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A Study on the Economic Strategies Employed by the Nomadic Moor Community Residing along the Chenab River Bank from an Anthropological Perspective

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### Abstract

*This anthropological study delves into the economic strategies and mechanisms of the nomadic Moor community living alongside the Chenab River. Witnessing the unique economic practices that nomadic communities, such as the Moors, develop due to their cultural and environmental influences is truly captivating. This study aims to explore the Moor community's intricate economic activities in the Chenab River bank area. Ethnographic research methods will be utilized to uncover these complexities, including participant observation, interviews, and historical and contemporary data analysis. This study seeks to understand how the Moor community navigates economic obstacles while maintaining their nomadic way of life. It achieves this by examining their resource utilization patterns, trade networks, and strategies for making a living. Furthermore, this study explores the wider anthropological context of the Chenab River bank region, examining the complex connection between the economic practices of the Moor community and the social, cultural, and environmental dynamics of the area.*

**Keywords:** Nomadic, Economic Strategies, Moor Community, Anthropological, Perspective

### Authors:

**Altaf Ghani:** (Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.  
(Email: [altafghani71@gmail.com](mailto:altafghani71@gmail.com))

**Hassam Ahmad Hashmi:** PhD Scholar, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, University of Sultan Zainal Abadin, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia.

**Dure Sadaf:** Visiting Lecturer, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

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## Title

**A Study on the Economic Strategies Employed by the Nomadic Moor Community Residing along the Chenab River Bank from an Anthropological Perspective**

### Authors:

**Altaf Ghani:** (Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.  
(Email: [altafghani71@gmail.com](mailto:altafghani71@gmail.com))

**Hassam Ahmad Hashmi:** PhD Scholar, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, University of Sultan Zainal Abadin, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia.

**Dure Sadaf:** Visiting Lecturer, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

## Abstract

*This anthropological study delves into the economic strategies and mechanisms of the nomadic Moor community living alongside the Chenab River. Witnessing the unique economic practices that nomadic communities, such as the Moors, develop due to their cultural and environmental influences is truly captivating. This study aims to explore the Moor community's intricate economic activities in the Chenab River bank area. Ethnographic research methods will be utilized to uncover these complexities, including participant observation, interviews, and historical and contemporary data analysis. This study seeks to understand how the Moor community navigates economic obstacles while maintaining their nomadic way of life. It achieves this by examining their resource utilization patterns, trade networks, and strategies for making a living. Furthermore, this study explores the wider anthropological context of the Chenab River bank region, examining the complex connection between the economic practices of the Moor community and the social, cultural, and environmental dynamics of the area.*

### Keywords:

[Nomadic](#), [Economic Strategies](#), [Moor Community](#), [Anthropological Perspective](#)

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## Introduction

The study delves into the socio-economic aspects of nomadic communities from an anthropological standpoint. Mobile communities are those groups that

regularly shift their location, rather than settling permanently. Anthropologists have long been fascinated by nomadic societies due to their unique economic systems and remarkable ability to adjust to constantly shifting environmental conditions



(Barfield, 2015). An intriguing case study involves the Moor community residing along the banks of the Chenab River in the Muzaffargarh district of Pakistan. These individuals' mobile way of life is intricately linked to the economic activities occurring along the river bank, and their capacity to adjust and relocate plays a vital role in their lifestyle (Sadr, 2017). Studying nomadic economies offers valuable insights into how diverse societies overcome economic challenges in different environments, often relying on traditional knowledge and social networks (Hodder, 2012). The economic mechanisms of the Moor community showcase a delicate balance between preserving tradition and adapting to the changing socio-environmental conditions of the Chenab River bank region.

The social and economic systems of the Moor are defined by the diligent Moors who keep watch on their river boats, carefully observing the flowing currents and muddy banks of the river Chenab while the sun illuminates their faces (Kelly, 2022). Disheveled hair, unkempt facial hair, and a prominent mustache stand out against the energetic and fit physiques. These individuals deeply understand the river's origins (Bhuiyan, Islam & Azam, 2017). They have a deep understanding of sailing and consider it a prestigious occupation. In earlier times, there was a plentiful supply of wood, and individuals would collect kanb, lai, kondor, and kalia from the woods in significant quantities. Moor community then used the materials to craft wooden boxes and other items for personal use and selling to others, resulting in a significant income.

In order to fully understand the economic dynamics of the Moor community, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach that takes into account the historical, cultural, and ecological factors (Ferreira et al., 2017). Historical narratives demonstrate the evolution of economic practices, shaped by interactions with established societies, colonial influences, and post-colonial transformations (Robin & Broto, 2021). Academic research offers insights into the intricate interplay between cultural practices, social roles, and economic activities, providing a valuable comprehension of the social structure within a

community. Furthermore, comprehending the economic strategies of the Moor community necessitates a significant emphasis on ecological considerations. The Chenab River basin is the backdrop for the Moors' way of life, with its dynamic water levels and productive plains. Their skill in synchronizing with the natural rhythms of the river, coupled with their astute resource management techniques, demonstrates a harmonious and mutually advantageous relationship with the environment.

This research aims to investigate the complex economic strategies of the Moor community through ethnographic fieldwork. It will explore a range of subjects, such as fishing, basket weaving, trade of these goods, and woodworking. This study seeks to investigate the resilience and adaptability of the Moor community's economic practices by examining their wider socio-political and environmental contexts. The research aims to analyze the economic strategies of the Moor community. The first objective is to understand the community's traditional economic patterns, methods, and skills. The second objective is to recognize the ecological dependency within the economic context of the Moor community.

### **Review of the Literature**

Legesse et al. (2022) highlight the Moor fishing community's expertise, which possesses valuable knowledge in environmental conservation, fishing techniques, and the craftsmanship of nets and boats. This traditional wisdom, akin to indigenous knowledge, plays a crucial role in their effective management of resources for their sustenance. People transmit knowledge across generations, utilizing non-scientific idioms incorporating symbols, myths, rites, etc. Throughout different periods of human history, individuals have consistently established economic systems to meet their fundamental needs by utilizing available resources, economic anthropologists have extensively researched various economic systems (Meillassoux, 2023). The primary objective of economic anthropologists is to provide descriptions of the diverse economic systems that have emerged throughout history and across multiple cultures. Economic anthropology categorizes these

arrangements into different classes and seeks to align them with various societies and cultures (Carrier, 2022).

Tobia has presented the concept of the interdependence between early humans and the current population. He states that the survival of the earliest hominids appears to have relied primarily on biological factors (Andrews & Johnson, 2020). The survival and adaptation of later palio-Pleistocene hominids seem to have relied more and more on cultural capabilities. At the same time, many modern human populations have become heavily reliant on culture for their survival strategies (Richerson & Boyd, 2020). So, the nature of the fishermen's society differs from that of the main river. It shares some similarities with the mainstream regarding its mixed mode of subsistence, but it may have a different nature (Sanon et al., 2021).

Ahmad et al. (2021) provide intricate insights into how individuals are compelled to pool their capabilities and exert maximum effort in order to endure and overcome famines or other natural disasters. This is connected to the Moor community, which tends to relocate together using well-thought-out plans and collective agreements. Precautionary strategies involve diversifying fields, herds, trades, and crop and pasture growth to ensure survival in times of need (Hufnagel, Reckling & Ewert, 2020). They also include measures such as stockpiling food or implementing fasting practices. Collecting jewelry or curios; accumulating debts and responsibilities through gift-giving (Sood & Sharma, 2023).

In 1980, Byron discussed the fishing system of the Moor community, highlighting the longstanding tradition of fishing that dates back to the days of hunting and gathering societies (Fabinyi et al., 2022). Fishing is similar to a gamble, where sometimes one can make a fortune and other times come back empty-handed. It's considered a thrilling and unpredictable adventure (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020). Fishing requires high skill and expertise, as it involves utilizing advanced techniques and strategies (Senina et al., 2020). The fish-catching technique used by the Moor fishermen at Chenab is genuinely remarkable. They

skillfully navigate in a specific direction and expertly cast their nets. Varied levels of success can be attributed to distinct variations in fishing techniques. The crew's economic success largely hinges on the skipper's intuition and their knack for accurately predicting the best fishing spots (Sembok & Zal, 2022).

The systems of nomadic living among pastoralists, maintain large animal flocks and migrate between pastures (Miotti et al., 2021). Similar to the bands of hunters and gathers, pastoralists also form a deep connection with the land they temporarily occupy (Romano, Lozano & Fernández-López de Pablo, 2020). Discussing the social significance of the nomadic lifestyle, it has been noted that one of its key benefits is the ability to choose and change residential connections constantly. This opportunity is often unavailable to those who are settled.

The rituals in this community serve the important role of building a sense of togetherness and fostering a strong bond among individuals (Al-Jallad, 2022). As Von Scheve (2020) suggests, rituals serve to meet the collective needs of individuals within groups. They embody the cultural expressions that shape individual behaviors, which can either be adaptive or reactive. They are highly regarded by society for their role in fostering social unity, promoting the integration of society by expressing its core values and beliefs, and preserving cultural traditions without significant alterations, thus contributing to cultural stability and societal cohesion.

## Materials and Methods

The research methodology provides a structured approach to address the research problem effectively. In addition, Research methodology provides a structured approach to conducting research and identifying issues. (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Essentially, the methods scholars use to investigate, clarify, and anticipate phenomena are referred to as research methodology (Verma, Verma & Abhishek, 2024). The researchers used the participant observation method in this study and through participation observation, the researcher uncovered

valuable insights into the socio-economic dynamics of the community. Participant observation offered a valuable opportunity to gain insight and document the happenings in the local area while also allowing the researcher to immerse themselves in the community to some degree (Hockey & Forsey, 2020). A researcher is actively engaged in the daily activities of the respondents and carefully observes their social activities to analyze the data with in-depth knowledge (Santos et al., 2020). The researcher conducted in-depth interviews using open-ended questions to gather qualitative data. Through these interviews, the researcher gained valuable insights into the culture. These thorough interviews were conducted to obtain the necessary information. During the interview, the researcher gathered pertinent data on various aspects of the community's life, focusing on their economic patterns and the methods they employ to generate domestic income (Knott et al., 2022). The researcher conducted a total of seventy interviews with the fishermen community of Moor. They were from various age groups and interviewed children to understand how they learned to catch fish, make nets, and weave baskets. A significant number of participants displayed a strong enthusiasm when answering the questions. Researchers commonly employ sampling to encompass the entire population, as studying the whole population can be challenging. So, to utilize sampling, a sample is chosen from the population of a specific area and then generalized to the entire population. The sample is a population segment chosen for investigation (Lohr, 2021). Researchers used purposive sampling, also known as a judgmental sample, which is a method of selection that relies on the researcher's understanding of the population and the study's specific objectives (McEwan, 2020). Purposive sampling is closely associated with qualitative research. Nevertheless, due to the multitude of objectives that qualitative researchers may have, the array of purposive strategies to be pursued is practically infinite (Obilor, 2023). It is crucial to understand that any particular list will only cover the situations that the author of that list has considered. The researcher utilized purposive sampling in the field, with a sample size of seventy. The researcher collected data from the seventy

participants. It is a valuable technique for documenting the statistical aspects of a community's life and obtaining the most up-to-date information about the community's current state. Using census forms, researchers have gathered quantitative and qualitative data from community members regarding various aspects of the population, such as gender ratios, different demographic groups, occupations, educational levels, and religious affiliations. Census forms were utilized to gather essential information and a wide range of necessary data, including age, gender, income, household size, marital status, family composition, economic activities, and occupational skills (Burch, Rizzoli & Loder, 2021). The meticulous case study method was extremely dependable in collecting qualitative data. This approach provided a comprehensive analysis of the subject, as various individuals with relevant expertise contributed their insights and information, which were then organized according to different aspects of the subject (Thomas, 2021).

### **Analysis and Discussion**

The economic techniques used by the nomadic Moor population living along the Chenab River are closely connected to their cultural history, historical patterns of movement, and natural surroundings. A key characteristic of Moor's economic activities is their dependence on traditional vocations that have been inherited over several generations. These activities may include pastoralism, agriculture, artisanal crafts, and commerce, all of which are adjusted to suit the distinct environmental circumstances and seasonal changes along the riverside. Gender roles have a substantial influence on these economic activities, since males often involve themselves in duties like tending to cattle or engaging in trading networks, while women participate in activities like weaving, pottery-making, and managing family resources. Moreover, the Moor community has an impressive capacity to adjust its economic tactics in response to changing conditions, including problems like variations in water levels, availability of grazing grounds, and market dynamics. Through an anthropological perspective, we may examine the economic methods used by the Moor community to

understand how they maintain their livelihoods, uphold cultural traditions, and navigate their position within larger socio-economic frameworks. This study emphasizes the ability of the Moor people to adapt and

find solutions amid environmental and socio-political uncertainty. It underscores the significance of understanding their economic practices to promote sustainable development and community well-being.

## Table on Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

### Demographic Analysis

**Table 1**

*Gender Percentage of Respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	26	65
Female	14	35
Total	40	100.0

Table 1 presents the distribution of gender within the sample size. Given that 65% of the population consists of males, men are likely overrepresented in economic activities that are traditionally associated with masculinity, such as agriculture, fishing, trading, and maybe leadership roles in enterprises or community groups and 35% of the society comprises females, it is

likely that there is a notable albeit comparatively lesser representation of women in economic endeavors. These activities may include engagement in agricultural responsibilities, individuals may participate in handicrafts, domestic chores, or pottery making.

**Table 2**

*Household size of respondents*

Family Members	Frequency	Percent
1 – 3	23	57.5
3 – 6	07	17.5
6 – 9	05	12.5
9 above	05	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Based on the field data, the table provides information on the population of the Moor community. The majority of families are small to medium in size. The percentage of 1-3 family members is 57.5, while the percentage of 3-6 family members is 17.5. These figures are pretty close to each other. Only a tiny fraction, precisely 12.5 percent of the total sample size, consists of families with more prominent members. The spatial arrangement of individuals within the

Moor community might have ramifications for economic endeavors. Families with six or more people may participate in agricultural pursuits that need more manpower, such as tending to greater areas of land or overseeing animal populations. This group may also engage in cottage industries, fishing, and handcrafting whereby family members make significant contributions to artisanal crafts or small-scale industrial operations.



**Table 3***Occupations of the respondents*

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Basket waving	13	32.5
Fishing	05	12.5
Household	07	17.5
Labor	05	12.5
Basket and fishing	10	25
Total	40	100.0

The table presents the distribution of professions among the Moor community, providing insight into the popular economic activities among its people. The activity of basket weaving is the most prevalent, with 32.5% of persons involved in this art. This indicates its importance in both domestic usage and possible economic exchange. Fishing is the next most common occupation, accounting for 12.5% of the people polled. This emphasizes the community's dependence on resources from rivers for both food and the possibility of making money. Furthermore, it is worth noting that 17.5% of persons are actively involved in domestic chores, emphasizing the crucial contribution of family labor in sustaining the community's operations. Five persons state that their main employment is labor, suggesting their involvement in essential manual chores that are vital for infrastructural and agricultural progress. Approximately 25% of the population, which is a significant portion, participates in both basket weaving and fishing. This demonstrates their use of diversification tactics to maximize economic possibilities and build resilience. The distribution of vocations within the Moor community provides valuable insights into the economic variety and techniques for using resources. It reflects a complex interaction between tradition, need, and adaptability.

### **Economic System of Moor Community**

In order for the nomadic Moor group to continue existing and sustaining itself, the economic activities that they engage in are very necessary. The likelihood of success is higher for those who have a good capacity to adapt to the standards that society has established. The material presented in this research pertains to

fishing methods and the many instruments that are used in the process of catching fish. Konta, a sharp iron stick, kur, a net with multiple needles, kundi, a string with a needle, and the practice of using one's hands are the instruments that are included in this set of equipment. The women of the Moor community provide assistance for the males of the community by supporting them with task management and handling household obligations, including the craft of basket weaving. The men of the Moor community participate in fishing.

There are instances in which the youngsters also contribute by working as baggers in order to assist their families in meeting their financial requirements. The purpose of this research study is to present a full overview of their responsibility distribution system and the sharing system. The people who live in the Moor community have a treasure trove of proverbs and superstitions that are associated with the Chenab River. They often make reference to these sayings and superstitions while talking about their economic operations.

### **Fishing in Moor Community**

Fisheries not only provide a substantial amount of revenue for a significant number of towns, but they also serve as an important source of sustenance for those populations. As a result of the nature of fishing itself, there is a close relationship between the Moor population and the activity of fishing. Residents of the Moor community who engage in fishing believe the activity to be more than only a means of livelihood; rather, they consider it to be an important component of their way of life. The fishery sector obtains a significant boost over the summer season as a result of

the concept of ecological dependence, which is responsible for the enormous surge. The effective acquisition of fish may be accomplished via a variety of means, including the use of fishing boats, fishing nets, plunging, and hunting the birds that inhabit rivers.

### **Basket Weaving Work in Moor Community**

The Moor community economy relies mostly on three primary sources of income: labor, the production of baskets, and fishing. On the other hand, two occupations that are very significant to the Moor community economy are fishing and basket-making. During the winter months, they focus mostly on fishing, but during the summer months, they shift their attention to weaving baskets. They keep themselves busy by fishing during the winter months. Due to the fact that they are able to gather and collect *Lai* in an efficient manner, their women and their children are now involved in the expertise of basket weaving. Those individuals who are responsible for providing the *lai* are the ones who are the ones who make the request to the *Maher*. The women and their children have been given the job of cleaning up the riverfront and eliminating any debris that may be present on our riverbed. This obligation has been assigned to them. Fifteen days after they have finished the process of cutting the *lai*, they start weaving baskets. This comes after they have spent a large amount of time cutting the *lai*.

### **Case Study 1**

Someone who took part in the discussion noted that they had three daughters and four boys in their family. I can provide for myself via the skills of basket making, fishing, and hard labor. I can earn 250 rupees each and every day via hard labor. Beginning in the summer and continuing through the winter, fishing activities would begin. The authorities, on the other hand, have placed restrictions on using the river to capture fish without the appropriate permits. As a direct consequence of this, the local community's primary source of revenue has been progressively decrease over time. As the loss of agricultural land and the

degradation of rivers continue to take their toll, the collapse of the basket-weaving profession is becoming more obvious. It is difficult for me to maintain a balance between taking care of my children and making sure that they get an education where they need it. This is the reason why our children are unable to go to school, and the reason for this is because of financial difficulties.

### **Case Study 2**

Qalsoom Bibi, who was one of the people I interviewed, said that her parents had planned for her to marry her cousin when she was 15 years old. When I married him, he was 16 years old. My family is structured conventionally, and I am the mother of five children. My spouse is compensated with a monthly wage of 7,500 dollars for his employment as a laborer. I am now employed as a basket weaver, which allows me to contribute to our home. It is unfortunate that my husband and one of my children are now sick and have developed a fever, and Zima Daar is not allowing the grass to be mowed because of this. The financial situation of my responders is precarious, and in addition to that, they have further borrowed 10,000 rupees from a relative.

### **Case Study 3**

Ahmad Yaar, one of my replies, told me that we were enjoying a pretty wonderful life fifteen years ago. He said that we were having a pleasant existence. The fact that the government did not provide a contract to the contractor (*thekadaar*) of the river during those times was the most significant factor in this situation. The fish were caught with the intention of selling them at the market, and we were enjoying a lovely life at the time. A large quantity of fish is readily accessible for consumption. On the other hand, their ability to generate revenue was limited as a result of the use of modern agriculture and the distribution of contracts to the *thekadaar*. Nobody will be able to get a permit to fish from the river since *Thekadaar* is not handing out licenses. It is now the case that we do not own any land, nor do we possess a permanent dwelling in which we may live. We were deemed to be people of

the third class when it came to our level of poverty. The people that live in the region are not helping us in any way.

### **Conclusion**

The nomadic Moor community living along the Chenab River bank provides an intriguing case study to delve into the intricate dynamics of tradition, adaptation, and resilience in economic strategies. This research has provided valuable insights into the various factors that shape the community's livelihood activities, adopting a comprehensive anthropological perspective. Throughout history, the economic strategies of the Moors have adapted to external factors such as interactions with settled societies and colonial interventions. The community's economic practices have been shaped by historical trajectories, demonstrating a blend of continuity and adaptation throughout time. From a cultural standpoint, the economic activities of the Moor community are deeply connected to social structures, kinship networks, and ritual practices. Gender roles play a crucial role in shaping economic responsibilities, with women often making valuable contributions to sectors such as pastoralism and artisanal crafts. The cultural dynamics in this community not only contribute to its economic resilience but also help to foster a strong sense of collective identity and belonging.

The livelihood pursuits of the Moor community are intricately connected to the natural rhythms of the Chenab River basin from an ecological perspective. Their profound expertise enables them to adeptly maneuver through the intricacies of a dynamic landscape, demonstrating a profound comprehension of resource management and the promotion of sustainability. However, the challenges posed by urbanization and environmental degradation in today's world demand innovative approaches to adaptation and resilience. Despite facing numerous challenges, the Moor community showcases remarkable resilience and adaptability. While the community continues to depend on traditional economic activities such as animal husbandry and handicrafts for their livelihoods, they have also welcomed new opportunities in sectors like tourism and small-scale trade. These adaptations showcase the community's ability to navigate change while preserving elements of their cultural heritage. Ultimately, the economic strategies utilized by the nomadic Moor community along the Chenab River bank demonstrate a captivating blend of tradition and innovation. By meticulously analyzing their chosen livelihoods, this research deepens our comprehension of nomadic economies and underscores the importance of cultural resilience in the face of changing environments.

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