

RESEARCH ARTICLE

CULTURE, MANNERS, AND BELIEFS OF AFGHAN PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

Afghanistan is a country located in the heart of Asia, which has the status of the gateway to South and Central Asia. Due to its strategic location, this country is home to various ethnic groups and cultures. Almost the majority of Afghan people are Muslim and follow the Hanafi, Jafari, and Ismaili religions. The culture of this country is based on Islamic thought and national and ethnic identity. Different ethnic groups with different subcultures and different customs live together under the umbrella of Islam and Afghan national identity. Islamic holidays and national ceremonies such as Nowruz and Independence are celebrated by the residents of this country every year. Celebrations and mourning ceremonies of Shiite imams are special ceremonies for Shiites that are performed with special customs. The purpose of this research is to introduce the culture of Afghanistan, which was done through the library observation method. The findings of the research are cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity. Ethnic groups who have lived together for centuries following the Islamic idea of brotherhood.

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Introduction

Culture is a set of ideas, beliefs, and achievements of a nation. A nation that has common beliefs and traditions has a common culture. The culture, manners, customs, and traditions of Afghanistan are derived from Islam in the first step. Islam, as a religion and a common work program, has put all the Afghan people under a single umbrella. Some cultures and customs are related to a specific region, ethnic group, or race. The strategic location and xenophobic character have caused confrontation and cultural exchange. Different governments have invaded Afghanistan and returned after some time, leaving behind their traditions and culture. Afghanistan is a country in the heart of Asia and the passage of world explorers from Central Asia and the Middle East to South Asia (Ghabar, 1368, 36). Afghanistan is an exhibition consisting of different cultures of different nations. Due to the diversity of ethnic groups living in the country and various cultural practices, it is widespread. Afghanistan can be imagined as a field that has cultivated various plants. The country's cultural diversity is such that it is rare to find a country in the world with this cultural diversity. With all this diversity, Islamic culture is at the top of the beliefs and customs of the people of this region. National culture is a combination of native, ethnic, and national culture with Islamic thought. Afghanistan's culture, manners, customs, and traditions are a mixture of different customs and traditions of different ethnic groups living in this country.

Research has been done about Afghan culture; but due to the breadth of the cultural aspect, each part of the culture has been discussed. The purpose of this discussion is to introduce the culture of the Afghan people to the world. Although research such as familiarizing with historical monuments, customs, rituals, and beliefs of Afghan people, books related to open inscriptions and their scripts, tangible and intangible cultural works, etc. have been written; due to its cultural breadth, it has studied a part of Afghanistan's culture. Due to limitations, this article cannot introduce the culture of Afghanistan with the abundance of cultural items in the necessary manner; like other writings, it has taken part in the cultural options, including the introduction of Afghanistan.

In this article, questions such as the situation and ethnic groups living in Afghanistan and the main cultural practices of this country have been discussed. The writing method of this work is an observational library. The method of collecting data is collected and analyzed in a library. As a member of the community, the author has observed and experienced various cultural aspects of the country.

Research Motivation

This research was written to introduce Afghanistan, its culture, and customs.

The Value of Research

This research has cultural value. This research is used to know the people living in the country, their customs, traditions, and way of life. This research aims to introduce the cultural face of Afghanistan to the world.

Research Methodology

The method of reviewing this writing is an observational library. A library means that it is a way of collecting data about the research questions by reading writings, articles, and other written works and thinking about the events. In other words, the way of thinking about the obtained events has been done in the form of perception, identification, research, retelling, and productivity. Observation means that the author himself was raised in the environment and is among the residents of Afghanistan who have lived in this country for generations and were raised according to the beliefs, culture, and customs of Afghanistan.

Background Research

Books and articles have been written about Afghanistan's culture, traditions, customs, and traditions. Not only domestic authors but also foreigners have produced such works; For example, an entry in the encyclopaedia of the culture of countries under the title of the culture of the Afghanistan people is dedicated to the culture of Afghanistan. Dada Jan Abedov, a Tajik writer, has written a book titled

"Customs, Rituals, and Beliefs of the People of Afghanistan". This is in addition to dozens of books and articles written by Afghan scholars about Afghan culture and people.

Research Findings

Culture is a set of material and spiritual achievements of a society. Afghanistan is an Islamic country with different tribes and religions. Common culture and different subcultures. Religious ceremonies such as Islamic holidays, and national ceremonies such as Nowruz and Independence are jointly celebrated by the people and the government of Afghanistan. Ceremonies such as Eid al-Ghadir, the first decade of Muharram, the days of birth or death of Shia imams, and the 28th day of Safar, the anniversary of the Prophet's death, are celebrated by Shiites in a special way with special rituals and ceremonies.

Research Literature *A-Culture*

Culture in the word means culture, science, knowledge, literature, knowledge, education, literary and scientific works of a people or nation (Hamid, 1363, 910). Assyrians consider culture as consisting of the prefix fur meaning profession and the ancient root hang meaning pulling. The words Farikhtan, Farikhtan, and Farihakhta come from the same root, which means to educate, to learn manners, to discipline, and to be polite. Culture is mentioned in different dictionaries as politeness, reason, knowledge, greatness, wisdom, art, and knowledge (Ashuri, 1374, 16). Culture is one of the simple and impossible words; That is, despite many studies, no consensus has been reached on the clear definition of consensus. It is simple because every person remembers some knowledge of culture. It is impossible because, in the position of providing a comprehensive, accurate, and wise definition, there is a division of votes. From UNESCO's point of view, culture includes all forms of creativity and individual group expression, including artistic and scientific activities. The Culture Commission considers it a mixed set of knowledge, belief, art, manners, ritual, law, habits, and any other behaviour and ability that a person provides as a member of society; Knows. There have been many definitions of culture. A more common definition of culture is a definition that considers culture to be the material and spiritual values of society that have been created in that society throughout history (Muntzari, 2014, 20). Culture is the identity-building element of societies, a symbol of human rational life and a whole that emerges from the combination of characteristics and symbols created in every society. The central core of this wholeness and this wise life is the special attitude existing in every society about man and his fundamental rights (Salimi, 2015, 53). According to the above definitions, it can be said that culture is not only arts and writing but also all states of human life, including basic human rights, value systems, relationships, and beliefs. Culture creates a clear boundary between humans and animals. It separates a person from another person with another culture. A cultured person knows himself and others. It gives him self-awareness and he receives others in its light. So, general culture includes different psychological, material, intellectual, and emotional characteristics that characterize a society or a group.

B- Belief

Belief in the word means acceptance, proof of speech. It is certain. The foundation of the word from the root (ver) means to choose, to excel and convert, to know, to believe. It also comes to the concept of being accepted, acceptable, believed, stable, and certain (Dehkhoda, Bita 2026). Belief is a point of view that exists in the subconscious of people, it becomes the reason for their success or failure in life. Belief means faith or trust in something based mostly on personal reasoning, trust, or evidence. Beliefs are thoughts that are hidden in the layers of our mind and their reflection is seen in life (Gurteen, 2023, October 9). The formation of beliefs begins at the time of birth. Gradually and throughout life, beliefs are formed in the human mind from all aspects of life. These beliefs interact with each other, influence each other, and form a belief system.

C- Manner

Adab plural of adab means customs (Dehkhoda, Bita, 262). Good methods, good habits, and customs are called politeness. Courtesy means good manners, good manners, and proper upbringing. In the term of politeness, it means to recognize everything that prevents a person from going astray and crooked (Watiq, 1385, 165).

Afghanistan, People, and Beliefs

Afghanistan is a rich country and a land for a variety of ethnic groups and cultures in terms of customs, and rituals. Geographically, this country is located at

the intersection of four main cultural areas. Middle East, Central Asia, Indian Subcontinent and Far East. These various influences can be seen in cultural norms and practices across the country. It was tasted in various Afghan dishes. It can be said that the regional characteristics of this country reflect the diversity found throughout the country.

A- The People of Afghanistan

The country that is now called Afghanistan was called Khorasan two centuries ago. Khorasan was much wider than the borders of today's Afghanistan. Afghanistan's new borders and name have been formalized after independence in 1919 (Mousavi, 2017, 23). Afghanistan is a mountainous country surrounded by land. Afghanistan is located in the heart of the Asian continent. This country is located in South and Central Asia and has an area of 647,500 km. It shares a border with Pakistan in the east and south, with Iran in the west, with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan in the north, and at the end of the northeast with China. This country has a dry and semi-arid continental climate with cold winters and hot summers. So far, an accurate census of the population of this country has not been done. According to the 2012 estimate, its population is twenty-six million. (National Environmental Protection Agency, 2012, 1). In recent years, speculations about population estimation have continued. The Department of Statistics and Population Information of Afghanistan has measured 33.6 million in the year 1400 with an overall growth of 2.14%. In 1401, the same department estimated the country's population to be 34.3 million, including 17.5 million men and 16.8 million women. In terms of gender, there are 104 men against 100 women. Population growth is different in cities. The population growth in Kabul city is 3.75%, in other big cities including Herat, Mazare-Sharif, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Jalalabad, it is 3.24%. 24.2 million Or 70.60% of Afghanistan's population live in villages and 8.6 million equal to 25% live in cities. 4.4% of Afghanistan's population is nomadic. 47.5% of Afghanistan's population is under the age of 15. Afghanistan is the fifth youngest country in the world and 68% of its population is youth and children under 25 years old. This population mix has made this country have a huge human capital for progress and hope for the future. 49.7% of Afghanistan's population is of working age. According to this department, the population of this country is expected to double by 2050 (Daily Information, 1401, 1 Hamel). Afghanistan is divided into 34 provinces and 394 governorates. The literacy level of people over 15 years old is 34%. This figure is 43.1% in men and 10-15% in women. There are many problems in the education sector. The lack of repair for schools, lack of budget, trends in society, and lack of professional teachers are among them (Nabizadeh, 2010, 4). Until 1389, more than seven million boys and girls attended school. At the same time, another five million did not have access to school. The number of school students is increasing year by year. According to the Minister of Education Faureq Wardak, the number of school students in 1392 is 10.5 million, and 40% of them are girls (Mahdavi, 1392, 1 Asad). The number of school survivors has also increased in proportion to the increase in population.

B- Afghan Tribes

Many ethnic groups were and still are in Afghanistan. Each of them has its own rich historical and cultural identity. Except for a small number of Hindus, Sikhs, and the Jewish minority who left the country, the people of Afghanistan are Muslims. Muslims are divided into two religious groups, Sunni majority and Shiite minority. According to estimates, seventy-five to eighty percent of Afghanistan's residents follow the Sunni Hanafi religion. Between twenty and twenty-five percent of followers of the Shia religion live with the Jafari Shia majority and the Ismaili minority (Ahmadi, 1386, 17 Jadi). The majority of the Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, and Arab peoples follow the Sunni religion, while the majority of the Hazara people follow the Shia religion. Shiites have followers among other ethnic groups such as Qazlbash, Turkmen, Tajik, and Pashtun. The word Afghan, which has been the national identity of this country for a long time, is derived from the name of one of the ethnic and racial groups living in the country. Afghanistan is the birthplace of diversity. Although this country is located in a more or less small geographical area, it is among the most colourful countries in the world in terms of culture, language, religion, ethnicity, race, food, clothing, music, natural landscapes, animal species, and vegetation. This country is a garden decorated with different ethnic and racial flowers. None of the ethnic groups of Afghanistan alone can complete more than half of the population; Therefore, Afghanistan can be called the land of minorities (Nabizadeh, 1390, 5). Afghan (Pashtun), Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Sadat, Pesha'i, Baloch, Nuristani, Arab, Gujar, Brahui, Imaq, Qazalbash, Pamiri, Kyrgyz and Hindu are the ethnic groups living in the country. While the national anthem and the previous constitution of Afghanistan refer to fourteen tribes. Avariwal has written down a list of ethnic groups in Afghanistan as follows: Pashtun, Hazara, Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen, Shadi Baz, Gwarbati, Taheri, Arab, Sadat, Ghazalbash, Jogi, Taymani, Brahwai, Gujar, Tirabi, Sig, Moorish, Mongol, Monjani, Sheikh, Mohammadi, Zuri, Kyrgyz, Ashkashmi, Shighnani, Jew, Jet, Qapchag, Sanglichi, Qarliq, Timuri, Picrag, Roshani, Persian, Firouzkohi, Mishmast, Kazakh, Vakhi, Jamshidi, Ghorbet, Parachi, Nuristani, Imaq, Maliki, Wangwala, Armori, Baloch, Jalali, Tatar, Kotana and Hindu (Afghanistan Information Network, 1402, 17 Mizan). Some researchers have counted

the group of tribes living in Afghanistan up to fifty-five tribes. They consider Afghanistan a treasure of different races and nations, whose current inhabitants are the survivors of two great races. The white race includes Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Nuristanis, and the yellow race includes Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kyrgyz, and Mongols. The complex mix of ethnicities in Afghanistan is the result of the way borders are drawn in this country (Nabizadeh, 2015, 6).

C- National Languages

Various languages are common in Afghanistan. Many residents of this country speak two or three languages. The official languages of Afghanistan are also spoken in neighboring countries. Farsi, Dari, and Pashto are the official languages of Afghanistan. Both of these languages are related to the Indo-European language family. Dari Farsi is spoken by Tajiks, Hazares, and Imaghs, it is not very similar to Farsi widely used in Iran. The Pashto language, which is divided into two main dialects, is spoken in the densely populated areas of Pakistan in addition to Afghanistan. Despite the government's decision to expand the Pashtun language, Persian is more common. Many educated and urban dwellers prefer it. The Uzbek language is the third most important language in the country. Balochi, Nooristani, and Peshai languages are also spoken. The Turkish language is widely used in the north of this country by Uzbeks, Turkmen, and Kyrgyz. Mongolian and Arabic languages are also common (Noor Magz, 2010, 291). As a whole, the people of this country speak more than thirty languages.

D- Lifestyle

Simplicity is part of the Afghan society life. Good morals and tolerance are institutionalized in Afghan society. Not shying away from oppression, forcing, and exploiting the characteristics of Afghan people. The people of Afghanistan are religious. Entertainment is a part of people's lives. Afghanistan has happy, lively, and humorous people. The role of the smile has always been in the corner of Afghan people's lips. Delicious food and a variety of food are a part of the food culture of Afghan people. Afghan men's and women's clothes, despite their similarities with other neighboring countries, are unique and show the outstanding culture and identity of the people of this country. The folk games of Afghan people are many and varied. The people of Afghanistan are hardworking and have low expectations. Afghans live their lives most simply. Unlike Western families, Afghan families tend to live together. Due to this simplicity, they prefer sitting on all fours to sitting on a stool and sleeping on the floor to sleeping on a bed. Avoiding luxuries has made them

able to safely pass all the hardships that have been imposed on them throughout history. Afghans are hospitable people. They consider the guest as a member of their family and treat him with delicious homemade food. The historical hospitality of Afghans has made them have many proverbs with the theme of welcoming guests in their popular culture. Afghans are great sociable people. They welcome any excuse to be around and be together. Whether it is a birthday, engagement, wedding, mourning ceremony, a continuous occasion with the change of season, or a ceremony to welcome or say goodbye to travellers or to honour guests. Going for family outings, in gardens, or around rivers is also a measure of their true love for the beauty of nature around them. The common national characteristic that is common to all of them (Calkin, 2019, 1 Jedi). Afghans are addicted to eating their special bread, which is one of the most delicious types of bread in the world. They have a well-known food called Shorba, in which they eat bread. The bread soaked in soup is eaten again with dry bread. The level of advertisement, desires, thoughts, wishes, affections, likes, the amount of love and inclination towards the hometown, recognition and acceptance from the society, adherence to cultural and popular values, and social occasions differ between different ethnic groups. It seems that religion, nationality, and ethnicity have always been the three basic components influencing the way of life in Afghan society. Afghan people are patriotic. The long history of war with colonialists and foreign oppressors proves this point well. A large population has been displaced from Afghanistan as a result of successive wars. The number of refugees in 1990 reached six million. Right now, it has the same number of immigrants from abroad. This population constitutes the largest number of displaced persons in the world (Normagez, 2010, 291). More than 80% of Afghanistan's population makes a living from agriculture, and some of its agricultural products, such as Herat saffron and Kandahar pomegranate, are world-famous. Afghanistan is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of mineral resources such as gold, copper, and other precious metals. Security threats have caused not much investment in the mining sector of this country in recent years. Based on research, the value of Afghanistan's mineral resources is estimated at 3 thousand billion dollars (Popel, 2016, 7).

Religious, National Ceremonies, and Religious Mourning

Religion, nationality, and culture have gone hand in hand and created various ceremonies in this country. This event is celebrated every year by the residents of this country. Religious holidays such as Qurban and Fitr, national ceremonies such as Independence Day and Nowruz among the majority of residents, and Ghadir Eid among Shiites are celebrated every year. In addition, since the first decade of Muharram, the martyrdom of Imam Hossein, the grandson of the Prophet of Islam, is commemorated among Shiites, and the tenth day of Muharram is commemorated under the name of Ashura among all Afghans under the name of days of mourning. Nights of Qadr in the holy month of Ramadan, the birthday of the Prophet of Islam and his death are among the days that are celebrated among the people of Afghanistan.

A- Religious Holidays

Eid al-Adha, including the ninth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, which is called the Day of Arafah, along with three other days, is included in the Great Eid or Eid al-Adha. Eid al-Fitr, which means the end of Ramadan and the first of Shawwal until the third day of Shawwal, is celebrated under the name of Eid al-Fitr or Small Eid in Afghanistan. People rush to meet each other during these holidays. They face a special reception at their friends and neighbours' houses and say Happy Eid to each other. The visiting ceremony continues these days. If someone has lost their relatives, the first destination is relatives and neighbours. First, they should visit him. The 30th night of Ramadan, that is, the night before Eid, is called the Eid of the Dead. Families distribute baked vows among the people in memory of their dead. On the night of Ramadan Eid, which is known as the night of Eid Zinda, they cook and distribute to the neighbours. On Eid al-Adha, those who have the ability or who have lost a loved one slaughter a sheep and distribute its meat among the neighbours (Haidari, 2011, 325). The 18th day of Dhu al-Hijjah is the day of Eid al-Ghadir according to Shia beliefs. According to them, on this day, the great Prophet of Islam chose Ali as his successor in a gathering of 100,000 pilgrims in the 10th year of Hijrah. Shiites celebrate this day under the name of Eid Ghadir in Afghanistan every year. The ceremony is held with the gathering of people in mosques and mosques and speeches by clerics on religious issues and remembrance of the same day. The 19th, 21st, and 23rd nights of the month of Ramadan are also celebrated by the Shiites as the Nights of Qadr. These nights, which coincide with the beating and martyrdom of Hazrat Ali, are commemorated by holding special ceremonies and speeches, fasting, reading the Qur'an, prayers and prayers. The ceremony goes on from the beginning to the end of the night with live music. In mosques and Hosseiniyehs, people start the night with prayers of praise, prayers, and greetings (ibid, 326).

B- National Occasions

Nowruz and Afghanistan's Independence Day from England are the national occasions of Afghanistan. Nowruz coincides with the first day of the solar year and

the beginning of spring. Like their neighbors, the people of Afghanistan celebrate the first day of spring and rejoice when it arrives. Nowruz is celebrated every year in most Asian countries, including Afghanistan, as an ancient day and a reminder of the magnificent Aryan civilization. In celebrating Nowruz, all the residents, both young and old, benefit from it without gender diversity. Afghan people celebrate Nowruz as the beginning of births and the season of fertility and happiness. For Afghans, Nowruz is a message of greenness, happiness, beauty, cleanliness, and a symbol of unity and empathy. Nowruz, as the first day of the year, makes a person attached to a pleasant future and increases his passion for life and work. In the villages, Nowruz is celebrated by killing sheep and cows and dividing the meat among the residents, praying together, and reading the Quran. In cities, especially cities such as Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul, and Bamyan, it is celebrated by lifting a big flag called Jahande, and this Jahande is tied to the name of Hazrat Ali. Ceremonies such as camping, playing in people's houses, and collecting people's donations for making vows are among the rituals of Nowruz in the villages. In the cities, like on Eid al-Adha and Fitr days, people go to each other's houses and receive each other's hospitality (Abdov, 2013, 43). Afghanistan's Independence Day, which coincides with the 28th of the month of Asad, is another national event in Afghanistan. On this day, in 1919 AD or 1297 AD, the brave forces of the Afghan government and the people were able to defeat the British Empire win the battlefield, and gain the independence of Afghanistan forever (Ghabar, 1368, 835). Independence Day is celebrated every year by the government and people in cities and governorates. This day is a holiday in the calendar of the Afghan government, and extensive celebrations are held by government departments and people.

C- Religious Mourning

Mourning, like other holidays, forms a part of people's lives. Religious mourning has a special place among the Muslims of Khorasan, both Shia and Sunni. The Muslim people of Khorasan have mourned the sufferings of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet since the distant past until now, and have enthusiastically aligned themselves. If the authorship of Maktal al-Hossein Khwarazmi and Rouza al-Shohdai Hossein, Waez Kashfi, one of the Sunni scholars, in the mourning of Imam Hossein, which is special for mourning gatherings, is evidence of this claim (kohi, 2022, 25). The people of Afghanistan, both Shia and Sunni, mourn Imam Hussain on the day of Ashura. However, this ceremony is fading among Sunnis. Shiites celebrate the first decade of Muharram magnificently. Speakers and religious preachers are present in all villages and mosques related to Shiites during these ten days.

People entertain the participants by offering three meals. In many places, various Ceremonies of Adrez, Rouza, and Shion are held twice within 24 hours. After expressing their religious content, the preachers avoided the event of Ashura and read some poems in this connection. By reading songs and poetic words, mourners raise the feelings of the participants. A group is also sitting and beating their chest with their hands. This ceremony is called breastfeeding. Chaining is also popular in some places. They carry a bunch with chains on their backs. Cutting a machete is also one of these ceremonies, which is considered illegal by religious scholars. On the first night of Muharram, the first flag is raised in the mosque or Hosseiniyeh, and on the ninth day, mourning peaks. On the 9th and 10th day, after mourning, the men go to the nearby villages or alleys with the flags they carry. The mourning ceremony is held jointly between men and women. A separate place is considered for women in the mosque or Hosseiniyeh. In the joint gatherings of Rouza Khan, he is a mourner, a preacher, and a men's breast lifter. On the roads and streets, there are drinking fountains, and various drinks such as juice and milk along with sweets and biscuits are prepared for the passers-by by the mourners. In addition, on the 40th day of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the 28th of Safar, on the occasion of the martyrdom of the Prophet of Islam (Haidari, 1393, 328), and the days of the martyrdom or death of Shia leaders and Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, Shias mourn.

Conclusion

Afghanistan has different ethnic groups and accordingly has different cultures. This country, being at the crossroads of Asia and the gateway to South Asia, has seen many travellers and tourists. These forced and salty visits have marked the cultural exchange in the country. It has turned this country into a paradise of different cultures. The people of Afghanistan are Muslims. All residents of this country are divided into two religious groups, Shia and Sunni. Sunnis follow the religion of the Great Imam Abu Hanifah, and Shiites live in the country with a Jafari majority and an Ismaili minority. Afghanistan is a young country from the point of view of its population. More or less half of the country's population is of working age. There are various customs in this country. Religious Islamic holidays such as Eid al-Adha and Fitr, and national days such as Independence Day and Nowruz are celebrated by the people of this country every year. Religious days such as Eid al-Ghadir, Muharram decade, and the death day or birthday of Shia leaders are celebrated by the followers of this religion every year."

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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