

A Descriptive Study Of The Culture And Environment Of Khaplu, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT:

The relationship between humans and their natural surroundings in Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan area is the subject of this research. It's a look into how people have dealt with and taken advantage of natural surroundings. The extent to which a people's environment dictates or shapes their culture is a question that has its roots in the late 19th century. The concept of environmental determinism emerged when the environment began to be seen as a key factor in shaping human civilization. Educators' contributions to developing human culture were downplayed beginning in the latter part of the first quarter of the twentieth century. According to their belief, people's actions are restricted by the state of the planet. The concept of environmental possibility emerged as a result of this. The purpose of this research is to determine how much the local environment in a remote mountain region of Pakistan has influenced cultural practises and how much those trends have been influenced by human conditions.

KEYWORDS: climate, Gilgit-Baltistan, Northern Areas, Khaplu

INTRODUCTION

Both physical and human geographers might draw connections to their current work. It's an interest in how human civilization and the natural world interact. Culture studies have tight ties to social anthropology because they both focus on humankind. This means that the literature that is relevant to this study is likewise somewhat diverse. It can be found in many areas of study, including Geography and other social sciences.

NEED OF STUDY:

There is a lack of studies in this field, especially those focusing on the connection between humans and their natural surroundings. The environment is a major factor in daily decision making. There is a direct correlation between the natural landscape and the regional culture and way of life. Human-environment studies are crucial for comprehending the region's culture and society. Changes have been noticed as a result of the region's better infrastructure,

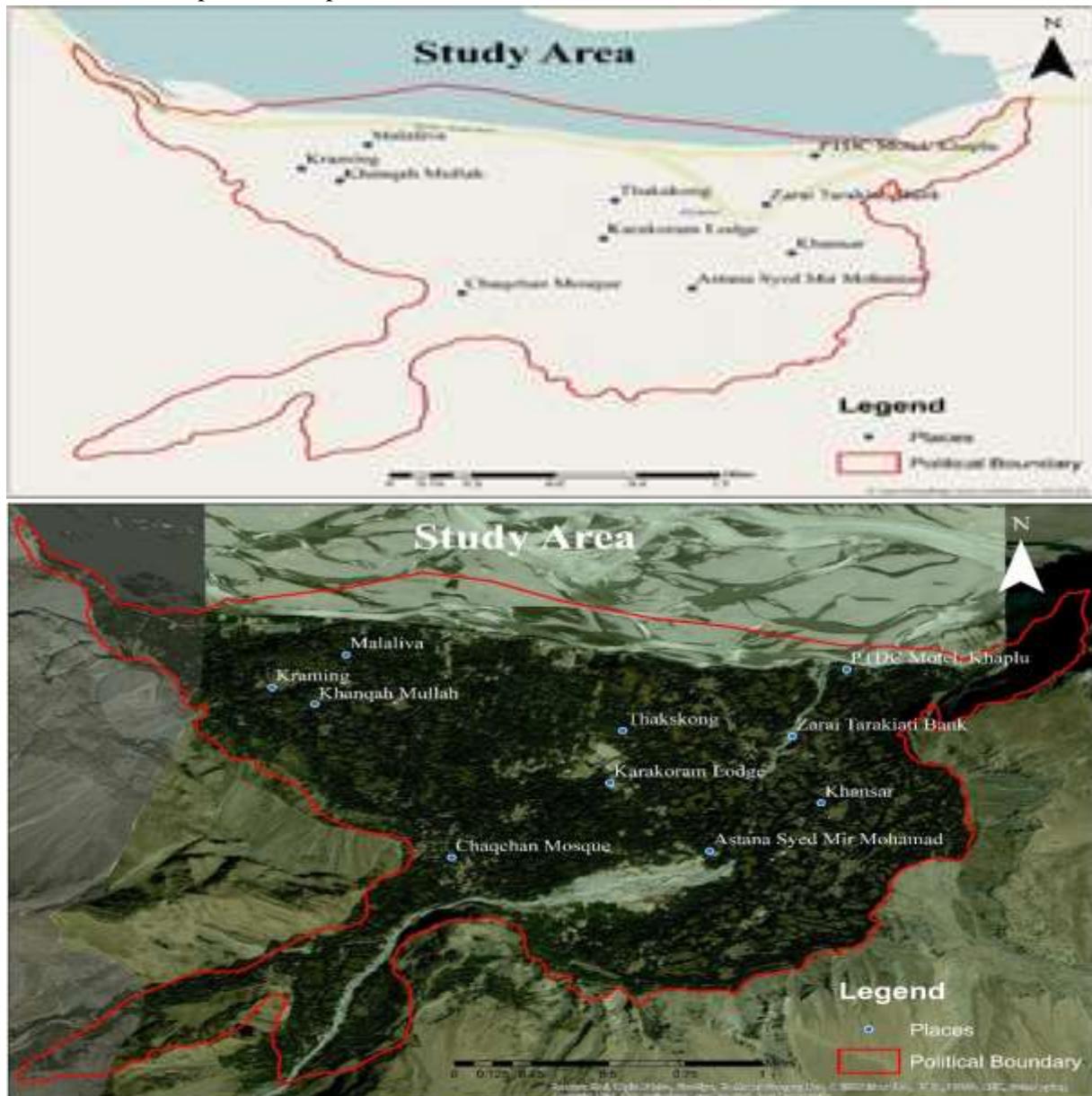
which has been brought about by the passage of time. Changes in the human-environment relationship have also resulted from improvements in accessibility, migration to new possibilities, and more engagement between the people of Khaplu and the rest of the world.

THE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Khaplu, where the research was conducted, is found at 35°10' 0 N, 76°19' 60E. Khaplu division, the capital of Ghanche district (Gilgit-Baltistan), is located at an elevation of 8532 feet above mean sea level. Skardu, Baltistan's capital, is located to the east, 103 kilometres away. A map is showing Ladakh and Tibet to the east, the Shyok River to the north, Tajikistan and Afghanistan to the northwest, and Skardu to the west. An estimated 83,000 people make their home in Valley, a region that spans over 20 square kilometres. Khaplu is split in half by the Nallah (streams) Ghanche, with the western half known as Khaplu Bala and the eastern half

as Khaplu Paen. The two components of Khaplu Pain, Hippi and Gharbochong, are a pain in the neck. Both Khaplu Broq and yul are considered to be part of Khaplu Bala. Of the

total population of 7165, 965 people live in households in Khaplu Bala, while 1086 people live in households in Khaplu Paen (7823 inhabitants).



Geographical Location of Studied Region, Mapped (Figure)

The majority of valley residents speak Balti. The origin of Balti is in Tibet. In terms of Tibetan dialects, Balti is one of the most westerly. Balti is written using the Tibetan script Yige, which originates from the country of Baltistan. Persian script, however, is in widespread usage. The arrival and subsequent stay of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi, a Muslim missionary, in Khaplu is often credited with this. The Balti language spoken in Khaplu

valley is widely regarded as the most authentic variety thanks in large part to the region's extensive repertoire of polite expressions. Khaplu served as the capital of the "Ybgo Dynasty" until the Pakistani government did away with Raja rule in 1973. During the century when the British and the Dogras ruled Jammu and Kashmir, Khaplu remained a princely kingdom on its own. Khaplu valley has been the tehsil Headquarter of one of Baltistan district's

sub divisions since 1973. Ghanche district was initially established in 1976 with Khaplu as its headquarters. Nevertheless, in 1977, during the martial law era, it was outlawed. As of its restoration in 1988, Khaplu has served as the district capital. One seat in the Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly is shared by the communities of Khaplu, a small portion of the Chorabat valley, and Surmu.

Until Syed Ali Hamadani arrived in the Khaplu valley in 783 AH during the reign of Muqem Khan, the ruler of Khaplu, Buddhism was the dominant religion throughout the region. Syed Shams Uddin Iraqi came along later and finished what his forerunner had started, converting the entire valley to Islam. Though he never set foot in the valley, Syed Muhammad Noor Bakhsh, the spiritual teacher/patron of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi, nonetheless left an indelible mark on the region. Mir Shamsuddin brought Noorbakhshi Islam to the Valley, and the region now adheres to the tenets of Fiqa ul Ahwat, written by Syed Muhammad Noorbakhsh. Nowadays, Shia, Ahl I Hadees, and Ahl I Sunnat Wal Jamat make up the remaining 10% of Khaplu valley's population. The Yabgo dynasty built the valley's palaces. The most well-known is Chopi Khar, the Raja's Palace in Bati. The building was recently remodelled thanks to the Agha Khan Cultural Assistance Project. Thoqsi Khar, to the south, overlooks the entire valley, while the palaces of Staqp sar khar and Hachi khar are to the north.

CASTES:

People from the following castes make their homes in Khaplu Valley:

- Ybgo, more often known as "Kacho," are members of the royal family who make up about 4% of the total population.
- Syeds: Persian syeds, primarily Mir Shamsudddin's descendants Between 6 and 8 percent of the valley's inhabitants are Iraqis.

Khaplu's picturesque:

- Facho: Around 8 percent of the population is descended from royal servants who were primarily responsible for the rearing of royal babies.

The remaining residents of Khaplu are "Balti," an ethnical people of Tibetan heritage with Dardic admixture.

Khaplu, being the administrative centre of the district, features a 200-bed hospital, district courts, a modern residential colony, and district offices for both sexes. Khaplu valley is the district's main commercial hub, housing offices for virtually every major commercial bank in the area.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE KHAPLU TOPOGRAPHY:

There are high, snow-capped mountains all around the Karakorum valley where Khaplu can be found. The valley floor is between 2500 and 3400 metres above sea level, with the highest khaplu grassland at 3400 metres. The valley slopes gently west to east along Ghanche Nullah, with its lowest points located around the mouth of the Shyok River. The whole population of the Khaplu Valley lives in a series of built up areas spaced at regular intervals along the valley's graduated agricultural terraces. Khaplu Bala, the upper part of the valley, and Khaplu Paeon, the bottom half, are separated by Ghanche Nullah. Flowing from Ghanche Lake in a southerly route, Ghanche Nala eventually empties into the shyok River further north.

Khaplu sits at the northern end of a typical alluvial fan, with its apex in the south. This alluvial fan is primarily drained by the Ghanche Nala.

The upper half of this alluvial fan, like the upper parts of most alluvial fans, has a sharp gradient, whereas the lower part has a more gradual slope and finer alluvial material suited for cultivation. Coarse, unconsolidated material predominates in the steeper upper section.

**CLIMATE:**

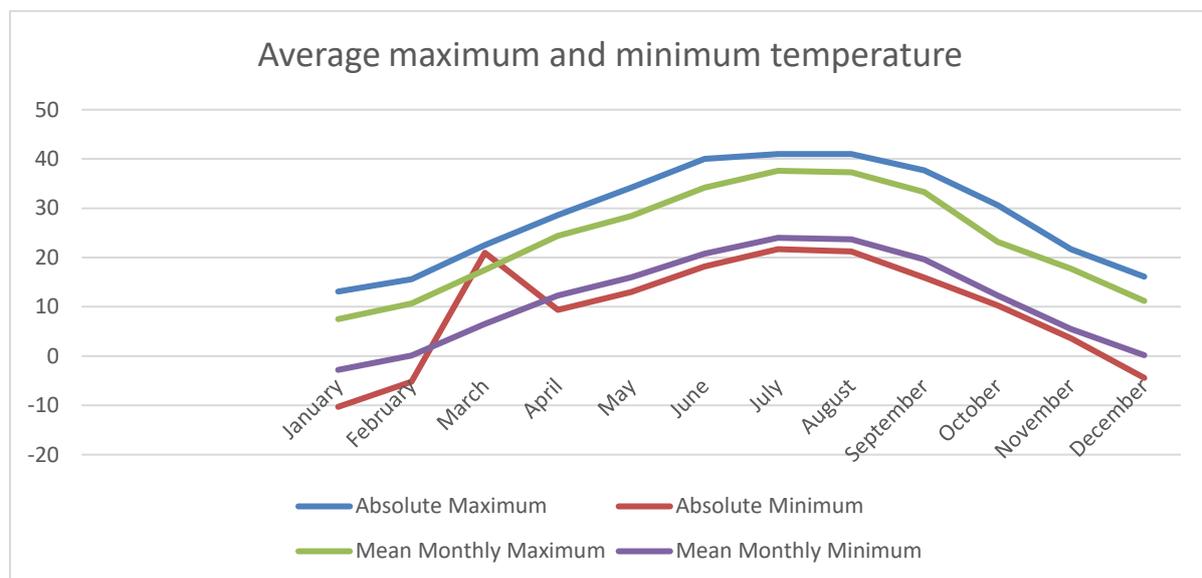
Khaplu experiences icy winters and mild summers. It gets downright frigid during the winter. The summer months of June, July, and August are the most enjoyable. The coldest months are definitely December, January, and February.

Khaplu's weather information is currently unavailable. However, data for nearby Skardu,

including its average high and low temperatures and monthly precipitation, is accessible. What follows is a table showing the average high and low temperatures experienced in the Skardu region. Khaplu has a more temperate climate than neighboring Skardu. Skardu's average high and low temperatures are:

Month	Absolute Maximum	Absolute Minimum	Mean Monthly Maximum	Mean Monthly Minimum
January	13.1	-10.3	7.5	-2.8
February	15.6	-5.2	10.7	0.1
March	22.5	21	17.5	6.5
April	28.6	9.4	24.4	12.3
May	34.2	13.0	28.4	16.0
June	40.0	18.2	34.2	20.8
July	41.0	21.7	37.6	24.0
August	41.0	21.2	37.3	23.7
September	37.7	15.9	33.3	19.6
October	30.6	10.3	23.2	12.3
November	21.7	3.6	17.7	5.5
December	16.1	-4.4	11.2	0.2

Feasibility study Report 2007.



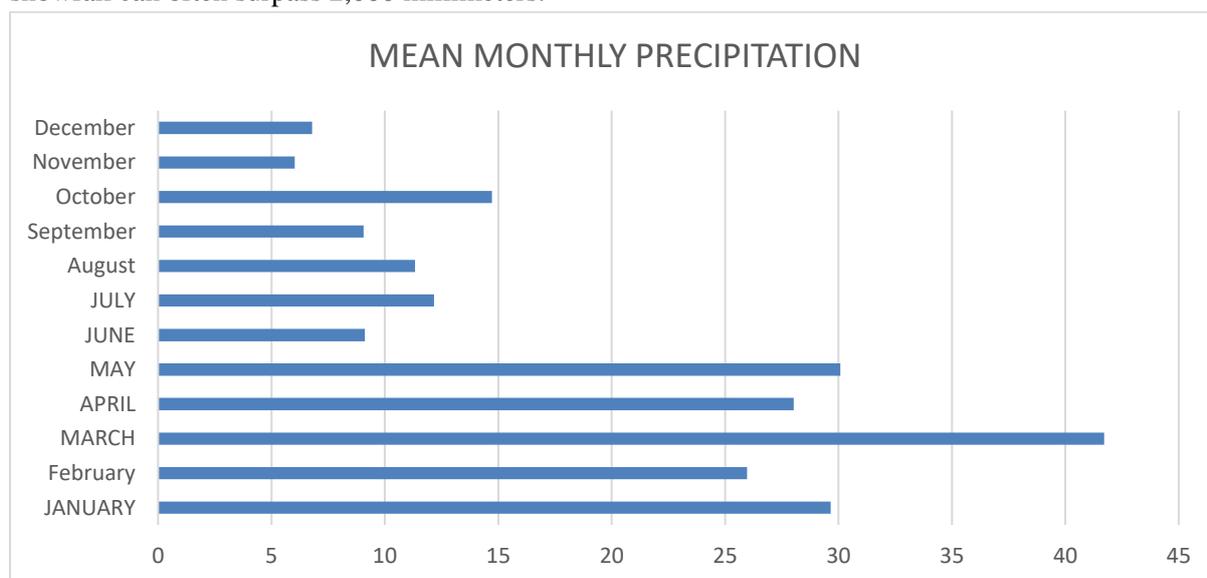
Average high and low temperatures are shown in Figure 3.2.

Cropping is restricted to the summer months because of the sub-zero winter temperatures. The number of cold-free days increases with altitude. While moving from a lower to a higher altitude, the number of days without frost decreases.

RAINFALL PATTERN:

As this location lies within a rain shadow, the prevailing monsoon winds are unable to bring precipitation. The summers are dry, while the winters receive much more precipitation in the form of heavy snowfall. Rainfall does not help much with supplying either crop water or stream flows. Skardu receives about 286 millimeters of rain on average per year. At

higher elevations and in glacier habitats, annual snowfall can often surpass 2,000 millimeters.



Average monthly precipitation is seen in Figure 3.3.

WATER RESOURCES

RIVER WATER

The Eastern portion of the alluvial fan on which Khaplu sits is traversed by the River Ghanche. The Ghanche glacier, in the south, is its source. The Ghanche Glacier may be found 15 kilometres south of the valley, close to the town of Khenpisho. The northernmost point where the Ghanche River meets the Shyok River is the town of Qobtung. In addition to the Ghanche River, a number of smaller streams also flow into the Shyok River. Depending on the time of year, the average flow rate might be anywhere from 10 to 2500 cusecs. Since the water in the river comes primarily from snow and glacier melt, the volume of flow is affected by weather conditions such as temperature and cloudiness. At Garbochung, a power plant with a 250KWA output has been set up on the Ghanche River.

SPRING WATER (CHUMIK)

The word "Chumik" means "spring" or "water hole" in the Balti language. All of the valley's residents can get their water supply from a variety of springs around the valley, making them a reliable resource all year long. The "Morghoto Spring" and the "Ghanche Nullah" supply water for Khaplu Paean. Khaplu Paean gets its water from two sources: the Ghanche Nullah in the upper region and the Morghoto

Spring in the lower region. Ghanche Nullah solely irrigates the Dokhsa region of Khaplu Bala; the rest of the region is supplied with water by the Khaplu Bala Chumik. Primary water supply comes from the 12-cubic-second-per-second-discharge Khaplu Bala chumik. Along the stream that flows from this spring in Bathong, a 135 KVA generating plant has been erected. Year-round flows can be seen from the Morghoto Chumik, which has a discharge of around 6 cusecs, the "Ghorghoto Chumik," which has a discharge of around 2 cusecs, and the "Muldumar Rangna Chumik," which has a discharge of around 6 cusecs. Khaplu also features the springs of Daholi, khohlong mikmat, and Muldumar Rangna Chumik.

LAKE:

When it comes to water, Ghanche Lake is crucial to the valley's economy. To the south of Khaplu lies a collection of three or four lakes. The Ghanche lake is accessed by way of the Ghanche Nala.

NATURAL HAZARDS:

FLOOD:

Having begun its journey from its source at Surmo broq (Place name), the Ghanche Nala

now follows a course that takes it south of due north. Chaqchan and the surrounding area within 500 metres of Ghanche Nala are prone to flooding due to heavy snowfall and persistent sunshine in the winter. Chaqchan and the surrounding communities have been devastated by a flood caused by a glacier eruption. When it rains a lot, this area is flooded, too. The glacier movement has also affected the left side of Askari gon. When it rains a lot, the river Shyok floods, and the areas within 500 metres of the river are affected. During heavy rains, the river flooded and caused damage in Muldomar and the surrounding area.

MASS MOVEMENT OF EARTH:

During times of extreme rainfall, landslides are a typical occurrence in Khaplu. Landslides are caused by the lack of flora in the dry, metamorphic terrain. Landslides are a typical occurrence in Muldomar and the surrounding surroundings.

RIVER EROSION:

When the river rises, whether from heavy rain or glacial melting, it can have a devastating effect on the land nearby. Frequently, river erosion has a negative impact on Qobtung.

THE CULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT CULTURE:

Culture encompasses all of human existence. Culture includes people's diets, clothing, lifestyles, social interactions, rituals, and events, among other things. The culture of a region is greatly impacted by its environment. The cultural qualities of a region are a reflection of the region's climate, soil, water, and topography. The present chapter focuses on the cultural traits of the Khaplu and their connection to the natural world.

ARCHITECTURE AND NEIGHBORHOOD:

A sizable percentage of Khaplu's population is stratified so that each village has its own muhallah ("Grong") where they all live together. Nothing like this has ever been

observed in any other part of Baltistan. Each muhallah was given a name that reflected their particular line of work. Gharbochung, Hippi, Shinkhon, Helem Grong, Dogsa, Bongreewa, Hlankhon, Garbong, Khsergrong, Mon,Grong, Harimonpi Gond, HeleenGrong, and Thaskon are all names of muhallahs. Every muhallah group operates under its own set of norms and customs. There is at least one mosque for every mullah, albeit not all mullahs have access to formal education. Most Khaplu homes have two stories, with the upper level serving as the main living area. The upper level, or "Thok Khann," has sleeping quarters and common areas, while the bottom level, or "Ooq Khann," stores straw and houses animals. Typically, a home will include between three and four bedrooms. There is one large room at the heart of the building, warmed by a chimney. In a connected neighbourhood, residences may share a wall with one another or a roofed walkway. Stone masonry with clay mortar is commonly used in the building of homes, and the exteriors are often finished with a clay straw mortar.

Another style uses hardwood trunks for the support beams and columns, with filler walls of dried branches linked together. Shaq is the name for this item. After that, clay mortar is used to plaster the walls. This type of building, designed to withstand earthquakes, is widely utilized throughout the valley.

The third style of building uses wooden bands in the walls and beams made of wood. In extremely cold climates, this building design is preferred because of the high degree of insulation it affords. Thus, all of these buildings make use of readily accessible, regional resources. Yet, as more and more people are able to travel to and from their homes, the design and construction of homes are evolving at a rapid pace.

MODERN ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN DWELLINGS:

Since an all-weather black top road was built to connect Khaplu and Skardu, there has been a dramatic shift in the style, construction, and

materials used in the valley's dwellings. It wasn't until the 1970s that affluent people began building new communities distant from the original "grong" (neighborhood). These dwellings had direct access to the "grong" via a network of walkways. But before the 1980s, it was only possible to build detached homes for a maximum of two families.

At that period, a family's home would have had four or five rooms, and it would also have had stalls for animals. This was a radical departure from the conventional pattern of housing, as most of the homes had indoor plumbing with flush toilets. The roofs of the houses were either mud or, in some cases, tin, and the walls were made of stone masonry. Major changes to the housing market occurred in the early 2000s. There is now an excellent road network throughout the entire valley. Modern housing trends favor individual homes built apart from the rest of the neighborhood, usually along a major thoroughfare. Structures are often made of reinforced cement concrete (RCC), which has a framed structure. It is not uncommon to find RCC structures with two stories and a ground floor devoted to retail. Cement blocks, rather of stone masonry, are used in today's RCC frame construction. RCC tiles have replaced the former mud-filled roofs. This movement's adoption is in the lowlands. Nonetheless, extensive wooden paneling was used to allow insolation from the elements. Those that can afford it often opt for an RCC ceiling and wall system.

This shift emerged as a result of rising living standards across the board, easier transportation thanks to paved roads, more opportunities for social engagement, and a more globalized media landscape and societal shifts. They are no longer limited to using locally sourced materials; instead, they may manufacture virtually any variety of construction products on the plains, having access to the necessary building supplies and personnel. Single-story homes are the norm, although multi-story homes that include features like a vehicle porch inside the house and a tiny kitchen garden are on the rise. The majority of commercial

structures, including malls, stores, offices, and banks, are still only one story tall. For environmental and economic reasons, the valley is devoid of any skyscrapers. The Khaplu palace, a relic from the ancient age, the PTDC hotel, a fine illustration of contemporary stone masonry architecture, and the karakoram lodge khaplu, a cutting-edge multi-story resort, are among the valley's most recognizable structures.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN DRESS CODE:

The Khaplu people's fashion sense is greatly affected by the weather. As Khaplu has long, chilly winters and short, mild to warm summers, woolen garments crafted from locally grown wool are an integral part of men's and women's attire. The Qar and the Balghosi Goncha are the traditional garments worn. Information is provided below.

It's a lamb's wool shawl in the traditional Balti style, Qar. The textiles are woven by hand in a variety of locations throughout the valley. Throughout the winter, you can find a huge number of elderly women in every household, spinning wool into thread for this shawl.

Traditional Balghosi Gonchas were gowns similar to the Shalwar Kameez and constructed from the same material as "Qar," which are now rarely worn. From October to April, the majority of people in the Middle East wear caps and Qars.

Balghosi Gonshas have been supplanted with shalwar kameez, a traditional clothing of the lowlands that can be produced from more readily available warm fabrics. Traditional shawl worn by Qars, made of khaplu.



ENVIRONMENT AND NUTRITION:

The traditional diet of the people of Khaplu was heavily influenced by environmental factors. Historically, only ingredients grown or raised in a particular region would be used to cook meals. Because they had to be transported great distances, few species were available for use in culinary preparations. Below are some of the specifics of these preliminary steps:

- Traditional "rdo zang" stone pot-cooked buckwheat mush (also known as "Mar Zan"). Buck wheat can be made into a prepared food similar to "halwa" by boiling it in water. This is followed by a serving of meat curry and a melted cup of butter.
- Ballay (Local Soup): Droung Ballay is made by boiling crushed barley grains (called "strup"), meat, potatoes, onion, salt, and spices in water. On Wednesdays during the month of "Safar," and during the winter for both lunch and dinner, "Droung Ballay" is offered as a special treat. The second kind of ballay is called "Traspi Ballay," and it consists of wheat noodles, meat, spices, potatoes, and salt simmered in water.

- Khurba is a wheat bread similar to roti that, after being partially cooked on a "Tawa," is finished baking in coal underneath the Tawa. It's the valley's traditional replacement for roti. Biami Khurba is what it is called when the same thing is cooked in hot sand. When making khurba, instead of cooking the wheat bread in a skillet, you let it sit overnight in ashes so that it grows hard, and then you cook it directly in the fire.
- Hrtzabkhur: By soaking barley grains in water and storing them in a wooden container, we can encourage the plant to sprout roots. The barley is sweetened in this way before being dried and crushed into flour. Named "Hrtzab," this is an acronym. Khurba, a thick round bread made with this flour, is traditionally served with apricot oil or melted butter. It's meant to be eaten as dessert. It's considered a nutritious snack, thus it's often shared between family members on happy occasions like the birth of a child.

You won't have any trouble preparing any of these meals. It uses little gas. Ingredients can be sourced from close by. Environment dictates planting season. From March through October, the weather is ideal for growing plants.





Khaplu traditional cuisine is depicted in Figure 4.2.

CHANGES IN DIETARY HABITS

Khaplu's native cuisine is being supplanted by the cuisine of Pakistan's plains as a result of increased access to other parts of the country. Food ingredients in the lowlands are readily available. As a result of seasonal and permanent migration, locals were exposed to more of the outside world. The cuisine of Pakistan's rural regions has become increasingly popular in recent years. Normal days no longer include the preparation of traditional dishes. Many Khaplu residents still reach for the comforting native soup (Ballay) throughout the colder months of the year. As opposed to before, now we have rice and beef instead of Marzan. In the summer, breakfast in Khaplu isn't complete without khurba. Khurba remains a staple of morning meals since it can be prepared quickly and easily, even when women are otherwise occupied due to the working season. Hrzabkhor has been replaced by Halwa and sweating. Hrzabkhor was traditionally given as a gift at times of great joy, such as birth, marriage, and other celebrations.

Certain events and situations are also connected to the environment in which they occur. Below,

you'll find specifics on such times and occurrences.

- Broq Kher: It's a methodical strategy for keeping the soil safe for planting. The cattle have been moved to higher ground (Broq). As such, its primary function is to safeguard the valley's agricultural property (Yul). Conventional wisdom holds that when land is being farmed, no cattle should be permitted to graze freely on the planted area since they destroy the produce. The second cause of this movement is that the valley's grass supply is diminished after the long winters that the cattle and sheep endure, while new growth begins in the higher elevations. Hence, the herds are relocated to higher ground (Broq). Noorzipa is the name given to shepherds who are responsible for the well-being of the flock.
- Ston Pheok: "Ston" signifies fall in Balti, and "Pheok" refers to a lamb or a goat. Every household will slaughter a lamb, goat, or zoo before the winter months set in. After that, the meat is

cured by hanging it in cool areas until the following winter. The similar custom is known as "Nasalu" in Hunza valley. When the supply of straw is limited during the long winter months, the custom may have originated as a means of easing the pressure on the remaining straw by reducing the number of livestock.

- Tap tho (planting time): Baltistan is a region where farming methods are passed down from generation to generation, with few towns having adopted more contemporary methods. The farming method relies on cooperation and input from everyone involved. Both persons and materials are pooled together to complete tasks. Tap Tho describes the entire cultivation procedure, which typically takes more than a month to finish. Rokhmee is the name given to the servants. As the men are out in the field, the women at home cook for the help.

The context in which these things occur is crucial. People usually schedule these activities in accordance with the seasons. As the surrounding environment shifts, the event itself undergoes transformations. The use of ston phoek has been declining in recent years as more readily available straw has been brought in from elsewhere in the valley. Straw availability for winter animal feeding was once the primary constraint on livestock numbers. Yet, acquiring straw is no longer problematic for expanding cattle numbers due to improved transport infrastructure.

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