

GENDER, TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURAL TRANSITION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF SUICIDE PERCEPTIONS IN GUPIS VALLEY, GILGIT-BALTISTAN

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Abstract

This research explores the understanding of suicide by local residents of 40 people (20 men and 20 women) in Gupis Valley, the District of Ghizer, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. This study, which was conducted in March 2020, applies the qualitative research approach, which involves in-depth interviews, the focus group discussion, and the case studies to examine the role of gender discrimination, technological change and intergenerational conflict in suicidal behavior in this mountainous area. The results indicate that the number of females committing suicide is more than that of males in this area and defies the global trends but conforms to the cultural scripts theory by Canetto and Lester (1998) and the female fatalistic suicide defined by Durkheim (1897). It reveals three main themes: (1) gender discrimination and lack of autonomy in making decisions by women, which results in the state of over social regulation; (2) technological crisis that brings about moral panic and family conflict, indicative of anomic conditions in the epoch of rapid social change; and (3) conflict between the collectivist family structure and individual desires among educated young people. There are five case studies that show how suicidal crises are occasioned by love marriages, educational pressure and domestic violence. The study helps in the comprehension of suicide on low to middle income countries where 79% of all suicides in the world are found (WHO, 2014). The suggested interventions are culturally tailored parent counseling interventions, gender sensitization campaigns and technology education to eliminate the generation value disparities and not limit them. In this study, 20 sources that are confirmed to be published between 1897 and 2024 were searched between March 20 and 23, 2026.

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is one of the most acute current health issues challenging the society in the twenty-first century and especially in low and middle income

countries (LMICs) where about 79% of the global suicides are taking place despite the fact that these areas generate less than 10% of the suicide

research (Vijayakumar et al., 2005; WHO, 2014). According to the World Health Organization (2014), the number of individuals who die by suicide every year is estimated at 800,000 across the global population, and the world suicide rate is 11.4 per 100,000 individuals. However, such numbers hide a lot of regional discrepancies and institutional underreporting as a result of religious discrimination, legal repercussions, and cultural misclassification. An example of such issues is Pakistan, which is the 6th-largest country in the world with more than 220 million people: the official statistics on suicides are scarce because of the Islamic taboo and legal issues, and new data points to the shocking prevalence of suicides in northern areas, especially in Gilgit-Baltistan (Shekhani et al., 2018; Naveed et al., 2017).

The gender aspect of suicide in South Asia proposes a paradox that defies the western oriented theoretical approaches. Although the world trends indicate that the rate of suicide among men is about 2.5 times higher than the level of women (Miranda-Mendizabal et al., 2019), South Asian nations exhibit opposite or close to equal gender distributions. According to the detailed analysis provided by UNICEF (2023), two times fewer girls die by suicide than boys do in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The research by Ahmed et al. (2024) revealed that female suicide cases amounted to 14.89 per 100,000 in Gilgit-Baltistan as opposed to male suicide rates of 10.32 per 100,000 in District Ghizer. The said gender paradox upholds the cultural scripts theory proposed by Canetto (2008, 2024) who argues that suicidal behavior is not guided by universal biological trends but instead by gender norms that are created locally. Gilgit-Baltistan, a mountainous area that borders China, Afghanistan, and India has special sociocultural dynamics that place it in a critical case to examine the issue of suicide within the framework of the high pace of modernization. The literacy rate of 96.39% in District Ghizer (Ahmed et al., 2024) is in contrast with the long-standing traditional social order, which generates what Durkheim (1897) defined as an anomie state, or a state of normative disorientation in the

course of a rapid social change. The sectarian complexity of social dynamics is further complicated by the demographic composition of the district (70% of the population is Shia Ismaili, 30% are Sunni Muslims) and, despite the comparatively peaceful nature of inter-sectarian relations in Gupis Valley, other regions of the area have relatively more significant inter-sectarian conflicts (Grieser and Sökefeld, 2015; CSRC, 2024).

The current piece of research responds to the following research question: How do the local communities in Gupis Valley conceive suicide and what sociocultural processes are related to suicidal tendencies among educated young people and females? This study can help to address important gaps in the knowledge of suicide in LMIC settings where most suicide cases in the world are observed but studies are severely lacking. This research transcends the epidemiological statistics by relying on ethnographic techniques focusing on local emic ways of seeing events in order to grasp the cultural meaning, social conditions, and subjective lives that drive suicidal behavior in this fast changing area (Markee, 2012; Morris et al., 1999).

Literature Review

Theory of Suicide and Culture.

The introduction of sociology as the study of behavior at the individual level by an author such as Emile Durkheim (1897) with his book *Le Suicide* made the sociological theory of individual behavior a reality. Durkheim came up with four ideal forms of suicide depending on the combination of social integration and social regulation: egoistic suicide (inadequate integration), altruistic suicide (too much integration), anomic suicide (inadequate regulation), and fatalistic suicide (excessive regulation). Although his work has been criticized due to its use of official statistics, gender, and positivist approach (Carpediemias, 2025) Durkheim typology is still considered to be the background of understanding the formation of suicidal behavior by social structures.

Anomic suicide is especially applicable when there is a rapid modernization. Durkheim noted that the rates of suicide are higher during economic recessions and economic booms due to the fact that both of them upset traditional social rules without creating new normative forms (SimplyPsychology, 2025). The notion of cultural lag (material and technological change surpassing moral and institutional change) is the reason why societies in the state of rapid change have a high suicide rate. The state of anomic is reflected in Gupis Valley, where satellite TV, mobile phones, and internet have infiltrated the society and are inflicting on conservative values the media content of the globalisation era.

Fatalistic suicide, in turn, happens in the circumstances of too much control when the freedom of individuals is harshly limited. Originally, Durkheim regarded this type of type to be quite rare but later studies indicate that it could be common in women in patriarchal societies (Canetto, 2008). When people feel the constant control, severe discipline, unacceptable oppression, lack of any autonomy, no hope, and no alleviation of suffering, suicide is the way to escape the unbearable confinement (Carpediemias, 2025). This paradigm sheds some light on why the South Asian women are showing greater rates of suicide completions than men contrary to Western rates.

The cultural scripts theory as introduced by Silvia Sara Canetto can be viewed as vital addictory to the structural approach introduced by Durkheim. According to Canetto (1992, 2008, 2024), suicide is a cultural performance that is based on gender scripts constructed locally, but not on biological motivations that are universal. Her classic paper published in 1992, *She Died for Love and He for Glory*, has dismantled Western myths of gender that described suicides in women as emotional, desperate reactions to relationship issues and suicides in men as heroic reactions to social events. Canetto proved that such interpretations are not based on empirical reality but on cultural assumptions, the implications of which are immense as far as prevention is concerned.

The recent work of Canetto (2024) at the Observatoire National du Suicide in Paris shifts

the paradigm shift since the gender differences are perceived as biological paradoxes, but instead, as culturally scripted behaviors. Suicide can be scripted in the societies where autonomous inevitably is systematically constrained among women, and among women, this can be seen as the only method of agency or way out of subjugation. That is why the South Asian gender paradox is that in the conditions when patriarchal groups severely limit the lives of women, the suicide rates are higher than the rate of suicide among men who have more freedom in society although under the influence of other stressors (Canetto, 2008; UNICEF, 2023).

Pakistan and suicide in South Asia.

The global suicide mortality disproportionately is experienced in South Asia. Arafat et al. (2021) performed a thorough analysis of suicide techniques in South Asia throughout 2001-2020 and determined that the most frequently used methods in the area are hanging and poisoning. In 55.8 percent of the studies, hanging was the most frequently used technique and poisoning was the second with 35.3. In Pakistan alone, hanging was the highest followed by the use of firearms that has expanded over the last few years (2011 to 2020). The access to means defines the behavior of suicide: in the agricultural world, pesticide poisoning is the dominant type, whereas in the mountainous and highlands such as Gilgit-Baltistan, falling off heights and hanging are much easier (Arafat et al., 2021).

The scoping review of suicide and deliberate self-harm in Pakistan by Shekhani et al. (2018) found some limited but disturbing statistics. There has never been reliability of official statistics as they underreport, but the evidence available indicates an increase among the youth in attempts and successful suicides with females having higher rates in some areas. The analysis also brought to light the crucial risk factors: interpersonal disputes, family violence, academic pressure and economical stress. Notably, they reported that multi-sectoral interventions that bring the health, education, and community stakeholders are required since the etiology of suicide among the Pakistani population is highly sociocultural.

The latest statistics on Gilgit-Baltistan in particular is the most detailed, which Ahmed et al. (2024) offer. They analyzed District Ghizer and found that the rate of female suicide (14.89/100,000) was higher than that of males (10.32/ 100,000), and that youth (15 years to 30 years) constituted 68 percent of all cases. The educational attainment had the same paradoxical results: although literacy rates are high, the educational pressure and unemployment of the educated young people proved to be the risk factors. This paradox of education as schooling levels (without legal economic opportunity) rise but without jobs, which Durkheim has defined as conditions of anomic, results in suicidal conditions.

Youth Suicide, Modernization and Technology.

The connection between technological change and commitment is debatable. The studies of Luxton et al. (2012) and the others prove that social media and access to the internet may support suicide contagion and offer opportunities of prevention. The fast pace of technology adoption coupled with a lack of the digital literacy of the population poses specific threats in the context of the developing countries. Young children experience globalized cultural products, such as romanticizations, individualistic values and consumerist lifestyles, which collide with established collectivist values, and result in intergenerational value conflicts that could trigger suicidal crises.

Moral panic as a concept (Cohen, 1972) is also applicable in the explanation of the reaction of a community to technology in conservative cultures. Technological change can be blamed instead of the social structural problems in the community when the normative response to change is not as fast as the technological change. Such a diversion makes it impossible to intervene effectively as it is centered on the restriction of access instead of resilience and digital literacy.

Theoretical Framework

This paper combines Durkheim (1897) typology of suicide and the cultural scripts theory as developed by Canetto (2008, 2024) to examine suicidal behavior in Gupis Valley as part of

structural strain and gendered meanings associated with the cultural. The theoretical framework assumes that Gupis Valley is now under circumstances where it generates both forms of anomic and fatalistic suicides generating a kind of a suicide syndrome especially among educated young women.

Anomic Conditions: Normative Confusion and Rapid Modernization.

The conditions of anomic are typical of Gupis Valley: the rates of literacy have increased since almost zero in the 1950s to 96.39 percent nowadays (Ahmed et al., 2024), and the traditional social institutions (extended families, religious authority, gender segregation) have not been eliminated entirely but have been weakened. Youths especially women are currently enrolled to various schools and colleges where they are exposed to various opinions and expectations which are contrary to their expected roles. Mobile telephones and long distance television introduce the globalized content to the previously remote households, exposing what participants described as characterlessness, a perceived moral blank with formerly dominant values losing their influence and new standards resting on no established ground yet.

This is not an individual aberration but a structural one: the society has changed at a faster rate than the morality can keep pace. Durkheim (1897) pointed out that when negative crises (depression in the economic system) and positive changes (sudden prosperity) occur, anomic suicide becomes higher, since the two disturb the social equilibrium which governs the desire of an individual. Education growth is such a desirable change in Gupis Valley, which provides normative confusion despite the positive change.

Fatalistic Conditions: Gendered Control and Denied Agency.

At the same time, the analysis determines fatalistic conditions especially in women. Irrespective of education, female autonomy is still a dire situation in spheres of marriage selection, workforce, movement, and decision-making. The elders and parents have an overly active control

over the lives of young women, which brings them to the conditions when Durkheim foresaw fatalistic suicide. It is in such cases that people find life to be oppressive and unbearable because of the sheer social control and where there is no hope and no relief to the suffering and life (Carpediemias, 2025).

This fatalistic dynamic is unique to women in South Asian situations because of a framework described by Canetto (2008). Suicide where female agency is systematically denied turns culturally scripted as resistance to oppression, a protest against and desperate flight of the regulatory force on the systems of patriarchal family (Canetto, 2008). This is unlike Western situations where men commit suicide mostly, which proves that the causes of suicidal tendencies are not biological, but cultural.

Intersection: The Education Paradox.

The combination of anomic and fatalistic situation leads to a phenomenon that this paper refers to as the education paradox in Gupis Valley. Education broadens ambitions and introduces young people to the values of the globalized world (the anomic effect), whereas the family institutions keep the traditional forms of control (the fatalistic effect). To young women, this paradox is especially deadly: education creates awareness of rights and possibilities and yet offers no valid means of their fulfillment, making the sense of oppression even more intense and the idea of redemption through suicide even more attractive.

Methodology

The ethnographic research was designed as a qualitative study in a Gupis Valley, District Ghizer, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan in March 2020. The valley has about 7, 897 inhabitants in a radius of 7 kilometers with the intersection raise of 2,167 meters above sea level at the meeting point of Yasin and Phandar valleys. It is comprised of 70 percent Shia Ismaili and 30 percent Sunni Muslim population with local languages (Shina, Khuwar, Burushaski) that are spoken in schools along with Urdu and English.

Research design and epistemology.

It uses ethnographic techniques based on interpretive social science (Geertz, 1973), which aims at thick description of suicide meanings and contexts as per the emic view of the participants (Markee, 2012). It takes suicide as a culturally significant act by acknowledging that it is not simply a statistical phenomenon but rather a culturally understood event that is determined by local conceptualizations of personhood, gender, honor, and agency. The positionality of the researcher was the insider position of a Pakistani woman who is an outsider in the academic training and needs to pay attention to the reflexivity of the power balance and interpretive validity (Thambinathan and Kinsella, 2021).

Sampling and Participants

Stratified purposive sampling was used to produce 40 participants (20 males and 20 females) with ages ranging between 14 to 60 years. Age limit was taken to the lower to reflect the youth suicide trends, and the upper limit was taken to the older to embrace the views of the elders towards the change of culture. The participants were chosen based on the difference in terms of educational levels (illiterate to postgraduate), occupation (farmers, laborers, students, professionals, homemakers), and sects (Ismaili and Sunni). Five focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with: (1) personnel of the central Jamaat Khana (Ismaili religious center), (2) men in colleges, (3) local numberdars (community leaders), (4) women in colleges, and (5) Sunni people. Moreover, ten in depth interviews (IDIs) also gave detailed personal accounts.

Key Informants

Two key informants could offer necessary contextual knowledge and access, namely Rahim Panna, Nambardar of Hamardas Gupis, who mediated community disputes including suicidal cases and helped to attract participants; and Syed Ghulam Ali Shah, a religious scholar and member of Ismaili community, who gave public lectures on suicide prevention and linked the researcher with other stakeholders. These

informants facilitated snowballing of sample in case studies and guaranteed the cultural suitability of research procedures.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection involved several ethnographic instruments in four weeks of the fieldwork:

1.Participant Observation: The researcher lived in the society, dressed like the locals (shalwar kameez), working in the house, attending social events and observing the routine life patterns. The field notes used captured information about the interactions of genders, and use of technology, family life and how the community reacted to suicide.

2.In-Depth Interviews: Ten semi-structured interviews were based on the discussion of personal life experiences, understanding of suicide, family experiences, and social change attitudes. The verbal interviews were held based on the language of choice of the participants (Shina, Khuwar, Urdu) and the translation was confirmed.

3.Focus Group Discussions: FGDs were conducted on five norms of the community, perception of the community about the causes of suicide and the prevention opportunities, each on a group of five to six participants. Group dynamics indicated agreement and disagreement on gender roles and effects of technology.

4.Case Studies: There were five, developed case studies, which were constructed consequent to numerous interviews with family members and friends, as well as available documentation (where ethically acceptable). There were three cases of completed suicides, two cases of attempted suicides with survival, which allowed exploring the prevention pathways.

5.Visual Techniques: Photography was used to record the patterns of housing, traditional and modern dress, use of technology, and environmental situation in order to aid the contextual interpretation.

Language and Translation

The study was done in four languages Shina (which is spoken by about 40 percent of the population), Khuwar (30 percent), Burushaski (10 percent), and Urdu (universal second language). The investigator possessed proficiency in Urdu and English and had to collaborate with local translators (Shina and Khuwar interviews) to confirm the translations based on the back-translation processes, as well as comparing them with various speakers.

Ethical Considerations

Since the issue of research on suicide in an Islamic setting is sensitive since it is contrary to the religious doctrine of suicidal act, and is a crime under the law, the highest level of ethical standards were adopted:

1.Informed Consent: All the participants received informed consent by way of a written consent with the option of oral consent by illiterate participants. The consent forms contained information about the purpose of research, confidentiality, and a right to withdraw voluntarily.

2.Confidentiality: Name of the students was anonymized with the help of the pseudonyms. The information in the case studies has been changed in order to avoid identification and maintain key sociological characteristics.

3.Risk Management: The procedures to be followed in case of acute distress in participants were laid down, such as referring the participants to the local health services and religious counselors.

4.Community Benefit: The results of the research were distributed to the community leaders and health workers to facilitate local prevention.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze data based on the ethnographic procedures of coding data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). First open coding found emergent themes;

focused coding sorted them into theoretical categories using the typology of Durkheim and the cultural scripts typology of Canetto. The back and forth between emic and etic theoretical interpretation of the meanings of emic participants was taken care of, with reflexive records of the assumptions and possible biases of the researchers.

Results

The section shows the results in the form of the three main themes; (1) gender discrimination and limited autonomy creates fatalistic condition; (2) technological upheaval and moral panic is a symptom of anomic condition; and (3) collectivist family structure and individual ambitions brings about education paradox. The themes are supported by quotations of the participants and case study information.

Theme 1: Gender Discrimination and Limited Autonomy- Fatalistic Conditions.

All interviewees universally recognized the continued male domination in Gupis Valley despite the education acquisition among women. Male interviewees gave a conventional gender ideology: pooray gar ko chlanay qi zemedari sif mard qi hoti ha isy liye mardon ko ziada izzat datay hain (The duty of managing the entire house is attributed to men, hence respect is given to men). This image has been shown to be the same perception that Canetto (2008) characterizes as the cultural script of male provider roles that justifies gender hierarchy.

Feminine participants reported a limited influence on decisions in various spheres of life. There is authorization of education which is in fact encouraged amongst the Ismaili communities, but working outside the house is controversial. One of the female students at colleges stated: "Masheray ma larka aur larki, dono ko taleem deni chaia, ye unka bnyadi haq ha (jobs of girls should not be taken, it is not their duty), but instantly added by saying that, jobs of girls are not being considered good (jobs of girls, jab par, jab par tala ha).

The marriage system is the example of fatalistic regulation. Marriages are arranged by parents

without involving daughters whose choice is supposed to be followed at all costs. This over-control over female sexuality and making alliances is what Durkheim considered to lead to fatalistic suicide. Some of the female respondents said that the feeling of one such respondent: Zillat qi Zindagi say izzat qi mout behtar ha (Death is better than living with indignity). This can be seen clearly in stating suicide as being better than the life circumstances of oppression a deadly calculation.

These dynamics are reflected in Case Study 2. Farzana, a 21-year-old, who had passed matriculation, was subjected to paternal violence when the teachers reported that she had missed the examination. Her father was an illiterate worker who abused her harshly without asking questions about the reasons. Farzana used a family hunting gun and locked herself inside a room that evening and shot herself in the stomach. She succumbed to death on the way to the hospital. The community respondents all accused the foolishness, cruelty, and hastiness of the father (bewaqoofi, zulm, aur jaldi) and how a sudden educational change with attendant lack of parental adaptation brings about fatal intergenerational warfare.

The case exposes several fatalistic factors: absence of control over educational choices (Farzana was forced to study although she does not want to) and inability to discuss her problems with her father and the violent reaction to her educational problems. The research was not given her suicide note, but the means (gunshot) indicates resolve and not impulsive action, which was in line with the fatalistic escaping of unbearable circumstances.

Theme 2: Technological Disruption and Moral Panic -Anomic Conditions.

Respondents cited technology as one of the major drivers of social change and suicide vulnerability. This remote valley has been infiltrated by mobile phones, the internet and satellite television within the last decade thereby producing what the respondents felt as normative confusion (Durkheim anomie). One of the elders complained: dish TV aur cable na logn ko bht

kya ha. Abi chotay bachon kaypas bhi touch mobile hotay hain uski waja say wo galat cheezain dakh kar khrab hotay hain" (Here, dish TV and cable have poisoned people. Even little kids now have touch mobiles; due to this they observe all sorts of evil things and get corrupted).

Such talk is symptomatic of moral panic (Cohen, 1972) community panic about what is believed to be the threat to social order, which takes the place of structural analysis and shifts its focus onto technological scapegoats. The subjects held technology responsible of causing characterlessness (akhlaaq bigar gae hain), family disintegration, not admitting the contribution of economic migration, education growth and delayed marriage in changing the social relations.

The younger generations had a more subtle insight. The youth respondents admitted that technology opens the doors to information and educational resources as well as communication tools; however, they also identified dangers. Some young women reported that mobile phones allow affairs of love which when uncovered leads to family violence and crises of suicide. One respondent said: boys get the numbers of girls and begin to talk. When they know in the family all is well-to-do trouble" (larke larkion ke numbers le kar baat karte hain. Jab ghar wale jaan lete hain to bharra masla banta hai).

The anomic dimension is manifested in the discrepancy between technological ability and normative direction. Parents are ill equipped with mechanisms to direct children on how to use technology since they have themselves grown up without such machines. This has what Durkheim described as a strain of institutions, such as when technology diffuses quicker than moral regulations can keep up and the result is a state of normative disorientation on what to do (SimplyPsychology, 2025). Juveniles are exposed to globalized content, romantic stories, individualistic ideals and consumerist ways of life with no media literacy and no discussion with the family members on how to interpret.

Anomic suicide dynamics are shown in Case Study 1. Nisar Hussain was a 19 year old Sunni student whose family belonged to the Sunni group and was an intellectually gifted student

who had studied in the private English-based schools. He would form a friendship with one of his schoolmates of the Ismaili race, which was the boundary of a sect, which, regardless of peace in the country, was socially important. The family of the girl did not approve the relationship at all when they found out about it and they severely punished her. Nisar killed himself on the phone when she heard him say that he was not able to satisfy your family.

This case is an example of anomic suicide: the social change (schooling between sects, mobile phone communication) was accelerated to provide a relationship that could not have been provided within past generations and the stabilizing structures (sectarian endogamy, parental dominance over marriage) were not lost. The crash brought about normative perplexity that lacked resolution mechanisms. The suicide note Nisar gave to the girl was oral, indicating that he was unable to handle his competing demands which is typical of anomic crisis.

Theme 3: Group Family Systems and Personal Dreams -The Education Conundrum.

The third theme entails the overlapping of anomic and fatalistic situations: schooling opens up new demands of education to educated youth, especially women, but keeps them locked within the collectivist family structures that require conformity. This education paradox puts structural pressure which is especially deadly to young women.

Respondents talked of the old housing forms (shino goat- large communal halls) being replaced by the nuclear family housing but collectivist ideals still remain. The respondents who are younger stated to have no self-perception (khud shanasi) and personal ability to solve problems. One student at college said: we are not taught to think. Always we have to think of the family, what the family will say to us" (hamein khud sochna nahi sikhaya jata. hamesha ye dekhna parta hai ke ghar wale kahenge).

Parenting styles proved to be important mediation variables. Nepalese and South Korean studies indicate that authoritarian parenting is associated with the risk of adolescent suicide, and

warmth and autonomy support is protective (MedRxiv, 2024; PMC, 2020). The cases of Gupis Valley have shown the ineffectiveness of uneducated parents with rigid styles (excessive permissiveness at early stages or authoritarianism) who do not afford the combination of structure and warmth that helps to cushion suicidal behavior.

Both prevention possibilities and education paradox are depicted by Case Study 4 (survivor). Farzana Bibi, 29 tried to poison herself after being humiliated by her father-in-law. Her story unveiled the institutional furtherances of educated women: she had graduated to intermediate school (grade 12), owned a home sewing business that she used to earn a bit of money with, but was still totally dependent on the power of the father-in-law. His "illogical and ridiculous comments" about household management created what she described as "enslavement by heart" (dil ki ghumami).

Her suicide attempt is due to her husband threatening to divorce her at the bequest of his father. The means to do the act (rat poison) was highly accessible in farm families; the timing (after the direct threat) could be taken as an impulsive reaction to urgent crisis, as opposed to a long-term planning. Most importantly, family dynamics changed after the attempt was made: the father-in-law was now healthy in relationships, her husband got more helpful, and now, she tells people that she survived a miracle and must not repeat the situation.

The present case shows that suicide attempts can serve as a means of communication in the family system - what Scourfield et al. (2020) call suicide as social action. The suicidal behavior was successfully renegotiated and it is possible to indicate that in collectivist environments, suicidal behavior can have systemic roles rather than individual pathology. The survival result made the change in the family attitude but did not allow its completion, which emphasized the possibilities of prevention as long as medical intervention and family system transformation are integrated.

Sectarian Dimensions

Although Gupis Valley has a rather calm inter-sectarian situation in comparison to other regions of Gilgit-Baltistan (Grieser & Sökefeld, 2015; CSRC, 2024), marriage patterns, and social networks are also influenced by sectarian identity. The Ismaili majority in the country, which makes 70 percent of the population, controls the local institutions and growth projects as the Sunni minority with 30 percent faces relative marginalization in some areas. The sectarian aspect of the case study 1 Sunni-Ismaili romance is unique (the majority of suicides happened intra-sectarianly), yet it demonstrates how modernization (attendance at the same schools) leads to emergence of new patterns of interactions where traditional structures (sectarian endogamy) do not disappear.

Discussion

In this ethnographic research of 40 individuals in Gupis Valley, Pakistan, it is established that the rapid modernization is a factor that predetermines both the anomic and fatalistic types of suicide, especially among the educated young women. The results serve to explain suicide in LMIC settings where 79 percent of all suicides in the world happen but the research is still limited whereas the researchers continue to develop the theoretical synthesis of the structural typology developed by Durkheim and the cultural scripts framework developed by Canetto.

Theoretical Implications: Outside the Gender Paradox.

The greatest outcome of the study is the reversal of gender suicide tendencies in the west, where females are more likely to be affected than males in this part of the world. This helps Canetto (2008, 2024) to shift his paradigm of considering this as a paradox that can be explained using biological or psychological concepts to culturally scripted behavior. Suicide becomes scripted in the contexts of South Asian societies that are systematically limited in female agency by early marriage, educational constraint despite literacy and domestic subordination, which is a protest against and desperate escape of the oppressive

rule of family systems of patriarchy (Canetto, 2008).

The phenomenon of fatalistic suicide mentioned by Durkheim (1897), although he in his literature did not pay any significant attention to this concept, is critical to comprehend this trend. In the event that social control becomes overindulgent, in the case when oppression is pressing heavily on people, and their lives have become untenable, suicide is one of the ways out of unacceptable restraint (Carpediemias, 2025). The research records the following situations of women in Gupis Valley: total control of marriage by parents, prohibition of work regardless of educational achievements and lack of any response to domestic abuse. Not individual pathologies, but structural conditions which need structural intervention.

At the same time, both genders experience anomic conditions due to the social change being very rapid. The growth of education, penetration of technology and economic change break the old norms without putting the new standards. The globalized values (romantic love, individual achievement, gender equality) are presented to the youth in schools and media, whereas the family structure requires adherence to tradition. Such schooling as a source of normative confusion is what Durkheim termed anomic, an education paradox in which the consciousness brought about through schooling does not offer any legitimate avenues to the actualization of aspirations.

Research Ethnography and Suicide.

The paper has shown that the ethnography approach is important in researching suicide in situations whereby official data is inferior and culture is a determinant of behavior. The research is not only shifting the focus from the epidemiological correlation to the sociological explanation but by placing emic perspectives first, the studies are considering the personal perceptions of suicide causes and meanings as expressed by the participants themselves. Although the case studies of survivors, especially, are a rare source of information about the prevention channels: the case of Farzana Bibi

demonstrates how the family attitude change after the attempt may help to avoid its completion and, therefore, the intervention should be aimed at the family systems, not at the individuals.

Ethnographic difficulties of suicide are also depicted in the research. The sensitivity of the community involved a lot of rapport building, sectarian diversity involved delicate positioning, and the stigma of suicide meant some cases were definitely undisclosed to researchers. These weaknesses are inherent in the research situation and not problems of methodology, but serve to warn against overgeneralization.

Practical Implications: Prevention in a Collectivist Culture.

The results indicate that the prevention of suicide in Gupis Valley and other settings needs culturally-sensitive solutions that respond to structural situations, but not the pathology of individuals. Three areas of intervention become apparent:

Parent education and counseling is essential, first. The researchers established that parenting styles, especially the authoritarian parenting styles and sudden changes in the highly permissive parenting style to the strict one, are associated with the risk of youth suicide. Education programs on adult education that would assist parents to learn the implications of educational expansion, enhance their communication with the children and skills in coping with the existence of technology without moral panic would go a long way in mitigating anomic family conflict. Such programs ought to collaborate with and not oppose collectivist values, where parental guidance is seen to foster family unity as opposed to fostering Western individualism.

Second, gender sensitization should focus on the conditions of fatalism of women. This involves questioning the marriage command which suppresses women autonomy, aiding women in their gainful employment as educated women, and creating support systems to women who have suffered domestic violence. The religious leaders (Ismaili and Sunni) should be involved as they have power in their community and the gender equity should be presented within the context of

Islamic ethical values as opposed to the Western intervention.

Third, technology should be taught instead of technology being restricted. Rejecting the role of mobile phones and television as a moral source of corruption should be replaced by interventions that facilitate digital literacy through which critical response to globalized content is possible. The young people require structures to ascertain the message of media, relationships in the Internet, and bargaining with parents on how to use technology, which can decrease the anomic confusion in the modernized world without denying modernization.

Limitations and Future Research.

The limitations of the study are that the sample size (40 participants) is too small to represent larger populations, the study was conducted by one researcher, and it is possible that they have missed the perspectives that could be obtained using a team-based study; and the study is cross-sectional, which does not allow an analysis of the trend of suicide rates over time. Longitudinal designs should be used in future research to trace the impact of the ongoing modernisation on suicide trends; comparative designs to determine the sectarian and regional differences in Gilgit-Baltistan districts; and intervention research designs that test the prevention methods proposed here.

Conclusion

This is an ethnographic investigation of 40 participants in the Gupis Valley of Pakistan, carried out in March of 2020, using 20 confirmed sources dating between 1897 and 2024, which found that suicide in this fast modernizing area was a product of the overlap between anomic conditions (normative confusion in the fast movements of social life) and fatalistic conditions (excessive regulation, especially of women). The cultural scripts theory proposed by Canetto is supported by the gender reversal of the suicide patterns in that females commit suicide at higher rates than males do. Education paradox where schooling increases desire, and yet family structures retain a traditional hold is

especially fatal to young women. Interventions are necessary to prevent the cultural adaptation: parent education enhancing intergenerational communication, gender sensitization breaking the shackles of patriarchy and technology education developing digital literacy as opposed to moral panic. This study helps to comprehend suicide in LMICs where most suicides across the world are committed, both conceptually and practically in terms of prevention.

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