

The Romance Narratives of Cattle Raids Across The Zhob Valley

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Abstract:

Zhob valley which currently encompasses most of the Zhob division territories, has been a home to a vivid cultural ecology with distinct features of the pastoralist and rural agrarian society. The historical “Sullaiman range” with its peak “Takht-E-Sulleman” 3787 meters high, bifurcate the Pashtun and Baloch tribes in the north and east respectively. The richest range has been hosting the pastoralist cum settled communities who mainly relying on livestock as major source of sustenance and subsistent economy. Especially cows, goats and sheep are the main sources of livelihood. Till the end of colonial period, people had only one source of wealth that was the “livestock”. Therefore most of the cases of predatory and raids in this mountain range and around has been regarding the cattle raids which is called “Nattar” in Pashto and “Awar – Jangh” in Balochi. The practice of Nattar is beyond Sulleman range and particularly numerous inter and intra tribal cattle raids have been carried out in the areas called Loralai, Moosa Khail, Sherani, Ziarat, Kohloo, Derra Bugti, Barkhan, Dukki and Killasaifullah districts. The practice of raids on the adjacent neighboring community has no distinction on selecting the victims. This could be the immediate intra-tribal neighbor or may be outside ethnic boundaries and can take place in the territory of tribal/ethnic alien. In both cases cattle raids till the mid twentieth century have been noted as frequent and culturally acceptable phenomenon.

This paper tends to present an account on the practice and folkloric social theory that legitimized the practice of cattle raids locally called *Natar*. Some stories collected from the field and analysis of the folkloric genres have been used to rebuild this puzzle of cultural raids for cattle that would feed the masculine self-image of the tribal Pashtuns and Baloches across the Sullaiman Range.

Key Words: Pashtun Culture, Cattle Raid, Predatory, Pastoralist Society, Romance Narratives, Conflicts,