23	BS (IT)	Gilgit																				
24	BS (Physics)	Gilgit																				
23	BS (Mathematics)	Gilgit																				
24	BS(Environmental Sciences)	La- hore																				
22	BS(Environmental Sciences)	Gilgit																				

Appendix 2
Profile of the male Farmers

Serial number	Name of the interviewee (Males)	Education	Place	Date
1	MUQ (69 years old)	High School	Pasti diour	22.7.19
2	SAG (82 years old)	High School	Jingal	24.7.19
3	STS (63 years old)	none	Suri Diour	26.7.19
4	SUA (61 years old)	Middle School	Pasti Diour	29.7.19
5	GOZ (50 years old)	High School	Binbogh	1.8.19
6	SAG (47 years old)	Primary	-	3.8.19
7	ASH (72 years old)	Middle	-	5.8.19
8	GHK (52 years old)	none	Nakhcharay Diour	10.8.19
9	FDA (63 years old)	Primary	-	11.8.19
10	GSH (78 years old)	Middle (lumberdar)	-	13.8.19

Appendix 3

Profile of the female Farmers

Serial number	Name of the interviewee (females)	Education	Place	Date
1	ZAB (70-year-old)	None	Jingal	23.7.19
2	BIA (46-year-old)	Standard 3	Jingal	24.7.19
3	ASP (32-year-old) The only young farmer, so called left behind due to her physical disability.	Middle	Suri Diour	26.7.19
4	HIB (59-year-old)	None	Matourkt	3.8.19
5	TAB (62 -year-old)	None	-	5.8.19
6	FAP (56-year-old)	Went to school for few years	-	13.8.19
7	MAH (50 -year-old)	Went to school for senior citizens	Matourkt	16.8.19
8	BIM (49 -year-old)	Matric	-	17.8.19
9	SIH (43-year-old)	Intermediate FA	-	17.8.19
10	BIN (45 -year-old)	Matric	-	22.8.19
11	BG (80 -year-old)	None	-	24.8.19

Appendix 4

Apricot picking



Source: Fieldwork 2019

Apricot drying process



Source: Fieldwork 2019

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