

**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF “FARSI” – THE
LANGUAGE OF HIJRAS OF D. G. KHAN AND
RAWALPINDI**

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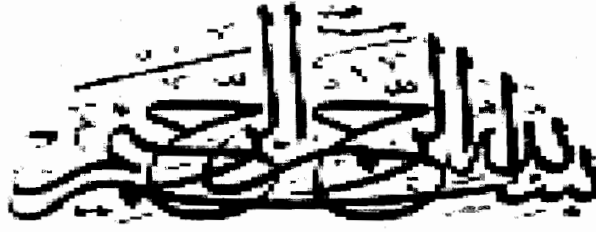
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(IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST MERCIFUL AND
BENEFICENT)

Dedicated to:

All the real intersexed people of the locale of study, who are not only ridiculed by the masculine and feminine genders but also exploited by castrated and normal male gurus wearing hijras face on the basis of the excuse that their soul is feminine

I wish I could do something for them

ACCEPTANCE BY THE VIVA VOCE COMMITTEE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores a secret language called Farsi spoken by hijra community in D. G. Khan and Rawalpindi. Hijras have successfully kept it private in order to take its advantage as a secret language. The data for this study was collected using ethnographic research methods. It was then analyzed using sociolinguistic theories. Linguistically, Farsi contains its own vocabulary and shows some syntactical and morphological differences from the other languages spoken in the two cities of locale of the study. Sociolinguistic analysis shows that Farsi is as good a language as any other can be. However, it has a small number of lexical items which is because of its limited and private use. The analysis also shows that the hijras learn this language to use it for many different purposes varying from establishing identity to earning livelihood.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Human being, defined as a social, political and thinking animal, is always in need of language to accomplish his needs and deeds. Human's politics and thoughts are all played through language as Barber (1972) opines that '... we can hardly imagine thought without words' (p. 1). That is why Palmer (1971) suggests that human beings are not well named as *Homo sapiens* (man with wisdom); they should be defined as *Homo loquens* (man with speaking). Humans are, hence, the best of all creations because of speaking ability. It is language that plays a key role in raising humans' status among the animal kingdom and making them a social animal. Language has many functions to play in the society by influencing it and by being influenced by it. Sometimes, it guarantees security and survival. In this case, it becomes highly private and sensitive asset of a certain community.

Language as a private asset proved to be a stimulus for this study, and the sentence that led me to this discovery that a community can even develop a secret language of their own was:

Kaṛe kaṛa ho¹

This imperative sentence was uttered by a hijra² – a member of the “third gender”³ – for another one who was giving us their telephone numbers when one of my friends, also a researcher, and I were at their *dera*⁴ in Rawalpindi to have an interview with them. It came to my knowledge later that they use many such sentences, sotto voce. I tried to know about the language to which they were code switching and the reasons for this code-switching but they declined to give any information about it except admitting that they have a language that is kept secret. However, this event inspired me to go through the available literature on hijras. A great deal of work (e.g. Shah, 1961; Kessler, 1987 & 1990; Nanda, 1990; Balaji and Maloy, 1997; Khattak, 2004; Brown, 2005; Reddy, 2005 etc.) has been done on their sexuality, queer identity, social organization, health problems, status in society etc but I could not find any specific work on the nature and role of the separate language that they have of their own which they call Farsi. Interestingly, as I observed, while on the one hand hijras of Pakistan are keen to exploit⁵ other Pakistani Languages, on the other hand, they are far keener to hide their own from

¹ This is one of the most frequently spoken sentences by hijras. This means something between “Keep quiet” and “shut up”, and is used usually by some senior hijra for a junior one to stop them from doing anything wrong or revealing any of their secrets to outsiders.

² Different writers have given different spellings to it e.g. hijda, heejra etc. I follow the spelling given by Kira Hall, a renowned sociolinguist, who produced a large body of work (e.g. Hall 1997) on hijras and *kotis* of India

³ Hijras identity as “third gender” is still controversial

⁴ Hijra household

⁵ I use the word exploit because when hijras use other languages they appropriate it with their typical terms like “veer”, “baji”, “saheli” etc and some gestures like flat palmed clapping etc

the outsiders. Keeping in view some obvious factors leading to this attitude, I decided to do a sociolinguistic study of Farsi with the hypothesis that it is a different language and a tool for their survival. They need it because they want to go on living as a separate gender where they hold no respectable role or a job. Therefore, perhaps due to a queer identity, the hijras invented the Farsi as a tool.



Plate 1: This inside view of a hijra dera shows only those items used in dancing etc. The rest of the things are hidden in the locked box

Dealing with the language of hijras whose identity as a separate gender is still not clear, in the present study, I have tried to use gender neutral language. Interestingly, the recent moves to achieve gender neutrality in English language have not served the cause of feminists or the women only; they have also done some good to the hijras. Therefore, when contemporary English writers use "person", "chairperson", "flight attendant", "human beings" and "synthetic" instead of "man", "chairman", "steward", "mankind", and "man-made"⁶, intentionally or (mostly) unintentionally they acknowledge the identity of the third gender that is neutral. Otherwise, they could employ feminine expressions for the above given words, chairwoman in place of chairman⁷, for instance. However, in their use of pronouns, the third gender usually finds no space. Using 'they' has also been suggested to refer to the members of either gender or both genders which, fortunately, refers to *any* gender, including the third one. Using 'she/he' or s/he to refer to people who include members of the two genders, also works to bring social equality between men and women but this ignores the "third gender". In English there is no separate pronoun for the eunuchs or hijras. In the present study, I would, however, use 'hshe' as a third person singular nominative pronoun to refer to a hijra – the subject of my study where the initial 'h' is also the initial of its referent, hijra. For third person singular possessive and objective pronouns, I would use 'hir' replacing 'e' of feminine 'her' with 'i' from masculine 'his' and 'him'. This will, perhaps, minimize the threat of being gender biased about either of the two dominant genders, from hijra's point of view. For third person plural, use of 'they' may work appropriately. At this point, it appears important to

⁶ More examples of gender-sensitive language have been compiled by Service-Growth Consultants Inc as given on <http://www.servicegrowth.net/documents/Examples>. They divide them into common gender-biased terms and bias-free substitutes. Even a more comprehensive discussion is available in Bouanchaud et al (1999) where guidelines on gender neutral language are given.

⁷ Though hijras of Pakistan have never enjoyed such posts as chairman, steward etc.

mention that hijras themselves refer to themselves as feminine members of the society most of the times and they prefer to be called so. However, they do so, perhaps, to compensate their masculine physical features. This means that they think themselves in-between the masculine and feminine genders. Thus, use of he, she or she/he would be inappropriate. Eliminating the use of pronoun altogether could also be considered but in an ethnographic research study like this, it might be difficult to do so. Hence 'hshe' in place of he/she and 'hir' in place of his, her and him sound more appropriate pronouns to refer to the hijras, and thus used in the present study.

1.2 Purpose

Usual perception about hijras among people is that they are some inferior, abnormal or ridiculous beings born to be ridiculed. Some people also consider them as those whose prayers are very effective. Others see them as gay prostitutes. Generally, they are perceived as passive and oppressed members of the society who have no choice but to live a miserable life lacking masculinity, fortune and self-respect. The professions they usually choose are also of the same kind like begging, praying at a child's birth, prostitution, dancing etc. Hijras are also considered to be biologically and sexually abnormal by birth. For many people, they are mentally and physically abnormal and inferior so they are usually not expected to have any social structure or organization. Although very few people from the masculine and feminine genders who are visited by hijras or frequently visit them get aware of Farsi and some are equally skilful to speak it,

yet more than 98 % people from the two cities (D. G. Khan and Rawalpindi) of the locale of the study cannot even expect from hijras anything like developing a private language⁸.

The present study is to raise the awareness of people about Farsi. However, the purpose is not to alarm or warn people rather to help save Farsi from dying though paradoxically it seems to be used by hijras as a tool of their survival. Some linguistic features of Farsi have also been discussed to determine its associations with and status among the languages of Pakistan in contact with Farsi.

The study intends to give a sociolinguistic analysis of Farsi where Farsi's introduction and the roles of Farsi in hijras' life have been discussed by giving qualitative analysis of the data collected during field research. Beginning with the discussion on what Farsi is, how and where it is used and why it is important, the study leads to a more important issue that is the true force of the language whether it is for hijra identity, solidarity, survival or something else.

In short, the main purpose of the study is to identify and describe a language and discuss some socio-economic factors that led it to become an inevitable position for hijras.

1.3 Main Research Question

The main research question that this study endeavors to answer is:

What is Farsi and why hijras need it?

⁸ See the survey in appendix – I

Hijra⁹: A member of the third gender in Pakistan and India similar to eunuch, two-spirit person, inter-sexed, trans-gendered, transsexual, hermaphrodite, aravani etc of different parts of the world. I use this term for all such persons but in India the writers (like Nagar, 2008; Hall, 2005 etc) have used term *koti* for those who are men but act as hijras and who live in a separate community away from hijras.



Plate 2: A beautiful hijra working in many capacities with an entertainment company that organizes its Magic shows (dance shows) on the occasion of annual fairs in various towns and villages

⁹ Most of the above given works on hijras and particularly those given in Chapter 2 of the present study who have worked on their language, sexuality and gender aspects like Hall and O'Donovan (1996), Hall (1997), Bucholtz and Hall (2004), Hall (2005), give this term 'hijra' with the same spellings to refer to a member of third gender community in India and Pakistan. However, Brown (2005) dealing with the red district of Lahore uses the term 'khusra' to refer to the same third gendered person. The original pronunciation for the word is /hi:ʒra:/ written in Urdu as

ہیجرہ

Hijra Community: Hijras living in a city/area; well-organized and interlinked together form a community of their own that they usually name as their *bratheri* that can be translated as community into English.

Rawalpindi: Rawalpindi is the name of a city of Pakistan. It is located in the Upper Punjab. Urdu, Punjabi and Potohari are the most commonly used languages here while the hijras living in this city also speak Farsi.

D. G. Khan: D. G. Khan is a city located in the Southern Punjab. Urdu and Siraiki are the two most common languages spoken in this area.

1.7 Basic Assumptions

Speech plays some very important functions according to the status of its speakers in society. The status is also dependent on as which gender we belong to. It is said that men and women speak differently (Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1974; Ruth, 1997 etc). This assumption has been carried forward here in the present study. Trudgill (1974) draws attention to 'the classical example of sex differentiation' that 'comes from the West Indies. It was often reported that when Europeans first arrived in the Lesser Antilles and made contact with the Carib Indian who lived there, they discovered that the men and women 'spoke different languages'. However, they were two 'different varieties of the same language' (p. 85). Such different varieties may be termed as genderlects. But the third gender, in Pakistan, it is assumed, is so much socially distanced and in such a drastic threat that it needed a separate language. Another assumption automatically comes into being i.e. Farsi is a language. The third assumption is that Farsi plays many important roles for hijras.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present sociolinguistic study draws on different inter related subjects like language, the issue of *a* language, linguistics, sociolinguistics, hijra community, their history, current scenario, their language and the importance of that language in their life. I review the authentic literature available on these subjects here in this section of the study. Much work has been produced on language, linguistics, sociolinguistics etc. As already stated, a large body of research (e.g. Shah, 1961; Kessler, 1987 & 1990; Nanda, 1990; Balaji and Maloy, 1997; Khattak, 2004; 2002; Brown, 2005; Reddy, 2005 etc) is also available on hijras of the Subcontinent¹⁰ as they have attracted the attention of anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists etc., even as early as in the nineteenth century (as Hall 2005:128 cites Shortt, 1873 and Faridi, 1899). But, a little work is available on Farsi. No one, to my knowledge, has conducted a systematic study of hijras' language so far, though a few (Khattak, 2004; Hall, 2005; Khilji, 2008; Nagar, 2008 etc) have, in their works, mentioned it as being the language of hijra community. Thus this becomes a

¹⁰ A part of South Asia, consisting of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

pioneer study into this very language and all the data on it has been gathered by exploiting ethnographic research methods. The main research question of this study is, 'What is Farsi and why hijras need it?' To answer the question, whether Farsi is a language or not, I have to define language.

2.1 What is Language?

As stated in the opening lines of the introductory chapter of the present study, language has played a key role in elevating the status of human beings among all the creatures of the universe; it has helped them process their thought in a quick and accurate manner (Barber, 1972; Aitchison, 1996) and it has many other functions (See Sapir, 1933; Barber, 1972, p. 20; Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 67-68; Hudson, 1996; Aitchison, 2003, p. 23; etc.) to perform in human life as in the words of Aitchison (1996), 'Human language is bizarre: it can cope with any topic even imaginary ones....' (p.15). We can even discuss many ways as how language is learnt; how written; how listened and how spoken. Despite all the knowledge acquired about language, one finds oneself in trouble when asked what this language is. Can we determine what exactly it means? How can we say that two speakers are speaking two different languages?

'... Can language be defined?' Jean Aitchison (2003) answers this question by making a list of design features of language e.g. arbitrariness, the need for learning, duality, displacement, creativity, patterning etc but his own question '...what exactly *is* language?' (pp. 13-23) remains unanswered. Similarly Chapman (2006), in order to define what language is, considers 'accounts of language that rely on the claim that language is a type of behaviour, that it is a state of mind, and that it is a means of

communication' (p. 25) and concludes that all these approaches 'have some interesting thing to tell us' (p. 68). Barber (1972), however, defines language in the following way: '... language, then, is a signaling system which operates with symbolic vocal sounds, and which is used by some group of people for the purposes of communication and social operation' (p. 21). He does not claim that this is what language exactly *is* rather he calls it 'an attempt at a definition' (p. 282). Downes' (1998) approach seems realistic when he states that 'language is a complicated business. In everyday talk, we use the word "language" in many different ways. It isn't clear how "language" should be defined or what the person on street thinks it actually is!' (p. 1). The opinion of the person on street is in fact a social factor in the definition of language.

Quine also gives importance to the social factor, 'Language is a social art. In acquiring it we have to depend entirely on intersubjectively available cues as to what to say and when' (as cited in Chapman, 2006, p. 8). The term 'language', in general sense, means 'the human faculty to communicate using particular types of signs (e.g. sounds and gestures) organized in particular types of units (e.g. sequences)' (Duranti, 1997, p. 69). It is, however, not that simple. No doubt it makes use of 'particular types of signs' that are 'organized in particular types of units', but its role is best defined by the sociolinguists, linguistic anthropologists and discourse analysts who, according to Bucholtz and Hall (2004) emphasize that:

Language is a primary vehicle by which cultural ideologies circulate, it is a central site of social practice, and it is a crucial means for producing socio-cultural identities. Thus, any socio-cultural analysis of language is incomplete

unless it acknowledges the relationship between systems of power and the ways that they are negotiated by social subjects in local contexts. (p. 492)

This argument shows that Language does not simply 'communicate' as Duranti (1997, p. 69) wants us to believe but rather it is central cite of social practice and it helps in the creation of socio-cultural identities. Lanehart (1996) expresses a similar view when he states that '...its purpose is not simply to communicate' (p. 322). I think Bucholtz & Hall are right when they state that it is a vehicle that produces socio-cultural identities.

Downes (1998) while discussing the difference between the terms 'language' and '*a language*' states, 'To the universalistic question, "What is language" the current best answer is Chomsky's: language is a set of very specific universal principles which are intrinsic properties of the human mind and part of our species genetic endowment' (p. 17). To me, the 'current best answer' to this question is the one given by Bucholtz and Hall (2004) referred in the above section. But Downes' (1998) discussion on the difference between 'language' and '*a language*' can be of some help here. I would explain it under the heading 'what is *a language*?'

2.1.1 What is *a language*? The terms "language" and "*a language*" have difference in them and Downes (1998) explains it in the following way (emphasis mine¹¹):

The question, 'what is *a language*?' is not the same as the question, 'What is language?' In the former case we are asking about the nature of particular languages, 'the English language' or 'the French language' etc. We shall see that

¹¹ Emphasis has been added by using bold font of the words and expressions on different occasions in the present study

in this case the answer proves, surprisingly, to be at least partially **social**. To the latter question, the answer is largely a psychological one. (p. 16)

This means when we refer to a language in comparison with other languages, some social ideologies are involved in declaring it a language. It is not only society that plays a dominating role in defining a language, but languages may even be dependent on individuals for their definition. Thus they may vary from person to person. Whitney has a similar opinion that is, 'In a true and defensible sense, every individual speaks a language different from every other' (as cited in Downes, 1998, p. 16). This makes it rather more difficult to decide what exactly a language is and where its boundaries are. Are they limited to a person (to form idiolects) or is person A's language different from that of person B's? Do they have strict boundaries along with geographical borders (to make dialects)? As discussed above, language in general sense, does not only mean psychological and its being 'a central site of social practice' cannot be ignored. It has, thus, become a challenging issue for the linguists to address. What else can be done to define it? Lassiter (2008) emphasizes the need of distinguishing the two meanings of the term language in the following words:

We need to distinguish two meanings of the term "language". The first is political: a language such as English and Urdu is defined primarily as the speech of a certain community of people, often corresponding roughly to political boundaries. The second notion of "language" involves *mutual intelligibility*. These two concepts do not coincide, and only the second has any real interest for philosophers and formal linguists. (p. 614)

Mutual intelligibility alone may have the interest for the philosophers and formal linguists. However, sociolinguists are also interested in the first notion that is political and based on the speech community of people of an area. I, working as a sociolinguistic analyst, will focus on '...the speech of a certain community of people' where the community's opinion about their language holds more importance than the establishment of boundaries on the basis of linguistic and geographical differences.

Hudson (1996) also declares that 'the search for language boundaries is a waste of time'. He concludes the discussion on what is a language by asserting that 'there is no real distinction to be drawn between "language" and "dialect" (except with reference to prestige, where it would be better to use the term "standard (language)" rather than just "language")' (p. 36). But I would not like involve in the debate of standard and non-standard because 'it has become accepted linguistic knowledge that so-called standard and non-standard language forms are social constructions' (Tamura, 2002, p. 20). The linguists who have worked on AAVE (Ebonics) (Fasold, 1999, for instance) have also expressed a similar view when they respond to the idea of its being a bad dialect or "corrupted" or "bastardized" (Louden, 2000, p. 235) form of English by declaring that it is as much a language as any other. Fasold (1999) reinforces the above discussed Lassiter's ideas in the following words:

Linguists generally agree that the notion of a language is largely, or entirely, social and political. What it takes to make a language is not a set of structural linguistic properties or lack of intelligibility with related linguistic systems, but rather the conviction that the linguistic system in question is a symbol of nationalist or ethnic identity. There are cases around the world of the two logical

possibilities—cases in which mutually unintelligible linguistic varieties belong to the same language and others where mutually intelligible varieties are separate languages. (p. 1)

This means that while deciding whether or not the variety in question is a language, the more importance is given to the social or political roles that it plays than its linguistic features. Some of the linguists (e.g. Chambers & Trudgill, 1980; Duranti, 1997 etc), due to the ambiguity of the term *a language*, are of the view that it should be replaced with some other term. Chambers and Trudgill (1980) state in this connection:

... A language is not a particularly linguistic notion at all. ... The term "language", then, is from a linguistic point of view a relatively nontechnical term. If, therefore, we wish to be more rigorous in our use of descriptive labels we have to employ other terminology. (p. 5)

This statement shows that the term "language" is inappropriate linguistically. By the time the linguists find its substitute, I, keeping in mind Fasold's argument that 'Ebonic need not be English' and that 'it is capable of being a language in its own right' (1999, p. 2), would call Farsi a language in the present study in general, universal and psychological sense. Farsi also measures up to Duranti's (1997) definition of language i.e. 'the human faculty to communicate using particular types of signs (e.g. sounds and gestures) organized in particular types of units (e.g. sequences)' (p. 69). The other rationale for calling Farsi a language in the present study is that others like Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Siraiki etc have been mentioned here as languages and, as I argue in Chapter 4, Farsi is in no way less than the languages in its contact, and most importantly I would call Farsi a language for the hijra speech community insists that it is a language separate from the

languages in its contact. So it must be regarded as a separate language exactly in the same way as 'Dutch and German **must be** regarded as separate languages, since, **in spite of their similarities**, the Dutch **consider** that they speak Dutch and the Germans **consider** that they speak German' (Aitchison, 2003, p.114 emphasis mine). Indigenous examples of this concept can be of Urdu-Hindi and Punjabi-Siraiki. Many similarities can be traced between Urdu and Hindi. 'Urdu and Hindi are genetically closely related languages. Both Urdu and Hindi belong to the Indo-Aryan language family ... The syntactic structures of Urdu and Hindi are quite similar; their phonology, morphology, and vocabulary are, however, different' (Ahmad, 2008, p. 2). Though there are some such differences, their phonology, morphology, and vocabulary are, however, not totally different as Ahmad's statement may wrongly imply here. Urdu and Hindi are regarded as separate languages for their respective speech communities consider them separate languages. Indian Muslims consider Urdu a separate language owned by them (Farouqi, n.d.), and in Pakistan it is considered to be the 'lingual aspect of national integration of Pakistan' (Durrani, 2008). There are even less linguistic differences between Siraiki and Punjabi, yet they are also regarded as separate languages because the communities consider them separate. In the fourth chapter of the present study, the concept of speech community has been applied on Farsi to show whether or not it is separate from the languages in its contact.

2.1.2 Dialect and variety: Dialect is a relatively more acceptable term with sociolinguists. Fasold (1999) defines dialects in the following way, '...dialects are speech varieties that make up a language; somewhat the way slices make up a pie' (p. 3). Thus, according to this definition, a language has more than one dialect. Dialect, then, is a

smaller unit of language. Masica (1993) reinforces the same idea: 'A dialect is a subvariety of a larger unit which is typically a language' (p. 23). He also gives the difference between a dialect and a language in the following words: 'A dialect is unwritten, while a language possesses a written "standard" and literature' (p. 23). But nowadays with the increasing disbelief of linguists in the term language, all languages are considered to be dialects. The term variety seems even more appropriate to replace language because, unlike dialect, it is not considered a sub-unit of language. '... a variety is a neutral term which simply means any particular "way of speaking": it is applicable to any linguistic phenomenon we want to treat as a single unit' (Downes, 1998, p. 16). Farsi is a single unit and variety is a neutral term to name such a unit. Hence, Farsi can also be regarded as a variety, not of any other language but as an independent unit which is considered a language by its speech community as shown in Chapter 4 of the present study.

2.1.3 Artificial language: Artificial language, as the name suggests, is not natural and is made artificially. The Dictionary of the English Language (2000) defines it as: 'An invented language based on a set of prescribed rules and developed for a specific purpose, such as international communication or computer programming' is named as artificial language. Though the origin of Farsi is not in the scope of the present study, it is a fact that Farsi is nobody's mother tongue, not at least in Pakistan. It seems that it is an invented language but, as it has been shown in Chapter 4 of this study, it is not an artificial language as that of computer programming etc.

2.1.4 Secret language and code: The purpose of a secret language is to conceal information. 'Individuals and groups will sometimes invent secret languages to keep

information private from persons who have not been initiated' (Harrison, 2002). Thus it can be said that a secret language is a type of an artificial language that is invented and used by a small group of people. For example in 18th and 19th centuries the 'Thugee' language has been used as a secret language in India by a group of thugs and killers (R. H. Khan, 2005). Farsi also appears to be a secret language. Code, on the other hand, is 'a distinctive way of speaking and/or writing which serves as an authentic expression of group identity' (Cameron & Kulick, 2003, p. xiii-xiv). The term code is usually used in wars and for spying to keep the information secret. If secret is what a code has to keep then every foreign language may act as a code (see for a detailed discussion Chapman, 2006, pp. 91-102). Thus, if Farsi acts as a code, as Hall (2005, p. 129) asserts, it should not be assumed that it is not a language.

2.1.5 Why a language? As indicated earlier, language has many functions to perform (Hudson, 1996). 'Though language consists of arbitrary signs, symbols or sounds constructed to make meaning, its purpose is not simply to communicate, nor is communication necessarily its most essential function' (Lanehart, 1996, p. 322). Bakhtin also emphasizes that 'if language also serves as a means of communication, this is a secondary function that has nothing to do with its essence' (as cited in Lanehart, 1996, p. 322). Therefore, the scope of language as being 'a central site for social practice' becomes relevant here. In this sense 'language can be a means of solidarity, resistance, and identity within a culture or social group' (Lanehart, 1996, p. 322). Bucholtz and Hall (2003) have also 'argued for the necessity of continued research on identity in linguistic anthropology' (p. 287). Bhatt (2008) also attempts to comprehend the identity

representations by language. Thus, we can say that a community may need a language for identity and certain other requirements even if they already have one for communication.

2.2 Studying Language

2.2.1 Linguistics: Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Jean Aitchison (2003) explains it in the following way: 'Linguistics covers a wide range of topics and its boundaries are difficult to define' (p. 8). One of the many topics that linguistics covers is 'language and society' and the branch of linguistics that deals with this topic is called sociolinguistics. In the present study, I have to work out the sociolinguistic meanings of Farsi, therefore let us see what sociolinguistics is.

2.2.2 Sociolinguistics: Sociolinguistics is 'the study of language in relation to society' (Hudson, 1980, p. 4). The linguists who conduct such a study are called sociolinguists. Holmes (1992) describes the job of sociolinguists in the following words:

'Sociolinguists study the relationship between language and society. They are interested in explaining why we speak differently in different contexts, and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning'. (p. 1)

There are many different methods that sociolinguists use to study this difference of speech in different contexts and try to identify the social meanings of language. One of these methods is ethnography of communication.

2.2.3 Ethnography of communication: In the present research I have used ethnographic research methods. Therefore, it is relevant to show here how ethnography of communication is defined. "Ethno" means 'culture of humans' and "graphy" means

'study of'. 'Ethnography is a study of the processes of human thought' (Foley, 1997, p. 100), and this study is conducted by examining the cultural and linguistic expressions of human thought. 'Ethnography of communication...seeks to explain communication in relation to social and cultural settings' (Chapman, 2006, p. 56).

2.3 Hijras

2.3.1 Hijra community: Human beings always, like other organisms, form different types of social groups. The more popular ones are based on sex, age, class and family etc. and they are usually created and controlled by the institutions of kinship, marriage, law, religion etc. This grouping they usually do in order to solve different types of problems that they face. Hijras also form units and they do so to earn livelihood and to live peacefully among similar people. But instead of going deep into their social organization and hierarchical structure consisting of guru (the head or master) and chelas (the disciples), I would try to give what the researchers say about them generally. Let us begin with who are hijras? 'Discussed variously in the anthropological literature as "transvestites", "eunuchs", hermaphrodites", and even "a third sex", most of India's hijras were raised as boys before taking up residence in one of the many hijra communities that exist in almost every region of India' (Hall, 1997, p. 430). Hall points out the male origin of most of India's hijras. Same is the case with the hijras in Pakistan. Biologically abnormal hijras are as less as one out of one thousand hijras. In this regard Latif (as cited in Khattak 2004) states:

...this is very important to know that real hijra is the one cannot reproduce due to lack of chromosomes or defect in the genes of parents whereas all other hijras are

those who joined this community according to their wish or compelled. According to a survey, there is only one inborn hijra out of thousand hijras in Pakistan. (p. 4)

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that in fact there are two types of hijras: those with biological disorders in their sex organs called as 'real' hijras by Latif and those who are males but join hijras claiming that their *ruh* (soul) is feminine. This also shows hijra is more a socio-cultural term than a biological one. The other similar terms socially constructed and used for different types of hijras are Zenana/aqba, Zankha, Khandani hijra, Mukhanas, Ruh, Khusra, Moorat, koti etc.¹²

Hijras form communities of their own because they become unwanted for the people around them. There is a large body of work (Hall, 1997; Hall & O'Donovan, 1996; Mcelhinny, 2003; Singh, 1989; Khattak, 2004; Rais, 1993 etc.) that points out the expulsion of hijras from biological families. "I was disowned by the Hindus and shunned by my own wife. I was exploited by the Muslims who disdained my company. Indeed I was like a *hijda*¹³ who was neither one thing nor the other but could be misused by everyone' (Singh, 1989, p. 55). Thus hijras are the creatures doomed to be disowned by all. This view is supported by Khilji (2008) who gives an account of the role play of a child birth by a guru at the time of induction of a new child in his household.

The role play goes thus: There is an expectant mother who is screaming because of labour pains. Her female friends are consoling her that soon it will be over. A midwife comes and announces that it is close to the delivery time. The screams

¹² See glossary, given in the end of the study, for meanings. However the term hijra that I use in the present study, encompasses all of them

¹³ Another way of spelling hijra

get louder; her legs apart, and suddenly a little bundle (of cloth¹⁴) that is considered to be the child comes out; sounds of an infant crying are mimicked by one of the actors. The mother, before anyone else says anything, utters these words, "If it is a male child go and announce it to one and all and take something sweet with you because a boy has come into this world. If it is a female child, there is no need of any joy, go back to your work; I will take care of her. And if it is a *zenana*¹⁵ go throw it in the river nearby, it is better for it to drown than to live a life of misery and misfortune". (p. 14)

This ceremony of induction of new hijra provides the hijras to do catharsis by expressing their hatred for the society where the birth of a male child alone is celebrated. Thus, '...marginalized both socially and spatially, the hijras have created an elaborate network that spans all of India, establishing a divergent social space that both parallels and opposes organizations of gender in the dichotomous system that excludes them' (Hall, 1997, p. 430). This is how and why hijras established a community of their own. The next is the issue of their recognition as a community and as a sex/gender. 'In India, the Southern state of Tamil Nadu has become the country's first, to recognize transgender people as a separate sex' (radioaustralia.net, online source). More recently, the Election Commission of India has given the hijras a separate identity by giving a third option 'O' (others) apart from 'M' (male) and 'F' (female) in their voter lists etc (Daily Jang November 14, 2009). Declaring all the transgendered people as members of a 'separate

¹⁴ In a video clip made during a participant observation of hijras of D. G. Khan conducted by Muhammad Khan during his research for M. Sc. Anthropology at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad in Fall, 2008, we can see Khan as playing the role of a new comer. Instead of taking out bundle of cloth, as Khilji observes, here the child (Khan) is himself made to sit between the legs of the mother and is born. This may have a better use of the ceremony as the child is readily affected by the words the mother utters that there is life of misery and misfortune for him if he is not among hijras.

¹⁵ In his work, Khilji uses the term "zenana" for hijra.

sex' seems inappropriate as hijras are people 'whose genitals, by birth or by choice, resemble neither male's nor female's' (Ogborn, 1994, p. 3 emphasis mine). There are two points to note: first, not all the people called hijras have confused genitals, secondly those who have, have them mostly by choice. Therefore, they should have been recognized by the Tamil Nadu state as a separate gender and not a separate sex.



Plate 3: *Induction*: 'Scene of delivery: the young daughter coming out the mother's body' (M. Khan, 2009)

2.3.2 Hijra History: Though still struggling to get their presence recognized by the states of the area, the hijras were there for long. Some are of the view that 'Hijras... first emerged in 12th century Muslim courts' (pakp.com, online source). While others say that hijras 'trace their origins back to ancient Hindu scriptures' (abc.net.au, online

source). Gannon (2009) reviews the works of different writers on the origin of hijras in the following way:

Those who have written on this topic tend to fall into two camps: echoing the above discussions of the religion of this community, there are those who argue that the *hijra* owe their existence to the Muslim invasion, and those who assert that they emerged out of Hinduism. One way that the *hijra* are thought to be a Muslim import is through the harem. Given the similarity between the harem eunuchs (*khoja* or *khwaja*) and the *hijras*, many have drawn a link between the two groups (Edwardes 1960; Pattanaik 2002; Ross 1969). Kishori Lal (1994) exemplifies this argument, when he posits that, when harems were disposed of by the British, they took to the streets as performers and prostitutes -- skills that they developed in the harems -- and became what we now call *hijras*. (p. 102)

Kishori Lal (as cited in the above given quotation), when he asserts that 'when harems were disposed of by the British, they [khwajas] took to the streets as performers and prostitutes', may not be true because the institution of *khwaja sira* was banned by the Mughal King Jahangir in the early seventeenth century about two and a half centuries before the British took over India. The evidence comes from *Tuzk-e-Jahangiri*. In his words (as cited in Khattak 2004):

I have prohibited this act all over the country and sent a royal message to the governor of Bengal, Islam Khan, that if anyone disobeys this royal order, will be punished. Inshallah with the omission of this custom there will be no *khawaja sira* anymore. (p. 19)

It seems from *khawaja sira* the king only means the castrated hijras who are being banned by him as obviously the birth of biologically real hijras can not be stopped by such orders.

In an attempt to trace the history of hijras, 'Various authors and organizations, including the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (2003) and Baird (2001), have assumed that the *hijra* date back between 4000 and 2500 years ... some do assert that the *hijra* can be found in Vedic times' (Gannon, 2009, p. 103). However '...the idea that Muslims introduced the castration of eunuchs, and therefore the institution of the *hijra*, into India is a common one' (Artola, 1975; Sweet & Zwilling, 1993 as cited in Gannon, 2009, p. 102). Kira Hall (1997) says, "...historical connection between the *khwaja* of the Mughal courts and the *hijra* of contemporary India is unclear" (p. 436). But I think this language Farsi provides evidence that hijras are the *descendents* of *khwaja siras* because they named their own language as Farsi after the language used in the Mughal court. One may also doubt the origin of hijras' language from the days when hijras were serving in the harems. They might have developed it to secure themselves from the danger of inviting the wrath of the royal family. Whatever the origin of hijras is, unlike Urdu and Hindi which are indexical of Muslim and Hindu identity in India (Ahmad, 2008), the language Farsi has nothing to do with religion because both the Hindu and Muslim hijras of the Subcontinent and even *kotis* of India speak it (Hall, 2005). Farsi may, however, be indexical of the dream hijra identity and recognition as *khwaja siras* of Mughal era as '...*Farsi*, [is] a name that recalls the dominant language of the medieval Mughal courts' (Hall, 2005, p. 129).

2.3.3 Current Scenario: Recently hijras have attracted the attention of Pakistani electronic and print media. The process started in summer of 2008 when some hijras were corporally punished by the Taxilla¹⁶ police. The hijras under the leadership of Almas Bobby Guru who called himself to be president of All Pakistan Eunuch Rights Association organized a demonstration against the police. After a period of about one year, in July and August 2009, the hijras of Rawalpindi turned against Bobby and staged many protests against him accusing him that he extorts Rs 1,000 to 10,000 from each of them every month and Rs 30,000 on his birthday. Superintendents of Police (first S. P. Rawal Town and then S. P. Rural) were appointed to investigate and to solve their issue. The matter also reached the Supreme Court of Pakistan that decreed the registration of hijras of Pakistan¹⁷ (Daily The News of 12th July, 2009; Daily Dopehr of 23rd July, 2009; Daily Nawa-i-Waqt of 18th August 2009; Daily Dawn of 22nd August, 2009 etc).

Despite all the hue and cry about hijras being suppressed, neither media nor the honorable court came to know about one of the most important tools that hijras keep with them i.e. their language.

¹⁶ A historical town of Rawalpindi District situated in the suburbs of Islamabad and Rawalpindi

¹⁷ See appendix – II for detail



Plate 4: 'Transvestites stage a protest against "Bobby" in front of CPO office in Rawalpindi on Saturday'. – Dawn (August 02, 2009)

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2.4 Hijras' Language

Hijras speak a language called Farsi.

2.4.1 What is Farsi? Despite all the hue and cry about hijras, their language is still under cover. Even the well researched works (such as Brown, 2005) fail to notice their private language. Same is the case with Rahman (1996) who brings into light almost all the languages of Pakistan but there makes no mention of Farsi. This private language seems to be an in-group, private and secret language. 'The in-group language is the one

used in any society for the basic face to face relationships with other speakers with whom the individual in question fully identifies' (Nida, 1975, p. 148). I consider it an in-group language because hijras use it for the 'face to face relationships' with each other and because they fully identify each other as members of the same community. Hijras speak a language which they name as 'Farsi'. The term Farsi may be confusing because the same is used for the Persian. As I have stated under heading Hijra History, Farsi might be an attempt to connect hijras with the *khwaja siras* of the Mughal India. Hall (2005) has a similar opinion when she states, 'Although the Farsi of kotis and hijras is unrelated to Persian Farsi, its speakers conceptualize it as such, employing it in the construction of a historically authentic sexual identity' (p. 129). Khilji (2008) reinforces Hall's idea about Hijras' Farsi being unrelated to Persian in the following words:

Farsi is the other word for Persian language. However this [Hijras'] Farsi has no similarity to Persian language. It is a language that does not reflect its origin through the use of words. For instance, *Darshan* means seeing someone in Hindi/Urdu, but in *Zenana Farsi* it means shaving the face or having the facial hair waxed. (p. 17)

However not always the words come from Hindi/Urdu or other languages in contact (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion).

Ila Nagar (2008) has worked on Farsi spoken by kotis¹⁸ of India. However, she could not differentiate between Farsi and Hindi, perhaps, because her focus is the identity

¹⁸ Nagar (2008) uses term koti for those hijras of India who are males but dress and act like women or, more accurately, like hijras. They live away from both hijras and gay men. But to look like hijras, they do their parody and speak Farsi. But, in Pakistan, this type of persons and even gay men all live under the hijra umbrella.

issue and not the Farsi itself. 'Kotis use a code language which they call Farasi¹⁹, which is a mixture of Hindi grammar and vocabulary of an unknown source' (p. i). Nagar (2008) also notes that Farsi is a secret language. '...the secret language Farasi was also shared by *hijras* and probably came to kotis from *Hijras*' (p. 62). Kira Hall (2005) also considers it 'a secret lexical code' (p. 129). But I think that we should not consider it a mixture or a sub-variety of any other language because then it can be blamed to have caused corruption of others as Fasold (1999) declares '...if Ebonic were a language and not a dialect, it would not be assumed to be a corruption of anything' (p. 3). Munawar et al. (as cited in Khattak 2004) is of the view that, '... eunuchs have created their own language. Their language is a mixture of Persian, Urdu and Punjabi, which is called *Farsi Chandrana*' (p. 21). Though there are words of these languages in Farsi yet it does not only consist of words from these languages. Farsi of different areas borrows words from other languages like Hindi, Pashto, Sindhi, and Siraiki etc and, more importantly, it has a large number of words of its own. The name, 'Farsi Chandrana' is mentioned only in the above given source. Others reviewed for the present study name it as Farsi. The hijras observed and interviewed during the field work for the present study also called it Farsi.

In Chapter 4, I have tried to show that Farsi has a separate identity. It is different. It persists because a large number of people speak it and they are bilingual or bi-dialectal and can code-switch to it when needed.

2.4.2 Why Farsi? Cheshire (2005) states: "Speakers use syntactic forms to construct discourse, and through discourse they perform many different kinds of social activities and construct many different kinds of social meanings" (p. 503). Addressing the issue of the origin of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), Loudon (2000)

¹⁹ Nagar (2008) gives these spellings to hijras' language

mentions two schools of thought – dialectologists and creolists. ‘The creolist position assumes a significant degree of social distance between blacks and whites during ... the colonial and antebellum periods, ... the idea being that social separation necessarily leads to linguistic differentiation’ (p. 223). The origin of Farsi also seems to have been caused by ‘social distance’ between the hijras and the others, in this case. According to Hall (1997):

... in many of the stories told by Manucci, the eunuch will do anything in his power to revenge himself against his deprivation, as in the case of I'tbar Khan, a eunuch who figures prominently in Manucci's *Storio*. Sold into Mughal slavery at a very young age by his Hindu parents and bitter because of it, “the immeasurably stingy” I'tbar Khan takes great delight in helping Aurangzeb make his father Shahjahan, unconditionally miserable. (p. 434)

‘Will do anything’ may mean that hshe might be very ambitious for hir activity against the king. Hshe could go as far as to learn a language to do something against others.

Another question arises in our minds as why they are stingy and anti-social. The answer could be traced in the following statement: ‘...hijra is used as derogatory epithet more generally’ (Hall, 1997, p. 444). Thus hijras are mostly disgraced, oppressed and socially distanced. This made them create some tools of survival for themselves. They use it not just to guard their own survival; they do so to threaten the others’ as well.

A hijra is socially ostracized even in hir family. Therefore hshe comes to join a hijra household where Farsi is a part of the code of conduct. Khilji (2008) describes how the inductee learns the rules of a hijra household in these words:

It is interesting that though the inductee may have become part of the household only on that day, he seems to be quite well-versed in the *zenana* code of conduct. It never ceases to amaze me how this child knows exactly how to conduct himself in presence of the *gurus* and other *zenanas*. In addition to this the child knows the Farsi language and is able to go on and on in it with his *zenana* friends. (p. 15)

This is possibly so because these 'zenana friends' who take this child to the hijra household have already taught him this language as it is very important. However, this is not the case always. Hijra gurus arrange special classes to teach the new comers (or "inductees" as Khilji would like to call them) Farsi language and other things like mourning, feminine manners etc.

Kotis of India are not inducted in hijra household but they want to be like hijras and to have an identity different from gays. Nagar (2008) asserts that the kotis of India learn Farsi to look like hijras. 'My assumption for now is that there is a correspondence between the amount of Farsi one knows and the closeness of one's relationship with *hijras*' (p. 114). 'Farsi sets apart kotis from another identity which they are confused with, gays. The use of Farsi gives kotis a distinct identity, an identity which is distinct from that of the 'English speaking gays' (p. 113). Kotis of India also learn Farsi to compete with hijras and to earn more prestige in their community (Nagar, 2008, p. 114). This shows that Farsi is being used as tool of identity by the kotis of India, and they learn it to become more prestigious among their own community because for them the hijras are the ideal being.

Why hijras keep their language secret can be judged by their nature of keeping facts about themselves secret. One reason may be the threat of the competition by kotis

who want to capitalize on hijras' Farsi. Secondly, they do many things secretly. For example, 'they have a tradition of burying their dead secretly' (pakp.com, online source). Hijras are more sensitive about keeping Farsi secret than kotis who deliberately use it to show that they qualify as hijras. Nagar (2008) says about Priya Devi – a hijra:

She said I could take pictures with her, talk to her about anything, but she was unable to talk to me about Farasi. She also told me that no *hijra* would tell me about Farasi. However, she pointed out, koti would be happy to talk to me about Farasi, but their Farasi was not as good as the *hijra* Farasi. (p. 70)

Thus we can say that hijras felt the need of a language long before Cameron and Kulick (2003) gave the concept of '...“a language of our own”...as an authentic expression of group identity' (p. 95).

After having reviewed the relevant literature it becomes clear as what methodology is needed to follow in order to conduct the study under question. The next chapter gives the same.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Strategy

Methodology is like a philosophy underlying a research project. As the present work is a sociolinguistic study of Farsi; therefore, the best suited methodology was ethnographic one. Methods are the tools used for the relevant data collection. For data collection, I used a combination of tools as would be given below. The available data was then analyzed using qualitative research methods.

3.2 Population

When a researcher is out in the field to collect data, the first question that he/she has to answer is *from whom?* This means he/she has to define the population from which data are to be collected. All the hijras currently settled in D. G. Khan and Rawalpindi were included in the population of the present study. Those who visit these cities from other

ones with different entertaining organizations like Circus and Death Wells etc on some particular events and fairs are also included in the population of the study.

3.3 Sampling

Though the hijras were randomly observed and asked questions wherever they were found in the above given two cities of the locale, i.e. either in fairs or on roads and streets yet purposive sampling was also used in the field research where four out of 16 hijra *deras*²⁰ were selected (two from each city). From these *deras*, twenty out of about 200 hijras were interviewed²¹ including four gurus. The four focus group discussions were also conducted from these four households. Two *mirasis*²² (one from each city) were also interviewed, for two reasons: first because they enjoy a close symbiotic relationship with hijras and thus are well informed about their language, secondly they are not part of the target population and thus could let those things know which the hijras would have liked to keep secret.

3.4 Research Instruments

I used a variety of ethnographic research instruments in order to gain relevant and correct data on the subject.

3.4.1 Rapport building: Building good rapport and gaining confidence of the hijra community was challenging for me. Hijras did not easily allow any out-group

²⁰ Hijra household where a guru heads a kind of family of a few to more than a dozen chelas

²¹ See details of the interview process under 'interviews' below

²² Mirasi is a member of the traditional musical band who performs on marriages and other happy events. They have a vast experience of working with hijras and, thus know much about their internal affairs including Farsi.

person to enter their community. They keep social distance by showing repulsive attitude. Money is something of their interest but they even doubt it if they are paid without reason. In the beginning I visited their gurus via the references of the people whom they respected; for instance, in D. G. Khan, the owner of the house of a hijra *dera* introduced me with them for the first time. I made use of Malinowski's (as cited in Placencia 2004) 'phatic communion' i.e. '... a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words' (p. 215) and it is a type of speech that helps us '... cement our bond of humanness' (p. 16). Then I started developing close friendships with them; listened patiently to whatever they wanted to tell me; talked about things of their interest; and would clap my hands flat palmed to please them. I did not ever mind when they would call me their *saheli*, *giryā* or *chamka*, did me *darshan* (make-up), demanded odd things etc. Most of the hijras I ran into were good human beings and they demanded only love and respect. However, they were very sensitive about their language and did not want to reveal it to any outsider easily.

3.4.2 Participant observation: Doing participant observation with the hijra community was not easy at all. It was not possible for me to participate in their outdoor activities like dancing, begging, prostitution etc. Therefore I did non-participant observation of hijras outdoors. However, I became a participant observer of their daily life and discourse during their indoor activities. I participated in different ceremonies like birth of a hijra (hijra induction), making kin relations, *wada khana* (grand feast) etc. This allowed me to observe the community under study very closely, and see what they do and how they talk.

3.4.3 Key informants: During my research, I tried to follow Russell's (1994) criteria while the selection of a key informant, i.e. he/she must be a well-informed person; he/she must be one of the most active persons of the community and must not be biased (p. 295). Imrana²³ and Laiqa from D. G. Khan and Saima and Reema from Rawalpindi were the hijras who proved very good informants during my field research. Laiqa being my class fellow during my M. A. English at Government College (men) D. G. Khan was always friendly and true. Saima and Reema were rather more cooperative and true in giving information. They would come from Rawalpindi to see me on my residence at a farm house in H-9 for many weekends in a row. They sometimes even brought with them their gurus and the young chelas.



Plate 5: *One of the hijras from Rawalpindi*

²³ Interestingly, all the hijras whom I interviewed had more than one name. The original name is the one that is given to them at the time of their birth and that is always masculine name. When they join hijra community they are given a feminine name by the guru. Even after that they tell different pseudonyms to different people. Therefore, they have different identities at different places and before different people. This is perhaps because they want to avoid any mishap that may come as a consequence of their activities that are mostly tabooed and illegal. Despite all this, I have used pseudonyms here – pseudonyms of *pseudonyms*.

3.4.4 Interviews: Most of the hijras studied are illiterate and those who are literate do not know English; therefore an interview²⁴ (or a kind of oral questionnaire) in English was designed and conducted in Urdu, Punjabi or Siraiki.

During the field research and participant observation of the present study, I came across more than two hundred hijras. But, as stated above, via sampling twenty hijras were selected for interview, apart from four focus group discussions and many informal talks with key informants and other hijras on their language. They were interviewed in order to have results nearest to the reality. However, after a few earlier interviews, it was observed that hijras did not feel comfortable in a formal interviewing atmosphere and, thus, sometimes responded falsely. Therefore, later interviews were conducted in an informal way keeping all the questions in mind, without showing them any paper, or recorder etc. As a result, the number and sequence of the questions also varied when asked practically. The original pattern is as given in appendix. Simple and indirect questions were asked from them; however, these questions were also explained to them whenever it was needed.

3.4.5 Daily diary: Daily diary is one of the most important research instruments for a field researcher. In the present study, important things were recorded on daily basis whenever time was found in the field. As it is meant for personal use therefore it proved a good outlet to record the bright and dark corners of the hijras' life and the bitter-sweet experiences I had during the data collection process.

²⁴ See in appendix – III the questions asked

3.4.6 Field notes: In the form of field notes, I recorded the relevant data. My notes consist of the parts of Farsi discourse and the hijras' discussion on Farsi. I also tried to note their responses and emotional reactions to my questions.

3.4.7 Audio/video recording: In the beginning I made video recording of some of my meetings with the hijras of D. G. Khan but then, on realizing that some of them were nervous before camera and the others were so conscious of their looks that they would start doing make-up, I decided to use an audio recorder, instead.

3.4.8 Photography: In order to keep a better record of the data, I also made photographs.

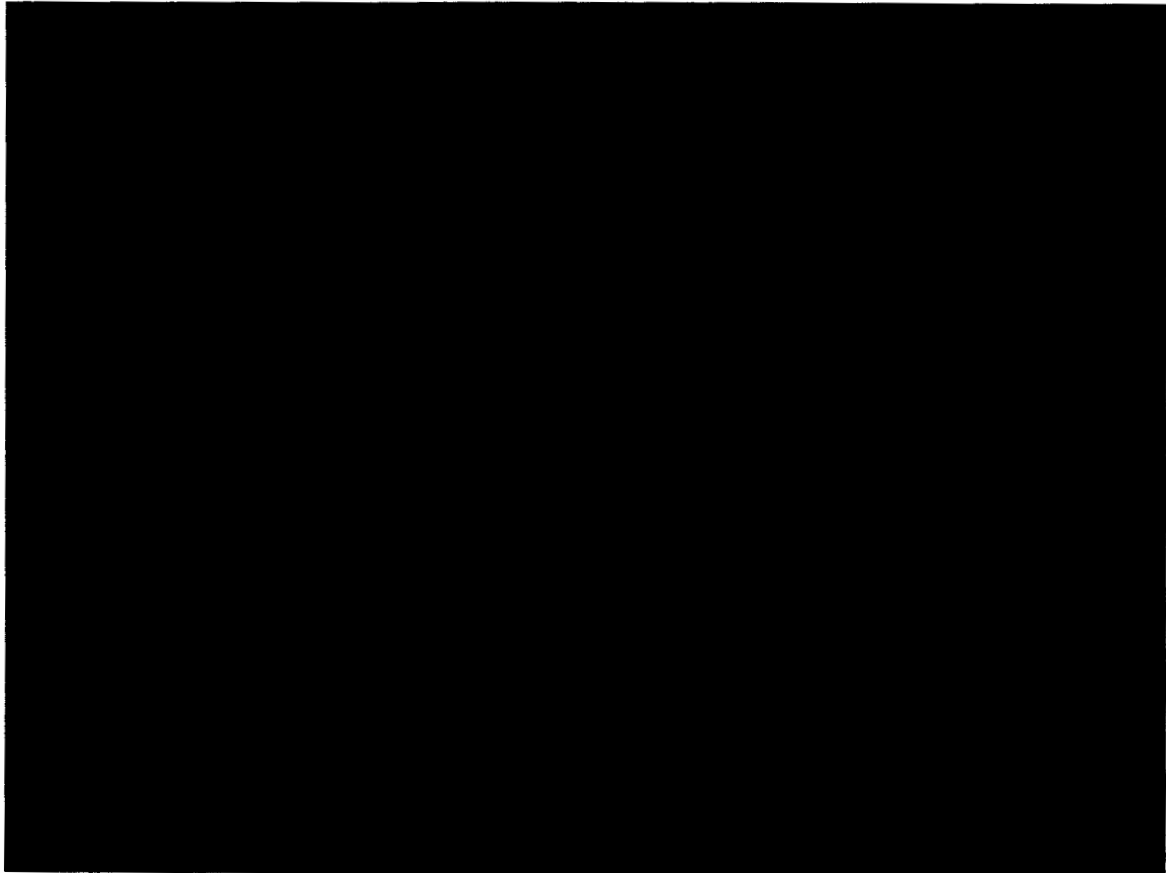


Plate 6: *One of the hijras from D. G. Khan*

3.5 Locale

Hijras can be found anywhere in Pakistan. Thus the study of their language could be a multi-locale based one. However, for convenience, I chose two cities as locales: 1) D. G. Khan (my native town) and 2) Rawalpindi (where a large number of hijras live, and is the twin of Islamabad where I am residing). Both²⁵ are the district headquarters of the Punjab province.

Using the above mentioned tools, the relevant data were collected from hijras of the two cities of locale of the study.

3.6 Transcription Conventions and Data Analysis

I present the data in the following way:

1. ***Hamala di kalam chamo, hamala di kalam chamo***
 - Mine of word listen, mine of word listen
 - Listen to my words, listen to my words

The first line is the real utterance of the respondents and the subjects of the study. It is given in bold letters where in Farsi. The second line here is a word-for-word gloss. The glossed words are underlined. The third line is approximate translation into English. This transcription style has been adopted from MacSwam (as cited in Iqbal, 2005, pp. 74-75). I have transcribed all the data produced by the respondents in Farsi, Punjabi, Siraiki or Urdu using Roman script. IPA and other popular transcription and transliteration

²⁵ See maps of the two locales in appendix - IV

conventions were not adopted because the actual pronunciation is unimportant here, and because it could have made the work complicated. However I have used /r/ for Urdu sound /ر/ because no Roman sound could become a better symbol for this sound, and the fact is that this sound is frequently used in Farsi. I transcribed the audio recorded data and divided them into different categories. Then, I analyzed it qualitatively and, at times quantitatively to answer the subsidiary questions. To analyze the data collected during field research, I used the sociolinguistic approaches mainly. I gave a comparison of Farsi with the languages in its contact, linguistically, and tried to determine its status socially. All the examples quoted from the transcribed data are my own translation into English.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

4.1 Procedures

The present study focuses on the language (Farsi) of hijras settled²⁶ in D. G. Khan and Rawalpindi. The relevant data have been audio recorded in²⁷ and about²⁸ Farsi by interviewing 20 hijras, ten with two gurus and eight *chelas* from each city. The four focus group discussions, two from each city, are apart from them. Interviews of two *mirasis* have also been conducted. After having gathered the data, it was transcribed following the conventions given in the previous chapter. I did it by using Roman script for the data in Punjabi, Siraiki and Urdu. I am proficient in Punjabi, Siraiki and Urdu – the languages in which the interviews and discussions were conducted – however during the

²⁶ From 'settled' I mean presently living in. Otherwise most of them are leading nomadic life. In a city, a *chela* (a subordinate hijra) cannot live peacefully after leaving guru except being sold by the guru (head of a hijra group). If a *chela* leaves a guru on own will the only shelter that can be found is outside the city. Then gurus and *chelas* also keep going on visits across the country attending different *urs* ceremonies at shrines of saints.

²⁷ Hijras' Farsi discourse was recorded in different contexts during observations.

²⁸ Eight interviews were conducted in Punjabi and the same number of them in Siraiki from the hijras of Rawalpindi and D. G. Khan; four interviews were conducted in Urdu two from each of the cities, and this language selection was done by the respondents and not me.

transcription of the Farsi discourse of hijras, despite having learnt the language under study, I had to seek help from one of my key informants on some occasions. The data also included written notes jotted down during participant and non-participant observations in the daily diary and in the form of field notes.

The process of transcription is followed by that of its organization. I organized the data by separating the interviews of hijra gurus from those of hijra *chelas* and then by putting them in two separate categories under the cities of the locale studied. The same was done with the four group discussions. I organized the data in this way because of the underlying assumption that gurus know more about Farsi than *chelas* and that Farsi of D. G. Khan and Rawalpindi also exists in two different varieties under the influence of the languages in contact i.e. Siraiki and Punjabi.

After organizing the data, I broke it into manageable pieces according to the research questions. It was in fact the beginning of actual analysis where the study focused: '**what is Farsi?**' that I tried to answer with the examples from Farsi's linguistic features and the social ones by mostly consulting the transcribed Farsi discourse, focus group discussions and field notes etc and by applying sociolinguistic concept of Speech Community and Bell's Seven Criteria for Language; and '**why Farsi?**' that I attempted to answer from the interviews, discussions and notes and observing the contexts where the hijras suddenly switched to it by searching for various functions that it plays for its speakers.

On the basis of my data and the methods of analysis, some accurate predictions about the answers of the research questions could be made. Even then, the analysis has been presented with extracts from the interviews and discussions in order to report it in

an authentic way. The data analyzed was helpful in verifying the assumptions as well. The research questions have been answered in two stages. The first subsidiary research question is:

- 1) What are the linguistic and sociolinguistic features of Farsi?

This question has been answered by giving the linguistic and social features found in the transcribed discourse and written notes of/on Farsi mainly in comparison with those of the languages in contact of Farsi²⁹.

The second subsidiary question has been dealt with in the second stage as it is:

- 2) Why do hijras learn a separate language – why Farsi?

During this stage, instead of giving a comparison with the other languages in use by hijras, my focus has been the factors that led to the inevitable importance of Farsi for hijras.

4.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis contains long discussion on and description of different features of Farsi, factors leading to Farsi and functions played by Farsi. The major part of the analysis is, thus, qualitative though the quantitative part has not been completely ignored e.g. it has been used in survey on the awareness about Farsi among people out of the community.

²⁹ From languages in contact of Farsi, I mean Urdu, Punjabi and Siraiki. I have not considered English as one of them because hijras know little about it and they rarely come across situations where this language is used. Only two hijras out of about 200 that I observed and/or interviewed were proficient in English. However, because it is the medium of this study, so translation of words and sentences of Farsi is given in English in the shaded columns and rows in the tables. The interviews conducted in Punjabi, Urdu and Siraiki have also been translated into English.

4.2.1 Subsidiary question no. 1: *What are the linguistic and sociolinguistic features of Farsi?*

In the 2nd chapter of this work the terms language, dialect and code have been defined, and stated that even code is a language and a language becomes code in many contexts and that most of the times, the notion of language is confusing and misleading for sociolinguists. However, in the present study the term *language* has been used in its general sense as defined above in Chapter 2 under *what is language?* Thus, in reply to 'What is Farsi?', I would not hesitate to say that it is a language though some of the sociolinguists (e.g. Nagar, 2008) insist that it is part of Hindi and Urdu and that it seems to be just a code as discussed in Chapter 2. As nobody from non-hijras knows about it and there is a conscious effort of hiding it by hijras, therefore it is a secret language. During my field research, I also came to know that it is only a spoken language and there is no written record of it. I have many reasons for my assertion that Farsi is a language as given below in detail:

4.2.1.1 Linguistic features of Farsi as compared with other languages used by hijras in the same locales: During my field research, I came to know about 1000 lexical items of Farsi. If we keep in mind the established linguistic notion that only ten percent words out of the lexicon of a language are in use by its best speakers, we may assume that Farsi consists of about as many as ten thousand words. It is the job of a lexicologist/lexicographer to collect them, arrange in alphabetical order, explain and count for the world to prove this discovery³⁰ of the language that has been initiated here in the present study.

³⁰ Again I make it clear that I call it a discovery because this living language is almost unknown to the world outside hijra community. Even the encyclopedic reference work "Ethnologue: Languages of the

There are many other arguments that lift Farsi from the narrow boundaries of dialect (and socio-lect and gender-lect) and code, and place it in the broader premises of language. However, kept secret by its hijra possessors and ignored by the researchers as hijras themselves, it still has no allocated and acknowledged space in the empire of languages. This life of Farsi in the 'third space'³¹ (Mair 1991 names this category intermediate to both language and dialect as 'topolect' while discussing the case of Cantonese in Hong Kong) could be, perhaps, the most appropriate evidence of hijras queer identity. This fact also allures me to call Farsi a *queer language* here and a *language* everywhere in the present study. A brief discussion on Farsi's linguistic features³² and its comparison³³ with the languages in contact will further help decide Farsi's nature as what it is. The points that I wanted to make needed no deep digging into the linguistic aspects of Farsi therefore the comparison below is of very general nature and at surface levels.

a) *Comparison at morphological level:* Farsi has nouns (feminine, masculine; singular, plural), pronouns, verbs (feminine, masculine; singular, plural), adjectives (feminine, masculine; singular, plural), determiners (feminine, masculine; singular, plural) etc of its own but it usually borrows the adverbs, prepositions etc from the languages in contact.

World' cataloging *all* of the world's 6,912 known living languages", fails to give any reference to Farsi of hijra community. Also the survey conducted by the researcher shows that Farsi is still an unknown language for the people of the locale under study. Then there is no devoted work on it in Pakistan. However some researchers in India have brought into light Farsi of kotis. But they (e.g Nagar, 2008) also did not give any thought to what Farsi is.

³¹ The term adapted from Bhabha (1994)

³² I was able to learn how to speak Farsi and analyze its features through participant and non-participant observations, group discussions, interviews and information given by key informants. Some of the relevant data may also be found in the appendix.

³³ I applied comparative approach here to highlight Farsi's differences from other languages of the locale of this study – the differences that led me to conclude that it is a language in its own right and not a code or part of other languages.

In the following table, a few nouns of Farsi are given. They are all parts of body.

Table 4.1 Farsi Nouns³⁴

Noun (Singular)	Masculine/ Feminine	Plural	English	Punjabi	Siraiki	Urdu
Khombaṛ	M	Khomaṛ	Face	Monh	Munh	Chehra
Nakṛa	M	Nakṛey	Nose	Nak	Nak	Nāk
Chamṛri	F	Chamṛian	Eye	Akh	Akh	Aankh
Dhhambṛa	M	Dhamṛey	Tummy	Tidh	Dhidh	Paet
Dambṛi	F	Dambṛian	Tummy	-do-	-do-	-do-
Choochkey	M	Choochkey	Moustache	Muchh	Muchh	Moochh
Reskey	M	Reskey	Hair on groin area	Chuan	Bood	baal
Nejma	M	Nejme	Tooth	Dand	Dand	Dant
Chamki	F	Chamkian	Skin		Chamra	Jild
Chhalka	M	Chhalkey	Breast	Than	Thanṛ	Chhati
Chapti	F	Chaptian	The hole of a hijra after castration similar with vagina of woman body	NIL	NIL	NIL
Leekaṛ	M	Leekaṛ	Penis	Laoṛa	Lun	Uzv-e- tanasul
Vatal	F	Vatal	Hips	Bund	Chut	Koolha
Seepo	F	Seepo	Vagina	Phudi	Budi	Farj

Here we see the difference; evidence against the argument that it is just a part of Hindi (and Urdu) with some code words. Code words are usually meant to be hidden but in Farsi, though most of the words are of that kind yet in its developmental process, some

³⁴ All of the Farsi words given in these tables I gathered from hijras during participant and non-participant observations using daily diary, field notes and audio recording

words have grown which need not be hidden; *nejma*, *choochkey* and *damʕi*, for instance from the above table are the words that are never forbidden to utter. Similarly, in the languages like Urdu and Punjabi, *nak* (nose) is feminine but in Farsi the word *nakʕa* is masculine. A phonological study of the above table will make us notice another difference i.e. Farsi makes frequent use of retroflex /ʕ/ sound (e.g. in *Khombaʕ*, *Nakʕa*, *Leekaʕ* etc.) which is rarely found in the words for body parts in the languages in contact. Then in these languages, we do not find any equivalent for *chapti* – a word of Farsi used for a part of hijra body. This feature is also evident in the following table which gives a few more nouns. They are words for dresses.

Table 4.2 Clothes

Noun (Singular)	Masculine /Feminine	Plural	English	Punjabi	Siraiki	Urdu
Khalki	F	Khalkian	Shoe	Juti	Juti	Joota
Firka	M	Firkey	Women's wear	NIL	NIL	NIL
Kotki	F	Kotkian	Men's wear	NIL	NIL	NIL
Santli	F	Santlian	Shawl	Chadar	Chadar	Chadar

Urdu, Punjabi and Siraiki languages have no separate words to refer to the clothes of men and women but Farsi does have *firka* and *kotki*. This seems to be so because unlike the men and women of the area who wear only one type of dress specifically designed for them, hijras wear that of both types. So they were in more need of separate words for dresses than men and women. Then the word *khalki* used for shoes is masculine in Urdu but feminine in Farsi.

The data shows that Farsi spoken in the locales of the present study borrows most of its pronouns from other languages that hijras speak though they are not totally absent because Farsi has *hamala* for 'I' and *tamala* for 'you'. Nagar (2008:206-207) in the glossary of her work has given two more of the Farsi pronouns: *humsio* (I) and *ojo* (he/she) that are not used by hijras of the locales of the present study.

Farsi verbs are mostly with the same morphological patterns as those of the languages in contact. Mostly their infinitives end with *na*(*ٺ*) for example, *vogna* (to walk), *taankna* (to drink) etc. Table 4.3 gives more detailed information.

Table 4.3 Verbs of Farsi

Verbs	Masculine/ Feminine	English	Punjabi	Siraiki	Urdu
Vogna	Both	To go or to walk	Jan[<i>a</i> /an[<i>a</i>	Wanjan[/ <i>avan</i> [Jana/ana
Chamna	Both	To understand	Samajhna	Samjhan[Samajhna
Lugi[<i>na</i>	Both	To die	Marna	Maran[Marna

The table 4.3 shows that Farsi has verbs of its own but, morphologically they are similar to those of the languages in contact with Farsi. The table also shows that the morphology of verbs of Siraiki is not the same as that of Punjabi and Urdu. Here the social variation comes to work because the verbs of Farsi in D. G. Khan are *vogan*[, *chaman*[, *lugin*an[etc instead of *vogna*, *chamna* and *lugin*na respectively. This means these verbs change their own morphology to keep in pace with the language in contact that is Siraiki in D. G.

Khan. These types of varieties influenced by the languages in contact can be found everywhere in the world.

Farsi also has many adjectives of its own. However, unlike English and just like the languages in contact, it does not have comparative and superlative degrees. Some of the adjectives are given for example in the table below.

Table 4.4 Farsi Adjectives

Adjectives	Masculine/ Feminine	Plural	English	Punjabi	Siraiki	Urdu
Chisa	M	Chise	Beautiful	Sonhṛa	Sunṛha	Khubsurat
Chisi	F	Chisian	Beautiful	Sonhṛi	Sunhṛi	Khubsurat
Sudha	M	Sudhay	Old man	Budha	Budha	Buṛha
Sudhi	F	Sudhian	Old woman	Budhi	Budhi	Buṛhi

Farsi has adjective *chisa* for beautiful male and *chisi* for beautiful female. They are totally different from their equivalents in Punjabi and Siraiki i.e. *Sonhṛa*, *Sonhṛi* and *Sunṛha*, *Sunhṛi* respectively. However, *sudha* and *sudhi* for old man and old woman are morphologically closer to *budha budhi* of Siraiki and Punjabi.

Farsi also has determiners as given in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Farsi Determiners

Determiners	Masculine/ Feminine	Plural	English	Punjabi	Siraiki	Urdu
<i>Insa</i>	M	<i>Inse</i>	This	<i>Ay</i>	<i>Ey</i>	<i>Yeh</i>
<i>Insi</i>	F	<i>Insiyan</i>	This	<i>Ay</i>	<i>Ey</i>	<i>Yeh</i>

From table 4.5, it can be noticed that Farsi has only demonstratives which work as specific determiners. However, all its contact languages and English have general determiners as well. Then Farsi has different determiners for masculine and feminine genders unlike other languages in comparison which do not have any gender marking on determiners. One more dissimilarity that is important to be discussed is that unlike its languages in contact, Farsi has only two determiners which are gendered and are equivalent to English 'this' and 'these'. They refer to the nouns that are not distant. This is because Farsi is usually used in presence of and against some outsider. The speakers need to refer to these outsiders when they are not away. This also shows how the growth of Farsi is hindered when it is kept secret, and exploited only in some particular contexts (further detail is given below in 4.3). The above data show that Farsi consists of simple mono or disyllabic words generally.

Farsi seems to be wanting in other parts of speech like prepositions, adverbs and conjunction and it is so perhaps because of its being possessed and used only by hijras for centuries. The same limitation reflects in its not being a written language.

It is interesting to note that Farsi has its own counting but it is not perfect. This counting system is just for money which is as follows:

Dasola/dasoli (ten rupees)

Adhi vadmi/adhi vadvi (fifty rupees)

Vadmi/vadvi (hundred rupees)

Panj vadmi/panj vadvi (five hundred rupees)

Katka (one thousand)

Nira patt (one hundred thousand)

Farsi does not have any equivalent for an amount more than this. This shows hijras' economic limitations, and Farsi's social imprisonment.

Then there are some other social aspects that have affected its growth negatively – considering hijras and everything associated with them as bad being one of these aspects (social aspects have been discussed in detail below 4.2.1.2).

b) *Comparison at syntactical level:* Like all languages in contact, and unlike English where S + V + O combine to form a sentence, Farsi follows S + O + V syntax pattern³⁵. See the example given in the following table:

Table 4.6 Farsi Syntax

Language	Sentences
Farsi	<u><i>Hamala tamala nal rootha krendi ey.</i></u> S O V
English	<u><i>I love you.</i></u> S V O
Punjabi	<u><i>Maen terey nal piar kerdi wan.</i></u> S O V
Siraiki	<u><i>Maen teday nal piar krendi aan.</i></u> S O V
Urdu	<u><i>Maen tum se piar kerti hun.</i></u> S O V

³⁵ Subject + Object + Verb

This table shows that Farsi is separate but not very different from other languages of the locale because all of them have the same syntactical structure. However, all the three languages in contact make use of *maen* (I) for subject in the above example but Farsi has *hamala*, instead. Now someone may object that Farsi borrows prepositions like *nal* (with) from the languages in contact and thus, on the basis of such evidences, may declare it a code or a sub-unit of any other language. But a careful study reveals that most of these prepositions are shared by all the major languages of the locale as is obvious in the above example. We can also see the close morphology of the verb *krendi*, *kerdi* and *kerti*. This is also not the problem only with Farsi but again it is shared by all the languages in the locale.

Hijras from D. G. Khan while speaking Farsi would say *krendi* while those from Rawalpindi would use *kerdi* instead under the influence of Siraiki and Punjabi, alternatively. These changes create two different varieties of Farsi in the two cities of locale. However, Farsi does not have any obvious influence on Siraiki and Punjabi. This is again because of the private and limited use of Farsi.

It can be affirmed that this comparison of Farsi with other languages used by hijras on the basis of linguistic features has, to some extent, proved competency of Farsi as a separate language. Now social aspects would be considered to further define what Farsi is.

4.2.1.2 Social features of Farsi: Apart from the linguistic facts presented above, the language has also developed some features of it to have a distinct identity for those who speak it. However Farsi's case is very strange because it is not visible in the society; it is limited to a community, therefore, only hijra community knows that Farsi *is* and that

it is a separate language. Sociolinguists have devised different ways to look at a language from social perspectives. From among these I would apply those which seem appropriate to the nature of the language. I have used the concept of speech community and Bell's seven criteria for language to decide what Farsi is.

a) *Hijra community and Farsi*: As stated above, the notion of language is confusing and misleading and to avoid this confusion 'sociolinguists prefer to start with the notion of a **speech community** rather than a "language" and they define a speech community as any group of people **who consider that they speak the same language**' (Aitchison, 2003, p.114; emphasis mine). On the basis of this decision power given to speech community by sociolinguists, Jean Aitchison (2003) declares that 'Dutch and German **must be** regarded as separate languages, since, **in spite of their similarities**, the Dutch **consider** that they speak Dutch and the Germans **consider** that they speak German' (p. 114; emphasis mine). In Chapter 2, under heading 'what is a language?' the opinion of speech community about Hindi-Urdu and Punjabi-Siraiki has been discussed which shows that these languages are separate because their speakers consider them separate. This suggests that a speech community has the right to **consider** what they speak – a separate language or not. Let us now see what hijra (speech) community has to say about Farsi.

Reema, one of my key informants, is a middle aged hijra living as guru with four hijra chelas in Shams Abad Rawalpindi. When in the start of my field research I went to learn something of and about Farsi, Reema said:

2. *Farsi kia hae? farsi ik zaban haegi jes tarah tusi kuj urdu ich bolde-o, asi punjabi bolde-an esi-tarah farsi vi zaban hae-gi.*

- Farsi what is? Farsi a language is as like you something Urdu in speak we Punjabi speak in the same way Farsi also language is
- What is Farsi? Farsi is a language just as you say something in Urdu, we speak Punjabi, in the same way Farsi is also a language.

Reema repeats my question perhaps to buy time and find some examples to make the point easy for me. Reema gives a comparison of Farsi with the contact languages (Urdu and Punjabi as is relevant in Reema's context). According to Reema's simplistic analogy Farsi is nothing less than Urdu and Punjabi. Reema is not alone to declare Farsi as a language; almost all (more than 98%, while the remaining said that there are some words that they use where necessary) of the hijras I interviewed insisted that their language is different from other languages.

Kiran, another of the key informants, owns a hijra dance party based in Pathar Bazar D. G. Khan. Kiran's response to 'what is Farsi?' was rather emotional:

3. *Samijh farsi meku tan andi-ay matlab thik-ay farsi samijh hik pashto ay samijh asan bulesun tan tuhaku tan pashto tan nai andi nan samijh sadi aprin hik boli ay*
- Say Farsi me then speak means ok Farsi say a Pashto is say we speak then you then Pashto then not speak isn't understand our own a language
- You can say that Farsi I know how to speak, right, you can say that Farsi is a Pashto, when we will speak it, now you don't know how to speak Pashto, you can say we have our own language.

Like Reema, Kiran also tried to make the point using the example of a language – Pashto³⁶. However, it is not exactly what Reema said. First, I will discuss the last few words that Kiran uttered i.e. 'we have our own language'. One can easily notice the sense

³⁶ An Indo-Arian language of Pathans of Pakistan, Afghanistan and those living in other countries

of possession here. But more importantly she calls it a language. Secondly, Kiran's saying that 'you can say that Farsi is a Pashto' is important to analyze. She means that it is a separate language and, very innocently, that it is as different from Siraiki as is Pashto. However, the difference is not that much. Then Pashto, for most of the common, uneducated people of D. G. Khan does not always mean a language. These people take it as a code language because they observe that when the Pathan businessmen in D. G. Khan have to say something secretly they switch to an alien (for those who do not know about it) language that is Pashto. This point that a language also works as a code, shows that if publically Farsi is being used as a code, this does not mean that it is not a language or that it is always used to hide things. Then if a developed language Pashto can serve as a code, why can't Farsi do so? When asked as whether hijras speak Farsi only when there is some out-of-community person around, Nazia (a *chela*, living among a hijra group in Iqbal Town, Rawalpindi) said:

4. *Nai nai hamare guru hum-ko mar mar mar mar ke hamara be[ra gharaq-kr-dete-haen, hamen sab ko ghar men farsi he bolni parti hae, na bolen to guru us ke-pas danda hae na hum kese ni bolen gay farsi phir ye hamari apni zaban hae guru bhi sai kehti hae zaban to apni sai hoti-hae chahe jesi bhi ho.*

- No no our guru us beat beat beat beat by our ship sink us all of home in Farsi alone speak have to not speak then guru hshe has stick we how not speak shall Farsi then this our own language is guru also right says language own right is no-matter type also is
- No, no our guru beats us a lot. We all have to speak Farsi at home. If we do not do so, then guru, he has a rod. Why won't we speak Farsi? Then this is our own

language. Guru also rightly says one's own language is right no matter what type it is.

Two points are important to note here. First, the emphasis that Nazia adds with the help of double reduplication of *mar* (beat) and her words that 'we all **have to** speak Farsi at home' implies that it is compulsory for all the hijras to speak it when they are home. Now, usually, there is nobody around them in the four walls of their house. Even then they speak Farsi perhaps to make the new comers proficient in it and to promote a sense of identity and solidarity etc (see detail under *why Farsi*). Secondly, Nazia's statement 'one's own language is right no matter what type it is' reinforces the assertion made by Cameron and Kulick (2003) as discussed above in Chapter 2 under heading 'why Farsi?'. 'One's own language' means the same as Kiran's 'our own language'. But when she says that 'one's own language is right **no matter what type it is**', it seems as if Nazia is apologetic for and conscious about the shortcomings of Farsi. Most of them know that Farsi is not as good a language as Urdu is, yet they think it is a language and that it is good because it is their *own* language.

So, hijras insist that Farsi is their *language* but they want to keep it as a language of hijra community alone so that they may take maximum benefits out of it.

To further clarify the social face of Farsi, Bell's seven criteria for language (as cited in Wardhaugh, 2006; McLennan, 1996; Groves, 2008) would be helpful.

b) *Bell's seven criteria for language*: I have applied Bell's seven criteria for language (standardization, vitality, historicity, autonomy, reduction, mixture and de facto norms) because it can be used to decide the status of it as being a language or not.

i. Standardization

Farsi, being a secret variety, is not standardized in the real sense of the word. No media or literature uses it. During my field work among hijras, I noted that only some gurus have some notebooks where they have got Farsi written for the purpose of keeping it fresh in their minds and to use it while teaching the new comers how to speak it. Otherwise, it is a language only to be spoken.

ii. Vitality

Farsi has vitality because it has a living community of speakers who exploit it actively wherever they need to do so.

iii. Historicity

The historical link that the hijras try to make with Mughal India and the FARSI (Persian) of that era is the only reference that proves the history of Farsi (hijras') as being competitive with the history of languages in its contact.

iv. Autonomy

The hijras of both the cities of the locale feel that they speak a language that is different from the other languages of the locales. They are also very possessive about it. This community alone has all the rights to manipulate it.

v. Reduction

Farsi has no reduction in its use. It does not seem to be a sub-variety of any other language of the area. Therefore, it is not a dialect of Urdu or Hindi.

vi. Mixture

The common hijras told me that their language Farsi uses words of other languages like Punjabi, Siraiki and Urdu. However, I observed that the gurus try to keep it pure. The

notebooks that they maintain to write its lexicon are also meant for not allowing the infiltration of the words of the languages in contact. We can say that though Farsi is a mixture yet its speakers prevent it from becoming more "impure".

vii. De facto norms

Of course there are "expert" and "poor" speakers of Farsi. Usually the senior hijras are considered to be the good speakers of Farsi and the new inductees the bad ones.

From the above discussion, we can assume that though Farsi is not standardized and though it borrows words from other languages yet it is not a dialect of any other one.

4.2.1.3 Articulatory, acoustic and auditory features of the sounds produced by Farsi speech: Hijras' Farsi can be identified by those who do not know about it by noticing the following features.

- a) High pitch: The hijras usually get into habit of speaking with high pitched voice as a desire to look more like women. Therefore, they speak Farsi also in the same way. The high-pitched voice sometimes helps them in whispering which they do to prevent themselves from being listened by the people around.
- b) Low volume: Normally hijras speak loudly all the time. But, as I observed them, they speak Farsi with low volume, except when they are on a noisy place like *mela* (fair) etc. Again they do so to avoid being discerned, perhaps.

Hijras always do flat-palmed clapping whatever the language they speak. This makes a common man identify them as hijras.

Similar features have also been given by Hall (2005, pp. 133,134) but as those imagined and produced by kotis to parody hijras' Hindi speech.

4.2.1.4 Themes of Farsi discourse: The hijras usually talk of money as to what amount they should demand while offering their services as sex workers or as dancers

etc. They guide each other as which among the men around is *chisa* (beautiful) or *koond kadaya* (wealthy) to be *pata* (allured). They use tabooed and abusive language of which the major theme is sex. They also use Farsi in order to threaten and fight each other.

4.2.2 Subsidiary question no. 2: *Why Farsi?*

Necessity is the mother of invention!

One's curiosity is aroused when one comes to know about the fact that the hijras, who are living in the same society where we do and who originally belong to us and later join a separate community, have a separate language about which they are very sensitive, and do not easily reveal. It seems that the mother of the invention of Farsi is its necessity in many walks of hijras' life. As discussed in the 2nd chapter of the present study, hijras are socially living at a distance from others and, perhaps, that is also why linguistic differentiation occurs. But it is not the kind of linguistic differentiation Louden (2000, p. 223) talks about in the case of AAVE. Here hijras acquire a language on the basis of conscious effort in artificial manner. It is a must for the newly inducted hijras to learn Farsi as a code of conduct at a hijra household. Why it is compulsory for every hijra to learn Farsi on joining this community might be answered in the discussion given below.

4.2.2.1 Farsi as a tool for solidarity: Most of the hijras I closely observed would talk softly in Farsi to each other. Whenever there appeared a bone of contention among them, they switched to Farsi and the harsh, coarse tone immediately turned into soft one and most of the time the issue resolved. This reminds me of a *jalsa* where a senior hijra was going to be made *chowdher* of Rawalpindi, and I was allowed to attend it. A quarrel started among the hijras when one of the hijras who had violated hijra rules was imposed

*dand*³⁷. It looked like an unending argument. Some of the hijras were beating their breasts and shouting and abusing loudly. But then suddenly a guru stood up; went silently to the stage and I heard his voice in the echoing loudspeaker.

5. *Hamala di kalam chamo, hamala di kalam chamo*

- Mine of word listen, mine of word listen
- Listen to my words, listen to my words

Suddenly, all the hijras were spell bound. I thought that the hijras got silent out of the respect for this guru. But then I remembered that the same was shouting at them a moment before, and was saying in Punjabi:

6. *Bus vi krjao aṛi baji*

- Stop too do O sister
- Stop it now, sister

Were they silent in respect for the loudspeaker, then?

7. *Farsi vich boldi pai-ey tain sarian kun sup sungh gae*

- Farsi in speaks doing so all to snake smelt have
- She is speaking in Farsi, therefore all of them got silent

On my query, I was informed by Saima who was sitting beside me. Then the guru in command of the loudspeaker said softly in Farsi to the one who was giving decision about the fine:

8. *Insi beti nal Farsi ich kalaman ghop, roothay di kalam ghop, dand chamwa*

- This daughter to Farsi in words talk, sweet of word talk, fine understand

³⁷ *Dand* is the fine imposed by the gurus on those hijras who violate the hijra rules and regulations, and also on those gurus who help him in that act. This is done in presence of the *dada guru* or *chowdher* and other senior hijras.

- Talk to this daughter in Farsi, use sweet words, make her understand the nature of the fine

Thus Farsi worked as an effective tool to remind them about the shared aims. Somehow this helped them in keeping them united.

4.2.2.2 Farsi as a tool for privacy and secrecy: As said above in the 2nd chapter, hijras do many things secretly. To keep their secrets unrevealed, they need Farsi, which also works for them as a code at times, and social distancing. Farsi and social distancing seem to have reciprocal effects on each other. This language enhances social distancing for them and the social distancing, in return, enhances the need of Farsi. On many occasions, I observed that one of Farsi's uses is doing some conspiracy against the outsiders who do not know it. Responding one of my questions Kajul of D. G. Khan told me that when some simple fellow is attracted by the beauty of a hijra and starts looking intently towards hir, and if hshe is ignorant about him, other hijras would tell hir about that man as:

9. Tamala da girya vog aey, inse koon pata

- Yours of lover walk come, this to trap
- Your lover has arrived, trap him

Hence encouraged and motivated by fellow hijras and by Farsi, a hijra advances to trap that particular man by alluring him. Even during this trap-process, hijras may guide their fellow in Farsi to help him succeed.

4.2.2.3 Farsi as a tool for identity:

Speak so that you are identified (Hazrat Ali K.U.V.)

Much has been said about the role of language that it plays in constructing identities. Nagar (2008) gives a detailed discussion on the identity given to the kotis of India by

hijras' Farsi. "How do you identify this some person is a hijra and not a man in woman's dress?" I asked Shazia who after giving some thought to my question, replied in the following words:

10. *Duroon tali vaja ken, Farsi ala ken*

- From distance clapping doing by, Farsi speaking by
- By clapping our hands from a distance and by speaking Farsi

Thus we can say that hijras exploit Farsi to identify each other. However, in Pakistan they do not make it one of their identification marks among the outsiders. For them they dress like women and do clapping.

4.2.2.4 Farsi as a skill for earning livelihood: Lali lives in Lal Kurti, Rawalpindi.

In the beginning of my research, one day, I went to visit hir *dera* with a *mirasi* who had good terms with hir. During the course of conversation, I asked hir whether hshe would teach me how to speak Farsi. Hir reply in Punjabi was as given below:

11. *Keun? apran hunur de-devaan? sonre aa sokhean ni sikhi asi Farsi, koi mufat tenu na sikhasi mufat aj-kal kida chhota vi kam hovay, mufat, toon lokan noon ja-ke sikhawanen ki itbar tera meri baji wadi harami ay purey pindi di, sadi guru ay os noon pata chal-gia te phir mera unj-ee jeen[ra haram ker desi*

- Why? My skill give away? Dear easily not learnt we Farsi anybody free you not teach free nowadays someone's little thing is free you people to go teach what trust your my guru big bastard is whole Rawalpindi of our guru is hshe to know come to so then my for no good life miserable make will
- Why? Should I give away my skill to you? Dear we haven't learnt Farsi easily. No one would teach you for free. For free, now-a-days even if it is something of

little worth, who knows you, you may start teaching it to the people. My guru is a big bastard of the whole Rawalpindi. She is our guru. If she comes to know then she will make my life miserable.

On hearing that I was there to learn Farsi, Lali grew red and started replying curtly. Lali is not alone to claim that Farsi is their *hunur* (skill). The connotation associated with the word 'hunur' in Punjabi is not exactly that of 'skill' in English. Here 'hunur' means some technical skill that is a source of earning. As language is taken for granted here therefore it is not considered a 'hunur' or skill because usually it is not one of the means of earning. But Farsi's case is different. It is a major tool of earning livelihood (as discussed in detail below). That is why Lali declares it *apran hunur* (own skill). It becomes a perfect skill when it is not common; when all and sundry are not skilful in it. Therefore, Lali fears that I '... may start teaching it to the people' and in this way they may lose their skill.

Many hijras told me that they had to give a fixed amount of money to their guru every day. So they are in need of money all the time and to get money they can even give away their *hunur* – Farsi. Thus, Lali is interested in being paid for teaching me Farsi when hshe says 'No one would teach you for free'. But Lali knows that this is something prohibited according to the rules of their community and is afraid of the guru (one of the leading activists for hijra rights in Pakistan) when hshe says 'If she comes to know then she will make my life miserable'.

On our way back from hir *dera*, I asked my *mirasi* guide as how Farsi is Lali's skill, he explained in the following words of Punjabi:

12. *Tusi notice nai lea, jadoon asi andar va[fej-aan us meray nal Farsi boli ey,
puchh-rai si jo bhai munda shoq da kina mul lasi*

- You notice not took, when we in enter did hshe me with Farsi speak did, asking was that brother boy desire of how much price will pay
- You did not notice, when we went in hshe spoke with me in Farsi, was asking how much you would pay to satisfy your desire

Then he explained how hijras exploit Farsi to earn livelihood. In a world where they are often vulnerable and always in danger, hijras use Farsi to become fit to survive.

4.2.2.5 *Farsi as a weapon for social revenge:*

You taught me language;

And my profit on't

Is I know how to curse

(Shakespeare)

Language is considered to be a loaded weapon (Bolinger, 1980). When on one hand hijras are ostracized in the society and when even the word 'hijra' has become a derogatory expression in the hands of the male dominated society, hijras take revenge by doing many anti-social activities. They try to persuade the young boys to join their community and get them castrated; do prostitution without any medical care; pick-pocketing etc. During all these activities they make use of Farsi. The term for pick-pocketing that hijras use in Farsi is '*adi lagana*' as revealed by Sadia in the following words:

13. *Ik hor vee chiz hae ve, aey tenu koi dasey ga ni, **adi lagana**, mra na dasdena kisey noon, khial krna, ida matlab ey jeb katna, ha te asi pukh-tan ni marna, mai tan kher ni kr di pr sadey vichun kuch es tarah de km kr-lendey-ney*

- One more also thing is there, that you anyone tell not, pick-pocketing, my not tell anybody, careful be, it means pocket cutting, yes we hunger not die, I however don't do but among us some this type things do
- There is one thing more. None would tell you about that – **adi lagana**. Don't tell anyone that I have told you about this thing. It means pick-pocketing. Yes, why should we die out of hunger? However, I don't do it but some among us do such things.

One of the motives behind pick-pocketing seems to be the revenge that is resulted due to the anger provoked by the derogatory attitude generally faced by the hijras, and it is not just to earn livelihood because they can earn money by many other ways as well.



Plate 7: Shows some hijras protesting in Islamabad against the “criminal hijras” (as the Urdu text on posters says).

Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hijra_Protest_Islamabad.jpg

These were some of the possible reasons why hijras learn Farsi. It can be assumed that Farsi is something of most importance for the survival of hijras. They use it mostly for negative purposes. However, if its contribution in hijras' life is to be given any credit, and if the fact that it is 'imprisoned' is kept in view, then Farsi as a language seems as good as any other language.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter has been designed to synthesize the wide range of information collected during analysis, discussion and presentation in the previous chapters. Here a summary of the whole discussion has been presented and the results of the research have been put together. An attempt has been made to give an overview of Farsi – the language under sociolinguistic study and the logical factors that played role in the emergence of this language as well as in its survival. After giving a summary of the whole thesis and presenting the findings, some recommendations have also been made here in the concluding chapter. As this research is not an all encompassing type, therefore its limitations and future research possibilities have also been given.

5.1 Summary and Findings

The first subsidiary question was ‘What are the linguistic and sociolinguistic features of Farsi?’ It has been answered by giving Farsi’s linguistic features as compared with those

of other languages (Punjabi, Siraiki and Urdu) in contact. The comparison has been made at two levels: Morphological and Syntactical. The results of the analysis show that Farsi has nouns (feminine, masculine; singular, plural), pronouns, verbs (feminine, masculine; singular, plural), adjectives (feminine, masculine; singular, plural), determiners (feminine, masculine; singular, plural) etc of its own. However, it usually borrows the adverbs, prepositions etc from the languages in contact. Farsi manifests many characteristic features, for example, *nak* (nose) in Punjabi and Urdu is feminine while in Farsi, its equivalent *Nakra* is masculine. Similarly, Farsi has two separate words for clothes of men and women but it is not the case with other languages in comparison. Farsi has the same syntactical pattern as other languages in contact i.e. Subject – Object – Verb.

Then, the study shows Farsi's status on the basis of its social features. Keeping in view the sociolinguistic notion of 'Speech Community', hijras were asked what they think about Farsi and almost all of them declared it a language. Then 'Bell's Seven Criteria for Language' was applied on Farsi. These also show that Farsi is a separate language. The study also gives some articulatory, acoustic and auditory features of the sounds produced during Farsi speech e.g. high pitch, low volume etc. It has been observed that major themes of routine Farsi discourse are money and sex.

The second subsidiary question was 'why Farsi?' The analysis results show that Farsi plays many vital roles in hijra life. It serves as a tool for solidarity among hijras. It helps them maintain privacy and secrecy. It gives identity to hijras that they use to be recognized before other hijras. It is also used as a weapon to take social revenge. Most importantly, Farsi is a skill that hijras learn to earn livelihood – for survival.

The findings of the research have been summarized in the following way:

Farsi is always oral and not written. So no written literature is available in this language in the locales of the study.

It is always a second language for hijras and this is one of the languages which are nobody's mother tongue. Hijras learn it as a second language.

The Farsi spoken ability of the senior hijras is better than the junior ones.

The major themes of Farsi discourse by hijras are money and sex. They ignore religious and other ideological discourse in their private language as it is more focused on taboos and economic dealings.

If hijras are a separate gender as recently they are being accepted to be so, then it can be affirmed that different genders of the same society may have different languages. In other words, like hijras, if the feminine members of the society establish a separate community, their distance from the other genders may give rise to a separate language.

The Farsi spoken by the Hijras varies as the context, especially the language in contact, changes. Therefore, there are some differences between the Farsi of D. G. Khan and that of Rawalpindi, with Farsi of D. G. Khan having more features of Siraiki and that of Rawalpindi of Punjabi. So we can say that two different but mutually intelligible varieties of Farsi have come into existence.

Farsi is not a widely used language, not even by those who are skilled in it. It is used only when there is some reason to use it. They also speak it at home but mostly because guru wants them to do so.

Hijras are very possessive about it and do not like an out group member to learn it, not at all if they feel that the person who wants to learn it may teach it to others.

In front of a person from outside their community, hijras use Urdu or Punjabi or Siraiki in their own exaggerated way for the sake of identity but they speak Farsi language to hide what truly they are. Though they use Farsi for identity as well but they do so in order to identify each other.

Finally, the study shows that Farsi is as good a language as any other can be.

5.2 Conclusion

To conclude, I would say that Farsi is hidden as many other aspects of hijras life are. Farsi may be queer like the identity of hijras. It is confusing just like its speakers – still it is a living language – though its survival is endangered as is that of its speakers. The long distance between the two cities of the locale of this study and the use of the same Farsi by the hijras of both the cities also becomes a temptation to generalize that Farsi is present throughout the subcontinent and geographical distances do not matter much. This language is unique to hijras and has a pivotal role in the day to day life of hijras as it helps bind them in a community. They use this language not for the purpose of communication alone. They can use it whenever and wherever they have to act as hijras. In other words wherever they have to act as members of the third gender, they speak Farsi. This leads us to think that if the third gender can have a separate language then the feminine and masculine genders can also have gender-lects.

5.3 Recommendations

Farsi, as has been stated above, is a language that was unexplored and hidden yet. Its remaining secret and private has two disadvantages: first, it is a threat for those against

whom it is used and, secondly, its own survival is threatened. After having accomplished this study, I want to make the following recommendations:

A lexicon of Farsi should be brought out to document this language.

Factors threatening the survival of Farsi's possessive 'owners' should also be addressed by the authorities concerned.

I would highly recommend separate educational institutions for real hijras – where they should be given modern education and Farsi should also be taught in these institutions. These institutions could work on the pattern of adult education.

The real hijras should be given separate third gender identity officially acknowledged on their National Identity Cards. They should also have some respectable roles/jobs according to their qualification and expertise to bring to the vortex of life.

In Pakistan, mostly gay men pretend to be hijras. Many of them get castrated and live permanently among hijras. Castration should be checked and all the gay men should be expelled from among hijras.

Those among them who indulge in negative activities or crimes like pick-pocketing, prostitution etc should be punished according to law.

Research on Farsi or any other similar issue/topic should be encouraged and funded by the government.

5.4 Limitations of the Study and Possibilities for Future Research

The present study addresses a main research question i.e. 'What is Farsi and why hijras need it?' and the two subsidiary questions i.e. 'What are the linguistic and sociolinguistic features of Farsi?' And 'Why do hijras learn a separate language – why Farsi?' In other words it gives an introduction of Farsi and focuses its functions. However, much more can be done on the subject. A research can be carried out to trace the origin of Farsi. In order to work out the ratio of code-switching between Farsi and the languages in its contact a complete study is required. Similarly, the exact contexts in which Hijras speak Farsi should also be researched in a separate study. A separate linguistic analysis of this language may also bring many new discoveries about it.

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APPENDIX – I

Survey:

People's Awareness about Farsi

In order to know how much awareness about the hijras' language there is among people, I conducted a survey asking the same question in two different ways:

- a) What do you know about the language that hijras speak?
- b) What is Farsi?

This was again a kind of oral questionnaire in which I asked the above given questions from 25 men and 25 women belonging to D. G. Khan and the same number of men and women belonging to Rawalpindi. The respondents were randomly selected.

Table

	D. G. Khan		Rawalpindi		Total (100)
	Men (25)	Women (25)	Men (25)	Women (25)	
Knew about Farsi	1	0	0	1	2 (2 %)
Didn't know about Farsi	24	25	25	24	98 (98 %)

Hijras were very successful in keeping their language a secret and private asset. Only one man (from D. G. Khan) knew that hijras speak Farsi. He knew how to speak it because he was living near the living place of hijras and was in frequent contact with hijras.

None of the women from D. G. Khan knew anything about hijras' Farsi. This is so perhaps because there is no or little contact between hijras and women over there. But the response from the female respondents of Rawalpindi was rather startling; as some of them said that hijras sometimes speak differently from us; that they use some sentences

that are unintelligible. One of these women even knew that the language they speak is called Farsi. The reason that seems more affective for it is that hijras in Rawalpindi also go from house to house in order to ask for alms during the day time. There, they come across women folk. Hijras being more 'masculine', perhaps, consider themselves cleverer than women and thus feel more confident before them. Therefore, they suppose that their Farsi is less threatened before women and make a vulnerable use of it. Thus the women are able to note that they have a different language. However, I would say that even more than 98% people are totally ignorant about Farsi.

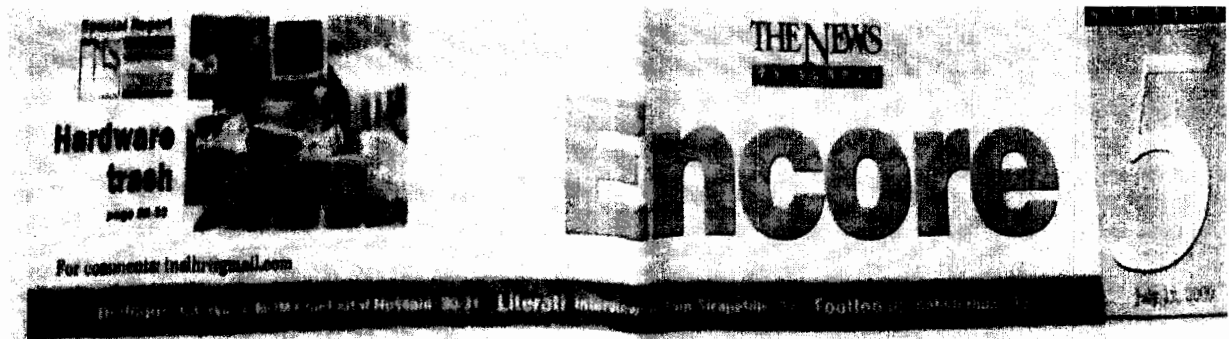
APPENDIX - II

Current Scenario

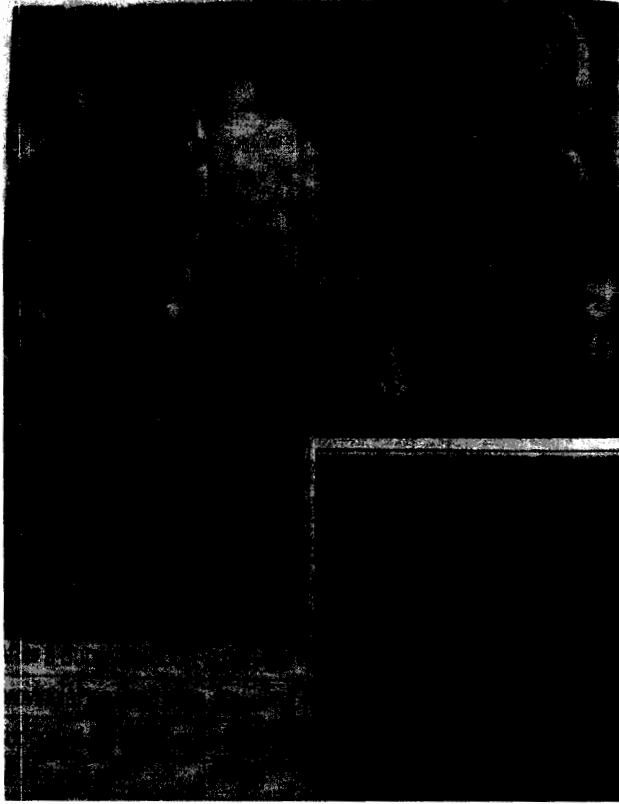
a) Hijras in media



The upper of the clippings from Daily Nawa-e-Waqt show the hijras protesting against 'Bobby' Guru while the lower one shows the chairperson of a relevant government organization announcing quota for hijras in jobs



The gender paradox



again and brooded the topic "Have you tried to register?" "Lahore," she said, now fed up. "What do you want me to say? Will we get better doctors? Will we get education? If all of you who are so busy are able to get something, we also have some hope. What is in this country for any ordinary woman or man or us?"

Again some uncomfortable silence followed.

"Can I talk to your leader? Do you have a union?"

"No, we have."

"Give me your number. I will make someone call you and discuss you further. We'll let out a card with length."

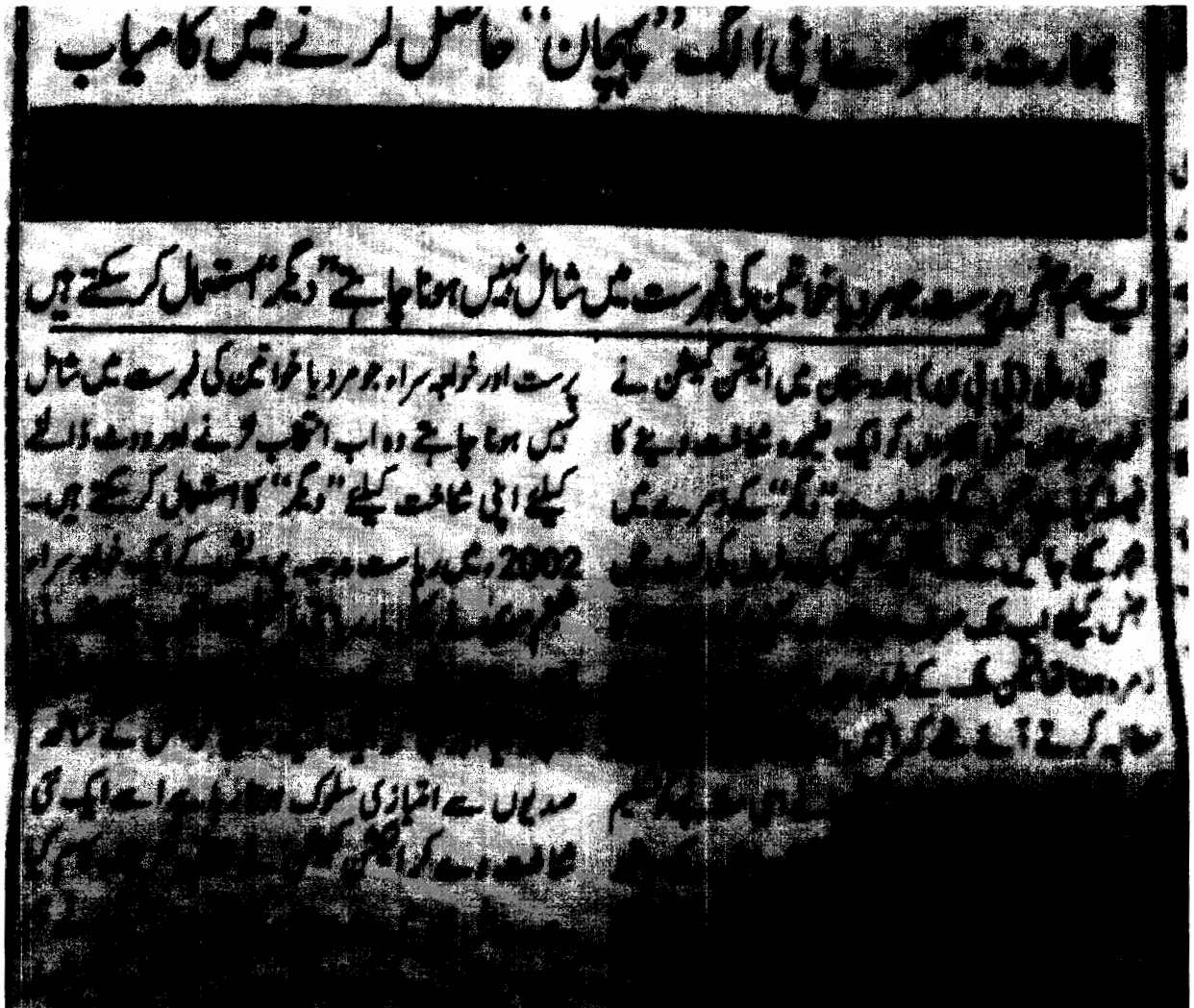
"After this, I called an employee of NADRA and asked if any new policy had been introduced for the registration of transsexuals. He confirmed there was a new policy but he had not read it and I should call after an hour. I called after an hour. The answer was still the same with new directions for men. Now wait for my call, this officer said. The call never came.

Govt was right. It is not an issue of being recognized in a state document but the overall tendency of a public sphere towards justice. If the males and females are begging, if the bait-and-switch does not operate, if the taxpayers' money is usurped without any return for them, if all the youth want to migrate as soon as possible, then the state cannot be for everyone and the transgender community may have found more trouble than relief in the mandatory registration process. It may even become 1871 all over again because there are no laws against data protection. The police may have access to all the details and can ruin them up for use in any unrelated crime.

If the case of Shaimal Raj and Shaheen Tariq is any indication, the logic of the existing order of things is going to remain unchangeable. Shaimal Raj was a transgendered man who married Shaheen Tariq, his country wife had gone through the biological transition of becoming male. The Court

ordered a divorce. The use of the word "biological" is significant. It is not the gender identity that is the issue. It is the biological transition that is the issue. The Court's decision is a clear indication that the state is not prepared to recognize the transgender community as a distinct legal entity. It is a clear indication that the state is not prepared to recognize the transgender community as a distinct legal entity. It is a clear indication that the state is not prepared to recognize the transgender community as a distinct legal entity.

An article by Saeed Ur Rehman published in Daily The News on July 12, 2009



This news clipping says that the hijras have gained a separate identity by the Indian Election Commission (From Daily Jang November 14, 2009)

Current Scenario
b) Hijras in Supreme Court of Pakistan

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN
(Appellate Jurisdiction)

PRESENT:
MR. JUSTICE RAJA FAYYAZ AHMED
MR. JUSTICE CH. IJAZ AHMED

HUMAN RIGHT CASES NOS.63 OF 2009

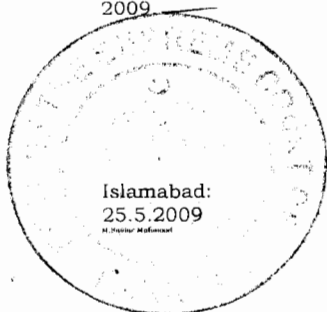
Dr. Mohammad Aslam Khakki	VERSUS	...Petitioner
SSP Rawalpindi and others		...Respondents
Petitioner:	In person	
On Court's call:	Qazi Muhammad Amin, Addl. A.G. Mr. Hasnain Chohan SP, Saddar Mr. Muhammad Shoaib, DSP (L) Mr. Akhtar Ali, SHO PS Taxila	
Date of hearing:	25.05.2009	

ORDER

Office is directed to prepare the copies of the report submitted in the light of the order of the Hon'ble Chief Justice dated 13.3.2009, which be supplied to all concerned.

2. Dr. Muhammad Aslam Khakki, learned ASC submitted that during pendency of the present proceedings another incident against she-males has taken place on 3.5.2009 in which their hard earned money was looted. On query by the Court, learned counsel submitted that the matter was not reported to the police, however, he after ascertaining the facts regarding the incident will make submissions on behalf of unrepresented segment of the society on the next date of hearing. The police officers whose presence has been noted above need not to attend the Court unless directed otherwise. Notices be also issued to the Advocates General of all the other provinces as well, for a date to be fixed by the office in the third week of June,

2009



Ord. Raja Fayyaz Ahmed. J
Ord. Ch. Ijaz Ahmed. J
Certified to be True Copy
[Signature]
25/5/09
Secretary
Supreme Court of Pakistan
ISLAMABAD

7/19/8

Date of birth _____
 Date of admission _____ 5-9-9
 No. of _____ 300
 No. of _____ ③
 Program _____ 5-0
 Cost _____ 1.86
 Government _____ 0-36
 Employment _____
 Country _____
 Date of _____ 17/11/09
 Name _____ 17-11-09
 Signature _____ M. Sajid

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN
(CONSTITUTIONAL JURISDICTION)

PRESENT:

Mr. Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, CJ.
Mr. Justice Ch. Ijaz Ahmed
Mr. Justice Mahmood Akhtar Shahid Siddiqui

Human Rights Const. P.No. 63 of 2009.

Attendance:

Complainant:	Dr. M. Aslam Khaki, ASC, (In person).
On Court notice:	Qazi Muhammad Amin, Addl. AG. Pb. Mr. Ikramullah, Addl. A.G. NWFP. Mr. Azam Khattak, Addl. A.G. Balochistan. Raja Abdul Ghafoor, AOR (on behalf of A.G. Sindh)

Date of hearing: 16.06.2009

ORDER

Learned Additional Advocate Generals are present but no comments have been filed by them. Petitioner, who is an Advocate of this Court, has filed this petition under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973. Petitioner, present in person, argued that community of She-males is the most oppressed section of life whose fundamental rights are infringed by the parents, Society and also the government as their right to live with their parents is negated by their own parents as they send them to 'Gurus' at birth to live in the separate Society and their right of dignity as enshrined by Quran as well as by Article 14 of the Constitution is seriously violated. In view of these arguments, we direct to the learned Additional Advocate Generals to arrange a survey of their respective provinces through the Secretaries Social Welfare Department and put up facts and figures of she-male

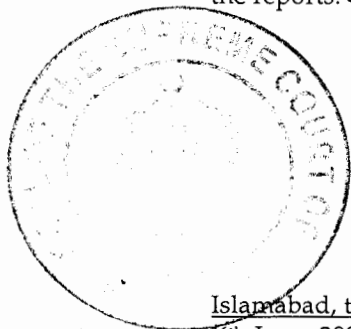
ATTESTED

Supervisor
Supreme Court of Pakistan
ISLAMABAD

HR Const.P.63/09

-2-

communities in their respective provinces and also point out the facilities which are being given to them. They would also register their names and particulars and whereabouts so that this Court may further elaborate the matter as to whether they have been forced to live with 'Gurus' or voluntarily they are doing so. The Provincial Social Welfare Secretaries would also ensure that in future if any child is handed over to the 'Gurus', their particulars should be noted and intimated to the Social Welfare Department for the purpose of further probe with regard to the status of such child and also to know whether they are voluntarily handed over or under compulsion and in both the situations what offence/crime has been committed by elders/parents by handing over them to such 'Gurus'. Adjournd to a date in office after four weeks for filing of the reports.



Islamabad, the
16th June, 2009
A.Rehman/*

Prof. Dr. Iqbal Muhammad Akhtar
Prof. Dr. Gias Ahmed J.
Prof. Muhammad Akhtar Khalid Ghallab

Certified to be True Copy

[Signature]
17/11/09
Superintendent
Supreme Court of Pakistan
ISLAMABAD

7119/9

Case No.	7119/9
Date of Filing	5.9.09
No. of Witnesses	3
No. of Exhibits	5
Receipts	3
Copy Fee	8.00
Date of Completion	17/11/09
Copy:	17-11-09
Completed by:	<i>[Signature]</i>
Received by:	<i>M. Sajid</i>

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN
(ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

PRESENT:

MR. JUSTICE IFTIKHAR MUHAMMAD CHAUDHRY, CJ
MR. JUSTICE MUHAMMAD SAIR ALI
MR. JUSTICE JAWWAD S. KHAWAJA

HUMAN RIGHT CASE NO. 63 OF 2009

Petitioner: Dr. Muhammad Aslam Khaki, ASC
(In person)

On Court Notice: Raja Abdul Ghafoor, ASC
(on behalf of A.G. Sindh)

Ch. Khadim Qaisar, Addl. A.G. Punjab
Mr. Muhammad Azam Khattak, Addl. A.G.
Balochistan
Nemo (for A.G. NWFP)

Voluntarily appeared: Saleem Iqbal alias Shazia
Qamar Hameed alias Roop
Babar Ali alias Ashee
Waqas alias Shehzadi

Date of hearing: 14.07.2009.

ORDER.

The learned Law Officers representing their respective Provinces request for further time to comply with the order dated 16th June, 2009. Learned counsel for the petitioner stated that although they are citizens of Pakistan but their fundamental rights are being violated inasmuch as in some of the cases, the she-males are compelled to live an immoral life including offering themselves for dancing etc. He also stated that "GURUS", who styled themselves as head of the different groups of she-males, manage their affairs and for such service, they have to pay substantial amounts to these self styled "GURUS". Some of the she-males are so poor ^{and} they are otherwise compelled to live an indecent life. Their status is not accepted in society and wherever they go or when they perform at any function, they are always disgraced and dishonoured.

2. One of the she-males, namely, Saleem Iqbal alias Shazia also appeared in Court in person and explained her miseries including threats being received by her from such elements of their community with a view to extract money from them and in some of the cases on the persuasion of the 'Gurus' etc. they are involved in false cases and kept in custody by the police, where they are subjected to physical and sexual abuse. According

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Supdtendent
Supreme Court of Pakistan

to learned counsel for the petitioner, on account of their sexual features and inclinations, they are not enjoying the status of either male or female but they are nevertheless citizens of this country. He also submitted that the Government is bound to protect their rights and provide them opportunities, so they may live independent and respectable lives.

3. Besides the issues, which have been highlighted by the petitioner, there is another unfortunate aspect of the lives of the she-males namely, that their own family members particularly male relatives including fathers and brothers do not accept them as their own although they have been born in the same family. They are turned out forcibly and under such compelling circumstances they have to live a disgraceful life. Their male relatives, instead of looking after them as part of their religious, moral and legal duty, prefer to expel them from their homes. It is to be noted that being the muslim as well as human beings, the parents are bound to look after their children without discrimination including those who have born as she-males. However, without caring for such values they are thrown on the road and they have to suffer throughout their life.

4. The petitioner further stated that there are such miserable stories about she-males, which cannot be explained in open Court. He contended that Pakistan proclaims to be a welfare State and the Government has a responsibility to look after such persons. To our surprise, while getting NIC, the photograph, is of women but in the relevant column of status they are categorized as male. We are also informed that in Pakistan, so far no steps have been taken for their welfare either by the Government or by NGO's. Learned counsel went on to state that there is no scope for she-males to receive higher education as normally they are allowed to attend the classes during childhood but no sooner they start growing up, the schools meant either for males or for females, refuse to admit them. However, some of them, who have received education, are doing regular jobs or business etc.

5. Social Welfare Secretaries of the Provinces except the Provinces of NWFP have prayed for time to comply with the order dated 16th June, 2009. No response so far has been received from the Province of NWFP. During the hearing of this petition, it has been noticed that she-males are not being given respectable status in the society mainly on account of their weak financial condition. The Federal and Provincial Governments can help them overcome this difficulty by offering financial support to them either from the Benazir Income Support Program, from Provincial Income Support Programs, from Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal or by extending loans to them, so they may adopt some respectable profession to earn their livelihood. We are of the considered view that once their problem

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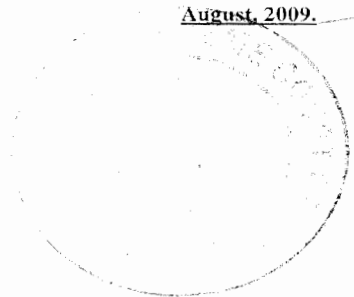
Secretary
Supreme Court of Pakistan
ISLAMABAD

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of earning livelihood is resolved, to some extent, their remaining difficulties shall start reducing gradually. However, this exercise has to be carried out by the Governments i.e. Federal Government as well as the Provincial Governments respectively. Copy of this judgment be sent to the Social Welfare Secretaries of all the Governments. Meanwhile, the petitioner shall also approach any NGO working in the social welfare sector of the country to mitigate their difficulties. Copy of the lists of registered she-males shall be sent to the Governments on its preparation and it would be expected that on the next date of hearing some suggestions be put forward by the respective Governments to ameliorate their difficulties.

6. As far as protection against 'Ghunda and Rogue' elements is concerned, that can conveniently be provided to them by the law enforcing agencies, therefore, Secretary Interior and the Home Secretaries of the Provinces are required to issue necessary directions in this behalf because she-males are citizens of this country and entitled to protection particularly under Articles 4 and 9 of the Constitution. If any highhandedness by the Police is reported to the higher police authorities, that shall be entertained and appropriate action shall be taken against delinquent officers because the object of extending protection and financial support to she-males is to ensure that their rights, guaranteed by the Constitution, are not violated.

Adjourned for filing of replies of Secretaries, Social Welfare Departments, as ordered on the last date of hearing. In the meantime, the Secretaries, Social Welfare Departments, may also send their proposals and suggestions to the Court about social uplift of she-males before the next date of hearing. Date in office in the 3rd week of August, 2009.



Islamabad, the
14.07.2009.

Handwritten signatures and names in Urdu script, including 'Muhammad Saif' and 'Muhammad S. Khan'.

Certified to be True/Copy

Handwritten signature and date '17/11/09' over a printed name 'Supervisor, Islamabad'.

Administrative routing table with handwritten entries for various departments and dates, including '17/11/09' and '17-11-09'.

M. Sajid

APPENDIX – III**Interview Questions asked from different Hijras****1- Name:**

- a- What is your good name?
- b- Is that the name your parents gave you at the time of your birth?
- c- Which name do you like more, the one given by your parents or the one given by the hijras?
- d- What name and gender do you prefer to get written on your national identity card?

2- Language:

- a- What is your mother tongue?
- b- How many languages can you speak?
- c- When did you learn Farsi?
- d- Why was it necessary for you to learn it?
- e- Is that easy to learn? How long did it take you to learn it?
- f- How do you write it?
- g- In which contexts you usually speak Farsi?
- h- When you see a hijra for the first time, do you speak Farsi or some other language in order to start the conversation?
- i- If you are not allowed at all to speak any language except Farsi, will you be able to lead a good life?

- j- What kinds of problems you would have faced if you had not learnt Farsi?
- k- Are there any hijras who do not learn Farsi?
- l- Do you know about any history of Farsi?
- m- Do you feel comfortable to switch from your mother tongue to Farsi and vice versa?

3- Gender:

- a- If you are given another life, which gender would you like to be a part of, feminine, masculine or the third gender?
- b- How would you greet another hijra?
- c- How would you refer to another hijra, using masculine or feminine gender?
- d- Do you shift your gender positions? Is that shift permanent or based on context?
- e- What exactly you want to look like, men, women or hijras?

4- Kinship and Marriages:

- a- What are the names of your parents?
- b- How many siblings do you have?
- c- Do you have any other hijra among your siblings?
- d- Do you feel more comfortable with the hijras or among your brothers and sisters at home?
- e- What about your marriage?

5- Hierarchy:

- a- Where do you live nowadays?
- b- With whom do you live? Who is the head of the house?
- c- Who runs the affairs of the home in the heads absence?
- d- What name do you give to the senior hijras especially the head?

e- Who are the important members in a group of hijras living in your home?

6- Punishments:

a- Are there any actions forbidden by your seniors for you to perform? If yes, what are they?

b- What kinds of punishments are given to the one who does not abide by the rules set by the seniors?

c- What are the basic 'crimes' that are a cause of punishment by the seniors?

7- Activities/Professions:

a- What do you do while you are at home?

b- What is your profession?

c- What was your childhood dream? What did you want to become?

d- What are the requirements to adopt your profession?

8- Personal/Informal Questions:

a- How can I be a member of your community?

b- What will I have to learn in order to be a good hijra?

c- Will you teach me Farsi?

d- Do you have any conditions for teaching me Farsi?

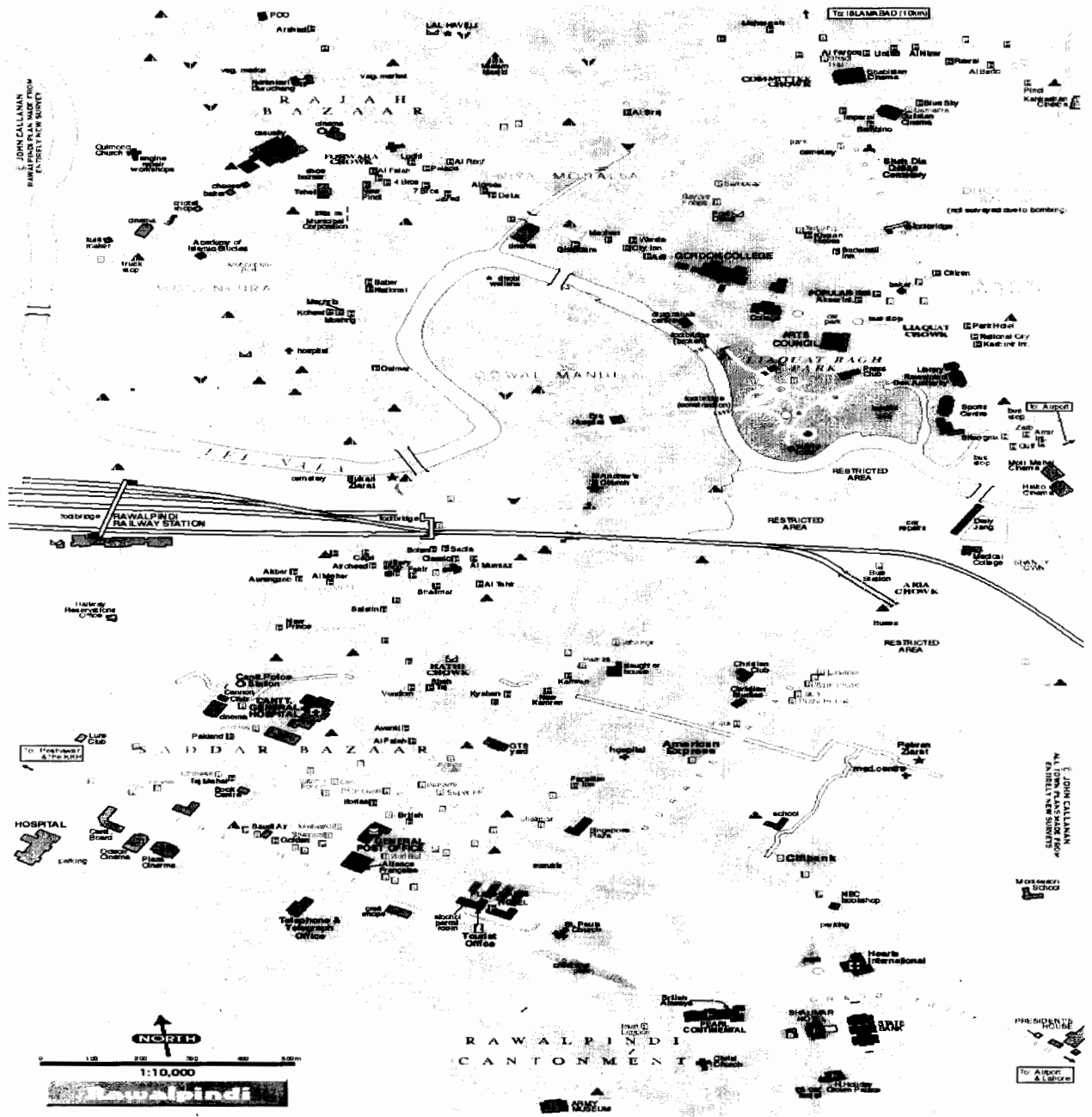
e- Have you ever been asked such questions before? How do you feel after talking to me?

f- What can I do for you?

APPENDIX – IV (a)

Locale

Map of Rawalpindi

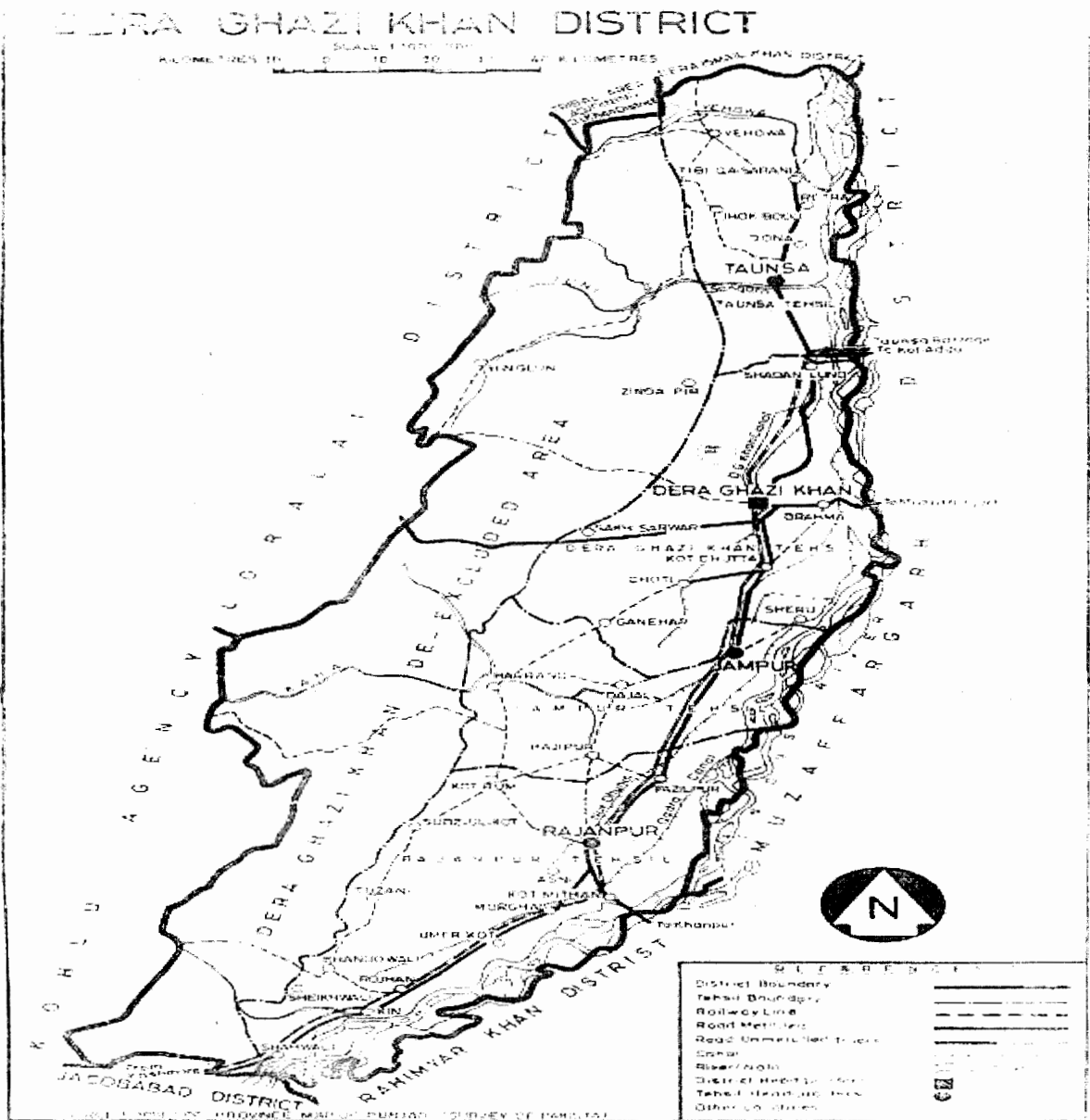


From: <http://pamirtours.pk/maps/rawalpindi%20map.htm>

APPENDIX – IV (b)

Locale

Map of D. G. Khan



APPENDIX – V

Glossary

- Aqba/aqva: Synonymous with zenana; however she wears *firka* (female garments) unlike zenana who usually wear *kotki* (male garments)
- Baji: Sister; some of the hijras living in the same household become each other's sisters and say baji while addressing each other
- Baygurwa: Without a guru; a fatherless hijra among hijras
- Brathery: A community or an ethnic group
- Chela: Junior member of the hijra community; a disciple of guru
- Chowdher: A senior member of hijra community; one of the top ranked positions in hierarchy of the community, usually one in a city
- Dada Guru: A hijra's guru's guru
- Darshan: Make up
- Dera: Hijra household; a place where hijras live or a place where they sit during the day
- Girya: A 'husband' of a hijra. Hijras secretly 'marry' some male and called him a girya. Usually girya is responsible for all the expenses of a hijra
- Guru: A senior member of hijra community; one of the top ranks in the hierarchy of the community

- Jalsa: Get-together of hijras where they sing, dance and arrange other activities
- Khusra: In some parts of Punjab hijras are called khusras
- Koti: In India uncastrated hijras who make a community separate from hijras
- Mirasi: A folk artist who beats drum on marriages and other happy events
- Moorat: Usually a hijra dancer/performer
- Mukhanas: Another term for hijras, usually used in Islamic literature
- Ruh: Soul; uncastrated hijras claim that their soul is feminine therefore they should not be treated a masculine
- Saheli: A friend; hijras use this term socializing their relationship with other hijras
- Urs: Annual gathering and celebration of festivals on shrines in order to commemorate saints
- Veer: Brother; used by hijras addressing a man
- Zankha: Another word for hijra
- Zenana: Another term for hijras of Pakistan; mostly used for uncastrated males living among hijras and working usually as dancers and passive gays

APPENDIX – VI

List of some Farsi Words

Here is the list of some Farsi words. A few of these words have been taken from Nagar (2008). The others are those collected by me. The list contains some of the words of Farsi and not the all.

Patao	To do
Thip	To sit, sleep, do intercourse
Adhi vadmi	Fifty rupees
Akba	Synonymous with zenana; however hshe wears <i>firka</i> (female garments) unlike zenana who usually wear <i>kotki</i> (male garments)
Akva	Another word for akba
Akvi	An akba who looks more feminine
Anda	Street, neighborhood
Aṛial	Much; Very; long
Aṛial jog	Long hair
Aṛial leekaṛ	Long penis

Badeedna	To get divorced/separation from husband or girya
Beela	Bad/thief/dacoit/miser (masculine)
Beeli	Bad/thief/dacoit/miser (feminine)
Beemarchi	Illness
Banwachi	Impotent woman
Barwachi nasha	Drug use
Bhapka	Make-up
Bhavla	Brother
Bhindi	Small/small penis
Blo	Bad smell
Booska	Pathan
Boti	Beautiful bride
Burma	A drug/ <i>Chars</i>
Button	Tooth/Teeth
Chalkeema	Marriage ceremony
Chalki	Motorcycle
Cham	Understanding
Cham	Love; liking
Chamakti khol	Movie
Chamde	Make one understand/ teach
Chaamka	Lover (Masculine)
Chamki	Lover (feminine)
Cham[̣i	Eye

Chamva	Make one understand/ teach/show
Chhande	Potato
Chandr	Sad
Chandrana	To look at fondly
Chant	Know how/basic knowledge of something
Chapatbaz:	Lesbian
Chapatbazi/kothorpan:	Homosexuality
Chapti	The hole of a hijra after castration similar with vagina of woman body
Chatai:	A get-together by hijras where a newly inducted hijra gives some money, dress, sweets etc to some guru requesting hir to teach hir dance etc
Cheram	Marriage ceremony
Chhabar	Castration
Chhalkey	Breasts of a woman or those of a hijra
Chamki	Skin
Chhamkola	Dance/seduction
Chhanda	Meal/ <i>Salan</i>
Chhango	A drug/ <i>Bhang</i>
Chhava	Passive gay
Chhindu	Hindu penis/ uncircumcised penis
Chia	Wedding
Chis	Love/beauty/near

Chisa	Good/beautiful/lovely (masculine)
Chisai	A kiss
Chisi	Good/beautiful/lovely (feminine)
Chissayan	Kissing
Chitti	Silver
Choochkey	Moustaches
Choochkian	Moustaches
Chookaṛ lena	To arrest
Chukṛeejna	To be arrested
Clunk	Fine
Dachhanda	Meal/ <i>salan</i>
Daambri	Tummy
Dangor	Policeman
Dangor khana	Police station
Dangoria	An army soldier/policeman
Daphel	Very ugly
Darshan	Beard
Darshan	Make-up
Dasola	Ten rupees
Dhhambṛa	Tummy
Dhor dhurappa	Intercourse
Dhorna	To fuck

Dhurakal	Passive gay
Dhurtaal	Intercourse
Dhurwana:	To be fucked
Dund:	Fine in cash on some hijra for the violation of hijra rules, usually decided in a gathering of hijras by different gurus
Duniyadari	Incest
Farsi Chandrana	Another name for hijras' language
Fatba	Impose fine in cash
Firka	Ladies dress
Garmili	Tea
Chaski	Tea
Ghamar	Tummy
Ghaan	Anal excretion
Ghanr	Anal excretion
Ghantal guru	Head guru
Ghoop	To talk
Giriya	Man/ sexual partner/ penetrator
Hamala	I/me/my
Humsio	I
Haanu	Small
Hathwachi:	Masturbation
Humsio:	First person singular
Insa	He; this

Khalki	Shoe
Khamblati	Chicken
Khanchaṭ	Intercourse
Khanjṛa	Prostitution
Jhalke	Money
khansṛa	Father
Khansṛi	Mother
Khari	
Sookal	Cigarette
Khaulni	Tea
Kheenṛgian	Fighting
Khel Khata	Prostitution
Khilva/khelva	Alcohol
Khingo poree	Prostitution
Khol	Home
Kholdasi:	Relative/neighbor/acquaintance
Khomaṭ	Face
Koṛki	Opium
Khṛant	Clever person
Khutni	Back biting
Khuwari	Insult

Koond kadayya	Rich man
Koondh	Eat
Koondna	To eat
Kotki	Gents' dress
Kotma	Impotence
Lachhmi	A drug
Lappa lori	Kissing
Leekum	Penis
Likkam taal pe	Erection
Leekaṛ	Penis
Liplipa	Milk
Sufaida	Milk
Loora	Boy
Lotar lagana	Falsely accusing someone
Lotar	Lie
Lug lug jeeven	May you die after suffering a lot (a curse)
Lugaṛna	To die
Lugaṛna	Love/death
Lugṛnewala	Ready to die
Lugni	Death
Lugṛana	Murder
Lugṛi	Death

Lugri da jhola povi	May you die (a curse)
Lugri pai gai	Died
Mala	I/my/me
Manki	Bread/chapatti
Mass	Beef
Matkara	A ritual of hugging a tree after castration
Mubaisia	Passive gay
Nakra	Nose
Namta	Boy
Narban	A castrated male; also the process of castration. This is usually done by mirasis (folk artists)
Narka	Money
Narkey	Rupees
Narkey pata	Get Money
Natoo	No/not
Natwache	Nose
Nejma	Tooth
Nejmen	Teeth
Niaro	Wife/woman
Niharan	Woman
Nijra	Money got during dance at marriages etc/ <i>vail</i>
Nira patt	One hundred thousand rupees

Nirban	A castrated male; also the process of castration. This is usually done by <i>mirasis</i> (folk artists)
Nugra	Clever/bad person
Ojo	Second person singular: he/she
Panj katkey	Five thousand
Panj vadmi	Five hundred
Panki	Bread/ chapatti/food
Panthi	Giriya (Man/sexual partner/penetrator) in Bangladesh
Parekh	Customer
Pat jana	Ejaculate
Pat	Get
Pata	Allure
Patauni	Semen
Peelka	Gold/jewelry
Phakaṭ	Slap/bad talk
Phakvan	Free of cost
Pho hona	Growth of beard stopped
Pin	To be fucked
Raṭa	Written
Reskey	Hair on body
Roheli	Charpoy/bed
Rootha	Love
Saer	Give

Saheli	Hijra friend
Santla	Body/leg
Santla	Cloth
Sat girayya	A ritual performed by a hijra after getting castrated in which hshe has to be fucked by giriyas for seven nights consecutively
Satre	Clothes
Seepo	Vagina
Shadooni	Marriage ceremony
Shooshkan	Moustaches
Shooter	Urination
Shorma	Brother
Shormi	Sister
Sippo	Vagina
Seepo	Vagina
Sookhla	Muslim
Rookhla	Non-Muslim
Sookṛi	Cigarette
Sooter	Urination
Sridhar	Giriya in Cochen
Sudda/sudha	Old man
Suddi/sudhi	Old woman
Sunṛkni	Cigarette

Suriley	Good
Sursuri	Cigarette
Taakna/Tankna:	To eat
Taakni	Food
Taal	Talk/situation/perfect
Tamala	You; your
Tank	Drink
Taṛava	Make-up
Teenda	Beaten
Thappal/thappar	Money
Thibna/thigna	To live/ reside
Thip wanj/thip ja	Sleep
Thush	Bad/ugly
Toolna	Son
Toolni	Daughter
Tulla	Boy/son
Tulli	Girl/daughter
Tumsio	You
Tunni	Small penis
Saeen log	Hijra after performing Hajj
Upal	Pregnancy
Vadma	Big (masculine)
Vadmi	Big (feminine)/hundred rupees

Vadvi	Hundred rupees
Vog	Go/run
Watal	Hips

