

A Survey of Historical Anthropology of Khiazai Tribe of Rajan Pur

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Abstract

The Khiazai baloch tribe of Rajan Pur is among those tribes whose history is yet to be written; interestingly they are still leading a nomadic life. They are followers of centuries old cultural traditions set by their ancestors. Astonishingly in the 21st century their culture seems to be of primitive nature. The present research paper is an attempt to see the various aspect of their cultural life especially of their rituals in the light of vernacular perspective. This is the first attempt in its nature to write about this tribe of Rajan Pur. It is an attempt to explore the cultural dynamics of the Khiazai baloch tribe of Rajan Pur scattered in the barren, hilly and urban areas of Rajan Pur.

RITUALS

BIRTH:

The birth of a baby boy is celebrated by slaughtering of a nanny-goat while on the occasion of birth of a baby girl nothing significant event is arranged. On the seventh day of the birth of a baby boy a ceremony arranged for the attribution of a name to that baby and nothing happened for the baby girl.

It is customary to keep a half opened knife near the pillow of a child in order to keep him safe from the mischievous activities of Jennies.

After the birth of newly born child his navel (NARA) is usually cut down and then when it becomes dried out it is put inside the ear of a nearest domestic animal like goat, sheep etc. the concept is that after growing up, the child will love to graze the animals.

JHAND:

After 40 days his “*Jhund*” is done. This job is done by an old man of family who cut a few hair and the remaining ceremony is done by the women of the family. In this ceremony no male person of the family takes part so that the boy could not be a Dumb. After that the hair of the boy are handed near the shrine of some peer on any bushby tree. All this is done for the long life, respect, well being and prosperity of the boy. Whereas no one is pleased at the birth of a baby girl. The name is given at the 7th day and after 40 days her hair is cut and placed in the house so that the honors of the house be in the house.

A child is given a bath after 40 days of its birth. A mare, a camel, sick man and menstruous women is not allowed to go near the newly born child because they may get suffer from some disease or the disease get worse by it.

After the first forty days of the birth of a baby the mother took a bath & special arrangement have been made to bath the newly born child. Forty Palms are being filled with water & poured on the child, before this act of bathing her mother is treated as impure; she is not allowed to cook food /meal. If there is no woman other than the menstuous one then the men in that home used to cook the food themselves and prepared the meal with effortless ease. Even the *KAAK* a famous balochi bread is being cooked by the balochi men only.(1)

KAJ

Before the completion of first 40 days a child is suspected to succumb to the disease if a animal like horse, camel and weapon are like “*KALASHANKOFF*” are brought near to him. When the baby fell ill before the end of 1st Forty days he is prone to *KAJ*.

It is believed that there are ghosts, evil spirits and demons who often freighted the little babies. So when a Kiazai baloch child is about to be one year old his family used to take a bowl full of water and put it on the head of that child. similarly they melt down the base metal which is used in making of pellet bullets and put it into that bowl of water the shape it takes, would thought to have close resemblance with the demons which is usually thought to be the culprit who frightens the child. After that they used to put that base metal in the west which is far away from the house of that child. The logic for this whole operation or process is that in this way the fear and danger of that demon would diminishes.

BOYS ATTIRE:

For ten years the boy is given a long shirt and no trouser. The reason for this attire is that in ancient times during the war calamities it was the tradition among the tribe not to kill the child of opposite tribe. Similarly no retaliation or revenge is taken from child. That is why the child wears only shirt. Now a day this tradition is fading away.

The boys' attire is of white colour while girls put on the coloured clothes till their marriage. After getting married the girl while taking on the bride dress when it becomes torn or old they then took on the white clothes forever.

CIRCUMSCISE:

A ceremony is usually called upon for this very purpose. A '*meerasi*' is called upon to invite the family relatives depending upon the status of that family a meal of morning and evening is distributed among the relatives. Ritual of Neotaa or *naindera* is not foolowed in Kiazai tribe.

This child is asked to look over in the sky as the green bird is going over there. And then they did the surgical work. For this purpose no JAGA tradition prevailed . This ceremony usually held on the fourth year of age of a baby boy. (2)

CHILD MARRIAGE

Age of marriage is usually 10 to 15 years. Early childhood marriage is in fashion. Arrange marriage is given preference. The family who delays the marriages of their children is looked upon in the tribe. Regarding marriage of a boy priority is given to paternal side.

LUB

The family of bride will inquire about the money, demanded for giving the hand of their daughter. Lub money usually ranges from 20000 to 100000

(WATA SATTA) MATHARN

Wata satta is a common practice among the Khiazai. In watta satta equal age is necessary. If girl is below 10 years her parents have to give two girls of 2 years old. The boy side have to wait for the ten years. It is said that this tradition is borrowed from arabs.

“**MAASLAAFI**” there is another tradition in which both sides in front of the elders of the tribe promised that if the pregnant woman will give birth to a baby girl she would be married with that certain boy. Regarding marriage no consent of the boy or girl is taken.(3)

SANG BANDI (ENGAGEMENT)

On the eve of engagement Khiazai Slaughter an in accordance with their financial position. Family members and the close relatives are invited to the function. In this custom of engagement a large coloured piece of cloth is put on the fiancée of that boy which is called **JAUL BANDI**. The duration of the engagement would vary from six month to four years. The boy's age should be of 5 years and girl must be six months old.

MAINDHEE

If the expected bride have long hairs then her hair are to be curled. The family of bride Groom went there for the fixation

of date usually with empty hands. It would vary from five days to one month. No one asked from bride about her willingness or unwillingness.

MARRIAGE CEREMONY (*Girls Section*)

The marriages functions are usually arranged on the even dates of the month as according to the notion floated in this tribe that on the even dates the marriage would become successful and the couple would be happier and have plenty of issues/off spring/children. While If the marriage take place on the odd date then someone in the couple would be died and marriage would end in a disaster and failure.

THE ARRIVAL OF BARAT

The women included in the Barat sings the traditional wedding songs and arrives at the bride's house the bride after listening their voices of songs ran into KARI which is made up of a branches of date palm tree. She sit over there in a way in which she is facing Qibla and wore a large piece of Cloth.

As Barat enters the bride's house the mother of bride spilled over water in front of them which is a symbol of good will, peace or warm welcoming.

the bride groom's mother and sisters sits around the bride and the "Marasin" pour water over the body of bride and make her bath. Then apply the fragrance and sandoor over her whole body. Sandoor mixed with oil is also applied on her body. Then the new clothes which are taken by the bridegroom's sister & mother are handed over to them. The bride wear that clothes, i.e. a trouser of white color & a long shirt of red color and a green colored large piece of cloth also put on her. In the meanwhile the Marasin sings the traditional SEHRA which are called *HALOS*. In this way whole night is spent over there by singing songs. All other women slept away but bride groom's sisters and mother usually does not sleep at that particular night. There is no tradition of *DHOLAK*, all the songs are in the praise of bridegroom and in pray for the bravery, prestige, pride & long life of him. Next morning after taking breakfast they

starts applying *MEHNDI* on the hands & feet of the bride. After dinner in the Girls Section, the teen age girls & young age girls sing the wedding songs and do perform the traditional dances of Special type which is called *CHISHTOO.JHAROO & GUMBUGH*. (4)

MANELY TRADITIONS/CUSTOMS/RITUALS

After the arrival of marriage procession/Barat some boys from bride groom's side which includes mostly the groom's brothers and close relatives, slaughtered an animal depending upon the status of groom's family. If he belongs to a well to do family then they slaughter cow or bull. If he belongs to a poor or humble background then a Goat or sheep is slaughtered. Cooking of rice at this occasion is very rare phenomenon. The work done by the young men is called "*KAARI MARD*" who would be compensated by giving some remuneration for their labor at the end.

The dinner is served to the whole marriage procession between the time of Aser and Maghrib prayer. The whole Barrat took the meal. Musical night is being enjoyed by the performance of *Narr Surr* which is being played by the *Narries*. Meerassi's presence is eminent because he collects the *daads* as a reward of good music. In the mean while the traditional folklores and Qisa's are being read out in front of the audience. Dance and *jhumar* is not performed in the male section. When the time of morning approaches an elderly one asked the young men to offer *fajar* prayers. After offering of prayer breakfast is served to the barratis.

At the time of marriage the Groom and bride groom would not be allowed to eat the meat of the animals which is being slaughtered with a knife as it is considered as ominous. They used to take bread with the milk. This is a good luck charm and it is perceived that in this way their life would be full of happiness & blessings and rewarded with the abundance of issues or off springs.

GOO

Before the serving of breakfast a race which is called **Goo** in Balochi, is being arranged among the young men and the winner is awarded the cash prize of Rs.100. The neighbouring people after attending the marriage returned to their home and then the *qabool o Eijab* and *Nikkahs* ritual takes place. The groom is being bathed and is made to wear the new white clothes and white turban and long red or green coloured piece of clothes is put on the groom's shoulder and he is taken inside the **MOOCHIE** (kachari) where the brothers, fathers and close relatives of the groom are already present. The two persons chosen from either side who go towards the bride room and ask about her willingness and assent of *Nikkah*. She in reply says **HOON OR HAA**. After this activity they return in *Moochie* first they offer Greetings started *Balochka Haal* and informed about every thing in Detail during the course of ritual of *Hoon* or *Haa*. Then *molvi* asks the concerned witnesses about *Qabool o Eijab* and registers them in witness of the whole process of *Hoon* on the part of groom. Upon the *Nikkah* ceremony of a widow she is made to sit towards east which is a symbol of sorrow and a baby is placed in her lap if the widow does not have a child. If her fiancée got killed or died then on her engagement or marriage this tradition is not followed. While the woman or girl who is going to be married for the first time is usually used to sit in a way that her face is towards west in *Qibla* direction. (5)

TAKAR

Groom is taken inside the *Kari* where the bride groom is waiting for him to perform the ritual of *Takar*. Only the close relative of groom and bride groom are allowed to accompany while the friends stayed outside. On the return of groom the friends who are waiting outside take out the *Battons* and pretend as they are going to beat him, and make fun of him.

When the marriage procession (*baraats*) returns it is customary that the brother or father of the bride groom must be accompanied with the bride. On the way towards bride groom's home on *Tractor trollies* or *camals*. In Groom's home the special *Kari* is made for the purpose of wedding night and its all of the

four corners are decorated by red colored tassel (phundana) which is the symbol of wedding night. After seven days the parents of the bride take her with them to their house for one month or five days. When a marriage procession reaches at bride grooms home a bowl of water is usually poured in front of the door of that house. It is considered as a symbol of peace and calmness and taken as a good luck charm.

DOWRY

There is no specific demand of dowry. It depends on the capacity of the family of bride and no criticism is passed on for low dowry. In a dowry a goat, a water bag, worth of 2000 rupees and a donkey for a nomadic system is given. Following are the common items of the dowry:

SHAI KHUN

A thing anapest wool to keep flower if for making bread

BUR SHOO:

A special container made of the sheep skin to keep edibles.

HEENZ.

A Special bag for mixing milk

OOPHAN

A hand bag to keep flower only

SAHNRAK

A tray made of wood to keep daily see pots

THOOTH

A pot made of wood to cone animal milk

KASEGH

A big pot to keep grains and other dry foods and is used for meat preserving purpose. It is also called “panr” Paropi” besides to keep meat and quickly spoiled things

HARTEER

it is a sack like a bag made of the wool to keep the clothes and fragile and delicate things in the house. It is noted that this bag is embroidered.(6)

JEWELRY

BIRGREE

it is a necklace made of small stones.

DASTEEN

small beads of stones are used to wear around the wrists instead of Bangles

HASREE

it made of especially silver and used as a necklace.

PATEER

These are specifically designed ear-rings .

CHULUMB

These are made of green or white stone beads.

TOORA

The women have no right of inheritance of land in the dowry.

ZIKH

It is made of sheep skin and acts as a refrigerator(7)

DEATH RITUALS:

On the death of a person the elder ones from the close relatives took the dead body under JAAL (salvadora persica) tree and on

the death of a woman, the near one's women performed the rituals of funeral bath. The shroud of a male dead body consist of three white cloaks while for women dead body in addition to these three white cloaks one red or green large piece of cloak is used to wrap up the dead body. In olden days the dead body was layed on the leaves of Jaal tree(*salvadora persica*) and then gave them the funeral bath. If the father, son or husband of a women died or got killed then the sorrow or Soagh is called "**SEEGH**". It is not common to remarry the widow.

In some families of this tribe if a person died after seeing of his Grandchildren then a piece of sweet or Jaggiry is put into the hands of that dead body which is a symbol of his happiness and tantamount to the effect that he lived here in this world happily and with satisfaction and life hereafter would also be happy. Upon the death of young men gun powder is put on his chest as a symbol of valor and heroism.

The dead body is taken to the JANAZA GAH on the wooden cot where local Maulvi offered its funeral prayer. The close relatives, neighbors and people of the tribe even in this procession of funeral prayer their worst enemy took part despite their differences and quarrels as a good will gesture. In the olden days they used to burry their dead bodies without offering a funeral prayer due to the unavailability of maulvi even Maulvi was called upon from two to three days distance.

After offering of the funeral prayer, the dead body is taken to the graveyard. Owing to the dearth of vehicles some young men of the tribe are being sent to the graveyard in order to dig and prepare the grave along-with water and food stuff, then the dead body is tied on the wooden sticks which are placed on the back of a camel and took them to the graveyard where the grave is already prepared. The people who took/carried away the dead body are called "*Kaandhi*" in which majority of the people are the close relatives, friends of that dead body. It is a very rare phenomenon that people from outside the tribe included in "*Kaandhi*". After burial the premature clay is put on the grave and after passage of one year, the grave is made up of stones in specific way/style. Now a days the sepulchral men

took their devices and walked along with the dead body and prepare the grave very quickly.

Approximately, one or two hours before, the return of “Kaandhi’s arrangement for the funeral meal takes place. For that purpose one sheep or Goat slaughtered which is donated by some of the relatives of deceased men or women voluntarily. Similarly no financial burden is imposed upon the family members of deceased one. The sheep has a specific name called “**JAHAN SAREE**”

After taking the meal, all the people present over there offered their condolences and commiseration to the father or elder son or brother, if the deceased is a male, in case of female deceased the condolence were shared by her husband by uttering these words “*Chay Uzray Giroon*” what happened or what is the cause/reason in reply the concerned man says “*Allah Bahi Hukum*”. It is the consent of Allah.

They did not perform the ritual of Qul Khawani on the third day. It is arranged on fourth, fifth or seventh day. It is called “**AASS ROAKH**” for seven days condolences are carried on. The relatives and people of other tribe of suburb areas offered their condolences one by one, this tradition is called “**UZAR KAARI**”. Meerasi is asked to inform people all over the area and close relatives are being informed by themselves about the “**AASS ROAKH**” “Qul Khawani”.

Before creation of Pakistan, one Aana, After culmination of Pakistan one rupee and till Ayub Khan’s era Rs:5/- only were given to the deceased family by the close relatives for compensation to their grief and sorrow now a day, it is almost vanquished however in the Saraiki culture in *Rajanpur* it is still prevalent among the women who gave 100 to 500 rupees and a suit or piece of cloak to end the funeral days and asked the women to start their normal life from now on for some families it took place at fortieth and for someone on the 1st death anniversary depending upon the age of the deceased, if he is died at younger age the sorrow period could prolong till 1st death anniversary to offer condolence to the bereaved family one person from every family must come, it is worth

mentioning that women would go for condolences only of very near & close relatives.

On the day of “Aass Roakh” the near relatives who lived far off area took morning & evening meal while the neighbors & friends only took morning meal. This tradition is called “**SEEGH** or **CHILL**”.

According to the financial & social status of bereaved family, rice & meat is cooked by Meerasi which is called *Maconochie/Firkin*,

No one is allowed to speak loudly. Address of Maulvis and recitation of Quran was not made in the past but now a days most of the families arranged maulvis address at Qul Khawani. Chaplets were not numbered.

It is worth mentioning that from the time of death till Qul Khawani, all family members, the people who came for condolences sits and lays on the ground and did not use wooden cot for sleeping. Eleventh, Jumaraat and fortieth never took place in some families while death anniversary celebrated after a month and some families after one year and called on the neighbors close relatives and made arrangements for the meal. (8)

FORMATION AND STRUCTURE OF GRAVE

The grave of a woman is about one and a half feet high from the ground while there is no specific height for the grave of a man. That is why some graves are high and large while others are small and low. In some areas like *Lope*, Soori, Lotie etc 15 to 20 feet high Pillars were erected which were made up of large stones. On the head side of the graves of men, White, Red, black stones are being used in the preparation of graves (Kot Sabzal) while the *Khiazai*'s who stayed & lived in the adjoining areas of cities in Punjab especially District *Rajanpur* made up their graves with bricks and mud clay.

The occasion of 10th of Muharram or any other day of the year is not specific for the alteration & repair of graves often. They did not go to visit the graves of their relatives while *Khiazai* living in *Rajanpur* often go to the graveyard and done the repair work of the graves on 10th Muharram. They neither recited Azan after burying the deceased nor did any green and fresh branches of tree put on the grave.

In olden days majority of the people while now a days few families of this clan broke and destroyed the wooden cot on which dead body is given the funeral bath and taken to the graveyard and the pitcher of water which is used in making the mud of clay is also broken and destroyed by them and it is called “**CHANJORE**”.

If a deceased one died as an heirless then on the pattern of stones of hearth the three large stones are arranged on the head side of the Grave and comparatively a large and round stone is put on them. However, this pattern is followed in case of a person who is very pious and generous. In the meanwhile, in the name of the heirless people, it is the tradition to make a water reservoir which is called “**Othugh**”.(9)

CONCLUSION

Khiazai baloch tribe is an important baloch tribe of *Rajan Pur*. They are found in various parts of Pakistan however majority is resided in the suburb areas of *Rajan Pur*. They are illiterate, simple tone and majority is leading a miserable nomadic life wandering here and there with their herds. Due to this abject poverty and malnutrition they are facing health problems. They and their cattle quench their thirst from the same pond. They have been observed in rages with poor health.

It has been observed during survey that they are very careful about their weapons and women. Having no penny they keep rifle with them similarly their women observe *Perda* strictly. Their elders and young both are fond of smoking and tea. Apparently they seems to be healthy because in their daily life they use herbs-shrubs, wild-vegetables, pure Gee and Pure milk of their goats. Walking with their herds is their usual exercise.

However they are rude and non-cooperative with the strangers, no hospitality, nor welcome to the guests because they wish to lead their isolated life. They still have joint family system and obey the orders of their elders in their house hold affairs. In the foregoing pages we have discussed how much religious they are. They do not say five times prayers regularly and keep away from fasting. In fact their religious life revolves around omens and superstitions. Majority of *Khiazai*'s believed in Pir's prayers however a few are wahabi's. Overall they are the followers of their century's old customs and traditions. Living in a saraiki belt besides their mother tongue they speak saraiki. Despite speaking saraiki language no other saraiki cultural influence has yet been observed. It leads us to conclude that how much they are attached to their centuries old cultural traditions.

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