



Center for Peace and Cultural
Studies, Peshawar - Pakistan

FREEMUSE
FREEDOM OF MUSICAL EXPRESSION

CPCS Report

Music and Militancy
in North Western
Pakistan (2001-2014)

Authors

**Shaheen Buneri
Muhammad Arif
Rameez HassanZaib**

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(CPCS) Peshawar Pakistan

Deans Plaza, Peshawar
cpcspeshawar@gmail.com
www.cpcsp.org

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CPCS
Report

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Contact authors at: cpcspeshawar@gmail.com

Shaheen Buneri is a journalist working for Radio Free Europe in Prague. He writes about Pashtun culture and society. He is also a former fellow of the Pulitzer Centre and Crisis Reporting.

Muhammad Arif is a writer, researcher and Executive Director CPCS.

Rameez Hassan Zaib is Research Fellow at CPCS.

CPCS Peshawar Pakistan (www.cpcsp.org)

Deans Plaza, Peshawar Pakistan

The Center for Peace and Cultural Studies (CPCS) was registered on 01/01/2014 under Societies Act XXI of 1860 as Non Profit/ Charitable Organisation. It has got Registration No. 1717/5/7895-B. The Registration certificate is obtained through NOC No. SO (C) 1-5/2011/Misc dated 20/12/2013 of Information, Public Relation and Culture Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Culture Domain.

The CPCS offers programs and services to promote and preserve indigenous cultural and artistic expressions and abilities to build a culture of peace as a base for a caring and just society. CPCS is engaged in documenting and preserving indigenous resources and cultural heritage that are specifically endangered. CPCS is also documenting cases of abuses and persecution of artists, musicians, writers, and other people and assets related to the local cultural industry/market. CPCS has an ambitious plan for cultural education and youth development.

List of Abbreviations

ANP	Awami National Party (of Pakistan)
CD	Compact Disk
CIRCL	Centre for Innovative Research, Collaboration, and Learning (Pakistan)
CJ	Chief Justice (of Pakistan)
CPCS	Center for Peace and Cultural Studies (Peshawar Pakistan)
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (of Pakistan)
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulations (about FATA)
IJT	Islami-Jamait-e-Talaba (Students wing of JI)
ISPR	Inter-Services Public Relations (Pakistan Army)
JI	Jumat-e-Islami (Religious political party of Pakistan)
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pashtun dominated province of Pakistan)
MMA	Muttahida Majles-e-Amal (Alliance of six religious parties which ruled KP in 2002-2007)
NWFP	North West Frontier Province (former name of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)
PPF	Pakistan Press Foundation
PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party (of Pakistan)
PTI	Tahreek-e-Insaf (Political party of Pakistan)
TNSM	Tahreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (religious organisation in Swat)
TTP	Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (militant organisation of Pakistan)
US	United States (of America)



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1- Introduction

Pashtuns living in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province have rich cultural traditions. Music gatherings, dancing and poetry recitals make important features of their social and cultural life. However continuous war and political instability in the region did not allow Pashtun social and cultural institutions to evolve and make progress.

The recent phenomenon of religious militancy in Pakistan Afghanistan border areas proved disastrous for Pashtuns cultural life. The conflict between the security forces and the militant groups not only displaced millions of people from their homes but also imposed a foreign and extremist world view on the people.

Until now some work has been undertaken on human and property losses due to the conflict but very little attention has been paid to the loss of hope and

shrinking spaces for cultural activities. Despite meagre resources Researchers at Center for Peace and Cultural Studies (CPCS) Peshawar worked for months to document the socio-cultural impact of the ongoing conflicts in the Pashtun belt of Pakistan. In this connection face to face interviews were conducted with Pashtun singers, musicians and cultural experts to ascertain the damage to cultural life. Meanwhile media reports of music censorship were documented. Following are the salient features of the report

- 1- Since 2001, 18 persons have been reportedly killed because of their direct involvement in music. There are 12 cases of women in this category.
- 2- An estimated 20 cases of harassment of musicians and artists have been reported since 2001.

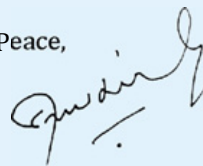
- 3- 5 artists and musicians have been forced to quit their profession and spend their lives in preaching.
- 4- 6 cases of kidnapping of musicians and artists have been documented.
- 5- Hundreds of artists and musicians are unemployed or suffer from poverty and old age.
- 6- Approximately 600 musicians suffered due to the closure of Dabgari Bazar during MMA government and around 200 families of musicians in Banr Swat suffered due to Taliban takeover of Swat.
- 7- Around 50 Sufi Shrines have been reportedly attacked.
- 8- An estimated 150 attacks on CD Shops and Music Centres have left an estimated 1000 to 1500 such shops and centres destroyed.
- 9- Major causes of music censorship are terrorism and religious militancy, social-cultural/ family pressures, religious governments and declining socio-cultural institutions.
- 10- Common types of music censorship are murders and attempted murders, harassment and forced displacement or exile, forcing religiosity upon artists and musicians, kidnappings and poverty and old age.
- 11- The report follows a historical/ chronological order to understand militancy and freedom of

artistic expression within the state structure of Pakistan.

- 12- Precedence is given to thematic issues and high intensity issues are stated earlier where necessary.
- 13- The report gains insight from the work of Freemuse and other information shared by UN report on the right to artistic expression and creation.
- 14- CPCS Peshawar does not claim a comprehensive account of all the details of artistic abuses and music censorship. The report largely focuses on reported incidents. Data from Freemuse, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), The Centre for Innovative Research, Collaboration, and Learning (CIRCL) and other sources have been tallied and updated.

The Center for Peace and Cultural Studies (CPCS) Peshawar intends to further expand the scope of research on the impacts of the ongoing conflict on Pashtuns ways of life and publish series of research papers on the subject.

Peace,



Chairman
Center for Peace and Cultural Studies,
Peshawar- Pakistan.
Date: February 24, 2014.

2- Background to music censorship in Pakistan's tribal region and KP province

The Pashtuns on both side of the Pak-Afghan border have rich cultural heritage. The areas are home to Zoroastrian traditions and Gandhara civilisation. Before converting to Islam, the Pashtuns had assimilated diverse Influences from Central Asia and South Asia which not only shaped their life-style but also enriched Pashtu language (East-Iranian family of languages). Even after converting to Islam the Pashtuns retained their centuries old tribal life-style and traditions which are coded into Pashtunwali or the Pashtuns way of life, a combination of different concepts like honour, chivalry, hospitality, asylum for those who seek and social institutions like *jirga* (elders council) and *hujra* (community guesthouse) etc.

Pashtuns are unique for many reasons. One of the distinctive attributes of Pashtuns is that they form the largest tribal population in present time in the world. Though the tribal structure of Pashtuns is fast losing its distinctive aroma and some of the tribal traditions have been distorted to the extent that they have lost their originality, still the Pashtun tribal structure is one of the main pillars which could explain a Pashtun identity. Normally Pashtuns proudly associate themselves with tribes, sub-tribes and clans. They take pride in their tribal and national heroes. They love the land where they live and a big portion of Pashto literature is about patriotism and

Family Dance



nationalism.

The archetypal Pashtuns way of life was simple and egalitarian where all the members of a family were supposed to work. Historically, Pashtuns had been living a nomadic life in Afghanistan and they had settled in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after several migrations. Where there was agriculture, men and women would jointly work in the fields. The family structure enjoyed a considerable matriarchy and older women had greater say in family matters. In the past women used to form *jirga*, the traditional institution for the settlement of disputes but the practice is now extinct. In times of tribal disputes and wars women would assist men in the battle fields.



Wedding Dance

The traditional Pashtun-life style has largely remained simple, tribal, patriarchal and religious. However, Pashtuns also strictly adhere to Pashtunwali and promote secular values, practice refined aesthetics and help in the development of a culture that simultaneously shares many traits with the Iranians, Indians, Central Asians and Arabs. Over the years Pashtuns have developed their distinctive life-style, customs and traditions, arts and architecture, poetry,

music, dances, festivals and celebrations.

With the partition of India in 1947 the Pashtuns were divided into Afghanistan and Pakistan but the movement of Pashtuns on the Pak-Afghan border was never restricted completely and cultural patterns on both sides have been jointly shared. That is why quite few visible changes can be witnessed among the Pashtuns on both sides. Pashtuns in Pakistan are further divided into three adjacent but administratively distinct areas on the Pak-Afghan border called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989) millions of Afghan refugees migrated to Pakistan and the Cold War politics caused a shift in Pashtuns way of life. The US with the support of Saudi Arabia and the dictatorial regime of Zia ul Haq in Pakistan set up thousands of religious seminaries and training camps for *Mujahidin* or holy warriors to fight the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Cultural life in the relatively urbanised Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was severely restricted. Zia's regime banned festivals, curtailed literary circles, discouraged music and openness of women and used the only available state owned media for his Islamisation project of the state and society. The students' chapter of the right-wing *Jumat-e-Islami* (JI) occupied university campuses and the *Deobandi Tableeghi Jumat* expedited its preaching of Islam in the streets. This was the time when Pashto language, customs and traditions and the overall life-style began to transform from worldly practices in to more obscurantist tendencies. During this time sectarian issues were also fanned and *Wahabism* was introduced into Pashtun society. Criticism on rich Sufi traditions, celebrations and music began. The local *Wahabi* religious sect called the *Panjpir* had been specifically critical of the shrines.



Pictures of artists defaced during MMA Govt, Shabistan cinema Peshawar

The war reduced Afghanistan to rubble and socio-cultural and political institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa weakened. After withdrawal of the Soviet forces, civil war broke out in Afghanistan which continued for six years till Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 1996. Great music teachers, singers, composers, producers and businessmen either abandoned their profession or migrated to other countries. During this time the debilitated music market of Peshawar provided support to artists and musicians but the great damage was already done.

With the rise of Taliban in Kabul all worldly and secular practices were banned in Afghanistan. Afghanistan national anthem was banned, Afghanistan flag was replaced. The centuries old *nauroz* festival was banned. Women were restricted to their homes. Music was banned and severe punishments were imposed on those listening to music or keeping musical gadgets.

After 9/11, US forces ousted Taliban and most of the Taliban took refuge in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. These seven Tribal Agencies are home to different Pashtun tribes who had been practicing their day to day life under Pashtunwali and through the tribal *jirga/jirgas*. Until then FATA enjoyed a special status in Pakistan and state's laws

were not extended to these areas. Political parties could not function there and the areas were administered through the colonial period draconian law called Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR). A Political Agent and his crew administered the tribal affairs with the support of government appointed *maliks* or elders. The areas somehow enjoyed a degree of autonomy and Pashtun life-style was preserved in some areas in its prototypical form. With the rising influence of Taliban in FATA the overall socio-cultural fabric began to tear apart. Taliban killed all tribal elders who resisted them. The traditional tribal *jirga* collapsed when elders were threatened. The Taliban established their writ in their own spheres of influence where they imposed their own version of Islam on the people. They banned music in all those areas, killed, kidnapped and harassed musicians. But rather than protecting the local population, the Pakistani government and its military signed peace deals with some factions of Taliban which further strengthened them not only in FATA but also in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Pictures of artists defaced during MMA Govt, Shabistan cinema Peshawar



Advertisement posters removing Campaign in MMA Government

While the US was engaged in fighting a full scale Taliban insurgency on the Pak-Afghan border, an alliance of religious parties called Muttahida Majles-e-Amal (MMA) exploited the situation and won 2002 elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa within the military led controlled democratic dispensation. The MMA government introduced *hasba bill* (a form of *sharia*) into the parliament. Women faces from public advertisements on billboards and posters were erased. The government locked *Nishtar Hall* in Peshawar which was the only place for cultural activities. Musicians, singers and performers were threatened

and displaced. A movement was launched to ban music which resulted in the closure of the famous Dabgari Bazar where offices of music teachers and performers (including a segment of eunuch community) were located. The government also forced public transport owners not to play music. During this time music market and performers shifted to Dubai and the local market was almost devastated.

The MMA government (2002-2007) had a soft corner for the Taliban and the military led federal government largely ignored Taliban activities. During this time Taliban regrouped and formed a network of different Taliban factions called Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007. It was during this time that the Taliban assassinated Benazir Buttó, the woman leader of the largest political party (Pakistani Peoples Party) of Pakistan. TTP also spread its tentacles in different parts of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and even beyond. The TTP Swat chapter inspired by the Tahreek-e-Nifaze Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) Swat grew in influence and in 2009 it took over the Swat valley where girls education was banned, TVs and CD players were burnt, musicians and singers were threatened and the famous female singers of Banr Street were killed and dislocated.



Meeting Of Shria council during MMA Govt.



Neshtar Hall Peshawar

Taliban closed the CD markets and put a ban on music and other cultural practices.

The year 2007 was decisive in several respects. There was a significant increase in the terrorist activities of TTP. The Civil Society and secular political parties which were marginalised and could not launch their political campaign previously found the opportunity to dethrone the military dictator General Pervez Musharaf. They supported the Lawyer Movement for the restoration of Chief Justice (CJ) of Pakistan who was sacked by Musharaf. The movement gained momentum and finally elections were held and the secular Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won the 2008 general elections. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the secular Awami National Party (ANP) won elections and formed the government. The ANP carried military operation in Swat and cleared many areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from the Taliban. However, the federal government could not launch a military operation in FATA. During this time historic legislations were passed such as 18th constitutional amendment which ensured greater rights to the provinces and ethnic groups. The ANP set up cultural department in Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, opened Neshtar Hall for cultural activities and offered support to

artists and singers. Cultural activities and musical events started in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but the status quo in FATA remained unchanged

The ANP was somehow successful to revive cultural life to the province. However, the party remained on the hit list of Taliban and in the five years term in office more than 800 ANP leaders and workers were killed and many more escaped death threats. The party's political activities were restricted by the Taliban and during elections 2013 it lost elections to Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the religious groups. The present government of Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jumat-e-Islami (JI) supports negotiations with the Taliban and has a strong voice against the use of drones against the militants in FATA. One of the coalition partners, the JI was previously part of the Zia's Islamisation process in the 1980's and then in the MMA government in 2002-2007. With the new government in office cultural activities in the province are slowed down and the government avoids any such move which could displease the Taliban.

3- *What is music censorship?*

Music censorship is broadly categorised as restrictions on artistic musical expressions by state, religion, society, family or any other agency. Artistic expression are protected under international human rights conventions. Restrictions on artistic activities and productions are in most cases a violation of the conventions. Music is censored because it carries an aesthetic and symbolic meaning which is reflective of an identity and which contributes to social debates or serves as counter-narrative to existing power centres and is necessary for the development of vibrant cultures and democratic societies. Like all types of censorship, music censorship is also based on fear. Music censorship and attacks on music activities include the banning of music, threats, attacks, torture, abductions, killings, exile of musicians and fear of composing , teaching , performing and dissemination of music. Music censorship affects cultural life and cultural heritage severely.



Burning of Pashto Video Cassettes during MMA Govt.



4- Different types of music censorship in FATA and KP



Singer: Nazia Iqbal

Since 9/11 terrorism has been posing a major threat to freedom of musical expression. These include a ban on composing and listening to music in some areas; killing and harassment of musicians and forcing them to abandon their profession; kidnappings; forceful migration of musicians to safer places; forcing religiosity upon musicians; attacks on CD shops, theatres (cinema), production houses and music schools and studios; attacks on Sufi Shrines and disrupting

performances. Terrorist groups and the affiliated commanders and clerics consider music against Islam and have issued decrees in their sphere of influence in favour of banning music and its business.

The people of KP and FATA love music but are ambivalent towards musicians. Music creators and professionals are derogatorily termed as *daman* or people without honour. Opportunities for female musicians and singers are very rare and those very few who take the risk of challenging female stereotypes are stigmatised and socially isolated to practise their profession in music streets and isolated markets. These socio-cultural barriers have also caused killing and persecution of musicians.



Singer: Khyial Mohammad



Singer: Gulzar Alam

Successive military and religious governments in Pakistan have discouraged music by putting restrictions on media and the education system. Music is not included in the curricula and any effort for its introduction into the education system is resisted by hardcore elements within the state and society. These governments have also been tarnishing folk music and cultural diversity in their efforts to "Islamise" the state and society. The musicians and music professionals of KP and FATA are largely marginalised as ethnic minorities within the homogenisation process of the state.

Traditional cultural institutions such as *hujras* (community guest houses), literary circles, *melas* (festivals and carnivals), traditional dances and marriages and other types of celebrations which previously served as nurseries for music have been weakened due to fear of terrorism, social engineering of the society on religious lines (through education system, media and religious preaching) and acculturation. This is an alarming situation for the freedom of artistic expression in general and freedom of musical expression in particular.

5- Killings and attempted murders



Courtesy by:
Wordpress (Ghazala Javed) <http://ghazalajaved.wordpress.com/>

The plight of musicians in the terrorism affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA can be judged from this simple fact that during (2008-2013), 18 people were reportedly killed because of their direct involvement in music. These killings do not include all those killed in attacks on CD shops, Sufi Shrines or incidents indirectly related to music. These killings primarily relate to two reasons: Religious militancy and socio-cultural/ family pressures. These killings are not only brutal but also reflective of the widespread barbaric cultural changes and practices that wars and terrorism have imposed upon the people. Most of these killed musicians and people related to music are women (12 reported cases) which show how a combination of changing religious and cultural trends are shrinking the space for women in general and female singing in particular. An anti-women *wahabi* ideology of Taliban and a predominantly patriarchal society obsessed with the female stereotype of honour are blocking women's access to education and their participation in the socio-cultural life. In traditional Pashtun society females are allowed to sing and dance

during celebrations and festivals but professional female singing is very rare and most of the professional female singers either belong to the music families or they are groomed in isolated areas or music streets.

The stage for killing of female singers was set by the Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Swat chapter. In January 2009, TTP militants stormed into the home of Shabana in Mingora city to punish her for dancing in a wedding in the adjacent Mardan city. Shabana and her family members were tortured and she was then dragged to the Green Square where she was shot dead and her body was hanged as a token of warning for others. Soon afterwards, the melodious young singer Shamim Aiman Udas was allegedly shot dead by her brothers inside her flat on the Ditzak Road Peshawar on 27 April 2009. She was killed because she continued singing despite disapproval of her brothers. On 27 November 2010, Quetta based Pashto Singer Yasmee Gul died in her home in mysterious circumstances. Her mother accused her husband of killing her. On 14 March 2010, a young dancer Afsana, whose family fled

Swat due to fear of Taliban, was shot dead in Peshawar. The popular singer Ghazala Javed was shot dead by her husband on 18 June 2012. Her husband was caught by the police and was sentenced to death. In July 2012, prominent singer Saima Naz was seriously injured when her brother opened fire at her in Kohat Road Peshawar. In a similar incident in November 2013, gunmen opened fire on Pashto Singer Spogmai in Peshawar and her mother died in the firing. On 22 June 2013, a Pashtu performer Shazia suffered critical burns when she was allegedly attacked by a TV producer in Nowshehra district. It was reported that the producer was forcing her for marriage. Such forceful marriages are common factor that most performers face and in most cases female artists are threatened or attacked.

Besides murders and attempted murders of female professional singers and dancers, ordinary women are also targeted and killed for listening and dancing to music. In May 2012, a mobile video was released from the non-Pashtun Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in which two boys were dancing while five girls were accompanying them by clapping their hands. It was reported that the local *jirga* (council) had ordered the killing of these girls at the behest of the local cleric. This incident was believed to have taken eight lives. However, despite much uproar by the Civil Society the issue was brushed under the carpet.

The first male musician who was reportedly killed during the last few years is Anwar Gul, harmonium player and close companion of Pashto singer Sardar Yousafzai. On 15 December 2008, unidentified militants targeted their car in Mahkand in which Anwar Gul was murdered while Sardar Yousafzai escaped death along with his other musicians. Prior to this, famous Pashtu singer Guzar Alam escaped a gun attack on 16 October 2008, near Baacha Khan Markaz Peshawar. He said that he had been receiving threats for continuing with singing. Four months after Shabana's death, a local singer, Ghani Dad was gunned down in Swat. In January 2010, Pashto singer Kamal Mahsud died under mysterious circumstances due to burn injuries in Islamabad Mahsud had left South Waziristan due to the fear of militancy after Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) of the Pakistan Army distributed his music album free of cost among the tribal people. The music album was part of the war propaganda against the militants. Adnan Abdul Qadir, a final year student of BS Civil Engineering at University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar from Bannu was severely beaten by the Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) students' wing of Jumat-e-Islami (JI) on 19 March 2010, for listening to loud music. He died later on.

6- Harassment and forced displacement or exile

The pro-Taliban government of the Muttahida Majles-e-Amal (2002-2007) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been a nightmare for musicians and performers. The government's strict policy towards artists and ban on music had left many in a terrible state. The government had closed *Nishtar Hall*, the only place for stage performances and concerts. The famous *Dabgari Bazaar* was closed down and musicians were forced to abandon their professions. Music events and live performances were restricted and listening to music was discouraged. During this time most of the musicians and performers suffered: majority abandoned their profession, some opted self-censorship and many were displaced and forcefully exiled.

An estimated 20 such cases of harassment have been reported since 2001. Many cases of artistic abuses had not been reported as government censorship and militancy were a collective problem for all. Leading artists and musicians were targeted and were forced to take refuge in safer places. Most of them were harassed through letters, telephone calls and text messages to quit singing and switch over to other professions.

The artists had not yet recovered from the ruthless policies of the MMA government when Taliban took over Swat in 2009 and put a ban on musicians and performers. Almost 2.5 million people migrated from Swat when the government finally decided a military operation against the militants. It took many years for artists and musicians to rejoin their profession and most of them are still threatened as terrorists' network is still intact and they (terrorists) are successfully carrying out terrorist activities in different parts.

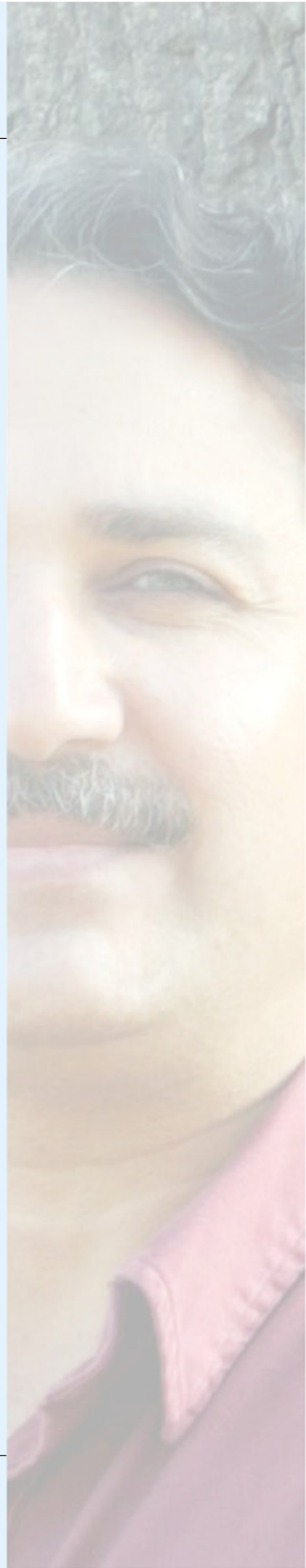
In April 2003, leading Pashtu singer and winner of Pride of Performance Award Gulzar Alam accused the provincial government of MMA and the police of harassing him and his family members. According to him 27 police officials entered his house and charged him and his family members of kidnapping two kids. Prior to this incident, in the month of February, Gulzar Alam was arrested by the police owing to MMA's government ban on music. The following year he migrated to Quetta. In August 2008, Pashtu singer Haroon Bacha escaped to United States to avoid threats



“ Since 2006 I was feeling that security situation is getting worse for singers and musicians. I can still recall that once a friend has organized a music gathering in a village in the outskirts of Peshawar. As we started the music, armed men entered the Hujra and asked us not to play the music as it is against Shariah. They said that they will not tolerate this un-Islamic act. It was not possible for me to continue with singing in such a threatening environment.”

“On several occasions I received threatening messages and calls on my cell phone. First I tried to argue with them and convince them that I am not involved in any un-Islamic activity. Melody is the blessing of God and this is not a sin if I am singer. I was told that I must quit singing and instead sing militants songs. I refused. Later on the threats became more serious. I was told that I would be responsible for all the consequences if I continued with singing. My friends and family forced me to leave the country. I had no option and I took asylum in the United States. **Haroon Bacha**”

to his life. He had received letters, calls and text messages threatening him and his family members and forcing him to quit singing. He was harassed because of his bold resistance to Taliban. Nagina, 20 year old famous dancer from Banr Swat was threatened by militants in 2009 to stop singing and dancing and was forced to quit her job. Later on she migrated to Peshawar with her family. Similarly, a young singer from Swat named Salman Gulzar was forced to spend three years in Karachi during the conflict in Swat. Shamim Ara, a female singer, was reported to have received several letters from the Taliban in 2011 after which she quit the profession. Award-winning singer Khyal Muhammad had also expressed similar apprehensions. On 27 October 2012, five people who were wearing masks and having guns entered the house of Pashtu singer, composer and poet Amjad Shehzad in Malakand and threatened him and his family members of dire consequences if he did not quit music profession. He took refuge in Peshawar. Amjad's compositions had presented a counter-narrative to Taliban. In October 2013, a group of eunuch was tortured by the police on the behest of a local cleric in Peshawar. The eunuch community in Peshawar and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa offers singing and dancing services during marriage ceremonies or other celebrations. In addition to this Wisal Khaya, Wagma, Janas Khan, Shah Wali, Sardar Ali Takar and Humayun Sakhi were also reported to have been harassed and some of them displaced.



7- Forcing religiosity upon musicians and performers

One of the strategies commonly adopted by the militants to force singers and artists to quit their profession was to threaten them and their family members for publically denouncing their profession and spending their lives in the preaching of Islam. This strategy was adopted for comedians and more popular singers to ridicule them and their profession in public and to make them laughing stock. Many of such cases were not reported and in most cases singers and performers voluntarily grew beards and kept up appearances. Such incidents were widespread and majority of them have not been reported. Five such most popular cases are documented here for a point of reference.

On 16 January 2009, Pashtun artist Alamzeb Mujahid announced his retirement from showbiz and pledged to spend the remaining of his life in pleasing God and earning *halal* (rightful) food for his children. He was kidnapped by the militants and released on the condition that he would spend 40 days in preaching and saying goodbye to his career. Soon after he fled to Malaysia to seek asylum. In march 2009 in a press conference, singer Gulrez Tabasum announced that he didn't rule out the possibility of starting *naat* and said that he had quit the profession because his son was learning Quran by heart. Tabasum was reluctant to refer to any threats from the militants. In January 2012, famous Pashto singer Nazia Iqbal announced quitting her singing profession and setting up an Islamic centre for the children. Later on she rejoined her profession and said that she had been given threats that her two kids would be kidnapped and that she had to quit singing. Vocalist Shahenshah Baacha was forced to denounce his profession and to return to the field of *naat*. Famous Pashtu comedian and singer Mirawas was forced to keep beard and to spend his life in preaching as punishment for his caricature of militant commander Mangal Bagh.



Singer: Nazia Iqbal

“...singing no more gives me pleasure because of the gloomy atmosphere in NWFP in particular and rest of the country in general

Gulrez Tabassum”



8- Kidnapping

Six reported cases of kidnapping of musicians and artists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA have been documented so far. Such kidnapping cases are very rare as other means of forcing musicians and artists are relatively easier. Majority of the musicians were kidnapped by Taliban from FATA and released afterwards with the instructions of not practicing their arts.

Rehman Shah Betani was kidnapped twice (and later released) in 2006 by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for singing. His uncle was a Talib who forced Betani to quit singing. He was kidnapped and tortured and finally forced to leave his hometown. He even could not attend his mother's funeral. Famous stage and TV performer Arshad Hussain was kidnapped for ransom on 2 October 2008, and was forced to pay Rs. 700,000 (US \$8,750) by the kidnapper believed to be militants. Singer Musharaf Bangash was kidnapped from Mir Ali (North Waziristan) on 26 November 2010. He was kidnapped by the militants for his nationalist songs. Pashto stage and TV actor and performer Alamzeb Mujahid was kidnapped from Peshawar in 2009 (and then released) and was forced to publically denounce his profession. Pashto folk singer Akbar Hussain also reports the kidnapping and release of his elder son in 2010. Similarly Wazir Khan Afridi reports that he was kidnapped thrice and then released on the condition to give up music profession.

I have been abducted three times from Peshawar and each time I am freed on the condition that I will not sing anymore,

Wazir Khan Afridi



Courtesy: DAP NEWS (Musharaf Bangash)
<http://thedapnews.blogspot.cz/2011/05/musharaf-bangash-pashto-male-singer.html>

9- Poverty and old age

During the last 10 years musicians and artists faced extremely odd situations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. Religious militancy, censorship from the State authorities and the overall apathy of the society have reduced opportunity of employment for them. As a result top class artists and music professionals are faced with abject poverty in their middle and old age. Many of the artists died in miserable conditions and many more are fighting very hard to make their ends meet. Such cases may be estimated in hundreds.

Folk and classical singer from Banu, Rasool Badshah died of fatal diseases on 2 January 2011. Before his death he was waiting for government's support for his treatment. On 25 July 2012, acclaimed Pashto singer Badshah Zareen Jan died in Peshawar after protracted illness. She spent almost 50 years in the service of Pashtu music

but had little resources in her old age. Zarshad Ali died in poverty due to throat cancer on 11 February 2013, in Charsadda. Renowned Pashto singer Mashooq Sultan lives in penury in a two-room rented house in Chughalpura Peshawar. She wishes a permanent end to militancy so that artists get rid of their fears and work for the peace of their land. Folk and Ghazal singer and music teacher Ahmad Gul is struggling in his old age to survive. He expects support from the government. Famous Pashto folk singer Zarsanga lives a nomadic life in a tent in abject poverty. She waits for help from those affluent people who love her music. Popular singer Qamro Jan lives in a small rented house in Mardan and is unable to pay her rent. The socially marginalised and isolated members of the eunuch community in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa suffer from poverty, diseases and miserable death in old age.



Poor living standard of musician

The minister gave me Rs. 3,000 and assurances for resolving my miseries but the people think as if I got some hefty amount of the government, which is not the case. Artistes of other provinces received admiration as well as monetary benefits from the government while those from NWFP (Now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) were always neglected,

Badshah Zarin Jan



Poor living standard of musician

10- The closure of music schools: Case studies of Dabgari Bazar and Banr

The closure of Dabgari Bazar in Peshawar and Banr Street in Swat are two important cases which could help us understand the type of censorship musicians would face in an Islamic Sharia as claimed by the local clerics and militants. Such studies are also important to give us a glimpse of the traditional and informal music schools in general and female music teaching and learning in particular. Moreover, the studies would help us understand the type of linkages these music schools had with traditional music families in other parts and more specifically how these schools promoted new talent. The current report is only concerned with the impact of the closure of these schools on the life and work of musicians.

Located in the hub of Peshawar city, the 200-year-old Dabgari Music Bazar was home to more than 600 musicians housed in 60 offices and houses. These offices were located in the balconies where one could see musical instruments from below or listen to music. There were also transsexuals or eunuchs who used to dance with orchestra in weddings. Dabgari was a big

informal musical school where instrumentalists and singer would learn from experienced teachers. The place provided singers and orchestra to functions such as weddings. Mature musicians from the school performed on stage, radio and TV.

When the alliance of six religious parties Mutahida Majlase-e-Amal (MMA) came to power in 2002 its Chief Minister issued directives for banning music on public transport. Display of musical instruments was banned. Female images were scrapped from advertisements and cinema posters. The only concert hall (*Nishtar Hall*) in the city was bcked down. Police started harassing the musicians of Dabgari Bazar. Shopkeepers Union of the Bazar first forced the transsexuals to leave and soon afterwards musicians were forcefully shifted and displaced. Some of these musicians shifted their office to Tehkal Market and many of them migrated to Afghanistan. Majority of them were made unemployed. Senior Minister Siraj ul Haq from Jumat-e-Islami (JI) was specifically against music.



Young musician practicing in Dabgari Peshawar



Female singer practicing

“Our priorities are different. Our children need schools. Our youth need employment. Music is not our priority. We don’t have time for music. We ask students to dedicate their time to studies instead of listening to music. We know the demands of our society. Demands in western world are different.”
 “In our previous government I invited cinema owners to my house for tea. I have requested them not to display film posters and if possible start other businesses.”

Siraj-ul-Haq

Banr, a music street in Mingora flourished during the reign of Mian Gul Abdul Haq Jehanzeb, the *wali* of Swat. The singers and musicians belonged to the landless class, and depended on musical performances for their livelihood. These singers and dancers were invited by local gentry for performance in wedding ceremonies and were given protection under Pashtun code of honour. Indeed, Swat was the only place in the Pashtun belt where girls from the families of professional singers and musicians could choose singing and dancing as a career. Today, the Swat Valley can still feel justly proud of the remarkable contributions of a host of Pashto folk singers, who perfected their craft, then harmonised it with modern musical trends.

Giant music festivals were celebrated until 1969, when Swat princely State was merged into Pakistan. The girls danced within a circle in front of thousands of people. No one was allowed to touch or throw money on a girl. It was against the self-respect of the community, and everyone cared about that. Compared to the women of the traditional Pashtun families, who lived and died

within the four walls of their homes, the dancing girls historically were more exposed to the outside world, and often considered smarter and more fashionable than traditional women.

Till 2008 there were about 200 homes of musicians, singers and dancers, however after the rise of Taliban militancy and attacks on musicians and dancers some of the families moved to other parts of the province and some quit music business altogether.



Young musician practicing in Dabgari Peshawar

11- Closure of musical instruments shops

After the MMA government's directives of forcing people not to display musical instruments in public, the business of musical instruments also suffered. With the passage of time musical instruments shops closed down and now there are very few people who are involved in this business. The locally prepared instruments such as *rabab* and *sitar* had many shops in different parts of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. But not only these shops or workshops have been closed down but the skill is also not transmitted to the new generation.

There was a famous guitar shop in Peshawar Cantonment which was closed down. *Ten Beats* and *A Beats* which used to sell imported instruments had closed their business. *Afghan Musique* was shut down and the business of musical instrument shops is now very rare.



Two Men Selling Musical Instruments in Chowk Yadgar Peshawar



Civilized world honor its traditions and cultural values because these play in the promotion of tourism and strengthening of economy. With us our centuries old traditions are on the verge of extinction. When I was in Peshawar book shops were full of students and book lovers. There was a shop close to Saeed Book Bank where you could repair musical instruments or buy new. But now all these shops and outlets are closed. These were the symbols of our cultural identity and our love for arts and literature.

Samar Minallah



12- Attacks on Sufi shrines



Ashaab Baba

Shrine culture is one of the dominant facets of traditional and colourful life of Pashtuns. The shrines serve both “devotional and recreational” purposes. People come to these shrines to offer prayers and perform other devotional services. People also come to these shrines to enjoy music, celebrations and festivals. *Qualis* or devotional music and Sufi dances on these shrines have been inspiring people for centuries. Every Pashtun area has one or more than one shrines to satisfy the spiritual and recreational needs of the people. Shrines have remained the hub of *Barelvi* tradition in Islam.

There are hundreds of shrines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. Many of these shrines are local and are visited by the locals only. Some of these shrines are resting places of religious and literary scholars, poets and national heroes. Normally there are weekly celebrations on these shrines with music or some other

kind of devotional services. Anniversaries on these shrines are also celebrated which are marked by music, dances, poetry recitals and festivity. Literary and poetic circles are also associated with the shrines of great poets such as Rehman Baba, Amir Hmaza Khan Shenwari and Ajmal Khatak. The shrines also serve as music academies for composing, singing and playing devotional music on instruments. The poetry and compositions of many of these Sufi poets are adopted by professional musicians and singers.

In the recent few years Taliban militants have been targeting these shrines. Around 50 such shrines are estimated to have been attacked. Most of the shrines attacked are in Peshawar and the surrounding FATA areas and these attacks are attributed to the Taliban operatives in Khyber Agency and in the suburbs of Peshawar. The Taliban profess *Wahabi* ideology and they consider Shrine culture and music un-Islamic.

Many big and small shrines have been targeted with a large number of human losses. As a result celebrations, music events, dances and festivals on these shrines have stopped and people are afraid to visit the shrines. Analysts consider these attacks as a deliberate attempt to change the identity of the indigenous people and to replace the same with an imported *Wahabi* Arab ideology or puritanical Islam.

In July 2005, militants threw hand grenades into the shrine of the Pashto poet Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari in Landikotal Khyber Agency. On 6 March 2007, Saint Bahadur Baba shrine in Nowshehra was damaged by rocket attacks. Bahadar Baba was the father of famous saint Sheikh Rehmkar Kaka. In July 2007, the militants captured the shrine of the legendary Pashtun freedom fighter Haji Sahib Turangzai in Lakarho Mohmand Agency FATA. The shrine of Abdul Shakoor Malang Baba in Chamkani on GT Road Peshawar was blown up by the militants on 18 December 2007. On 1 March 2008 militants tried to detonate the shrine of Ashab Baba in the outskirts of Peshawar. The shrine of Hazrat Abu Saeed Baba in Shaikhan village Peshawar close to Bara Tehsil of Khyber Agency was targeted on 3 March 2008. On 5 March 2009, the mausoleum of Rehman Baba in Peshawar was attacked. Rehman Baba is one of the greatest Pashtun Sufi poets. On 1 May 2009, the shrine of Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari in Landikotal Khyber Agency was targeted again with rockets. On 6 May 2009, the Shrine of Hazrat Khayal Muhammad was attacked in Orakzai Agency. On 8 May 2009, the shrine of Sheikh Umar Baba was demolished in Peshawar. On 16 March 2010, the shrine of Malang Baba in Sheikh Muhammadi Peshawar was attacked. On 1 April 2010, a saint mausoleum was targeted in Khyber Agency. The shrine of Mian Umer Baba in the Chamkani area of Peshawar was destroyed by Taliban on 22 June 2010. On 15 July 2010, the shrine of late Alhaj Sahibzada Muhammad Sedique Banori known as Bacha Sahib was destroyed in Landikotal Khyber Agency. On 20 September 2010, the shrine of Akhun Salak Baba in the outskirt of Peshawar was destroyed. On 14 October 2010, Syed Muhammad Shah's shrine was targeted in the same agency. On 14 December 2010, the shrine of Ghazi Baba Syed Arab Shah was targeted. On 5 January 2010, five different shrines were demolished in Orakzai Agency.

In the same agency the shrine of Bawa Abdul Haq was set on fire on 22 April 2010. On 3 January 2011, Musa Neeka Shrine in Angoor Ada South Waziristan was damaged. The Shrine of Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari in Landikotal Khyber Agency was attacked for the third time on 1 June 2011. On 19 October 2011, the shrine of Haji Gul was fired with short-ranged missile. On 21 October 2011, the shrine of Karim Shah Baba was blown up near the mausoleum of Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed in Swabi. On 1 November 2011, the shrine of Saidullah Dad Shah was targeted in Dera Ismael Khan. On 11 December 2011, the shrine of Sheikh Nissa Baba was completely destroyed in Khyber Agency. The same day the shrine of Sheikh Bahadar was set on fire in the same agency. On 9 May 2012, the under construction mausoleum of progressive Pashto poet Ajmal Khatak was blasted in Akorha Khatak Nowshehra. On 24 November 2012, the shrine of 11th century Pashtu saint Ali Mardan Shah, also known as Madai Baba was blown up in Jalala Takhtbai District Mardan. On 21 June 2012, a bomb was blasted near PanjPir shrine Hazrat Khwani Peshawar. On 28 October 2012, a bomb exploded in the shrine of Ziarat Kaka Sahib located in district Nowshera. A medium intensity bomb exploded in the Sufi shrine of Phandu Baba at Phandu Chowk Peshawar on 3 November 2012. On 31 December 2013, an explosion occurred outside shrine of a saint Baba Saheb in Charsadda. On 10 January 2014, two people were killed in shrine of Ghazi Shah Baba in Mardan.

“ We are all one body who ever torture another, wounds himself.
Rahman Baba ”

13- Attacks on CD and video shops, music centres, cinemas, musical events, wedding ceremonies and music listeners



Burning of Cd's collected by police in Peshawar during MMA Govt.

The attacks on CD and video shops, music centres, cinemas, musical events, wedding ceremonies and music listeners which took place after Afghan war (1979-1989) show that hardly any area is spared which directly relates to musical expression. Militancy has largely reduced spaces for social and political expressions due to which artistic expression such as open air performance, ceremonies and festivals have been very difficult for common people. The attacks on musical expression are specifically important for restricting people's access to music and performing arts.

The local performing arts and music market is not all about local singers and performers. The market also satisfies recreational needs and ever increasing artistic thirst of the local people with imported music, arts and movies. Variety of Urdu and English songs, dramas, movies, documentaries and other types of imported

entertainment have been used by the people. Conservative elements within the society had remained critical of such foreign materials and had labelled them as "obscene". However, music and video shops before Afghan war were rarely targeted and in extreme cases social pressure was applied on the businessmen not to sell "obscene" material.

The Afghan war and Talibanisation in Afghanistan and later in FATA brought a cultural change. Till 9/11, conservative quarters within the society had already increased and with MMA's government in 2002, such conservative elements were encouraged to collect and burn VCRs and TVs. With the increasing influence of Taliban in FATA music was completely banned in some areas and music centres and CD shops owners were threatened, harassed and forced to shut down their businesses. Before attacks on CD shops and video centres began, there had been many isolated incidents

where people had burnt musical gadgets voluntarily or under the influence of Taliban and government officials.

Ban on music and attacks on CD shops and music centres abruptly shifted from FATA to southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa mainly Tank, Kohat, Banu and other Frontier Regions. With the rise of Taliban in Swat gadgets worth millions of rupees were burnt and attacks on CD shops and music centre increased. Peshawar as the cultural hub of the region was severely targeted and hundreds of CD shops and music centre destroyed in terrorist activities.

Since 2001, around 150 attacks on CD Shops, Music Centres, Musical Events and Wedding Ceremonies have been estimated (116 are documented) These estimations depend on the incidents reported by different media outlets, data reported by individuals and reports compiled by different organisations such as CD and Music Shops Association and Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF). The incidents are diverse and have been occurring in almost all parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. It is estimated that around 1000 to 1500 CD shops and Music centres have been destroyed.

Estimation of those people who stopped CD business cannot be done due to limitation of the data. Data from PPF and Freemuse are

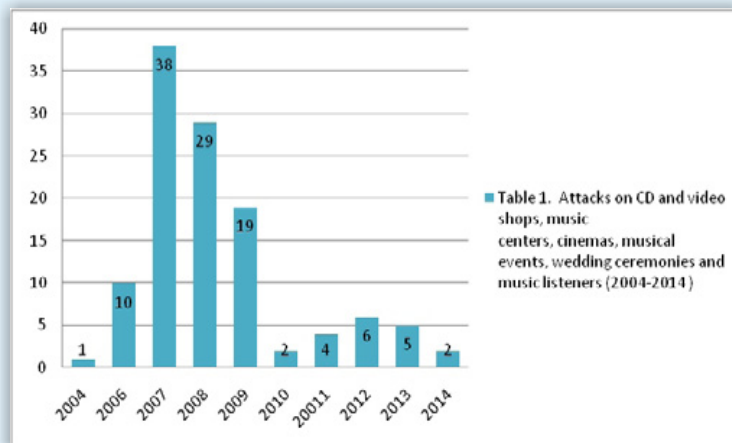


Man Selling Cd's in his shop, Peshawar

tallied and the need for further data is felt which may take a longer time. Some of the PPF data along with CPCS improvement is given for a point of reference.

Complete data about attacks on cinemas are also not collected. Cinemas have been targeted in Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshehra and Swat. Very few cinemas are functional now and quite few people visit there.

Since 2001, there have been several attacks on musical events and wedding ceremonies. A complete data on such incidents is also very limited and requires time and resources to be collected from diverse sources.



Note: The chart represents 116 documented attacks mostly on CD shops and video centres. The data is tallied with the 2011 Report of PPF. Many of the attacks on cinemas, musical events and wedding ceremonies have not been included due to the limitation of the data. Together these attacks are estimated to be around 150.

14- Threats to folk music



Open display of Folk music in front of Novelty Cinema Peshawar

Pashtuns have rich and unique folk singing, folk poetry, folk musical instruments and folk dances. In recent years these folk traditions have been threatened by diverse factors, the foremost among them is terrorism. The rising terrorist incidents which have been affecting all spheres of life have also been posing grave threats to the survival of these musical traditions.

The Afghan War, Pakistan's poor governance structure and historical marginalisation of the minority ethnic groups have already affected and to an extent transformed major socio-cultural institutions such as *jirga* (council), *hujra* (community guesthouse), *mela* (festivals) and traditions of celebrations. With further radicalisation of the society and with increase in religious militancy these socio-cultural institutions are on the verge of collapse. The traditional *jirga* has lost its resilience to serve as arbitrator in disputes and conflict resolution and the same system is being replaced by poor and corrupt judicial and governance system of the state. The *hujra* which previously provided an environment of get-together and recreation has been weakened and is being replaced by guestrooms with not community or social events.

Hujra musical nights have been a common source of entertainment for Pashtuns. Music events have been frequently held where folk artists and music lovers would sing and perform on folk musical instruments such as *rabab* (local guitar like instrument), *mangay* (pitcher), *shpelay* (flute) and others. This would provide folk musicians enough practice time for their art and the young and old would listen to both new and old compositions. Youth would also learn music in the *hujra*. In some areas women would also enjoy the music played in the *hujra*.

Pashtuns have rich dance traditions called *atanr*. Every Pashtun tribe or locality has its unique dance. The dances is performed during weddings or on festivals with the traditional drum called *dhol*. In major urban and semi urban centres these dances have been replaced by Indian and other dances while in southern regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA the dances are threatened by religious militancy.



Folk Dance

The Pashtuns share a good taste for poetry. Almost all Pashtuns enjoy poetry and majority of them could create their own poetry. *Mushaera* or poetry recital events have remained major events in the Pashtun social and cultural life. Every area has its own poets and some of these poets have their poetry collections published. Pashto *tapa* is one of the rarest literary and poetic genres. Most of the *tapas* are orally transmitted and they form the core of Pashto folklore. A significant thing about *tapas* is that they are mostly put together by women. In *folk* life such as working in the field or at home Pashtuns would sing *tapas*. The diverse cultural changes have been affecting the composing and singing of the *tapas*.

Pashtuns have rich festival traditions. The historical *nauroz* or New Year festival which was banned by the Taliban government in Kabul is fast losing its traditional value and besides Afghanistan it is only practised in some parts of FATA. The Pashtun also celebrate two Islamic festivals called the *big eid* and *small eid*. In very recent past, *melas* (festival, carnival or a place with diverse entertainment such as circus and musical events) were held on these celebrations where both professional and amateur singers and musicians performed. With rising militancy and cultural changes these festivals are also threatened and now there are very few musical performances.

15- Threats to ethnic and linguistic diversity



Kalash Valley Festival



The population of FATA is 99.6% ethnic Pashtuns but in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa there are many ethnic and linguistic communities whose cultures and life-styles have been threatened by the recent wave of terror. These include communities from Indus Kohistan, Swat Kohistan, Chitral and Hindko speaking in Peshawar and Hazara regions. In February 2014, a 52-minute video on a *jihadi* website threatened the Kalash tribe to convert to Islam. The video also criticised NGOs and warned them to stop their humanitarian work in district Chitral.

The Kalash tribe is one of the few ancient tribes of the world who still practice their centuries old pagan rituals. These Kalash people have rich music and dance traditions and tourists from all the world attend their festivals and enjoy the traditional music and dances of Kalash men and women.



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Center for Peace and Cultural
Studies, Peshawar - Pakistan

**Center for Peace and Cultural
Studies (CPCS)
Peshawar Pakistan**

**Deans Plaza, Peshawar
cpcspeshawar@gmail.com
www.cpcsp.org**