

**Media and Socio-Cultural Transformation in Pakistan: A
Case Study of District Karak**



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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
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By

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National University of Modern Languages

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

DEDICATED

TO

**MY BELOVED PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS
WITHOUT WHOM, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN
POSSIBLE**

Declaration

The material and information contained in this thesis are my original work. I have not previously presented any part of this work elsewhere to any other degree.

Kinza Khalid

Certificate

This thesis submitted by ***Kinza Khalid*** is accepted in its present form by the Department of Pakistan Studies, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan, as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Pakistan studies.

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Abstract

The research examines the role of media in shaping socio-cultural transformation in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. It explores how traditional norms, culture, values, and practices are influenced by increased media consumption patterns including television, social media, radio channels, and online platforms. The current study was a case study from District Karak, KP. It is a quantitative correlational research method study. The study was carried out to investigate the media and socio-cultural transformation taking a case study of Village Khurram Muhammad Zia and Karak city, KP. A total 100 people were selected for questionnaire including 50 male and 50 female. Also 40 people were selected for interviews including 20 male and 20 female. The number of people from rural and urban area was kept same. Sampling was done in one week, in the months of December 2024 and May 2025. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys (Appendix I) and qualitative interviews (Appendix X) and to capture the extent of cultural adaptation and resistance among the local population. The study showed that media and especially social media has greatly influenced the personal, social, cultural and educational life of both male and female equally. It has become a necessity and many people take its use and impacts positively. But this is also obvious that it had affected the cultural and traditional values to a great extent and had mixed modernism and globalization in the traditional values of people and areas. Despite its localized scope, the research underscores broader implications for cultural preservation in an increasingly digital world and calls for expanded studies to explore regional variations and long-term effects.

Keywords: Media, socio-cultural transformation, globalization, modernization, gender role, social media, traditional media, district Karak

Chapter NO 1

Introduction:

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), located in the northwestern region of Pakistan, is a mosaic of diverse cultures, ethnicities, and traditions. District Karak, situated within this dynamic province, encapsulates a microcosm of historical echoes and cultural nuances that have evolved over centuries. In the contemporary landscape, the region is witnessing a significant transformation influenced by numerous factors, with media playing a pivotal role in shaping and navigating these changes. As a critical driver of social change, media possesses the power to disseminate information, shape perceptions, and influence cultural narratives. A village of district Karak, KP is selected to study some of the attributes according to area and geographical position.

In District Karak, where tradition is deeply rooted and societal norms have been resilient, the impact of media on socio-cultural transformation is a compelling area of inquiry. This research seeks to explore the intricate relationship between media dynamics and socio-cultural transformation in District Karak, with the aim of unraveling the multifaceted ways in which media contributes to or challenges the evolving cultural landscape. The media has become an integral part of modern society, influencing various aspects of daily life and shaping public perceptions, beliefs, and behavior. The rapid development of media technology and the proliferation of digital platforms have significantly changed the way information is distributed and consumed. In the context of Pakistan, the media plays a crucial role in reflecting and shaping the socio-cultural landscape by providing a platform for diverse voices and stories.

Karak District in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), province of Pakistan is a unique case to study the impact of media on socio-cultural change. Historically rich in tradition and cultural heritage, Karak has seen significant socio-cultural changes in recent decades

influenced by various factors such as media, globalization, and urbanization. Understanding these dynamics is essential to understanding the broader cultural changes taking place in the region.

Media platforms have emerged as a powerful agent of change, significantly impacting cultural landscapes worldwide. The proliferation of television, radio, print media, and more recently digital and social media platforms has revolutionized the dissemination of information, ideas and values. This transformation extends to the region District Karak, where media's influence intertwines with existing culture paradigms.

The function of the media as a tool for socio-cultural change has been broadly recognized in both academic and social conversations. In Pakistan, where the cultural values are strongly embedded in tradition and faith, the media acts as both a mirror and a driver for transformation. This research examines District Karak, a semi-urban region in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), to explore the complex connection between media and socio-cultural change.

The media landscape in Pakistan has undergone considerable transformation since the advent of television in the 1960s and the liberalization of private media outlets in the early 2000s. Due to technological advancements and greater access to digital platforms, media has emerged as a powerful tool in influencing public opinion and cultural standards. In conservative areas like District Karak, this influence appears in distinctive forms, striking a balance between maintaining traditional values and embracing modernity.

The Pakistan media, which includes television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms, plays an essential role in sharing information, entertainment, and educational material. In areas such as Karak, traditional media, particularly radio, serves as a key

information source for rural communities, whereas younger demographics are progressively using digital platforms like social media.

The Pashtun society is much more male centric as the ladies are very less allow to make their life decisions or any other decision regarding their social, economic or political life. It is greatly practiced in Khattaks among Karak as in rural areas mostly Pashtunwali code is followed. The District Karak, primarily settled by Pashtun populations, is distinguished by a vibrant cultural legacy based on Pashtunwali, a customary ethical system highlighting honor, hospitality, and social equity. The socio-cultural framework of the district is significantly shaped by religious beliefs and tribal connections, rendering it a distinctive situation for examining the influence of media on cultural change.

Historically, Karak's culture has prioritized gender roles, communal values, and conformity to social standards. Nonetheless, engagement with media has brought forth fresh concepts, resulting in a lively contrast between conventional values and contemporary impacts. This engagement offers a rich opportunity to analyze the influence of media in shifting cultural views, especially concerning gender, youth ambitions, and social advancement.

Media acts as a double-edged weapon in socio-cultural change. On one side, it fosters awareness, knowledge, and forward-thinking concepts; on the other, it confronts established customs, frequently resulting in pushbacks. In Karak, the media possesses challenged traditional gender roles, promoted youth engagement, influenced cultural identity, and exacerbated cultural hybridity. TV dramas and social media have presented different stories regarding women's empowerment, education, and involvement in public life. For instance, portrayals of knowledgeable and autonomous female figures in Pakistan dramas contest conventional ideas of gender roles. Social

media platforms have provided the youth of Karak with a means to voice their hopes and worries. This has led to a gradual change in perspectives regarding career options, education, and individual liberties.

Portrayal of Pashtun culture in the media, frequently idealize or simplified, have generated conversations regarding cultural maintenance and transformation. This duality emphasizes the necessity for a balanced representation of local customs in the media. The arrival of global culture via digital media has resulted in a mixture of local and global influences, forming a hybrid cultural identity. Thus, occurrence is apparent in clothing, speech and cultural behaviors in Karak.

In human society, education is the mean substance of development. Education is not only the start of individual knowledge, information or awareness but that is the universal strategy for the development of humankind. In many developing countries like Pakistan, the condition of study is not inspiring. In the constitution of Pakistan, education is considered as the basic right of each citizen, but gender disparity still exists here.

1.1 Problem statement:

The rationale for investigating media's influence on socio-cultural transformation in District Karak is rooted in the recognition of media transformation potential. The accelerating pace of globalization, technological advancement and the increasing interconnectedness of societies amplify the role of media in shaping cultural identities. This study is motivated by the need to comprehend how media as a catalyst for change interacts with the rich tapestry of cultural tradition in District Karak. Furthermore, acknowledging the unique socio-cultural context of District Karak where traditional values coexist with contemporary influences underscores the significance of this research. Understanding the mechanism through which media navigates cultural change

in such a region is crucial not only for academic inquiry but also for information policies, preserving cultural heritage and fostering a harmonious coexistence of tradition and modernity.

1.2 Significance of study:

This study holds significance on multiple levels. Academically it contributes to the growing body of literature on media and cultural studies by providing insight into the nuanced relationship between media dynamics and cultural transformation in a unique regional context. Moreover, the findings have practical implications for media practitioners, policymakers, and cultural stakeholders, offering a deeper understanding of the ways in which media can preserve or reshape cultural identities.

By investigating media role in socio-cultural transformation change within District Karak, this study seeks to empower local communities, fostering a dialogue that acknowledges both the challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving media landscape. The study aspires to facilitate a holistic understanding of the interplay between media and cultural transformation, providing a foundation for informed decision-making and cultural preservation efforts.

1.3 Delimitations:

This research included study from village Khurram Muhammad Zia and Karak city, KP through questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires include sets of questions from factors like media consumptions patterns/habits, perceptions of cultural representation in media, perception of media influence, impact of media on cultural identity, language and identity and interviews include questions like media consumption patterns/habits, media preferences, role of traditional vs digital media, perceptions of cultural transformation, perception and attitude, social changes, influence of globalization, urbanization, and future direction. Only 140 people were included and time constrain

was one week in December 2024 and May 2025. Also limited factors like digital and traditional media are included.

1.4 Research Questions:

The following research questions were addressed in the study.

- How did the media influence cultural practices in District Karak?
- Which type of social norms and cultural changes have occurred in Karak due to media exposure?
- Which media platforms have the most significant impact on cultural transformation?

1.5 Aims and Objectives:

The aim of the study was to highlight the media and socio-culture transformation in a village Khurram Mohammad Zia, and Karak city, KP including the aspects, by mixed-method. The objectives of the study were:

- To investigate the impact of media on cultural practices in District Karak
- To analyze the change in social norms and cultural values influenced by media exposure
- To evaluate the role of different media types in social and cultural transformations

1.6 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1.6.1 Literature review

All the data used in the study are taken from multiple primary and secondary sources including official websites, the research articles from google scholar, research gate, journals, books, case study, and PubMed with mostly focused on the last ten years literature available. Here is the selection of literature that explores the intricate

relationship between media and socio-cultural transformation. Research on the basis between media and socio-cultural transformation has been important in the context of developing nations like Pakistan. The influence of media on the culture norms, societal values, and individual behaviors is especially relevant in the areas like District Karak, where modernity and tradition coexist. With an emphasis on theoretical stances, media consumption trends, and the unique circumstances of District Karak, this literature review summarizes important studies on the impact of media on socio-cultural dynamics in Pakistan.

Since the media was liberalized in the early 2000s, Pakistan's media environment has drastically changed. Media has become an essential component of everyday life due to the rise of private television channels, the spread of social media platforms, and the adoption of digital technologies. According to the scholars like Iqbal and Shah (2017), the media in Pakistan both reflects and drives socio-cultural change, affecting public opinion on the topics like gender roles, the goals of young people, and religious customs. According to Qureshi and Ahmad (2019)¹, the media in Pakistan serves two purposes, it introduces foreign influences while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage. This dichotomy is especially noticeable in places like Karak, where contemporary concepts spread via online platforms, social media, and television dramas coexist with traditional values derived from Pashtunwali. Cultural hybridity, a well-documented phenomenon in the literature on cultural studies, is frequently the result of the blending of these influences.

¹ Ahmed, I., and Qureshi, S. (2019). "Media's Role in Cultural Hybridity: A Study of Rural Pakistan." *Journal of Cultural Studies* 14(3): 45–67.

According to Khan and Rehman (2020)², there are notable demographic differences in media use, according to studies on media consumption in rural Pakistan. Due to its accessibility and affordability, radio continues to be a popular medium in rural areas like Karak, especially among older populations. However, for entertainment and social interaction, younger generations are increasingly using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. According to Ali (2021)³, television dramas are crucial in influencing how the public views in Karak influence gender roles and family relationships. These dramas frequently portray urban lifestyles and progressive ideals, upending conventional wisdom and igniting community discussions. Like this, the emergence of digital media has made it possible for young people in Karak to engage with larger cultural and social movements, which has led to a slow change in perspectives regarding personal freedoms, work, and education.

The literature on media and socio-cultural transformation in Pakistan highlighted the important role of media in forming cultural narratives particularly in areas like District Karak. This review emphasizes the intricate and varied effects of media on societal values, youth aspiration, and gender roles by utilizing theoretical frameworks like Cultural Evolution Theory and Media Dependency Theory.

1.6.2 Theoretical Framework

The focus study is based on 2 theories such as Cultural Evolution Theory and Media Dependency Theory, which guide us in the exploration of media influence on socio-cultural transformation in District Karak. Media serves a crucial function in socio-

² Khan, H. U., and Rehman, S. (2020). "Media Consumption in Rural Pakistan: Trends and Challenges." *Asian Journal of Communication Studies* 25(4): 98–112.

³ Ali, F. (2021). "Television Dramas and Gender Perceptions in Rural Pakistan." *Pakistan Journal of Media Studies* 15(2): 78–95.

cultural change, affecting the ways in which societies adjust and develop throughout the year. 2 theoretical frameworks offer important perspectives on the interactions between media and socio-cultural change. Utilizing these frameworks in the context of media's impact in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, provides a detailed comprehension of the interplay between traditional and contemporary factors in forming cultural and social identities.

1.6.2.1 Cultural Evolution Theory

Edward Tylor, Lewis Henry Moran, and Herbert Spencer were among the initial authors on cultural evolutions. This theory, based in anthropology and sociology, suggests that culture develops progressively through adoption, innovation, and social transformation. It highlights the importance of cultural characteristics, actions, and organizations in influencing the progress of society. Cultural Evolution Theory investigates the ways in which cultural traits, practices, and institutions develop over time via mechanisms of variation, selection, and retention. It implies that cultures evolve in response to shifting environments and societal demands similarly to biological evolution. In the scenario of Karak, one can witness cultural advancement through the interaction of traditional Pashtun customs and the impact media induced modernity⁴. Historically grounded in Pashtunwali, a code prioritizing honor, hospitality, and social equality, the culture of Karak is currently influenced by the transformative power of media.

Media presents innovative concepts and practices, including contemporary gender roles, fashion styles, and ambitions for youth. For instance, dramas illustrating city life offer different stories compared to conventional rural standards. Access to international media via digital platforms has integrated hybrid cultural components into local

⁴ Boyd, R., & Richerson, P. J. (1985). *Culture and the Evolutionary Process*. University of Chicago Press.

traditions. People and communities choose to embrace media-induced changes that resonate with or improve their current cultural contexts. For instance, even as mobile phones and social media have gained widespread acceptance, some traditional values, like family unity, continue to endure.

Cultural characteristics that align with community values are preserved and incorporated into everyday activities. For example, portrayals of robust family structures in media often uphold rather than question established Pashtun cultural values. Cultural Evolution Theory emphasizes the fluidity of socio-cultural shifts in Karak, with media serving as a driving force for both preservation and change.

1.6.2.2 Media Dependency Theory

The media system dependency theory, or media dependency for short, was formulated by Sandra Ball, Rokeach, and Melvin DeFleur in 1976. Media dependency theory investigates the relationship between media and the audience, emphasizing how people and communities depend on media for information, entertainment, social interaction, and aspects of identity⁵. In Karak, the reliance on television, radio, and social media for information and entertainment highlights media dependency. This reliance differs among demographic groups, impacting socio-cultural change in unique manners. For numerous inhabitants of Karak, particularly in the countryside, radio continues to be an essential source of news and religious broadcasts. It influences public perception of social, political, and religious matters. Youth are increasingly utilizing social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp to obtain news, engage in discussions, and express their opinions. Television dramas, especially those featuring compelling social themes, have emerged as a significant form of entertainment, quietly shaping views on

⁵ Ball-Rokeach, S., & DeFleur, M. (1976). "A Dependency Model of Mass Media Effects." *Communication Research*, 3(1), 3-21.

gender roles, family relations, and professional ambitions. Media portrayals of urban living frequently inspire young people to seek modernization and question conventional values⁶.

Social media facilitates connections with wider communities, promoting exposure to various cultural customs and concepts. This has led to a show change in perspective, particularly among youngers, regarding education, work, and gender equality. Media Dependency Theory highlights the crucial role of media in influencing societal values in Karak, where the scarcity of alternative information and entertainment sources amplifiers media's impact.

This research merges Cultural Evolution Theory with Media Dependency Theory, offering an extensive framework to groups to grasp the ways in which media affects socio-cultural change in Karak; Cultural Evolution Theory describes the process of cultural transformation-how the new concepts are presented, chosen, and preserved specially in their narratives the broad change came just because of that modernization. Media Dependency Theory explains the extents of media's impact in situations where conventional information sources are scarce, and media takes a central position. Collectively, these theories provide understanding of the media's dual function as a catalyst for modernization and a guardian of cultural identity in Karak. They also emphasize the significance of balancing media content to honor local customs while promoting progressive social change.

⁶ Loges, W. E., and Melvin L. D. (1986). "The Utility of Media Dependency as a Conceptual Framework for Research on Media Systems." *Communication Research* 13(4): 399–422.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Study Design

A mixed-method approach involving quantitative survey and qualitative interview was employed. This comprehensive strategy aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the research questions.

1.7.1.1 Quantitative Phase

The survey was administered to residents of District Karak utilizing random sampling for broad representation. The survey was conducted on a sample of media content for comprehensive coverage.

1.7.1.2 Qualitative Phase

In-depth interviews were done with key information and focus groups discussion with community members provided qualitative insights into media impacts on socio-cultural transformation.

1.7.2 Study Sites

The location of study was village, Khurram Muhammad Zia, and Karak city KP, which is a rural and urban area respectively.

1.7.3 Sampling

One village and one city were selected for sampling. A total of 100 people were selected for questionnaires, utilizing a stratified random sampling technique. 30 people for interviews were selected based on demographic characteristics. Key information for interviews was also selected through purposeful sampling ensuring diverse perspectives.

1.7.4 Data collection

The survey was conducted face to face and the data was collected by questionnaire (Appendix I). It contained the factors including media consumptions patterns/habits, perceptions of cultural representation in media, perception of media influence, impact of media on cultural identity, language and identity.

The interviews were conducted in person, recorded, and transcribed through (Appendix-X). It contained the factors including media consumption patterns/habits, media preferences, role of traditional vs digital media, perceptions of cultural transformation, perception and attitude, social changes, influence of globalization and urbanization, future direction.

1.7.5 Research Method

A quantitative correlational research method was used in this research study.

1.7.6 Organizational Structure

This study section covered three chapters.

- Cultural Dynamics in District Karak
- Media landscape in District Karak
- Impact of Media on Socio-Cultural Transformation

Chapter NO. 2

CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF DISTRICT KARAK

Introduction

District Karak is situated in the southern part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Pakistan. Geographically, it is bounded to the north by Kohat, to the West by Bannu, to the Southwest by Lakki Marwat, and to the East by the Hangu region. The total area of Karak is around 3,372 square kilometers. Mostly hilly, the region is characterized by the rough hills and valleys of the Kohat Range, which naturally divide the harsh tribal territories to the west from the populated plains. Karak's climate is characterized by hot summers and mild winters. The district socio-cultural and economic environment of Karak is partly attributed to its steep topography and dry circumstances, which have also kept it isolated from major urban areas. One of the most notable geographical features of Karak is its strategic location along the Indus Highway (N-55), which connects it to major cities like Peshawar and Islamabad, which is among its most remarkable topographical features. This route is essential for the flow of people and

products, enabling commerce and other economic activity between Karak and other regions of Pakistan⁷.

According to the 2017 census of Pakistan, the population of District Karak was approximately 706,299. Just a tiny percentage of the district's population resides in metropolitan areas like Karak city, which serves as the administrative seat. The district has a population density of around 209 people per square kilometer, and most of the population lives in little settlements dispersed throughout its steep terrain⁸.

The people of Karak are Pashtuns, and they follow the Pashtunwali code, a customary set of moral principles that places a strong emphasis on virtues like honor, hospitality, and revenge. The Khattak tribe, one of the biggest and most powerful Pashtun tribes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, makes up the bulk of the population. The Khattaks are known for their strong tribal affiliations, and tribal customs continue to play a significant role in social governance and conflict resolution. Pashto is the primary language spoken in the district, reflecting its strong Pashtun identity⁹. The primary religion in the area is Islam, more especially Sunni Islam, which has shaped the moral and cultural norms of the area. Religious organizations and leaders have a significant impact on day-to-day operations and local government. Like many conservative regions of KP, Karak has a traditional societal structure with well-defined gender roles. However, as more families understand the value of female education in a society that is changing quickly, access to education has improved recently, particularly for women. According to the census

⁷ Ahmed, F. (2010). *The Tribal Structure of Pakistan: A Case Study of Karak District*. Oxford University Press.

⁸ Afridi, F. (2017). *Tribal Dynamics in Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Study of Inter-Clan Relations*. *South Asian Studies Journal*.

⁹ Ahmad, A.S. (1980). *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society*. Routledge.

data¹⁰, the literacy rate in Karak is around 60%, with a significant gap between male and female literacy. While male literacy is high (around 80%), female literacy remains lower (around 40%), although this gap is slowly narrowing with greater educational endeavors.

2.1 Cultural Dynamics: Understanding Traditions, Social Norms, and External Influences Shape Karak's Culture

Cultural dynamics refer to the ongoing processes of change and continuity within a society's cultural norms, traditions, values, and behaviors. Understanding cultural dynamics is critical in a region like Karak, a district situated in the southern part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Rooted in the Khattak tribe and Pashtun traditions, Karak's unique culture is subject to changing pressures from external factors like media, technology, and migration, as well as from internal societal trends. The purpose of studying the culture dynamics of Karak is to examine how these factors interact to shape the district's unique cultural identity. This research is significant as it contributes to a broader comprehension of the socio-cultural changes occurring in several rural areas and semi-urban areas of Pakistan.

The traditions and values of the Pashtun people, especially the Khattak tribe, characterize the cultural environment of Karak. The Pashtunwali code, an unwritten ethical and moral system plays a leading role in shaping social behavior, governance, and conflict resolution within the community. Hospitality (Melmastia), Honor (Ghairat), Bravery (Tora), and Revenge (Badal) are the key elements of Pashtunwali code that continue to guide interpersonal and tribal relations in Karak. One of the most

¹⁰ Government of Pakistan. (2017). Census Report of Pakistan. Islamabad: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

popular traditional practices in Karak is the Khattak dance, a symbol of the region's warrior heritage. Among other traditions, it is possible to mention the holding of the Jirga (council of elders that resolves disputes) and the holding of gender roles, which are often seen men to be breadwinners and breadwinners in the home, and women to oversee work in household responsibilities. However, these traditional practices are being reinterpreted due to changes in education, media production and changing socio-economic conditions¹¹.

Social norms in Karak are mostly informal and are influenced by religious and tribal values. Most of the region's population is Muslim, and Islamic teaching strongly influence daily life, social interactions, and governance. Marriage customs in Karak are another important part of the social culture. Marriage is preferred within the tribe or extended family is preferred, with arranged marriages being the norm. Despite the strength of these traditions, external influence such as urbanization and globalization are also reshaping Karak social norms.

In recent years, external influences have had a growing impact on changing the cultural landscape of Karak. Media, whether traditional or digital, has become an important agent for creating change. Television, radio, and social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp have reached even the most secluded areas of Karak, offering exposure to a variety of cultural stories and worldwide trends. This has introduced the local population to different ideas, values, and lifestyles, which may conflict with traditional standards but are also gradually being accepted.

Migration is another factor shaping Karak's culture. Many people living in Karak, especially young males, migrate to urban centers in Pakistan or abroad, particularly to

¹¹ Barth, F. (1959). *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans*. Athlone Press.

the Middle East, in search of job prospects¹². These migrants frequently come back with new cultural influences, including exposure to diverse ways of living, modern values, and global trends, which they introduce to their own local communities. The interaction of people and ideas flowing between Karak and the external world has led to a vibrant cultural exchange that is changing the traditional social structure of the district.

Technological advancements, especially in telecommunication, have continued to spread cultural transformation in Karak. The extensive utilization of mobile phones and internet services has linked the residents of Karak with the global community, enabling facilitating the exchange of information and ideas. This has had profound implications for the district's cultural identity, as traditional values are now being negotiated in the context of a globalized world.

2.2. Historical background of Karak

2.2.1 Karak's History, including its Establishment and Development

In 1982, Karak officially became a district after being separated from the Kohat District. This was the part government of Pakistan's initiative to form smaller administrative units in the KP region. The establishment of Karak District aimed to give the residents more political representation and autonomy over their local matters. The reorganization of the administration also sought to tackle the socio-economic challenges in the area, which were frequently disregarded because of its isolated position. The creation of Karak as a district brought a fresh emphasis on enhancing infrastructure, including roads, educational institutions, and medical services. The establishment of the Karak

¹² Malik, I.H. (2020). *An Anthropological Study of Pakistani Media, Society, and Culture*. Oxford University Press.

district headquarters in the town of Karak further strengthened the region's identity and administrative importance¹³.

The social and political structure of Karak has been influenced by its tribal roots, and it's incorporated into the contemporary nation of Pakistan. Throughout its history, the Khattak tribe has been significantly involved in the political affairs of the region. However, there have been significant political changes in the district, especially with the emergence of political parties like Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Awami National Party (ANP), both of which have gained influence in the local political arena. These parties have brought a more structured political system to the area, challenging the traditional tribal setup¹⁴.

In recent years, Karak has shown substantial progress in both education and economic growth. The introduction of schools, colleges, and technical institutions has enhanced the literacy levels and opened new prospects for social and economic advancement among the younger generation in Karak. Karak University founded in 2012, stands as a prominent academic establishment in the region, providing advanced education across different disciplines and contributing to the intellectual and professional development of the district. Karak's economy is reliant on agriculture, but the exploration of natural resources has broadened the local economy.

2.2.2 Migrations Patterns and Colonial Legacy

Migration patterns have historically affected Karak, particularly among the Pashtun tribes. It is thought that the Khattak tribe, who make up most of the population, moved

¹³ Ahmed, F. (2010). *The Tribal Structure of Pakistan: A Case Study of Karak District*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁴ Barth, F. (1959). *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans*. Athlone Press.

to Karak in the early middle Ages¹⁵. The rich Pashtun traditions, languages, and customs brought by these migrations still rule the cultural scene today. Cultural practices have also been exchanges because of migration within the region, which is fueled by social and economic factors.

Karak was influenced by the British colonial era in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Tribal autonomy was impacted by British policies, even though they still had indirect control over a sizable portion of the tribal territories¹⁶. Roads linking Karak to other regions and other infrastructure improvements made it easier to interact with nearby communities which resulted in minor cultural changes and exchanges.

2.3. Tribal Structure and Social Organization

2.3.1 Dominant Tribes in Karak (e.g., Khattak tribe) and their Influence on the Social Hierarchy

The Khattak tribe, one of the most well-known Pashtun tribes, is the main population of Karak, a district in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pashtun traditions are ingrained in Karak's tribal structure and social, cultural, and political dynamics of the district. The dominant tribes and their influence on the social hierarchy are described in the following sub points. In Karak, the Khattak tribe is the biggest and most powerful tribal group¹⁷. The Khattaks have long played a significant role in the district's governance and cultural identity, and they are well-known for their martial traditions. As the tribe continues to play a crucial role in dispute resolution and decision-making processes

¹⁵ Ahmad, T. (2017). *Migration and Pashtun Identity: Historical Patterns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*. *Journal of Regional Studies*.

¹⁶ Ali, S. (2019). *Colonial Encounters and Tribal Transformations in British India: A Case of KPK*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁷ Ahmad, A.S. (1980). *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society*. Routledge.

through traditional jirgas (tribal councils), their dominance in the district has influenced the local leadership structure.

2.3.2 Role of the Maliks (Tribal Leaders) and other Traditional Power Structures

The Maliks (tribal leaders) are at the center of the tribal governance system in District Karak, a Pashtun region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is based on traditional power structures. The socio-political and cultural structure of the district has historically been shaped by these leaders, as well as by other tribal elders and jirga systems. Maliks have a leading role in mediating conflicts through jirgas, or tribal councils, where they use tribal laws and traditions to resolve conflicts. Usually, they base their decisions on Pashtunwali, the Pashtun code of conduct, which places a strong emphasis on vengeance, hospitality, and honor¹⁸. Maliks oversee the fair distribution of communal resources within the tribe, including land, water, and grazing areas. Maliks have historically served as a point of contact between tribal communities and the governments, especially during British colonial rule and later administrations.

The jirga system, which is still a crucial institution in Karak for settling conflicts, resolving grievance, and upholding social harmony, heavily relies on Maliks. Especially in regions with a weak state presence, the jirga, which is frequently led by Maliks, upholds tribal traditions rather than state laws in Karak. Maliks are revered elders who are regarded as the keepers of tribal customs and cultural values, guaranteeing their survival.

¹⁸ Barth, F. (1959). *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans*. Athlone Press.

2.4 Traditional Cultural Practices

The Pashtun cultural heritage of District Karak, located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, is strongly ingrained and is distinguished by unique customs and traditions. These customs have changed over the years, reflecting historical influences, Islamic values, and the district's tribal structure. Three main facets of Karak's traditional cultural practices are discussed in detail below.

2.4.1 Marriage Customs

In Karak, marriage is an important social institution that reflects cultural values and tribal affiliations. There are several customs and rituals involved in the process, which is steeped in tradition. Elders in the family are responsible for matchmaking. In depth discussions of proposals are held, with an emphasis on reputation, compatibility, and tribal affiliation. To preserve kinship and lineage, marriages are frequently arranged within the same tribe or sub-clan. Although they are less frequent, intertribal marriages can occasionally be used to fortify alliances or settle conflicts. To guarantee respect and agreement, both families confer with their elders prior to a formal engagement¹⁹.

2.4.2 The Dowry System

The dowry (jahez) system is still in place in Karak despite Islam's emphasis on modesty in marriage. As a thank you gift to the bride's family, the bride's price, or walwar, is usually provided by the groom's family. The dowry system is regarded as an essential cultural practice, but it can put a heavy financial burden on families, especially in areas with low incomes²⁰.

¹⁹ Ahmed, S.A. (1980). *Pukhtun Society and Economy*. Routledge.

²⁰ Spain, J. W. (1963). *The Borderland of Pathan*. Karachi: Indus Publications.

2.4.3 Wedding Ceremonies

Music, dance, and close family participation are all part of ceremonies like mehndi (henna night) and mayoun (bridal beautification). A procession from the groom's home to the bride's followed by feasting and festivals marks the wedding day (barat). Following marriage, the bride moves in with her husband, frequently with blessings and music. The bride's assimilation into the extended family is emphasized by traditional customs²¹.

2.4.4 Festivals and Celebrations

Karak's cultural identity revolves around festivals and group get-togethers, which promote social harmony and uphold traditional values. Families of Karak get together to pray, eat, and exchange gifts during this celebration at the end of Ramadan. This festival, which emphasizes themes of charity, thankfulness, and unity, is distinguished by the sacrifice of animals. The impoverished neighbors and family members all receive meat²².

2.4.5 The Importance of Hospitality (Melmastia): Social Obligations and the Concept of Respect for Hospitality

A fundamental aspect of Pashtun culture, hospitality, or melmastia, is engrained in District Karak's social ethos. Melmastia, which has its roots in centuries-old customs, embodies the virtues of social cohesiveness, generosity, and respect. The Pashtun code of conduct (Pashtunwali), which establishes principles like loyalty, honor, and respect for others, is embodied in this tradition. For Karak's Pashtun populace, showing

²¹ Khan, A. (2019). "Modernization and Tribal Societies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*.

²² Rauf, A. (2020). "In Pakistan's Rural Areas, Festivals Promote Social Cohesion." *Cultural Studies Journal* 12 (3): 45–56.

hospitality is a source of pride as well as a moral obligation. Although *melmastia* is given without condition, it is culturally expected that guests will not take advantage of the host's kindness. In tribal Karak, extending hospitality can improve relations between tribes and promote harmony and collaboration. Although the essence of *melmastia* has not changed, its practice has been impacted by urbanization and economic difficulties. Sometimes the younger generation finds tradition burdensome, which causes changes in how it is conducted²³.

2.5 Language and Identity

2.5.1 The Role of Pashto as the Dominant Language in Karak and its Impacts on Cultural Identity

Because it shapes social interactions, cultural transmission, and communal solidarity, language is an essential part of cultural identity. Pashto, which is ingrained in the historical, social, and cultural fabric of the area, dominates the linguistic landscape in District Karak. However, the region's linguistic and cultural dynamics have become more complex due to the growing influence of Urdu, English, and other outside forces²⁴. In Karak, Pashto is the main indicator of Pashtun identity, representing centuries of oral history, tradition, and folklore. Most residents speak Pashto as their first language, which promotes ties with the community and a feeling of inclusion. Traditional storytelling, music, and poetry in Pashto are essential components of Karak culture.

²³ Barth, F. (1965). "Leadership in Politics Among Swat Pathans." *Monographs on Social Anthropology*, London School of Economics.

²⁴ Rahman, T. (2002). *Language Learning Among Muslims in Pakistan and North India: Language, Ideology, and Power*. Oxford University Press.

2.5.2 The Relationship between Language and Social Mobility

To effectively participate in community activities and integrate into Karak's social and tribal structures, one must be proficient in Pashto. Tribal ties frequently increase Pashto's significance in local governance and conflict settlement. Pakistan's national language, Urdu, is becoming increasingly linked to interprovincial and bureaucratic communication. Being able to communicate in English is seen as a sign of modernity and education, opening doors to higher education and employment. For the sake of wider communication and professional advancement, the younger generation is embracing Urdu and English, which occasionally causes conflicts about cultural authenticity.

2.5.3 Influence of Urdu and English due to Educations and Media

Exposure

English and Urdu are the primary languages of instruction in Karak's schools, particularly the private ones. Proficiency in the English language is frequently linked to advancement in both intellect and society. Because Urdu predominates in print and television media, Karak's populace is exposed to non-Pashto cultural material. Social media commonly uses English words and expressions, which reflects how globalization has affected the younger generation. A hybrid linguistic environment is produced by exposure to Urdu and English, even though Pashto is still essential to cultural identity²⁵. To combat the declining use of the native language in public settings, efforts are being made to promote Pashto literature and media. There are worries that Pashto's place in Karak cultural fabric is gradually being undermined due to Urdu and English's

²⁵ Rahman, T. (1996). *Pakistani Language and Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

increasing dominance. Pashto-speaking local media outlets are becoming more popular as a means of promoting linguistic pride.

2.6 Religious Influences in Karak: A Comprehensive

Analysis

The Karak district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, offers a distinctive perspective for examining the significant impact of Islam on the social norms, cultural values, and day-to-day existence. With an emphasis on religious instruction, mosques, customs, and identity, this section examines how Islamic institutions and teachings influence Karak's cultural landscape.

2.6.1 The Role of Islamic Point of View in Shaping Cultural Values and Social Norms in Karak

The foundation of Karak's social and cultural structure is Islam. Daily life is guided by the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, which uphold virtues like hospitality, difference to elders, modesty, and the well-being of the community. These ideals, which show up in both the public and private domains, have their roots in Islamic principles. In Karak, decisions about family and community issues are influenced by Islamic principles. The community's dedication to Islamic modesty is reflected in the widespread practice of customs like pardah (veiling and gender segregation)²⁶. Despite being traditional, these standards are changing as exposure to global cultures increases through education and media.

²⁶ Esposito, J.L. (2010). *Islam: Essential Information for All*. Oxford University Press.

2.6.2 Religious Education (Madrassahs), Mosques, and the Role of Religious Leaders (Ulema)

With madrassahs (Islamic schools) playing a major role, religious education is an essential part of Karak life. Madrassahs are places to inculcate Islamic values and provide Quranic education, frequently at no cost. Students, referred to as talib-ul-ilm, study the life of Prophet Muhammad (Seerah), Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), and theology (Aqeedah) in addition to memorizing the Quran. The mosque is focal point of religious life in Karak, serving as more than just a place for prayer. Ulema plays a crucial role in directing community members and influencing religious discourse²⁷.

2.6.3 Practices Related to Islamic Faith: Daily Prayers, Fasting During Ramadan, and Pilgrimage (Hajj)

In Karak, Islamic customs are ingrained in everyday life, guaranteeing that faith continues to play a crucial role in both individual and group identity. One essential practice is the observance of the five daily prayers. There is a great deal of spiritual and cultural significance to the holy month of Ramadan. Iftar, or breaking the fast, brings families and communities together and promotes unity. For many people in Karak, doing the Hajj is a treasured dream. In their communities, those who finish the pilgrimage are held in high regard and frequently take on leadership positions. The title bestowed upon them, Hajji, represents both social prestige and spiritual achievement.

²⁷ Ghaus, M. (2017). "Madrassahs' Function in Pakistan's Educational System." *Islamic Studies and Culture Journal* 5 (2): 45–60.

2.6.4 Religious Identity Shapes Interactions Within and Outside the Community

In Karak, religious identity has a significant impact on how people interact both inside and outside of their community. Islamic teachings place a strong emphasis on Ummah, or the idea of Muslim brotherhood worldwide, which encourages harmony and support among locals. The values of justice, accountability, and kindness frequently serve as a framework for social interactions.

2.7 Gender Roles and Family Structure in Karak

An intriguing illustration of how traditional and changing gender roles affect family dynamics and societal structure can be found in the Karak district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Karak's gender roles and family structure, which are firmly anchored in Islamic and Pashtun cultural traditions, are gradually changing as result of the influence of media, education, and economic pressures. This section looks at how changing gender dynamics, the extended family system, women's roles, and traditional expectations interact²⁸.

2.7.1 Traditional Gender Roles in Karak: Men as Breadwinners, Women as Caretakers

Islamic values and Pashtu traditions, which define men as the main providers of income and women as the guardians of the home family, have a significant impact on gender roles in Karak. In Karak, men are usually responsible supporting their families. They work in government jobs or agriculture, or they move to cities or other countries (especially the Middle East) in search of work. The male's role as the breadwinner is

²⁸ Moghadam, V. M. (2003). *Gender and Social Transformation in the Middle East: Modernizing Women*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

deeply embedded and represents honor, strength, and the performance of familial duties. Women are supposed to concentrate on household management, cooking, and childcare, among other domestic duties²⁹. Cultural norms that place a premium on modesty and limit women's freedom of movement in public areas serve to reinforce these roles. The widespread practice of *pardah*, or veiling and seclusion, highlights the cultural value placed on women's modesty. Despite these drawbacks, women play a crucial role in maintaining family unity as caregivers and cultural ambassadors through their child-responsibilities.

2.7.2 Role of Women in Family Decision-Making and Public Life

Although women are frequently viewed as inferior in family decisions due to traditional roles, their influence is more complex. Women are essential to informal decision-making in the home, especially when it comes to marriage, raising children, and money-related issues like savings. Women's opinions are frequently sought, especially by their husbands and sons, even though male family members typically have the last say. To increase women's participation in the workforce, governmental and non-governmental organizations are striving to improve their access to education and vocational training. Cultural resistance endures despite these developments³⁰. The conflict between tradition and advancement is highlighted by the scrutiny that women who assume public positions frequently endure.

²⁹ Critelli, F.M. (2010). "A Call for Transformation: Women's Rights in Pakistan." *Journal of Women and Social Work*, 25(3), 236-249.

³⁰ Saeed, R. (2012). "Cultural Constraints on Women's Education in Rural Pakistan." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 18, no. 3: 103–124.

2.7.3 Extended Family System and the Importance of Lineage

A fundamental component of Karak social structure, the extended family system reflects both traditional values and the significance of ancestry. In Karak, families usually live in joint arrangements, with several generations sharing a single residence. Because family members share resources and responsibilities, this arrangement promotes interdependence. In Karak, families frequently trace their ancestry back to their tribal roots, making lineage a source of pride and identity. The family and the larger community are strengthened by this emphasis on ancestry. To preserve social cohesiveness and lineage, marriages are frequently arranged within the same tribe. Ghairat, or honor, has a strong connection to gender roles and the family, especially when it comes to women's conduct³¹. The strong correlation between gender expectations and family reputation is highlighted by the perception that any perceived departure from conventional norms reflects poorly on the family's honor.

2.7.4 Shifts in Gender Roles due to Education and Media Exposure

Gender dynamics in Karak are gradually changing, despite the dominance of traditional norms. One important factor influencing change is education. Though still restricted, women's access to education is expanding, giving them the confidence to question conventional roles. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to look for work, support their families, and fight for their rights in the home and community. Increased school enrollment among girls has also been facilitated by local advocacy and government initiatives. But issues like early marriages and social opposition continue to be major obstacles. Residents are being exposed to different gender roles and lifestyles through mobile technology, social media, and television. Men are slowly

³¹ Khan, N. (2011). *Gender Dynamics and Pashtunwali in Pakistan's Tribal Areas*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

coming to terms with the fact that women can contribute to the household economy, while women are becoming more conscious of their rights and opportunities. The conflict between modernization and cultural preservation is reflected in the uneven and frequently contested adoption of new gender norms despite these influences³².

2.8 Economy and its Influence on Culture in Karak

The district of Karak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, exemplifies a changing economy driven by both contemporary global dynamics and traditional customs. The district has experienced substantial economic transformation because of migration and remittance inflows, despite its historical reliance on agriculture, livestock farming, and small-scale enterprises. Social structures, customs, and lifestyle decisions have all been significantly impacted by these shifts.

2.8.1 Traditional Economy: Agricultural, Livestock Farming, and Small-Scale Businesses

Historically, local trade, livestock farming, and subsistence farming have been the main drivers of Karak's economy. Due to a lack of irrigation infrastructure, Karak's agriculture is mostly reliant on seasonal rain. Wheat, maize, and millet are important crops that are frequently grown for local consumption. The district's rural character and limited access to contemporary agricultural technologies are reflected in the traditional farming methods with little mechanization. The economy of Karak depends heavily on livestock farming, especially the raising of cattle, sheep, and goats. It supplies milk, meat, and hides that are either sold in local markets or eaten locally. Additionally, raising livestock gives families a safety net by providing a source of income in times of financial need. Shops, tailoring, and handicrafts are examples of small businesses that

³² Ali, S. (2014). "Media's Effect on Pakistan's Traditional Gender Roles." *Journal of Gender Studies*, 23(4), 467-483.

support the local economy. These businesses are usually run by families and provide additional revenue. Rural women's role in economic sustenance within cultural boundaries is reflected in their occasional participation in home-based enterprises like weaving and embroidery³³.

2.8.2 The Role of Migration (both National and International) in Shaping Economic and Social Structures

Karak's social structures and economic environment have been significantly impacted by both domestic and foreign migration. In search of better work prospects, many Karak residents relocate to Pakistani cities like Karachi and Islamabad. The district's lack of industry's development opportunities are the main causes of this trend. To support their families and boost the local economy, migrants frequently send money home. The majority of Karak's male population is employed in the Middle East, specifically in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. These workers send back remittances that make up a sizeable portion of household incomes from low-skilled jobs like construction and housework³⁴. Social structures and family dynamics have changed because of migration. Although it offers financial security, it also results in extended family separations.

2.8.3 Economic Changes Influence Traditional Practices, like Joint Family System and Gender Roles

Traditional Karak practices like gender roles and the joint family system are changing significantly because of changing economic conditions. The traditional joint family

³³ Duflo, E., & Banerjee, A.V. (2011). *Poor Economics: A Complete Rethink of How to Combat World Poverty*. Public Affairs.

³⁴ Gazdar, H. (2007). "Livelihoods and the Rural Economy in Pakistan." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 34(2), 217-235.

structure is under threat from urbanization and economic pressures. Nonetheless, the joint family system is still common in rural regions due to cultural norms and economic interdependence. Gender roles are also being impacted by economic shifts. Traditional gender norms are gradually changing because of the increased demand for education, especially for girls, brought on by remittances and urban exposure. Women are becoming more involved in decision-making, especially in households where their contributions to domestic enterprises or farming are essential.

2.9 Cultural Impact of Migration

The socio-economic and cultural landscape of Karak has been characterized by both internal and international migration. Residents' exposure to a variety of environment has a big impact on their traditional cultural practices, lifestyle, and consumption patterns as they move to Pakistani cities or the Middle East in search of better economic opportunities. With emphasis on urbanization, the impact of expatriates, and the introduction of global trends, and the introduction of global trends, this section examines the cultural ramifications of migration.

2.9.1 Internal Migration within Pakistan: Urbanization Affects

Traditional Cultural Practices

In recent decades, internal migration from Karak to cities like Peshawar, Islamabad, and Karachi has grown significantly. Rural populations are exposed to urban lifestyles and practices through this migration, which is motivated by the desire for improved healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Traditional cultural practices are being challenged by urbanization, especially the extended family structure and close-knit communal ties that are common in Karak. Traditional cultural customs are under

threat from urbanization, especially Karak's extended family structure and strong communal ties³⁵.

2.9.2 Changes in Consumption Patterns due to Exposure to Global Trends through Migrants

Due to their exposure to international trends, migrants have significantly altered Karak's consumption patterns. Migration has exposed people to global markets, which has raised demand for consumer goods like electronic, high-end apparel, and contemporary appliances. Once regarded as luxuries, devices like satellite televisions and smartphones are now ubiquitous in many homes, indicating a shift toward consumerism. Remittances are frequently used by families to build concrete homes in place of traditional mud homes.

2.10 Media and Globalization's Influence on Culture

Globalization and the media have a growing impact on the cultural landscape of Karak, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Residents of Karak are exposed to both domestic and global cultural trends due to the increasing use of social media, television, and internet content. Significant changes have resulted from this exposure, particularly among young people, as it has challenged traditional values and changed perceptions and customs³⁶.

³⁵ Arif, G. M., and R. Amjad. (2014). "Recent Trends and Emerging Issues in Pakistani Migration and Development." *Working Paper of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics*.

³⁶ Appadurai, A. (1996). *Globalization's Cultural Aspects: Modernity in General*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

2.10.1 Exposure to National and International Media: Television, Social Media, and Online Content Shape Cultural Perceptions

Karak is now able to access a global network of information and culture thanks to the widespread availability of television, social media platforms, and mobile technology. In Karak, television is still one of the most important media outlets. While international satellite channels offer global viewpoints, national channels offer everything from entertainment to news and religious programming. Particularly among young people platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube are becoming more and more popular. Additionally, social media gives people a platform to voice their thoughts, share personal stories, and participate in larger cultural conversations³⁷. The internet has made a wide range of international content available, such as news, entertainment, and educational materials. Users can further expand their horizons by exploring global cultural trends, from Western fashion to international cuisines, through online streaming services like Netflix and YouTube.

2.10.2 Media's Role in Transforming Local Traditions, Particularly among the Youth

Local customs and cultural practices in Karak have changed because of the media, with the youth being the group most affected. Once essential to Karak's cultural identity, traditional storytelling, folk music, and poetry are progressively fading in popularity as young people turn more and more to contemporary entertainment. By encouraging youth women to seek education and careers, these representations progressively change

³⁷ Khalid, R., and Ali, S. (2020). "Social Media's Effect on Pakistani Cultural Identity." *Journal of Social Sciences in Pakistan* 40, no. 2: 123–134.

societal perceptions³⁸. Cultural expressions show a blending of traditional and modern elements. These days, Karak weddings frequently combine traditional Pashtun customs with contemporary customs, like using popular music or media-influence modern attire.

2.10.3 Global Cultural Trends Entering Karak through Films, Social Media, and New Channels

Films, social media, and other platforms have all contributed to the introduction of global cultural trends into Karak. Karak's youth are increasingly adopting global fashion trends, such as influence-popularized makeup techniques and Western-style apparel. These changes are more noticeable among the population's educated and urbanized segments. English and Urdu, which are frequently seen as languages of modernity and advancement, are becoming more and more prevalent in Karak. Younger generations' shifting linguistic preferences are reflected in the frequent use of a combination of English, Urdu, and Pashto in social media and television shows. The introduction of new culinary tastes is a result of globalization.

2.10.4 The Balance between Maintaining Traditional Values and Adopting Modern Global Practices

The preservation of traditional values in Karak is challenged by the inflow of global cultural trends. Many locals, nevertheless, try to balance embracing contemporary influences with preserving their cultural identity. The ongoing celebration of traditional festivals, adherence to Pashtunwali (the Pashtun code of ethics), and the significant influence of religious values are all examples of efforts to preserve cultural identity³⁹.

³⁸ Zada, N., and Jan, A. (2022). "A Case Study of Karak District on Media and Pashtun Cultural Transformation." *Asian Journal of Media Studies* 15, no. 3: 241–255.

³⁹ Rehman, H., and Khan, S. (2018). "Cultural Shifts and Globalization in Rural Pakistan." *Rural Studies Journal* 60: 62–70.

Community elderly people frequently stress the value of passing down customs and traditions to the next generation. Karak residents frequently selectively embrace international customs that complement their religious and cultural beliefs.

2.11 Educational and Cultural Shifts

In Karak's cultural and social fabric, education has become a transformative force. Traditional customs, attitudes, and views of cultural identity have changed because of the expansion of formal education, including both public and private schools, and the increase in literacy rates. This change is being accelerated by universities and vocational schools, especially among young people who are beginning to see their cultural heritage through a more contemporary prism.

2.11.1 Role of Formal Educations in Karak, Particularly the Spread of Government and Private Schools

The spread of formal education in Karak has had a big impact on social attitudes and cultural customs. In Karak, government schools continue to be the main educational institution, providing rural residents with reasonably priced access to a foundational education. Private schools, which offer superior facilities and high-quality instruction, have also become more widespread in recent years, particularly in urbanized areas. These educational institutions foster critical thinking and global awareness by exposing students to a variety of subjects, such as science, technology, and languages. Formal education encourages secular knowledge, but it frequently includes Islamic studies as well, reflecting the religious and cultural values of the district. This dual approach ensures that students gain modern skills while remaining rooted in their cultural and religious heritage⁴⁰. Significant cultural practices and attitudes are changing in Karak

⁴⁰ Das, J., Khwaja, A. I., & Andrabi, T. (2015). *Providing Education: An Analysis of the Educational System in Pakistan*. World Bank.

because of rising literacy rates, especially about social mobility and gender equality. Traditional gender roles have been challenged in large part by education. Women who are literate are better able to advocate for their rights and participated more in decision-making. A route to upward social mobility is education. Children's education is becoming a top priority for families, who see it as lifting their children out of poverty and ensure better futures. Meritocracy is therefore becoming more and more important, and traditional systems of status based on wealth or ancestry are becoming less and less important. Younger generations are challenging some traditional practices that they view as archaic or constrictive because of education's promotion of critical thinking.

2.11.2 The Role of Universities and Vocational Institutions in Shifting Mindsets

The existence of colleges and technical schools is also changing Karak's cultural landscape. Students' worldviews are expanded by exposure to a variety of ideas and cultures in higher education institutions. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate social norms and contemplate alternative lifestyles through courses in the humanities, social sciences, and technology. By emphasizing competencies like computer literacy, engineering, and healthcare, career opportunities are diversified and reliance on conventional economic methods is decreased⁴¹. People with higher levels of education are more likely to adopt contemporary technology and international trends, which can have an impact on their families and communities. For instance, graduates frequently launch innovative business endeavors that question the status quo or modern farming or healthcare methods.

⁴¹ Khan, A., and Rehman, H. U. (2018). "The Effect of Education on Pashtun Cultural Practices." *Rural Studies Journal* 33, no. 1: 45–56.

2.11.3 Educated Youth perceive their Cultural Identity and it differs from Previous Generations

Compared to earlier generations, Karak's educated youth have a very different understanding of cultural identity. Young people with education try to strike a balance between traditional values and contemporary influences, whereas older generations frequently stress the importance of maintaining traditions. For example, many young people still follow Pashtunwali (the Pashtun code of conduct) and celebrate cultural festivals while also embracing international fashion, technology and social trends. Youth who receive an education are more likely to feel a sense of civic duty and individual rights⁴². They are more likely to support environmental sustainability, gender equality, and social justice, frequently opposing ingrained cultural norms that run counter to these ideals. Education instills in young people a sense of civic duty and individual rights. They frequently question ingrained cultural norms that run counter to these ideals and are more inclined to support social justice, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

2.12 Challenges to Cultural Preservation

The combined effects of modernity, migration, urbanization, and Westernization pose serious challenges to Karak's cultural preservation. There is a conflict between conserving cultural heritage and adjusting to contemporary lifestyles because of these forces changing traditional values, social customs, and local identities. This section looks at how Karak culture has been impacted by urbanization, Westernization, and the decline of traditional values.

⁴² UNESCO. (2020). "Social Change and Education in South Asia." *Working Papers of UNESCO*.

2.12.1 Erosion of Traditional Values due to Modernity, Migrations, and Economic Changes

Traditional customs are dwindling as modern lifestyles, propelled by economic growth, education, and technology, gain traction. The values of elders are frequently at odds with the global trends that younger generations are increasingly following. For instance, the emphasis on communal ties is being diminished as digital communication platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are taking the place of traditional in-person meetings. Migration, both internal and international, significantly influences cultural preservation. Internal migration to cities weakens ties to traditional norms by exposing locals to a variety of lifestyles. Traditional values are changing because of the transition from subsistence farming to wage labor and small enterprises⁴³. Practices like communal festivals and share farming have been undermined by economic pressures that have made people more concerned with their own success than with the well-being of the group.

2.12.2 The Role of Urbanization and its Leads to the Loss of Communal Living and Traditional Practices

Karak's social structure has changed significantly because of urbanization. In cities, nuclear families are taking the place of traditional extended family structures, in which several generations shared a single residence. This change lessens the chance that cultural practices and knowledge, like storytelling, folk music and traditional crafts will be passed down through the generations. Public areas like hujras, or communal guesthouses, are essential to cultural life in rural Karak. As people in urban areas place

⁴³ Appadurai, A. (1996). *Globalization's Cultural Aspects: Modernity in General*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

a greater value on privacy and individualism, urbanization reduces the significance of such spaces⁴⁴.

2.12.3 The Influence of Westernization and its Impacts on Local

Dress, Food Habits, and Social Interaction

Karak's fashion tastes have been greatly impacted by westernization. Traditional clothing like shalwar kameez is being replaced by Western-style clothing like jeans and T-shirts among younger generations. Although this trend is more common among young people who live in cities and have higher levels of education, it represents a larger shift in how culture is expressed. Western eating habits are becoming more and more apparent, especially among younger people. Traditional meals prepared with ingredients that are sourced locally have been replaced by processed snacks and fast food. In addition to changing eating habits, this change lessens the cultural value of family meals and time-honored recipes that have been handed down through the years. In contrast to Karak's traditional values of collectivism, Westernization has brought about a more individualistic approach to social interaction⁴⁵. Due to their strong Western influence, social media platforms promote self-promotion and individual expression. This contrasts with the community-oriented philosophy, which places a higher value on harmony within the group and group decision-making. Even among Pashtun communities, the use of English and Urdu in communication is growing due to Western media and educational systems. Pashto's function as a conduit for regional cultural heritage may be undermined by this change in usage.

⁴⁴ Khan, S. (2020). "Urbanization's Effect on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Traditional Culture." *Journal of Social Sciences in Pakistan* 40, no. 3: 55–68.

⁴⁵ Zada, N., and Jan, A. (2022). "Cultural Changes and Westernization in Rural Pakistan: The Karak Case." *Asian Journal of Culture and Development* 12, no. 4: 121–137.

2.14 Socio-Political Dynamics and Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is significantly shaped by Karak's socio-political environment. Cultural practices and societal dynamics are influenced by the intersection of local governance structures, political parties, and tribal affiliations with national and provincial policies. This section examines the relationship between tribal allegiances and contemporary politics, the influence of political mechanisms on cultural preservation on cultural customs and practices.

2.14.1 Local Politics and Governance Structures Influence Cultural Practices

Tribal systems of government, especially the jirga system, have historically impacted Karak's cultural customs. This traditional council upholds Pashtunwali (the Pashtun code of conduct), handles community resources, and settles conflicts. The emergence of formal governance structures, such as district and provincial administrations, has reduced the jirga's significance, despite its effectiveness in maintaining cultural norms and communal harmony⁴⁶. New methods for managing resources and resolving disputes have been introduced by contemporary political systems, such as local government councils. Formal governance and indigenous systems frequently clash because of these structures' preference for legal frameworks over customs. Cultural preservation is frequently not explicitly supported by local government. Policies prioritize infrastructure and economic growth, but there are few efforts to preserve Karak's cultural legacy, such as providing funds for traditional arts or festivals. Cultural practices may be eroded because of this neglect.

⁴⁶ Khan, H. (2021). "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Cultural Identity and Governance Structures." *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 8, no. 4: 43–58.

2.14.2 The Role of Political Parties and Leaders in Shaping Public

Opinion about Cultural Preservation

In Karak, public opinion regarding cultural identity and preservation is greatly influenced by political parties and leaders. To win over voters, many leaders use cultural themes like upholding Islamic or Pashtunwali values. Political platforms are used by groups such as the Awami National Party (ANP) to promote Pashtun pride and identity. Leaders who support modernization and those who support cultural preservation are frequently seen as being in opposition to one another⁴⁷. Some leaders advocate for progressive policies that go against the grain, like education and women's empowerment. Even as outside forces drive for modernization, their influence guarantees that cultural identity will continue to be a crucial factor in political discourse.

2.14.3 Interactions between Tribal Loyalty and Modern Political

Affiliations

In Karak, tribal identity continues to be fundamental to both political and cultural life. Tribal loyalty affects community alliances, leadership choices, and voting trends. In order to guarantee that their tribe's interests are represented in local governance, tribal elders frequently play a significant role in political negotiation. Younger generations are increasingly siding with contemporary political parties, even though tribal allegiances are still strong⁴⁸. This change reflects a larger trend away from family-based

⁴⁷ Barth, F. (1965). "Leadership in Politics Among Swat Pathans." *Monographs on Social Anthropology*, London School of Economics.

⁴⁸ Rittenberg, S. (2006). "Continuity and Change in the Pashtun Tribal System." *Asian Studies Review*, 30(3), 111-126.

collective decision making and toward individual political agency influenced by exposure to national issues and education.

2.14.4 Impact of National and Provincial Policies on Cultural Practices such as Land Rights and Resource Management

In Karak, where collective ownership of resources and land is a long-standing custom, land rights and resources management regulations have a big impact on cultural practices. These customary arrangements are frequently upset by provincial policies that support privatization or extensive resource extraction, leading to tensions on both a cultural and economic level⁴⁹. Traditional systems of resources use and land sharing, for instance, may be weakened by conflicts between corporations and communities over land ownership. The role of national education policies is twofold. On the one hand, they encourage awareness and literacy, allowing the next generation to interact with concepts from around the world.

2.15 Cultural Resilience and Adoption

Karak culture is remarkably resilient, maintaining its fundamental customs while adjusting to contemporary influences. Elders' efforts, the community's dedication to cultural preservation, and intentional efforts like festivals and media representation that celebrate local identity all contribute to maintaining this balance between change and continuity.

⁴⁹ Khan, S. (2018). "Policy and Cultural Aspects of Land and Resource Conflicts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Journal of Governance and Policy in Pakistan* 5, no. 2: 25–39.

2.15.1 Karak's Culture has adapted to Changing Times while maintaining its Core Modernization

Without sacrificing its essential principles, Karak culture has changed in response to modernization. Key elements of Pashtunwali, the Pashtun code of conduct, such as honor (nang), mutual respect, and hospitality (melmastia), remain essential to social life even though contemporary influences like education, migration, and technology have changed some customs. For instance, the custom of social connectivity is being preserved in a modern format by using contemporary communication tools like Facebook and WhatsApp to plan group events. To produce hybrid forms of cultural expression, younger generations are fusing traditional customs with temporary components.

2.15.2 The Role of Elders in Preserving Cultural Narratives and Practices

Through oral history, storytelling, and the passing down of customs, elders are essential to the preservation of Karak's cultural identity. They serve as knowledge keepers, passing along the history, folklore, and traditions of the area to the next generation. In a society with few written records of cultural heritage, this oral transmission is especially important. Elders not only preserve stories but also act as community mentors and mediators. They uphold traditional values and settle conflicts by participating in jirgas, or tribal councils, which guarantee the use of cultural values in contemporary settings⁵⁰. As younger generations are exposed to different worldviews through education and the media, modernization and migration are posing a growing

⁵⁰ Rittenberg, S. (2006). "Continuity and Change in the Pashtun Tribal System." *Asian Studies Review*, 30(3), 111-126.

threat to elder authority. To bridge the generational gap, many elders, however, adjust by incorporating contemporary knowledge into their teachings.

2.15.3 Efforts to Promotes Local Culture through Festivals, Events, and Media Representation

The celebration and preservation of Karak's culture depend heavily on local celebrations and events. The region's heritage can be showcased through traditional Pashtun events like tribal gatherings, poetry recitals, and Attan (a traditional dance) performances. In the face of social change, these events also strengthen a sense of community solidarity and shared identity. Karak's cultural identity is being promoted through the media more and more on a national and regional level. The region's distinctive heritage is highlighted through documentaries, TV shows, and social media campaigns that showcase traditional crafts, music, and cuisines. Cultural education is starting to be incorporated into the curricula of Karak's schools and community organizations⁵¹. To ensure that the next generation grows to appreciate their cultural heritage, this involves teaching students traditional Pashto songs, crafts, and historical narratives.

2.16 Conclusion

This conclusion evaluates the future of Karak's cultural identity, summarizes important insights into the coexistence of tradition and modernity in the city, and emphasizes the significance of striking a balance between necessary adaptation and cultural preservation.

⁵¹ Khan, S. (2021). "Cultural Preservation through Media in Rural Pakistan." *Cultural Studies Journal* 15, no. 4: 45–63.

The traditional values of Karak, such as honor (nang), hospitality (melmastia), and the communal way of life, are intricately woven into the city's cultural identity. The jirga system, religious rituals, and the guidance of elders, who act as cultural guardians, are some of the mechanisms that keep these traditions alive. However, major changes in cultural practices have been brought about by the advent of modernity, which is characterized by the expansion of education, urbanization, and exposure to global trends.

By fostering critical thinking and creating avenues for social and economic mobility, modern education has expanded perspectives. Like this, migration, both domestic and foreign, has introduced new lifestyles and remittances, which have influenced local dress, gender role attitudes, and consumption patterns. Traditional practices have not entirely been replaced by these changes, though. Rather, a hybrid cultural framework has developed in which young people balance their local identity with global aspirations and contemporary tools like social media coexist with communal values.

The dynamic cultural resilience of the Karak people is demonstrated by their ability to incorporate modern elements without completely abandoning tradition. For example, young people are fusing contemporary music with traditional Pashto folk styles, and traditional arts and crafts are being promoted online. These adaptations show how Karak's changing cultural narratives combines modernity and tradition.

Technology and globalization are two forces that will shape Karak's cultural identity in the future. On the one hand, new cultural paradigms brought about by globalization frequently challenge regional customs. Fast food, individualistic social values, and westernized attire are becoming more prevalent, especially among the younger generation. Conversely, technological instruments such as digital platforms and social media present chances for cultural expression and conservation.

The difficulty is in preserving outside influences from overshadowing Karak's cultural legacy. Cultural pride can be greatly enhanced by initiatives such as media representation, cultural festivals, and education programs that emphasize regional customs. Furthermore, the younger generation needs to be inspired to see their heritage as a dynamic aspect of who they are that can change with the times rather than as a holdover from the past.

Cultural identity is also shaped by the political and religious leadership of the district. Karak's distinctive customs can be preserved with the support of policies that support regional arts, crafts, and language. In a similar vein, religious authorities can promote harmony between preserving Islamic principles and accepting essential social and economic reforms.

At the intersection of tradition and modernity, Karak faces both opportunities and difficulties. Its people's adaptability and resilience are demonstrated by the coexistence of these forces. But the way forward necessitates a conscious attempt to embrace the advantages of modernization while maintaining the fundamental principles of Karak culture.

It is imperative that the district's rich legacy, which is firmly anchored in Islamic principles and Pashtun traditions, be honored and transmitted to upcoming generations. At the same time, meeting the socio-economic demands of a world that is changing quickly requires adjusting to globalization and technological breakthroughs. Karak can guarantee that its cultural identity will be alive and well in the years to come by cultivating a balance between adaptation and preservation.

MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN DISTRICT KARAK

3. Introduction

The Status of women varies in different regions and classes of Pakistan due to unequal social and economic development and effect of servitude and tribal systems on women lives. There is overall improvement in status of women in Pakistan as compared to previous record due to increase in women education and awareness. Social and religious groups are also greatly denouncing honor killing and domestic violence. Judicial system has also delivered strict orders for crimes against women.

3.1 Media Landscape in District Karak

The media scene in Karak is not as developed as in other urban areas of Pakistan, but it has been greatly impacted by the widespread growth of media channels throughout the century. In the past, oral storytelling, poetry, and religious sermons were the main forms of communication and cultural exchange in the district. Nevertheless, the emergence of electronics media, social media platforms, and mobile communication networks has significantly changed how people in Karak access and interact with information.

In Karak, traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers are the primary forms of communication, but their effectiveness is hindered by the challenging geography and limited infrastructure in remote areas⁵². Historically, state-run channels like Pakistan Television (PTV) have been the primary source of news and entertainment for the people of Karak. However, private television channels and regional media have

⁵² Malik, I. (2006). *Pakistan: Modern Media and Traditional Society*. Oxford University Press.

become increasingly popular in recent years, offering more localized content that addresses the district's Socio-Political issues. Radio, especially community-based stations, also plays a crucial role in reaching out to rural populations with limited access to television.

The age-era-introduction of mobile phones and internet access has brought about the popularity of social media channels like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube, particularly among young people. These platforms are not just for entertainment but also for discussing politics, sharing cultures, and organizing social movements. They enable the sharing of local content, enabling the residents of Karak to both create and consume media that represents their cultural heritage.

The media environment in Karak encounter obstacles, including restricted internet access, lower literacy levels, and the prevalence of conservative social norms which can constrain media freedom at times. The influence of these media channels on the district's Socio-Cultural framework is still developing, as traditional values frequently conflict with modern perspectives propagated by National and Global media⁵³. Conclusively, the media environment in Karak is changing, influenced by both conventional communication methods and contemporary digital technology. It is crucial to comprehend the continuous socio-cultural changes within the district. The correlation between media consumption and cultural identity in Karak is vital for examining the district's adjustment to broader national and global development.

3.1.1 Purpose of Studying Media in Karak

Studying media in District Karak is essential for comprehending the changing dynamics between modern communication tools and traditional cultural practices in this

⁵³ Khan, A. (2019). "Media, Youth, and Social Change in Rural Pakistan." *Journal of Rural Development*.

historically significant yet relatively overlooked area. With the increasing pervasiveness of media throughout Pakistan, Karak has not been exempting from these transformations, albeit the local population's rural lifestyle and geographical seclusion have shaped the ways media influences them.

The Primary purpose of studying media in Karak aims to examine how different media platforms such as TV, radio, newspapers, and social media impact the cultural identity, social norms, and political involvement in the district. Media serves as a means of both sharing information and providing entertainment, and it significantly influences the modernization process, shaping people's perspectives on education, politics and social conduct. The emergence of electronic and digital media in Karak has brought in new concepts and external influences, resulting in changes in cultural outlooks and the balancing of traditional values with contemporary standards⁵⁴.

Furthermore, it is crucial to comprehend the media environment in Karak to evaluate its impact on connecting rural and urban communities. Due to limited infrastructure and lower literacy levels, media access is not informed, raising queries about how various demographic group in Karak, such as men, women, and youth, interact with media. Analyzing these trends helps reveal inequalities in media access and its influence on shaping public opinion, particularly in a region where conservative tradition and tribal dynamics significantly shape public life.

Another significant rationale for researching media in Karak is its impact on promoting societal transformation and engagement in politics. Recently, the rise of mobile phones and social media has enabled more involvement in national conversations, offering the youth in Karak a means to participate in wider socio-political discussions and interact with social justice, education, and rights movements. Analyzing media's impact on

⁵⁴ Khan, S. (2021). "Cultural Preservation through Media in Rural Pakistan." *Cultural Studies Journal* 15, no. 4: 45–63.

Karak's integration into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan's evolving media ecosystem is crucial, whether as a tool for social activism or cultural preservation.

Ultimately, analyzing the media environment in Karak is crucial for understanding how the district is changing in response to modern communication technologies. The influence of media in shaping social and cultural narratives in a place like Karak provides understanding of the intricate relationship between traditional and modernity, as well as the overall effects of media on rural societies in Pakistan. Comprehending this process can help develop fairer media access strategies and aid in regional development endeavors.

3.2 Evolution of Media Sources

3.2.1 Traditional Media Platform

The evolution of media in District Karak, a region with historical and cultural importance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), started with conventional media outlets that were crucial for communication and cultural diffusion. Prior to the rise of modern electronic and digital media, oral traditions like storytelling, poetry, and religious sermons were the main ways information was shared. Embedded in the Pashtun cultural and tribal heritage, these customs function not just as amusement but also as means for upholding history, imparting ethical guidance, and strengthening societal principles⁵⁵.

In addition to oral traditions, radio became one of the earliest mass media outlets in Karak. During the mid-20th Century, state-controlled radio, specifically Radio Pakistan, served as a vital source of information, learning, and amusement for the people of Karak, who have limited newspaper access due to low levels of literacy.

⁵⁵ Ahmed, N. (2017). "The Function of Media in Forming Socio-Cultural Standards in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Communication Studies Journal*, 12(3), 45–58.

Radio, reaching rural and remote areas, acted as a means of spreading information, religion, and folk music, helping to maintain local culture. Furthermore, despite being limited in scope, community radio started to play a crucial part in local communication and closing information disparities. Even with the emergence of modern media in recent years, these traditional platforms maintain cultural importance, particularly for older individuals. Their presence shows the evolution of communication in Karak, demonstrating the simultaneous existence of traditional and modern communication methods.

3.2.2 Introduction of Modern Media

The introduction of modern media in District Karak represented a notable transition from conventional means of communication to advanced, technology-based channels. The introduction of television in the late 20th century, along with satellite channels, mobile phones, and social media, started to reflect national trends in Pakistan within Karak's media environment. Television emerged as a crucial platform for broadcasting news, entertainment, and educational content to a broader audience, bringing international programming to the region⁵⁶. Private television channels like GEO News and ARY Digital, particularly after 2002, offered different perspectives and introduced Karak to discussion on a national and international level.

The increased prevalence of mobile phones in the early 2000s led to a substantial level of connectivity in Karak, enabling individuals to utilize the internet and popular social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube. These platforms, available in remote areas as well as enabled the residents of Karak, especially the young

⁵⁶ Malik, I. (2006). *Pakistan: Modern Media and Traditional Society*. Oxford University Press

population, to interact with international cultures, receive up-to-date information and take part in social movements. The younger generation has been greatly impacted by the introduction of social media, providing opportunities for political involvement, cultural expression and socializing. Nevertheless, infrastructure difficulties and Socio-Cultural norms still restrict media accessibility for certain groups, especially women in traditional households, despite these advancements. In general, the development of contemporary media in Karak has led to significant shifts in how information is accessed and distributed, greatly impacting the socio-cultural environment of the area.

3.3 Media Consumption Patterns in District Karak

3.3.1 Types of Media Platform Consumed

In District Karak, the media consumption patterns in district Karak have changed dramatically over the past few decades, moving from traditional to more contemporary platforms. Being a comparatively rural region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Socio-Economic status, literacy rates, and the accessibility of infrastructure all have an impact on the kinds of media that are consumed there. In Karak, radio, oral storytelling, and community meetings have historically dominated media and information sharing⁵⁷. But as technology has improved and more people have access to contemporary communication tools, the media landscape has become much more varied.

3.3.1.1 Radio

Radio remains an essential medium for many in Karak, especially in rural areas where access to other media may be restricted and literacy rates are lower. A lot of people use FM stations and Radio Pakistan to get news, entertainment, and religious content. Older

⁵⁷ Khan, S. (2020). "Media and Rural Development in Pakistan: A Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*.

generations and those with limited access to television or the internet favor radio because of its affordability and portability.

Radio Aman 88.4 according to Facebook (that station plays a mix of information and music with the goal of bringing peace and education to the society of Karak KP.

FM radio station was launched at Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak. The FM 98.6 radio station was launched by the Deputy Commissioner Shah Rukh Ali Khan and Vice Chancellor Dr, Mirza Jan. At the inauguration events, the Vice-Chancellor said that that station will mainly broadcast educational programming and will be used to support local educational initiatives.

FM 93 and FM 101, which are widely available throughout Karak and KP. These stations offer a variety of entertainment, cultural, and news programming. A radio station like Mashal transmits to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pashto. Radio liberty, a division of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, started it on 2010. Programs on Radio Mashaal include documentaries, investigative journalism, and call-in-shows.

3.3.1.2 Television

Television is another significant medium, particularly in urbanized parts of Karak and among more affluent households and in Karak's urbanized areas. Television has become a vital source of information and entertainment since the introduction of satellite TV, private news channels, and entertainment networks like GEO, ARY, and PTV. In Karak, news, religious programming, and cultural performances significantly impact public opinion. Television is becoming more and more popular, especially with families, thanks to its visual appeal and variety of content.

3.3.1.3 Mobile Phones and Social Media

Mobile phones and social media have grown quickly, particularly as smartphones and reasonably priced data plans become more widely used. The most widely used

platforms, especially by young people, are Facebook, WhatsApp, and You Tube. Users can now create and share content in addition to consuming it, making media consumption more participatory and interactive thanks to social media⁵⁸. It has given Karak's youth access to social activism, education, and cultures around the world. Additionally, because they provide more individualized and on-demand media consumption, mobile phones have emerged as the main source of news, entertainment, and even educational content.

3.3.1.4 Print Media

Print media, such as newspapers, remains less consumed in Karak due to lower literacy rates and a preference for audio-visual media like radio and television. Nonetheless, educated people, public servants, and those with an interest in regional and local politics do read local Urdu newspapers and publications.

3.3.2 Demographics of Media Users

In District Karak, media consumption is shaped by a variety of demographics factors such as age, gender, education, income levels, and urban-rural divides. The majority of Pashtun population of Karak, which is a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), adheres closely to traditional values and customs, which has an impact on how various groups in the district engage with the media. The most active users of contemporary media, particularly digital platforms like social media, are the younger generation in Karak, especially those between the ages of 18 and 35. Younger people are more likely to use Facebook, WhatsApp, and You Tube for communication, entertainment, and news consumption as smartphones and mobile internet access increases. As a result of their increased exposure to international media influences, this group is also more likely to

⁵⁸ Rahman, T. (2017). "The Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion in KPK." *The Journal of Rural Communication*.

interact with both domestic and foreign content⁵⁹. On the other hand, the older generation, especially those over 50, tend to rely more on conventional media, like television and radio, for news and entertainment. Because of its accessibility and the area's long-standing reliance on audio media for information dissemination, the elderly still widely use radio.

In Karak, gender has a big impact on how people consume media. Women frequently have limited access to public spaces and, consequently, media platforms because of conservative regional attitudes and traditional societal norms. In Karak, women's media consumption is usually more confined to the home, whereas men have greater access to a wider range of media, such as newspapers, social media, and television⁶⁰.

Educational background strongly influenced media consumption in Karak. Higher educated people are more likely to interact with a variety of media platforms, such as print media, online news portals, and social media, particularly who have completed college and university.

3.3.3 Income Levels and Media Consumption

Income levels also determine access to media in Karak. Higher-income households are more likely to have smartphones, mobile internet, and satellite television, which allows for a wider variety of media consumption. Conversely, because free-to-air television and radio are more affordable, lower-income households are more likely to rely on these media. However, mobile phones are now more prevalent across all income levels; many

⁵⁹ Rahman, T. (2019). *Media and Society in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*. Islamabad: National Press.

⁶⁰ Yousafzai, Z. (2021). "Digital Media Consumption in Rural Pakistan: The Case of KPK." *Journal of Media Studies*.

low-income families now own simple smartphones that give them access to online content and social media.

3.3.4 Urban-Rural Divide

The urban-rural divide is another critical factor in media consumption patterns in Karak. Urban dwellers have better access to contemporary media platforms like social media, mobile internet, and television, especially those who reside in the more developed parts of the district. However, because of infrastructure issues like poor internet connectivity and lower smartphones penetration, rural residents are more likely to rely on traditional media, like radio, and have less access to digital platforms⁶¹.

Almost 50 questionnaires were conducted. 50 from rural area and 50 from urban area but the result was almost same. Nowadays 85% of people use social media in both areas.

3.4 Role of Media in Shaping Cultural Narratives

3.4.1 The Intersection of Traditional and Modern Narratives

There are opportunities and challenges at the nexus of Karak's traditional and contemporary narratives. Modern media platforms offer a space for alternative viewpoints and social change, while traditional media still serves to uphold ingrained cultural values. The continuous cultural change in Karak, where media both preserves and promotes cultural identity, is reflected in this dynamics interplay between old and new narratives.

In District Karak, as in much of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), religious content in the media plays a central role in shaping and reinforcing cultural narratives. Islamic

⁶¹ Khan, A. (2020). "Media Usage Patterns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *South Asian Studies Journal*.

teachings and the region's cultural identity are strongly entwined, and media outlets are an important medium for spreading religious knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Religious content has long been promoted by traditional media like radio and television, but the reach and impact of religious discourse have increased thanks to contemporary digital platforms⁶².

3.4.2 Traditional Media and Religious Content

In Karak, radio and television, particularly national broadcasters like Pakistan Television (PTV) and Radio Pakistan, have historically been primary channels for religious programming. These platforms broadcast religious talks, Quranic recitations, and Islamic talk shows that discuss everyday issues from an Islamic perspective. By promoting long-standing Islamic customs, religious scholars frequently use these forums to interact with the public on issues of morality, ethics, and social conduct, thereby preserving cultural continuity.

In Karak's rural areas, where access to more contemporary media may be restricted, radio is still widely consumed. The Islamic values that form the basis of much of Karak's cultural identity are thus reinforced by radio, which has shaped local narratives and contributed significantly to the preservation of religious and cultural values.

3.4.3 Traditional vs Modern Narratives

In District Karak, a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) with strong traditional values, the media has a big influence on how cultural narratives are shaped and changed. While modern media, especially social media, has started to question these narratives by bringing in fresh perspectives and international influences, traditional media, like radio

⁶² Rahman, T. (2018). *Media and Cultural Identity in Pakistan*. Islamabad: National Book Foundation

and television, have long functioned as platforms for upholding cultural norms, religious values, and societal expectations.

3.4.3.1 Traditional Narratives

Historically, media in Karak has played a vital role in reinforcing traditional cultural values. For a long time, content that is in line with local traditions, Islamic teachings, and social norms has been distributed through national television networks like PTV and local radio programs. For example, family values, gender roles, and respect for elders have been promoted through religious programming, folk music, and culturally significant dramas. These conventional media outlets prioritize preserving cultural continuity by highlighting community cohesion and adherence to long-established social structures⁶³.

Radio is still the main source of information in Karak's rural areas, where access to contemporary digital media is still restricted. Here, oral storytelling and community gatherings that are televised on local stations frequently serve to maintain and strengthen traditional narratives. In this situation, traditional media play a dual role in preserving and educating the Pashtun people's cultural identity, which is intricately linked to regional traditions, language, and tribal ties.

3.4.3.2 Modern Narratives

In recent years, more contemporary cultural narratives have emerged in Karak because of the growth of digital media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp in recent years, especially among the city's youth and educated populations. Younger generations can engage with a variety of perspectives, access global content, and take part in debates that question the status quo thanks to social media. These platforms

⁶³ Khan, I. (2020). "Digital Media and Youth: Navigating Cultural Change in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Journal of Social Media and Cultural Studies* 7, no. 2: 34–56.

frequently introduce contemporary narratives that advocate modern lifestyles, gender equality, and individualism-ideas that occasionally run counter to the region's traditional cultural fabrics⁶⁴.

For instance, many young people in Karak have been able to embrace different cultural norms, such as more liberal views on gender roles, education, and career opportunities, thanks to their exposure to global media content through social media platforms. Debates concerning cultural changes versus preservation have also been triggered by this exposure, as younger generations attempt to balance the demands of modernity. As a result, social media has changed how people view themselves in the larger framework of cultural change, in addition to how they consume information.

3.4.4 Modern Media and Religious Discourse

The introduction of digital media in recent years has changed how people access and use religious content. In Karak, social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have gained popularity for religious discussion, especially among the younger population. Preachers and religious scholars can reach a wider audience by providing lectures, sermons, and discussion on current events from an Islamic perspective on these platforms. These platforms' adaptability makes it possible for discussion, interaction, and the exchange of differing opinions on religious issues, fostering a more vibrant atmosphere for religious participation⁶⁵.

Additionally, social media has made it simpler for people to obtain religious content whenever they want, which has increased the amount of religious content that is

⁶⁴ Khan, A. (2019). "Media, Youth, and Social Change in Rural Pakistan." *Journal of Rural Development*.

⁶⁵ Saeed, H. (2019). "Religious Broadcasting and Cultural Identity in Pakistan." *Journal of Islamic Media Studies* 10, no. 2: 135-155

consumed. Furthermore, the accessibility of material from international religious scholars has infused local religious discourse with fresh perspectives and debates, potentially influencing cultural attitudes and customs. Younger people can interact with religious teachings in ways that respect heritage while also reflecting the complexity of contemporary life thanks to this accessibility.

3.4.5 The Role of Religious Content in Cultural Transformation

Religious content in the media serve as both a preserver of tradition and a mediator of cultural transformation. Even as contemporary influences permeate Karak's cultural landscape, religious media content serves as a stabilizing force in the face of social change, guaranteeing that Islamic values continue to play a significant role in day-to-day life. Globalization and technological advancements are driving socio-cultural change in the region, and religious media continue to play a critical role in influencing how people understand and negotiate these changes within the parameters of their Islamic identity.

However, religious content can also aid in cultural adaptation by providing an Islamic perspective on modern social issues like women's rights, education, and technological advancements. This offers a framework for combining contemporary issues with enduring cultural and religious values, enabling traditional religious values to change in combination with shifting social norms⁶⁶.

3.4.6 Entertainment Media

Entertainment media plays a vital role in shaping cultural narratives, especially in areas like District Karak where traditional values and contemporary influences coexist. Entertainment media, including music, movies, television dramas, and digital content,

⁶⁶ Abbas, Z. (2021). "The Role of Media in Shaping Islamic Discourse in Pakistan." *Islamic Studies Quarterly*.

has long served as a medium for reflecting and influencing societal values, attitude, and behaviors in Pakistan. In addition to reflecting cultural realities, entertainment media also affects how people view and adjust to shifting cultural landscapes by portraying social issues, gender roles, family dynamics, and cultural practices.

The Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) was established in 1964, signaling the start of television broadcasting in the country. It emerged as the main medium for broadcasting dramas and various entertainment programs, having a major impact on Pakistani culture and society. The initial dramas aired on PTV featured straightforward production but were filled with engaging stories, emphasizing social issues, family dynamics, and ethical lessons. The 1980s and 1990s era are frequently known as the Golden Age of Pakistani dramas. This period was marked by exceptional scripts, unforgettable performances, and themes that struck a chord with viewers. With the emergence of private channels in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Pakistani dramas experience substantial transformations in the production quality, storytelling methods, and subject matter. The sector welcomed a wave of new talent, creative storylines, and a movement towards more modern topics. The development of Pakistani dramas from their straightforward origins to their intricate and varied plots today is indicative of the expansion of the sector. It demonstrates how well the nation can adjust to shifting social mores and technical breakthroughs. Pakistani dramas have continued to serve as a social mirror throughout their existence, providing glimpses into the nation's culture, struggles, and ambitions.

Long before Pakistan was established in 1947, the history of Pakistani theater dates to the ancient and medieval periods. Local customs, storytelling, and folk performances are all intricately entwined with the history of theater in the area. Pakistani theater has changed over time, embracing different cultural influences and adjusting to shifting political and social environments. The 19th century Parsi theater was one of the biggest

influences on contemporary Pakistani theater. It was renowned for fusing dance, music, and storytelling while showcasing both modern social issues and tales from Indian and Persian epics⁶⁷.

Theater was used to entertain the public, explore social issues, and express the new national identity after Pakistan was established in 1947. Traditional performances coexisted with the rise of a more formal, urban theater culture in the early years. Ajoka theatre, which was established in 1984 by Madeeha Gauhar and her husband Shahid Nadeem, is a shining example of Pakistani theater that prioritizes peace, human rights, and social issues. Ajoka's plays are an essential part of modern Pakistani theater because they frequently address taboo topics and question social norms.

3.4.7 Traditional Entertainment Media in Karak

In the Past, television dramas and films were the most significant sources of entertainment in District Karak. Both well-known private channels and state-run networks like Pakistan Television (PTV) have significantly influenced how social narratives are portrayed and shaped. Particularly, PTV dramas have played a significant role in promoting cultural values that are based on tradition, family, and respect⁶⁸.

The entertainment media in the region has also provided stories that uphold religion principles and national cohesion, preserving cultural continuity in the face of modernization. But as private channels expanded rapidly and the nation's media

⁶⁷ The Express Tribune. "Do Pakistani Dramas Reflect Our Society?" *The Express Tribune*, October 22, 2023. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2442590/do-pakistani-dramas-reflect-our-society>.

⁶⁸ Khan, A. (2020). "The Role of Pakistani Dramas in Cultural Transmission." *Media Studies Journal*

landscape changed, the variety of content expanded, offering stories that occasionally questioned established conventions and represented shifting social values.

3.4.8 Modern Entertainment Media and Cultural Transformation

In recent years, District Karak has been exposed to global media landscape in recent years due to the growth of digital platforms such as You Tube, Netflix, and other online streaming services⁶⁹. A vast array of content is now available to younger generations, ranging from international films and television series to local television dramas. New cultural concepts, ways of living, and viewpoints have been brought about by this exposure to international entertainment, occasionally causing conflict between more liberal ideals represented in international media and more traditional cultural norms.

Modern entertainment media often parents' themes of individualism, romantic relationships, and female empowerment, which can be in contrast with the more communal and patriarchal values traditionally upheld in Karak.

Additionally, District Karak's cultural consumption patterns are influenced by how language, fashion, and contemporary lifestyles are portrayed in entertainment media. Cultural norms in the area are subtly but significantly changing because of people, especially young people, consuming these media and adopting elements of the culture they see, including speech patterns, fashion sense, and social behaviors.

3.4.9 Culture Transformation

Culture transformation refers to the substantial shifts that occur over time in a society or community's values, customs, beliefs, and general way of life. Culture transformation is a building awareness of our organization's core values, recognizing when we were or are not in line with them, and creating workable plans to communicate

⁶⁹ Zubair, M. (2019). "Impact of Global Media on Local

and promote the adoption of any required changes are all part of the continuous process of cultural transformation.

Every change modifies a society's social structure. Changes in nature, social institutions, social behavior, or social relations. Modifications that change a society's cultural norm. It could involve societal changes brought about by discoveries, inventions, innovations, and interactions with other societies. Such changes have many aspects, positive and negative, but our lives are now more comfortable and easier than they were in the past⁷⁰. Through technological advancements, in our home, we use a variety of electronic devices and machines like microwaves, computers, laptops, smartphones, digital watches, and so many other advanced technologies. Now we can access information anywhere in the world. In the past, communicating with friends or family who lived overseas was really challenging. However, they are now only a click away. The lives and lifestyles of the Pakistani people are revolutionized by such change.

3.4.10 Impact of Entertainment Media on Cultural Narratives

Entertainment media has a complex impact on how cultural narratives are shaped. It serves as a change agent, progressively affecting public opinion and behavior, as well as a mirror, reflecting the values of society as it currently exists. While exposure to contemporary and international entertainment promotes a reexamination of those values, the ongoing consumption of traditional dramas in District Karak serves to reinforce cultural expectations. As a result, the region experiences a dynamic interaction between the adoption of new cultural elements and the preservation of tradition.

⁷⁰ Appadurai, A. (1996). *Globalization's Cultural Aspects: Modernity in General*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

3.5 Media and Political Awareness

3.5.1 Local and National News Channels

In Pakistan's modern society, the media is an essential medium for raising public political consciousness. This is especially true in District Karak, where local and national news outlets are essential for educating the public about civic duties, political issues, and governmental policies. Individuals' political consciousness in Karak and beyond has been shaped by the transformation of media from traditional forms to a dynamic digital landscape, which has had a significant impact on the dissemination and consumption of political information.

3.5.1.1 Local News Channels

In District Karak, local news outlets serve as an essential conduit between the populace and the larger political discourse. These channels concentrate on topics that have an immediate impact on the local populace, such as local government initiatives, development projects, and law and order issues. Programs that emphasize community issues and local governance.

Furthermore, local news outlets frequently highlight the opinions of community members and local leaders, enabling a more complex view of the political environment. This localized coverage allows citizens to actively participate in the democratic process and promotes civic engagement⁷¹.

3.5.1.2 National News Channels

On a larger scale, National News outlets like Dawn News, ARY News, and Geo News are crucial in influencing political consciousness. They guarantee that citizens are

⁷¹ Katz, E. (2009). "The Social Context of News: Media and Political Knowledge." *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 70-90.

informed about the nation's Socio-Political climate by offering thorough coverage of national issues, political discussions, and governmental policies. People in District Karak can place local problems in a broader national context by analyzing national events, such as legislative developments or election procedures.

Additionally, because national news channels use social media and digital platforms to interact with a larger audience, their reach goes beyond traditional broadcasting. Real-time updates and interactive discussions are now possible thanks to this accessibility, which has completely changed how people consume political news. Young people are encouraged to express their opinions and actively participate in political issues using social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to share news stories.

3.5.2 Impact on Political Awareness

In District Karak, the combined impact of National and Local News outlets greatly raises political consciousness. In addition to being informed about current affairs, citizens are also urged to assess political information critically. Fostering an informed electorate that can take part in democratic processes depends on these critical engagements. Higher media consumption has been linked to higher levels of political engagement and knowledge among citizens, according to research.

Furthermore, a more informed populace is fostered by the inclusion of a range of political viewpoints in both local and national media⁷². It eventually promotes a more dynamics democratic culture by enabling people to comprehend various political philosophies, party manifestos, and policy discussion. In this regard, the media facilitates political dialogue, encouraging public participation and well-informed decision—making.

⁷² Norris, P. (2000). *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3.5.3 Social Media as a Political Platform

In recent years, social media has become a potent instrument for political awareness and engagement in recent years, especially in Pakistan, where it has revolutionized the way people engage with political information and take part in the democratic process. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have played a significant role in influencing political consciousness among young people and the public in District Karak by giving them forum to voice their opinions, rally support, and participate in political discourse. Social media sites are alternate information sources that frequently supplement more established media channels. They make it possible for news and political commentary to spread quickly, keeping the public informed about current affairs, governmental regulations, and election procedure⁷³.

Social media also serves as a forum for political discourse, allowing users to discuss policies, exchange viewpoints, and have conversations. By encouraging people to critically assess information in addition to consuming it, this interaction promotes a culture of political awareness. Social media use has been linked to greater political awareness and active participation in democratic processes, according to research. Because of the platform's interactivity, users can ask questions, look for clarification, and share their thoughts on important political issues.

3.5.4 Mobilization and Political Participation

Social media not only increases awareness but also acts as a stimulant for political mobilization. Social media platforms help organize rallies, protests, and awareness campaigns during election campaigns or other major political events. Social media, for instance, has been instrumental in encouraging young people to vote and take part in

⁷³ Ali, S., & Zafar, F. (2018). "The Role of Media in Political Awareness: A Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Pakistan Journal of Media Studies*, 9(1), 50-56.

the democratic process during elections. As demonstrated in numerous cases throughout Pakistan, viral campaigns have the potential to dramatically boost political engagement and voter turnout.

Additionally, social media gives underrepresented voices a forum that traditional media might not sufficiently represent. Diverse viewpoints can be heard thanks to this inclusivity, which enhances political discourse⁷⁴. By sharing their thoughts and experiences, people from different socio-economics backgrounds can help the public develop empathy and understanding. Social media provides an alternative platform for engagement in District Karak, where traditional hierarchies frequently control political discourse. This allows citizens to express their concern and push for change.

Social media has many advantages for raising political awareness and participation, but it also has drawbacks. The spread of false information and fake news has the potential to skew public opinion and impair reasoned decision-making⁷⁵. As in other areas, the dissemination of false information has the potential to sway public opinion and cause confusion in District Karak, so media consumption must be approached critically.

3.6 Influences of Digital Media and Social Media

3.6.1 Mobile Phone and Internet Penetration

In Pakistan, the widespread use of mobile phones and the quick growth of internet connectivity have drastically changed social interaction, information sharing, and

⁷⁴ Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2012). "Social Media Use for News and Civic Engagement: A Study of the 2011 Chilean Student Movement." *Journalism Studies* 13, no. 5-6 (2012): 820-840.

⁷⁵ Allcott, H., and Gentzkow, M. (2017). "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31, no. 2 (2017): 211-236.

communication styles. Digital media usage has increased dramatically in District Karak, radically changing how locals interact with content, take part in public discourse and construct their cultural narratives. The growing use of mobile devices and the internet, which have made information more accessible to all and opened new social networking opportunities, is to blame for this change.

3.6.1.1 Mobile Phones Penetration

In District Karak, mobile phones are now commonplace, and more and more locals depend on them for a variety of functions, such as entertainment, communication, and information access. Millions of users nationwide are enjoying the convenience of staying connected, according to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), which reports that mobile phones subscription rates have skyrocketed⁷⁶. In rural and semi-urban areas like Karak, where traditional media outlets might not have as much reach, mobile phone accessibility has been especially advantageous.

Social media engagement has increased because of the advent of mobile phones. Due to their ability to facilitate opinion sharing, information sharing, and community discussion, social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter have become essential to everyday communication. As a result, citizens are now better informed and able to participate in social and political issues. People feel more empowered to express their concerns and get involved in local issues because of the growing use of mobile phones.

3.6.1.2 Internet Penetration

The impact of digital media has been further enhanced by Pakistan's expansion of internet services. According to recent reports, a significant portion of the population

⁷⁶ Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). "Telecom Indicators." 2021. Accessed January 27, 2025. <https://pta.gov.pk>.

now has access to the internet, indicating a significant increase in internet penetration. Residents of District Karak now have greater access to a variety of information, including news, educational materials, entertainment, and cultural resources, thanks to this expansion.

Reliance on print and broadcast media has decreased because of the internet's transformation of traditional media consumption patterns. Because social media platforms and online news sources provide real-time updates on current events, residents are increasingly turning to them for information⁷⁷. This change promotes critical engagement with a range of perspectives in addition to improving the immediacy of information dissemination. People can gain a more sophisticated grasp of regional and national issues by having access to a variety of information sources, which promote informed citizenship.

3.6.2 Role of YouTube and Facebook

In recent years, social media sites like Facebook and YouTube have grown to be essential parts of the digital media environment, greatly impacting Pakistan's Socio-Cultural dynamics, including in areas like District Karak. In addition to offering channels for information and entertainment, these platforms have been crucial in forming communities, influencing public opinion, and promoting cultural changes. They continue to change how people engage with the world around them and have a significant impact on cultural identity, social engagement, and local discourse.

3.6.2.1 YouTube's Role in Cultural and Educational Influence

For millions of users worldwide, including those in remote places like Karak, YouTube has emerged as a vital source of knowledge, amusement, and education. YouTube has

⁷⁷ Internet World Stats. "Internet Growth Statistics." 2021. Accessed January 27, 2025. <http://www.internetworldstats.com>.

amassed a sizable user base thanks to its mobile-friendly accessibility and comparatively low data usage, providing a variety of content from entertainment and cultural programming to religious sermons and instrumental tutorials⁷⁸.

In District Karak, traditional music, folklore, and religious teachings are just a few of the cultural materials that local artists, educators, and influencers in District Karak have shared on You Tube.

3.6.2.2 Facebook's Role in Social and Political Engagement

Facebook, which remains one of the mostly widely used social media platforms in Pakistan, has also had a profound effect on the social and cultural fabric of District Karak. Facebook is a vital platform for social networking, information sharing, and community development, with millions of active users nationwide. It enables users to participate in local and national debates, expressing their opinions on Socio-Political issues in public discourse.

In Karak, Facebook has made it easier for Karak residents to establish online communities where they can exchange knowledge about social issues, cultural customs, and local events. In addition to promoting communication between traditionalists and modernists, Facebook groups devoted to regional customs, artwork, and crafts have assisted in maintaining Karak's cultural identity. Facebook's "Live" feature has proven particularly helpful for broadcasting events, such as religious sermons or cultural festivals, enabling wider community participation⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ We Are Social & Hootsuite. (2021). Digital 2021: Global Overview Report. Available at Digital 2021.

⁷⁹ Jahangir, R. (2020). "Social Media Trends in Pakistan: Understanding the Landscape." *The Express Tribune*. Accessed January 27, 2025. <https://tribune.com.pk>.

Facebook has also given activists and advocates a forum in the political sphere. Facebook is a platform that local leaders and politicians use to interact with the public directly, share updates, and mobilize support for various causes. Facebook has occasionally played a key role in planning neighborhood demonstrations or civic moments by giving people a forum to plan events, air complaints, and encourage civic participation.

3.6.3 Cultural and Social Impact

Facebook and YouTube have both changed how people in District Karak interact with social and political content and consume media. By giving users unparalleled access to a wide range of perspectives and experiences, these platforms aid in bridging the gap between regional customers and influences from around the world. They do, however, present certain difficulties, including the dissemination of false information, echo chambers, and the possible deterioration of regional cultural values because of exposure to globalized content.

3.6.4 Social media and Youth

Social media platforms all over the world, including in Pakistan, now rely heavily on their daily lives. Youth use of social media has increased significantly in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, over the past ten years, following both national and international trends. Popular platforms for communication, entertainment, education, and political participation include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Young people, who make up a sizable portion of Pakistan's population, actively participate in the production of digital narratives in addition to consuming content, influencing both their own identities and the country's larger cultural landscape⁸⁰.

⁸⁰ *Dawn News*. (2020). "Pakistan's Digital Youth: Navigating Opportunities and Challenges." *Dawn*. Accessed January 27, 2025. <https://dawn.com>.

3.6.5 Social Media as a Tool for Communication and Socialization

Social media is an essential tool for socialization and communication among the young people in District Karak. The main way to stay in touch with friends, family, and larger social circles is through platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, especially in an area where face-to-face interactions are frequently restricted by physical distances. Even in communities that are geographically separated, these platforms allow for instant communication, allowing young people to maintain relationships and take part in group activities.

In Karak, social media plays a major role in young people's socialization and identity development in an increasingly globalized world. Young people are an increasingly globalized world. Young people are increasingly balancing the influence of global youth culture with their local cultural traditions because of being exposed to a variety of opinions, fashion trends, music, and lifestyle choices. Traditional values and contemporary ideals frequently coexist in hybrid identities that result from this interaction.

3.6.6 Youth Engagement with Educational and Informational

Content

Social media's function in education and information sharing is another important facet of young people's usage in Karak. Educational content, ranging from lectures and tutorials to discussion on social and political topics, is frequently accessed through platforms such as Facebook and You Tube. These platforms bridge the gap between formal education and self-directed learning by giving young people access to resources

that might not otherwise be available in a rural setting⁸¹. For example, to stay involved in their studies during the COVID-19 pandemic, many Karak students resorted to online learning resources and social media platforms. Additionally, students collaborate academically by sharing notes, discussing assignments, and exchanging ideas on a variety of topics using platforms like Facebook groups and WhatsApp.

3.6.7 Challenges and Risks

Social media presents challenges as well as many opportunities for youth engagement. Common concerns include things like exposure to harmful content, misinformation, and cyberbullying. Additionally, there may be conflicts between local cultural values and the influence of globalized content, resulting in tensions between modern influences and traditional norms. Another issue that parents and educators in the area frequently raise is the possibility of social media addiction, which could result in fewer person encounters and physical activities.

3.7 Media Representation of District Karak

3.7.1 District Karak portrayed in National and Regional Media

Despite having a special place in Pakistan's cultural and Socio-Economic landscape, District Karak, which is part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), is frequently only partially and selectively portrayed in the country and the region's media. Public perception is greatly influenced by media representation, which has the power to either emphasize a region's complexity or simplify it into simplistic stereotypes. Both national and regional media portrayals of District Karak reflect larger trends of marginalization, frequently ignoring the area's rich cultural legacy and social advancements in favor of

⁸¹ Khan, R. A. (2019). "The Role of Social Media in Youth Engagement in Rural Pakistan." *Journal of Communication Studies* 12, no. 2: 145-160.

concentrating primarily on problems like tribalism, underdevelopment, and the influence of traditional norms⁸².

3.7.1.1 Portrayal in National Media

Karak is frequently described in the national media in terms of its Socio-Economic problems, including deprivation, inadequate infrastructure, and deficiencies in education. By highlighting the region's shortcomings and ignoring local communities' development efforts, this frame tends to perpetuate the idea that the area is underdeveloped. While these topics are certainly important, they do not provide a comprehensive picture of Karak's rich cultural life and customs. By emphasizing the district's issues rather than the resiliency and potential of its residents, such representations may lead to a distorted national perception of the area⁸³.

3.7.1.2 Portrayal in Regional Media

Regional media, especially those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), on the other hand, present a more complex picture of Karak. The rich Pashtun culture of the area is frequently highlighted in local newspapers and television programs, with particular attention paid to the traditional dance, music, and poetry of the area as well as the strong sense of community among its residents. Furthermore, local developments initiatives, political movements, and cultural events are more likely to be covered by regional media, which presents Karak as a district with a vibrant political and cultural scene rather than just a region with difficulties.

⁸² Dawn. (2020). "Challenges Facing District Karak: A Local Perspective." *Dawn News*. Accessed (10-11). <https://www.dawnnews.com>.

⁸³ Khan, I. M. (2018). "Media and Marginalization: Representation of Karak in National Media." *Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 7 (1): 50-66.

3.7.2 Media's Role in Shaping Public Perception

Local's and visitors' perceptions of District Karak are directly impacted by the selective coverage of the area in both national and regional media. The only way that many Pakistanis are exposed to Karak is through national news reports, which frequently highlight poverty, conflict, or tribal tensions, perpetuating images of instability and backwardness. In the meantime, when contemporary advancements or progressive social movements are underrepresented, Karak residents may feel more marginalized, or their cultural identity may be validated by regional media.

In this regard, it is crucial to consider how media narratives influence both the identity of Karak residents and how they are perceived by others⁸⁴. Local youth are exposed to alternative narratives about their district that go beyond traditional media portrayals as they use social media and online platforms more frequently. The people of Karak have the chance to take back control of their story and draw attention to facts of their culture and society that are frequently overlooked by the media thanks to this exposure.

3.7.3 Stereotyping in National Media

The Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) district of Karak is frequently the target of stereotyped representations in the national media, which reduces the complexity of its Socio-Cultural identity to limited and generalized frameworks. Tribalism, underdevelopment, and conservatism are the main themes of these stereotypes in the national media whether they are found in news sources, television shows, or public discussions. The region's diversity, cultural depth, and progressive aspects may be obscured by such portrayals.

⁸⁴ Rehman, H., and Khan, S. (2018). "Cultural Shifts and Globalization in Rural Pakistan." *Rural Studies Journal* 60: 62–70.

District Karak is frequently portrayed by Pakistan's national media, such as newspapers and broadcast news channels, as being backward and tribal. The narratives associated with Karak are dominated by stories about religious conservatism, honor killings, or tribal conflicts. Although these elements do exist in some form, they are frequently overstated, which distorts the district's image. The cultural, social, and economic developments occurring-such as rising literacy rates, rising youth use of digital media, and the growth of local infrastructure tend to be overlooked by this one-dimensional representation⁸⁵.

3.7.3.1 Impact of Stereotyping

Such stereotyping has a significant effect on Karak's citizens as well as how the district is viewed throughout Pakistan. People in Karak may feel alienated and marginalized because of these unfavorable depictions, especially young people who are becoming more involved with digital and international cultures but who don't see much acknowledgement of their changing identities in the local media. Since the district's potential for advancement may be overshadowed by the idea that it is stuck in the past and unadaptable. Because stereotypes backward areas might not get the attention, they need for development projects, this can have an impact on investment, tourism, and even political attention.

3.7.3.2 Efforts to Change the Narrative

In the national and regional media, attempts have been made over the years to change the stereotypes about District Karak. By emphasizing the district's cultural diversity, economic development, and the growing socio-political consciousness of its citizens, these programs seek to present a more complex and favorable image of the area. These

⁸⁵ Ali, M. (2017). "Stereotypes in Media: A Case Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Journal of Media Studies*, 10(2), 15-29.

initiatives have been greatly aided by a variety of stakeholders, such as government representatives, media experts, and local activists. The objective is to balance the limited portrayals of underdevelopment, conservatism, and tribalism that have traditionally characterized Karak in media narratives⁸⁶.

3.7.3.3 Local Media Initiatives

The local media landscape itself has made one of the biggest attempts to alter the narrative. Media outlets and regional journalists have made a concerted effort to promote narratives that transcend the prevalent stereotypes surrounding Karak. For instance, local media has reported on Karak's emergence as a major hub for the production and distribution of natural gas, highlighting the district's economic contributions to the province and the nation. These encouraging tales have drawn interest from outside the area, gradually changing opinions in the national media.

3.7.4 Government and Development Programs

The narrative surrounding District Karak has changed significantly because of government initiatives, especially those centered on infrastructure development and education. The district's reputation has shifted from under development and isolation to one of growth and modernization thanks in large part to the establishment of contemporary educational institutions and the expansion of local infrastructure, including roads and telecommunication networks. As part of an overall initiative to present a more diverse and positive image of the area, several government campaigns have also highlighted Karak's cultural heritage, including traditional Pashtun music, poetry, and festivals. In addition to preserving the district's cultural identity, these

⁸⁶ Ali, Z. (2019). "Redefining Karak: How Local Media is Changing Stereotypes." *Journal of Media and Culture Studies* 12 (3): 45-60.

programs seek to dispel the unfavorable stereotypes that are propagated by the national media⁸⁷.

3.7.5 Youth and Social Media Activism

The growing influence of social media in Karak is another important force behind change. Young people in the district, many of whom are active on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and You Tube, have taken on a pivotal role in changing the perception of their hometown. Young people from Karak can oppose how their district is portrayed in the media and offer alternative narratives that represent their experiences and goals through blogs, videos, and online forums. Many young Karak residents are using digital media to celebrate their heritage and promote modernity and progress as part of this grassroots movement, which has gained momentum⁸⁸.

3.7.6 National Media Efforts

Although stereotypes have frequently shaped how Karak is portrayed in the national media, there have been some attempts to change this perception. The region's potential for economic growth and its place in the larger framework of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's development have been the subject of numerous investigative reports and documentaries. For instance, national publications like Geo News and Dawn have published stories about Karak's natural resources and the rising literacy rates among its young people. Although these initiatives are just getting started, they show that national media professionals are becoming more conscious of the need to cover places like Karak in a more thorough and impartial manner.

⁸⁷ Geo News. (2021). "Karak's Natural Gas Boom: An Economic Success Story." *Geo News*. Retrieved from [Geo News website](#).

⁸⁸ Hussain, A. (2020). "Youth Empowerment in Karak: Social Media and the Changing Narrative." *The Express Tribune*.

3.8 Challenges in Media Development in District Karak

3.8.1 Limited Access to Technology

Among the many obstacles to media development in District Karak, in the southern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), is the lack of access to technology. With major development in digital platforms, Pakistani media has expanded quickly, but this expansion has not been dispersed equally throughout the nation. Due to its rural location and lack of development, District Karak faces several obstacles that limit its access to contemporary media technologies, which affect both the production and consumption of content⁸⁹.

3.8.2 Lack of Infrastructure

The absence of infrastructure to enable broad access to contemporary technology is one of Karak's main problems. There is still a lack of consistent internet access, particularly in the district's more isolated regions. Due to insufficient telecommunications infrastructure, Karak has fallen behind while Pakistani cities have benefited from 4G networks and high-speed internet. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) reported that internet penetration is lower in rural areas like Karak than in urban areas like Peshawar or Islamabad. Residents find it challenging to use digital media platforms, which are essential to contemporary communication and information sharing, because of the digital media⁹⁰.

⁸⁹ Malik, F., & Khan, S. (2020). "Media Access in Rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Socio-Economic Perspective." *Journal of Rural Media Studies* 15 (4): 123-140.

⁹⁰ Pakistan Telecommunication Authority. (2021). "Telecommunication Infrastructure in Rural Pakistan." *PTA Annual Report*. Accessed January 27, 2025. <https://pta.gov.pk>.

3.8.3 Affordability and Digital Devices

Affordability is a major obstacle in addition to infrastructure problems. Many people in District Karak, whose economic circumstances are frequently linked to low-paying jobs and agricultural, are unable to purchase the computers or smartphones required to access digital media. The cost of digital devices and high-speed internet packages is prohibitive for many families in districts like Karak. On rural media access in KP. A significant section of the populace is further isolated from national and international media trends due to this economic barrier, which keeps them from fully engaging in the changing media landscape.

3.8.4 Gender Gap in Media Access

Another significant issue in Karak is the gender gap in media access. In this area, women's access to media technologies is more restricted than men's due to cultural and social norms. Accordingly, to the International Journal of Communication Studies, women in rural KP, including Karak, are discouraged from owning or freely using digital devices due to patriarchal values, which causes a gap in the number of media that men and women consume. As a result, women have less access to important information and are less able to use the media to engage in larger conversations about social, political, and cultural issues⁹¹.

3.8.5 Government and Private Sector Initiative

Government and private sector efforts to close the technology gap have been made, but there have not been enough. Due to logistical and administrative obstacles, the government's efforts to increase internet access in rural areas have not advanced quickly. Furthermore, due to lower profit margins than in more urbanized areas, private

⁹¹ Abbas, Z. (2017). *Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Globalization's Impact on Rural Pakistani Cultural Identity*. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(3), 45-58.

companies have been hesitant to make significant investments in underdeveloped areas like Karak.

3.8.6 Limited Household Income and Media Access

A significant portion of the population in Karak, which is predominantly an agrarian district, works in low-paying occupations or subsistence farming. The average income in rural KP, including Karak, is much lower than the national average, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Limited discretionary spending on media technologies like computers, televisions, smartphones, and internet subscriptions is a result of this economic disadvantage. In Karak, families frequently place a higher priority on necessities like food, healthcare, and education than on media consumption, which is viewed as a luxury rather than a need. Furthermore, households are less likely to invest in long-term media infrastructure like broadband internet or satellite television because of financial instability. Because of this, many locals rely on conventional, inexpensive media like radio or basic television services, which restrict their access to a variety of information and content⁹².

3.8.7 High Cost of Digital Infrastructure

The high cost of setting up and maintaining digital infrastructure is another significant financial obstacle to Karak's media development. Due to the low return on investment and high deployment costs, internet service providers and telecommunications companies are frequently hesitant to make investments in rural areas like Karak because they are less profitable than urban centers and have smaller, less affluent populations. Pakistani telecom firms typically give priority to urban growth over rural areas because

⁹² Khan, A. (2018). "Obstacles and Chances in Gender and Media Reach in Rural Pakistan." *Journal of Gender and Development* 24 (2): 67-84.

the lower revenue in these areas does not justify the cost of establishing fiber-optic networks, mobile towers, and other infrastructure⁹³.

Karak's access to contemporary media platforms is restricted by this underinvestment from the private sector, which worsens the digital divide between urban and rural areas. Most households in the district struggle to access digital media because residents frequently pay more for services of lower quality.

3.8.8 Socio-Economic Disparities and Digital Literacy

Karak's socio-economic divide influences the media landscape of the community as well. Digital literacy rates are impacted by the fact that most people are not well educated. Despite the availability of technology and media platforms, widespread media participation is hindered by the cost of pursuing digital literacy education and everyday financial difficulties. Low digital literacy rates exist in rural KP, including Karak, because of underfunded educational institutions that are unable to give adults and students the training they need to use contemporary media technologies.

In addition to impeding the present generation, this economic resistance also makes it more difficult for the district to enhance its media environment in the long run. Karak's media development is likely to continue to lag other districts in the absence of government subsidies, investments in reasonably priced media infrastructure, or financial support for education⁹⁴.

⁹³ Khan, I. (2020). "Digital Media and Youth: Navigating Cultural Change in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Journal of Social Media and Cultural Studies* 7, no. 2: 34–56.

⁹⁴ Zia, S., & Khan, M. (2019). "Media Consumption in Rural Areas and the Digital Divide in Pakistan." *Digital Pakistan Journal*, 10(2), 22-35.

3.8.9 High Cost of Media Content Production

The financial obstacles to producing and disseminating content are especially significant for local media producers. When attempting to create content that represents the culture, problems, or needs of the district, Karak's local journalists, videographers, and other media professionals encounter financial obstacles. They frequently lack the funds to purchase contemporary equipment, obtain high-quality internet services, and distribute content. Producers in rural areas like Karak are unable to compete with national and international media outlets because they are dependent on antiquated tools and technologies. Because content created in the district is frequently localized and unavailable to wider audiences, this restricts the diversity and representation of Karak in both regional and national media. The underrepresentation of Karak in media narratives perpetuates stereotypes and downplays the district's distinctive cultural contribution.

3.8.10 Cultural Resistance

One of the major obstacles to the growth of the media in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), is cultural resistance. The region's strong adherence to traditional values, norms, and customs—which frequently clash with the contemporary media landscape—is the foundation of this type of resistance. Like many other Pakistani rural communities, the people of Karak have a strong sense of cultural identity that is influenced by their Pashtun ancestry, religious customs, and tribal social structures. Media can be a potent instrument for teaching and cultural expression, but it can also be viewed as a danger to long-standing customs and values, especially when contemporary media content is viewed as alien or inconsistent with regional beliefs.

3.8.11 Media Literacy

A major obstacle to media growth in District Karak is the insufficient level of media literacy within the community. Media literacy involves being able to access, analyze, access, and produce media across different formats. It enables people to make educated choices about the information they consume and to actively interact with media channels. Media literacy is still a challenge in Karak due to limited education levels and technological infrastructure, hindering the use of media for socio-economic and culture progress.

3.8.12 Low Educational Attainment and Media Literacy

Education levels are generally low in District Karak, especially for women and older age groups. Based on data from the census by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (BPS), literacy levels in rural regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, such as Karak, are lower compared to urban area. The absence of formal education leads to media illiteracy because many individuals struggle to navigate the ever-evolving digital media world. Individuals who lack the ability to analyze or interact thoughtfully with media content tend to only consume passively, which hinders their access to the educational, informational, and economic advantages provided by media platforms⁹⁵.

3.8.13 Dependence on Traditional Media

One more reason for low media literacy is the population's strong dependence on traditional media outlets, like radio and word-of-mouth communication, which involve less interaction when compared to digital media. While radio still plays a vital role in reaching rural communities in Karak, it does not encourage the same level of involvement or media literacy needed to navigate contemporary media platforms such

⁹⁵ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). 2017. *District-wise Literacy Rates in Pakistan's Census*. Retrieved from www.pbs.gov.pk.

as the internet or social media and online news outlets is often due to their passive consumption of information from traditional media forms.

3.8.14 Addressing Media Literacy Challenges

Efforts should be directed towards educational interventions at both formal and informal levels to tackle media literacy challenges in Karak. Educational institutions in the area can incorporate media literacy into their programs, helping students develop skills in media usage, critical content evaluation, media bias awareness, and media production. Furthermore, community initiatives focused on adults, specifically targeting women and elderly individuals, could play a vital role in closing the gap in media literacy by providing fundamental education in digital competencies and critical media consumption. NGOs and media development agencies can help boost media literacy in rural areas by offering resources and training. Efforts to introduce media literacy workshops to rural communities in Pakistan have displayed potential, especially when tailored to local culture and context⁹⁶.

3.9 Conclusion

An important understanding of the changing role of media in forming local culture, social norms, and identity can be gained from the study of media and socio-cultural transformation in District Karak. Due to the growing impact of both traditional and modern media, Karak, a region with a rich cultural legacy, is experiencing significant changes. The district's media landscape is characterized by a shift away from reliance on more static digital media, such as social media sites like Facebook and YouTube, and toward more dynamic platforms like radio and oral storytelling. People's

⁹⁶ Zubair, M., Khan, F., & Ali, A. (2020). "Challenges and Opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Internet Access and Media Literacy." *Information Studies Journal*, 18(2), 45-60.

perceptions and interactions with their political consciousness, social norms, and cultural identity have changed because of this transition.

According to the analysis, media has two roles in Karak's cultural change. On the one hand, it provides a forum for upholding and advancing religious content to play a significant role in the lives of the local populace. Conversely, the media presents contemporary stories, global cultural influences, and new forms of expression, especially for young people who are more exposed to outside concepts and ways of life. The intricate role that media plays in the socio-cultural fabric of the district is highlighted by this blending of traditional and contemporary cultural narratives.

One important aspect of Karak residents' interaction with media is their level of media literacy, or lack thereof. The region's low educational attainment and lack of digital literacy restrict the populace's capacity to interact critically with media content, resulting in passive consumption as opposed to informed, active engagement. By addressing media literacy through educational initiatives, people may be better equipped to navigate the constantly changing media landscape and use it to further their cultural, social, and economic development.

Furthermore, it is impossible to ignore the media's impact on Karak's political consciousness. Residents now have greater access to local and national news thanks to the emergence of social media as a political platform, which enables them to take an active role in the political process. The complete realization of media's potential to change Karak's socio-cultural landscape is still hampered by issues like restricted access to technology, financial limitations, and cultural resistance. In conclusion, the media in District Karak serves as a catalyst for change while also preserving tradition. Its influence on social identity, political consciousness, and cultural narratives emphasizes the necessity of expanding access to technology and media literacy. By

tackling these issues, media can develop into a more potent instrument for constructive socio-cultural change, helping Karak residents to preserve their cultural heritage while navigating the intricacies of contemporary life.

MEDIA AND SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN DISTRICT KARAK

4. Introduction

In the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and media studies, the connection between media and socio-cultural change has been a major focus. The media is a potent force for change that both reflects and shapes social norms. With a particular focus on District Karak, an area with a distinctive cultural legacy and continuous social -cultural change. The foundation for comprehending socio-cultural change, the influence of media on society, and the reasons Karak is an important case study is laid out in this section.

The dynamic process of societal values, norms, beliefs, and cultural practices changing over time is referred to as socio-cultural transformation. Numerous internal and external factors, including media penetration, globalization, economic development, education, and technological advancements, can have an impact on this transformation. The shift from traditional to modern societies, which is characterized by changes in identity frameworks and values systems, frequently propels socio-cultural transformation.

Religious conviction, historical precedents, and popular consensus frequently determine cultural norms and values in traditional societies. However, traditional practices are challenged by the emergence of modern technologies and mass communication, which results in the adoption of new cultural practices and beliefs. This

evolution is not consistent; historical circumstances, local contexts, and the degree of media access all play a role⁹⁷.

4.1 Media's Role in Society

The media has a variety of functions in society, including advocacy, discussion, and information dissemination. Its impact has increased with the introduction of digital communication and mass media, which allow ideas to spread across national and cultural borders. Media functions as an extension of human senses, influencing how individuals engage with and perceive the world. The media has a multifaceted impact on socio-cultural change. The media presents stories that affect how society views topics like gender equality, governance, and education. Global media can preserve local identities in the face of globalization by highlighting regional diversity, even as it can also result in cultural homogenization. Social media platforms have evolved into instruments that enable underrepresented groups to express their grievances and fight for their rights, thereby promoting socio-cultural change⁹⁸. The advent of media frequently signifies a dramatic change in how people obtain information and view their environment in rural and impoverished areas. This phenomenon is especially noticeable in areas like District Karak that have unique cultural traditions.

4.1.1 Focus on District Karak

Studying the role of media in socio-cultural change is made easier by District Karak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This area is distinguished by its conservative social structure, robust tribal customs, and only recently exposed to contemporary media.

⁹⁷ Appadurai, A. (1996). *Globalization's Cultural Aspects: Modernity in General*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁹⁸ Hussain, A. (2020). "Youth Empowerment in Karak: Social Media and the Changing Narrative." *The Express Tribune*.

Pashtunwali, a code of ethics that emphasizes hospitality, honor, and loyalty, has historically been a fundamental part of Karak culture. However, new cultural paradigms have been brought about by the proliferation of social media platforms, internet access, and satellite television over the past 20 years.

Karak research is important for several reasons: Karak provides a prism through which to view how traditional societies attempt to maintain their cultural heritage while adjusting to contemporary influences. The media both preserves traditions and serves as a catalyst for change.

Karak is experiencing demographic changes that are changing its socio-cultural fabric due to rising educational opportunities and economic migration. To close the gap between conventional norms and contemporary goals, the media is essential. Karak provides a microcosm for comprehending how South Asian rural and tribal communities deal with the opportunities and problems brought about by media-induced globalization⁹⁹.

This thesis aims to clarify the nuances of media's role in socio-cultural change in a setting where tradition and modernity coexist by concentrating on District Karak. By this investigation, the study adds to more general conversations about how media shapes social dynamics in rural and semi-urban areas.

4.2 Media Landscape in District Karak

The interaction of traditional and modern media platforms shapes the media landscape in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, reflecting the socio-cultural and economic context of the area. Karak's media consumption habits have changed dramatically over the last 20 years because of increased infrastructure, increased

⁹⁹ Ali, S. (2018). "A Case Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan: Religious Broadcasting." *Journal of Media Studies*, 12(3), 45–60.

literacy rates and easier access to communication technologies. To shed light on how the media shapes and reflects the socio-cultural dynamics of the district, this section examines the kinds of media that are consumed in Karak as well as the demographic of media consumers.

4.2.1 Types of Media Consumed

District Karak residents consume media on a variety of contemporary and traditional platforms, each of which makes a distinct contribution to the local information ecosystem. Karak's primary media consumption categories include¹⁰⁰.

4.2.1.1 Television

In Karak, television is still one of the most widely available and significant media outlets. Particularly well-liked are national and local channels like AVT Khyber, PTV, and Khyber News. These channels are culturally relevant to the area because they frequently broadcast content in Pashto. In addition to providing entertainment, television is also used to broadcast news and educational content.

4.2.1.2 Radio

The media environment still heavily relies on radio, especially FM stations. Many listen to FM radio stations for news, religious programming, and cultural programming, such as BBC Pashto and Mashal Radio. For people who live in isolated places without access to television or the internet, radio's portability is particularly crucial.

4.2.1.3 Social Media

In Karak, social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have become more popular among the city's younger and more urbanized citizens. These platforms

¹⁰⁰ Khan, A. (2020). "Media Usage Patterns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *South Asian Studies Journal*.

are used for news updates, communication, and the exchange of cultural materials like poetry and music in Pashto. Social media's popularity in the district has been greatly boosted by the widespread use of smartphones.

4.2.1.4 Print Media

Newspapers and magazines are still important to educated populations, despite being less prevalent than digital and broadcast media. For local news and issues, people read local newspapers like Shunal and Daily Aaj. Nonetheless, the downward trend in print media consumption is consistent with global trends, particularly considering the growth of digital news platforms.

4.2.1.5 Traditional Media

In Karak's rural areas, public gatherings, religious sermons, and oral storytelling are still important. These conventional communication methods coexist with contemporary media and frequently have an impact on how people assimilate and comprehend new information.

4.2.2 Demographics of Media Consumers

Age, gender, education, and access to technology are some of the variables that affect the demographics of media consumers in District Karak. A closer look at these factors reveals the various ways that affect people: The most frequent users of social media and digital platforms are members of the young population from (15-30 years). For amusement, education, and keeping up with world trends, they utilize websites like Facebook and YouTube¹⁰¹. The main media consumed by older people (30+Years) are radio and television, which is consistent with their inclination for more conventional and structured media. There is a gender gap in Karak's media consumption habits. Due

¹⁰¹ Malik, F., & Khan, S. (2020). "Media Access in Rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Socio-Economic Perspective." *Journal of Rural Media Studies* 15 (4): 123-140.

to increased mobility and access to public areas, they typically have wider access to all media, including newspapers and social media. Frequently limited to media consumption in the home, including radio and television. Despite growing, women's use of social media is still restricted because of privacy concerns and cultural norms.

Media consumption patterns are directly impacted by literacy levels. People with higher levels of education are more likely to access print and online media. Digital tools have also begun to be used in Karak's schools and colleges, which has an indirect impact on students' media habits. Karak's urban centers offer residents more access to a wide range of media, such as cable television and high-speed internet. Radio and oral communication are more common because media consumption is restricted by a lack of access to electricity and internet infrastructure.

4.3 Historical Evolution of Media in Karak

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan District Karak's media development reflects the region's larger societal and technological shifts. Karak has seen tremendous shifts in the ways that information is shared, shared, and used, from the days of oral communication to the emergence of digital and social media. The historical development of media in Karak is examined in this chapter, with particular attention paid to traditional media, the arrival of contemporary media, and the rise of digital and social media.

4.3.1 Traditional Media

In the Past, oral traditions and group cultural practices played a significant role in Karak communication. The district's social and cultural fabric was preserved in large part thanks to these media. One of the main forms of communication was oral storytelling, or *daftar* in Pashto. In villages, elders tell younger generations historical accounts, poetry, and stories. To preserve cultural values and collective memory, these tales

frequently focused on local heroes, tribal conflicts, and moral lessons. Urgent messages were transmitted throughout villages using techniques like ghagar, which involves beating a drum to announce significant events. In a pre-modern setting without formal communication infrastructure, these techniques were crucial.

Although traditional media platforms were good at promoting community cohesion, their scope and reach were constrained, and they mainly relied on personal connections.

4.3.2 Introduction of Modern Media

Technological developments and government-sponsored programs sparked the introduction of contemporary media in Karak in the middle of the 20th century. The first notable change in media consumption occurred with the introduction of radio in the 1950s and 1960s. Karak received news, entertainment, and religious programming from Radio Pakistan, particularly in Pashto. Particularly among men who would congregate in hujras to listen collectively, portable radios became commonplace in homes¹⁰². Television sets started to appear in Karak's urbanized areas by the late 1980s and early 1990s, but rural areas took longer to adopt them because of infrastructure and economic constraints. Access to national and regional content was made possible by Pakistani television channels, including PTV and later regional channels like AVT Khyber. By introducing visual storytelling, television broadened people's access to news and culture.

The educated elite, especially teachers and government workers, had access to newspapers and magazines. Regional news and commentary were offered by local

¹⁰² Malik, I. (2006). *Pakistan: Modern Media and Traditional Society*. Oxford University Press

editions of newspapers such as Mashriq and Daily Aaj. However, because of low literacy rates, print media's influence was less than that of broadcast media.

4.3.3 The Rise of Digital and Social Media

The late 2000s saw the emergence of social media and digital technology, which revolutionized Karak's media environment and the way people engage with information and one another. Media access in Karak was transformed with the advent of mobile internet services and reasonably priced smartphones. Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp were widely used by the 2010s, especially by younger audiences. These platforms made it possible to communicate in real time, access a variety of content, and take part in local and international discussions.

4.3.4 Social Media Usage Patterns

Facebook is used for cultural content sharing, local news sharing, and networking. YouTube is a well-liked website for watching tutorials, music videos, and Pashto dramas. WhatsApp is often used for discussions in community groups and for private correspondence. With the introduction of online resources and e-learning by schools and colleges, digital tools started to become more integrated into educational settings. Although there are still issues with digital literacy and access inequalities, this change has enabled professionals and students to access knowledge from around the world.

4.3.5 Challenges and Implications

Critical media literacy is challenged by the spread of unreliable information on social media. Discussions concerning cultural preservation are sparked when the flood of international media content occasionally conflicts with traditional values. Social media

has developed into a forum for underrepresented voices, especially those of women and young people, to participate in public debates and push for reform¹⁰³.

4.4 Media's Role in Shaping Cultural Identity

Cultural identities are significantly shaped and reshaped by the media, especially in areas like District Karak where traditional values and outside influences coexist. The media can both challenge traditional practices by introducing alternative values and preserve cultural heritage, which is a double-edged sword for the Pashtun community. Through the portrayal of Pashtun culture, the impact of global culture on regional customs, and the rise of cultural hybridity, this section explores how the media shape's cultural identity in Karak¹⁰⁴.

4.4.1 Representation of Pashtun Culture in Media

The Pashtun's collective self-image and societal perceptions are greatly impacted by the representations of their cultural identities in the media. Regional media, such as Pashto-language television channels, radio shows, and movies, frequently celebrate Pashtun culture and its unique code of ethics, known as Pashtunwali. Dramas and documentaries usually portray traditional values like hospitality (melmastia), honor (nang), and loyalty (wafa), which strengthen cultural pride and continuity. For example, Pashtun folklore, poetry, and music are highlighted in shows on channels such as AVT Khyber and Mashriq TV, providing a platform to preserve cultural customs. While mainstream national and international media frequently present Pashtun through a narrow and occasionally biased lens, focusing on tribalism, conflict, or conservatism,

¹⁰³ Khan, A. (2018). "Obstacles and Chances in Gender and Media Reach in Rural Pakistan." *Journal of Gender and Development* 24 (2): 67-84.

¹⁰⁴ Ahmed, N. (2017). "The Function of Media in Forming Socio-Cultural Standards in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Communication Studies Journal*, 12(3), 45–58.

regional media primarily celebrates Pashtun culture. Such portrayals have the potential to foster unfavorable stereotypes and minimize the Pashtun identity's cultural diversity and richness¹⁰⁵. These representations may drive Pashtun viewers away from national media narratives and towards sites that support their identity.

To conform to current themes, Pashtun culture is frequently portrayed in modern dramas through adaptations. This strategy raises questions about the dilution or commodification of cultural values even though it makes traditional practices relatable to younger audiences.

4.4.2 Influence of Global Culture on Local Practice

Global media's growing influence has brought new cultural paradigms to Karak, upending long-standing customs and promoting socio-cultural change. Local audiences are exposed to international trends in fashion, entertainment, and lifestyle choices through satellite television and digital platforms like YouTube and Netflix. These trends especially affect Karak's younger generations, who embrace contemporary fashions, musical tastes, and social mores. Older generations tend to emphasize traditional norms and values because of this exposure, which frequently causes a generational divide. Gender roles in Karak have also been impacted by international media. International content challenges traditional patriarchal norms by exposing women to narratives of empowerment and autonomy. Younger women in Karak, for instance, are using social media to pursue education and entrepreneurship, which reflects changes in their goals and social roles¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁵ Khalid, R., and Ali, S. (2020). "Social Media's Effect on Pakistani Cultural Identity." *Journal of Social Sciences in Pakistan* 40, no. 2: 123–134.

¹⁰⁶ Rehman, H., and Khan, S. (2018). "Cultural Shifts and Globalization in Rural Pakistan." *Rural Studies Journal* 60: 62–70.

Debates concerning cultural deterioration, specifically the loss of native languages, customs, and practices, have been triggered by the inflow of global culture. However, when local communities incorporate ideas from around the world into their traditional frameworks, it can also result in cultural enrichment. For example, a synthesis of traditional and international influences can be seen in the adaptation of Pashto music using contemporary instruments and styles.

4.4.3 Cultural Hybridity

Because of the media's influence on identity formation and cultural hybridity, a process in which traditional and modern influences combine to create new cultural forms is becoming more and more apparent in Karak. The blending of regional and international cultural elements has been made easier by the media. For example, Pashto dramas create content that appeals to a variety of audiences by combining contemporary cinematography techniques with traditional storylines. In a similar vein, Karak social media influencers frequently encourage cultural hybridity through their posts that combine traditional clothing with modern styles. The region's primary language, Pashto, continues to be essential to cultural identity. However, a move toward linguistic hybridity is reflected in the increasing usage of English and Urdu in media content. Younger generations frequently combine Pashto with English or Urdu for expression in social media posts and bilingual media productions, demonstrating this linguistic fusion¹⁰⁷.

People in Karak can negotiate their identities in a globalized setting thanks to cultural hybridity. They maintain their Pashtun identity while embracing global cultural practices, resulting in a complex and ever-changing cultural environment. Such hybrid

¹⁰⁷ Rahman, T. (2018). *Media and Cultural Identity in Pakistan*. Islamabad: National Book Foundation.

identities are a defining feature of modernity. Since local cultures actively interact with and transform influences from around the world.

4.5 Media and Changing Gender Roles in Karak

It is becoming more and clearer how the media is changing gender roles in District Karak by influencing both personal and societal norms. Although Pashtun culture has a strong hold on traditional gender roles in Karak, changes in these norms are being facilitated by the way women are portrayed in the media and their increasing use of digital platforms. This section examines how women are portrayed in the media, how this affects women's empowerment, and the obstacles and opposition encountered during this shift.

4.5.1 Media Representation of Women

The media's portrayal of women has a big impact on how society views their roles and abilities. Both contemporary and traditional media have shaped these portrayals in District Karak. Women are frequently portrayed as symbols of honor and familial loyalty in traditional Pashto dramas and songs, which reflects the patriarchal ideals of Pashtun society. These depictions uphold the traditional roles of women as nurturers, caregivers, and cultural value keepers¹⁰⁸.

In conservative contexts like Karak, the media frequently steers clear of contentious issues like women's education or employment, upholding the status quo. Women are now portrayed in television shows on networks like AVT Khyber and Mashriq TV in a wider range of roles, such as professionals and teachers. Local female influencers can question conventional narratives by promoting gender equality and showcasing their

¹⁰⁸ Saeed, R. (2012). "Cultural Constraints on Women's Education in Rural Pakistan." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 18, no. 3: 103–124.

accomplishments on social media sites like Facebook and YouTube. Despite some advancements, societal norms and gender biases continue to limit the number of women in leadership positions in the media, such as journalists or anchors.

4.5.2 Impact of Media on Women's Empowerment

The media is essential to women's empowerment because it gives them a forum to express their views, obtain information, and participate in public debates. In Karak, the media has helped raise awareness of the value of education for women. Traditional attitudes have significantly changed because of educational programs on television and digital platforms that encourage families to educate their daughters. Campaigns on social media that support girls' education have become more popular among younger people. With the help of digital platforms like Facebook Marketplace and WhatsApp, Karak women are now able to start small businesses that give them financial independence, like selling clothing or handmade crafts. Online courses and training videos have further enabled women to acquire previously unattainable skills like computer literacy, baking, and tailoring¹⁰⁹.

Women in Karak are becoming more involved in local advocacy and governance because of media coverage of women's rights movements and female political figures. Enhanced availability of political discourse on digital platforms enables women to remain informed and involved in public affairs. Previously taboo subjects like domestic abuse and women's rights are now more easily discussed thanks to media more easily discussed thanks to media resources¹¹⁰. These conversations encourage victims to seek support and aid in the challenge of oppressive practices. Karak-based female

¹⁰⁹ Critelli, F.M. (2010). "A Call for Transformation: Women's Rights in Pakistan." *Journal of Women and Social Work*, 25(3), 236-249.

¹¹⁰ Moghadam, V. M. (2003). *Gender and Social Transformation in the Middle East: Modernizing Women*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

influencers who share their accomplishments and experiences serve as role models for other women in the area.

4.5.3 Challenges and Resistance

The role of media in changing gender roles in Karak is fraught with obstacles stemming from structural and cultural barriers, despite its transformative potential. Media messages supporting gender equality frequently run counter to conventional values in conservative environments like Karak. Such messages are seen by many as a danger to moral principles and cultural identity. Since their visibility is viewed as dishonorable in patriarchal societies, women who use social media platforms frequently experience criticism and exclusion. Women's ability to benefit from media is limited in rural areas by limited access to digital devices and internet connectivity. A further factor contributing to the gap between urban and rural areas is the fact that many women cannot afford smartphones or internet services due to economic disparities.

Karak's female social media users are discouraged from actively participating in online platforms due to harassment, cyberbullying, and privacy violations. These issues are made worse by a lack of knowledge about digital security and a lack of legal options. Male-dominated narratives are perpetuated by the region's media organizations' frequent lack of female representation in decision-making positions. Social norms limit women's ability to contribute to the creation of more inclusive content by discouraging them from pursuing media careers.

4.6 Media and Religious Influence in Karak

In District Karak, where religion is a major part of societal identity, the media has a big influence on religious discourse and values. Media outlets both support traditional religious values and occasionally question accepted interpretations, demonstrating the dynamic nature of the relationship between religion and the media. The effect of

religious programming on radio and television, as well as the media's larger role in shaping religious values in the district, are examined in this section¹¹¹.

4.6.1 Religious Programming on Television and Radio

Regional radio stations and Radio Pakistan have played a significant role in disseminating religious content, including hadith (the Prophet's sayings), tafsir (the interpretation of the Quran), and Quranic recitations. In Karak, a lot of people listen to these shows, especially the elderly and those living in rural areas who depend on the radio as their main source of information. To maintain direct communication with the community, nearby mosques also broadcast sermons and announcements on community radio.

4.6.2 Television's Contribution to Religious Education

Programs on religious education, such as Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), moral instruction, and discussion of current religious issues, are available on both national television networks, like PTV, and Islamic channels like Peace TV and QTV. These shows frequently uphold Islamic principles and customs, which appeal greatly to Karak's conservative audience. Regional Pashto channels like AVT Khyber broadcast religious dramas and documentaries that embed religious teachings in easily comprehensible formats while examining themes like faith, sacrifice, and morality.

4.6.3 Media's Role in Challenging or Reinforcing Religious Values

Karak's religious values are influenced by the media in a variety of ways, both positively and negatively. The community's dedication to common values is strengthened by religious programming that frequently highlights fundamental Islamic

¹¹¹ Ali, Z., and Shafique, S. (2019). "The Involvement of Religious Leaders in Shaping Media Representations in Rural KPK." *The International Journal of Media Studies* 8 (1): 25-40.

teachings like charity, social justice, and unity (ummah). Islamic scholars who speak to issues unique to young people are featured on contemporary media platforms like YouTube and social media, providing advice on how to deal with contemporary issues while upholding Islamic values¹¹².

4.6.4 Challenging Conventional Interpretations

Traditional religious narratives are challenged by exposure to diverse interpretations of Islam via satellite channels and internet platforms, which promotes critical thinking and discussion among Karak's educated youth. For instance, conversations about social reforms, education, and gender equality are frequently sparked by progressive Islamic scholars' online lectures. A more moderate interpretation of Islamic teachings is promoted by media coverage of topics like extremism and sectarianism, which opposes the exploitation of religion for political ends.

4.6.7 Tensions between Media Content and Religious Sensitivities

International media consumption, such as watching dramas and films, frequently introduces cultural and ideological elements that are at odds with Karak's conservative Islamic values. Such material may provoke criticism and demands for stricter censorship. Social media sites give users access to a variety of opinions, but they also turn into forums for religious arguments and disputes. Online religious content that is misunderstood or misused can make tensions in the community worse. In Karak, the media is essential to striking a balance between the community's religious customs and the needs of modernity. Digital platforms provide opportunities to examine current religious issues in a global setting, whereas traditional media perpetuates long-standing religious norms.

¹¹² Abbas, Z. (2021). "The Role of Media in Shaping Islamic Discourse in Pakistan." *Islamic Studies Quarterly*.

4.7 Impact of Media on Youth and Social Change

In District Karak, the media has become a transformative force in influencing young people's attitudes, actions, and goals. Media has two functions in an area where traditional values have a significant impact on social dynamics; it acts as a platform for youth empowerment and expression and as a catalyst for changing attitudes toward tradition. This section looks at how their views on tradition are evolving, and how important the media is as a forum for young people to express themselves¹¹³.

4.7.1 Youth Media Consumption Patterns

Determining the impact of media on social change in Karak requires an understanding of how young people use it.

4.7.1.1 Television and Radio

Television continues to be a popular medium because it provides news, entertainment, and educational content, especially for families. Karak's youth are attracted to national and international entertainment and news networks, as well as local Pashto channels like AVT Khyber. In rural areas, radio is still important, especially for young people who have little access to digital gadgets. Many people watch shows that feature music, cultural conversations, and local news.

4.7.1.2 Digital Media and Social Media

The use of social media by young people in Karak has increased due to the growing availability of smartphones and reasonably priced internet services. Popular platforms for networking, entertainment, and idea sharing include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. YouTube is especially important for finding a variety of content, such

¹¹³ Ali, S. (2014). "Media's Effect on Pakistan's Traditional Gender Roles." *Journal of Gender Studies*, 23(4), 467-483.

as vlogs by local influencers or instructional tutorials. Urban dwellers and educated youth use social media the most, connecting them to worldwide trends¹¹⁴.

4.7.1.3 Gaming and Online Communities

Male youth are increasingly using online gaming platforms and chat apps because they offer a sense of community and connection in addition to entertainment. Karak's youth have a wide variety of tastes in content, ranging from international pop culture and fashion trends to religious programming and traditional Pashto music. This variety demonstrates how their consumption patterns combine modernity and tradition.

4.7.2 Shifting Attitude toward Tradition

Youth's perceptions of traditional norms and practices are greatly influenced by the media, which encourages both conformity and departure from cultural expectations. Young people have been inspired to challenge inflexible patriarchal systems by media narratives that support gender equality, education, and individual liberties. Among educated young women, who see media as a source of empowerment, this is especially noticeable. Younger generations exposed to alternative lifestyles through the media are reevaluating traditional practices such as gender segregation and arranged marriages. Individual choice and autonomy are becoming more and more accepted, even though many people still follow cultural norms¹¹⁵. Many young people in Karak actively balance tradition and modernity, even in the face of the influence of international media. As an example of cultural hybridity, young people frequently modify international fashion trends to conform to regional dress codes. Not every change in sentiments is welcomed; conservative groups and older generations frequently see these

¹¹⁴ Jahangir, R. (2020). "Social Media Trends in Pakistan: Understanding the Landscape." *The Express Tribune*. Accessed January 27, 2025. <https://tribune.com.pk>.

¹¹⁵ Khan, A., and Rehman, H. U. (2018). "The Effect of Education on Pashtun Cultural Practices." *Rural Studies Journal* 33, no. 1: 45–56.

developments as challenges to cultural identity. Generational differences in views on tradition and modernity are brought about by this resistance.

4.7.3 Media as a Platform for Youth Expression

The media has given Karak's youth previously unheard-of chances to express themselves, engage with larger audiences, and push for reform¹¹⁶.

4.7.3.1 Social Media as a Voice for the Youth

Young people can express their opinions on social, political, and cultural issues through social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. Local Karak influencers, for instance, use social media to advocate for cultural pride, environmental awareness, and educational initiatives. TikTok has gained popularity in particular for displaying talent, humor, and creativity, providing young people with a forum for self-expression and acknowledgement.

4.7.3.2 Entrepreneurship and Skill Development

By giving them platforms to advertise their goods and services, the media has given young Karak entrepreneurs more power. A lot of young people use digital platforms to operate small businesses, like selling online services, crafts, or clothing. Opportunities for skill development that were previously unavailable in rural areas are provided by online tutorials and courses that can be accessed through platforms such as YouTube.

4.7.3.3 Participation in Social and Political Movements

Youth can participate in civic and political discourse through the media, bringing attention to issues such as corruption, health, and education. Young people in Karak

¹¹⁶ Khan, S. (2021). "Cultural Preservation through Media in Rural Pakistan." *Cultural Studies Journal* 15, no. 4: 45–63.

frequently launch digital campaigns that draw attention to local issues and look for answers.

4.7.3.4 Cultural and Artistic Expression

Through platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, young people are now able to share their artistic and cultural works, ranging from short films and photography to Pashto poetry and music. Such material not only helps to preserve cultural heritage but also gives young people the opportunity to reinterpret it in novel ways.

4.8 Political and Social Awareness through Media

In areas like District Karak, where traditional structures frequently control public discourse, the media has become a potent tool for promoting political and social awareness. It empowers communities to address urgent issues and take part in governance processes by acting as a tool for social advocacy and encouraging political engagement. This section explores how the media can be used to promote social change in Karak and to engage in politics¹¹⁷.

4.8.1 Media's Role in Political Engagement

In Karak, the media has a big impact on political engagement because it makes people more knowledgeable and active in the political process, especially young people. Election campaigns, parliamentary debates, and political developments are covered by AVT Khyber as well as national and local channels like PTV. The people of Karak benefit from having access to information that keeps them informed about policy and governance decisions. Radio shows are still useful for broadcasting political debates and interviews with local leaders, especially in rural areas. Even people who have limited access to digital platforms or television can participate in political discussions

¹¹⁷ Ali, S., & Zafar, F. (2018). "The Role of Media in Political Awareness: A Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Pakistan Journal of Media Studies*, 9(1), 43-56.

thanks to this medium. Young people now use social media sites like Facebook and WhatsApp to share news, organize campaigns, and have conversations about political issues. For example, political parties in Karak are using social media more and more to connect with young voters during elections¹¹⁸. A sense of political accountability is also fostered by the youth's ability to participate in discussions about regional development, corruption, and governance through online forums and community groups.

Election commissions and civil society groups' media campaigns have played a crucial role in informing voters of their rights and promoting election participation. These campaigns have specifically targeted women and first-time voters in Karak, removing long-standing obstacles to their participation.

Even though the media has raised political consciousness, problems with bias and false information still exist. Fake news on social media and partisan reporting by certain outlets can divide opinions and mislead the public.

4.8.2 Media as a Tool for Social Advocacy

In Karak, the media is a potent medium for drawing attention to social issues, inspiring communities, and promoting change. Karak's urgent problems, like water scarcity, a lack of educational resources, and access to healthcare, are regularly covered by the local media. Authorities are under pressure to act because of this coverage, which increases awareness. Community-led social media campaigns have raised awareness of local issues, like the district's environmental degradation and deforestation. The media is essential in elevating the voices of underrepresented groups, such as low-income families and women. Their hardships are frequently highlighted in documentaries and interviews on websites like YouTube and Pashto television channels, which encourage

¹¹⁸ Katz, E. (2009). "The Social Context of News: Media and Political Knowledge." *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 70-90.

compassion and solidarity. Digital platforms, for instance, have made it possible for women in Karak to speak out against cultural norms that have historically silenced them in favor of improved healthcare facilities and education for girls.

Youth civic engagement is sparked by media campaigns that support social causes like health awareness or literacy campaigns. To solve local issues, these programs promote volunteerism and group efforts. Social media sites frequently serve as focal points for planning neighborhood activities like blood drives and relief missions¹¹⁹. Breaking taboos around delicate subjects like mental health, reproductive rights, and domestic abuse has been made possible in large part by the media. Attitudes have gradually changed because of the discourse on these subjects that talk shows, PSAs, and online forums have promoted. Despite its potential, Karak's low level of digital literacy limits the use of media for social advocacy, especially among older and rural populations. Conservative resistance to some advocacy initiatives, like campaigns for women's rights, is still a problem.

4.9 Media's Role in Economic Transformation

The media has emerged as a key force behind economic change, especially in areas like District Karak. The media creates an atmosphere that is favorable to growth and innovation and opens new economic opportunities through its impact on consumer behavior, market trends, and public perception. This section examines how the media has changed consumer behavior and created new opportunities, thereby contributing to Karak's economic transformation.

¹¹⁹ Khalid, R., and Ali, S. (2020). "Social Media's Effect on Pakistani Cultural Identity." *Journal of Social Sciences in Pakistan* 40, no. 2: 123–134.

4.9.1 Introduction of News Economics Opportunities

By linking people to larger markets and resources, media, particularly digital platforms, have opened doors for economic growth in Karak. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok allow Karak's small business owners to advertise their goods and services. For instance, traditional Pashtun attire and regional handicrafts are now being purchased outside the district, generating revenue. Young entrepreneurs can compete in contemporary markets by learning vital skills from tutorials and webinars on websites like YouTube, which cover everything from digital marketing to business planning. Online courses and media literacy initiatives have been instrumental in providing them with skills such as software development, writing, and graphic design. Professionals can now investigate remote work options thanks to digital connectivity, especially in the information technology and education sectors¹²⁰.

Travelers' interest has been piqued by media coverage of Karak's natural beauty, cultural legacy, and traditional cuisine. The expansion of hospitality enterprises such as neighborhood entries and guesthouses, because of this promotion, has stimulated the local economy.

Local businesses now have access to new markets thanks to the growth of e-commerce platforms and mobile payment systems, which are frequently promoted in the media. This change contributes to Karak's economic formalization and greater financial inclusion.

¹²⁰ Zubair, M., Khan, F., & Ali, A. (2020). "Challenges and Opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Internet Access and Media Literacy." *Information Studies Journal*, 18(2), 45-60.

4.9.2 Impact on Consumer Behavior

The media has a big impact on Karak's economic trends by influencing consumer preferences and behaviors. Social media, radio, and television advertisements educate the public about new goods, services, and technological advancements. Promotions of agricultural equipment and mobile banking, for instance, have prompted adoption among Karak residents. Local ads and social media influences also contribute to the district's exposure to international trends, which affect consumer choices. Young people in Karak are increasingly choosing branded products because of exposure to commercials and entertainment content. This change is especially noticeable in food items, electronics, and fashion. Although it helps local markets for some products, it also poses a threat to established sectors like artisanal crafts and handmade apparel. Consumer behavior is changing because of the growth of online shopping platforms, which have been made popular by media campaigns. For convenience, Price comparison, and access to goods that aren't available locally, Karak consumers are depending more and more on online marketplaces. Additionally, this change pushes Karak businesses to adopt online sales, revolutionizing conventional retail methods. Consumer awareness of sustainability and rights has increased thanks to the media. Although these trends are still in their infancy in Karak, campaigns emphasizing ethical consumerism, eco-friendly products, and health-conscious choices are influencing consumer behavior.

4.9.3 Challenges and Considerations

Disparities in media literacy and access to digital tools continue to be obstacles despite the transformative power of media. Many rural residents do not have the means to take full advantage of these economic opportunities. The adoption of contemporary economic practices, especially those brought about by international media platforms, can occasionally be resisted in Karak due to traditional mindsets.

4.10 Challenges Posed by Media in Socio-Cultural

Transformation

Although the media is a potent instrument for socio-cultural change, it also brings with it problems that have the potential to upend established societies. These issues show up in District Karak as the digital divide, media censorship and control, and cultural deterioration. This section examines these problems and emphasizes how they affect the socio-cultural dynamics of the district¹²¹.

4.10.1 Cultural Erosion

Adaptation of foreign values, customs, and lifestyles is frequently the result of exposure to global culture via digital content, social media, and television. Due to their growing exposure to Western language, fashion, and entertainment, young people are especially affected by this trend.

Individualism and digital entertainment are progressively displacing traditional Pashtun values, such as collective familial systems and indigenous storytelling customs. Modern forms of art and entertainment that are promoted by the media displace the traditional crafts, music, and poetry that were once essential to Karak's cultural identity. As international celebrations and events, such as international music festivals or Valentine's Day, gain prominence, local festivals and customs are also becoming less significant. There is a risk of cultural homogenization, even though cultural hybridity can benefit societies by using traditional and modern elements. The distinctive features of Karak's cultural legacy are in danger of being lost due to the predominance of global media narratives.

¹²¹ Zia, S., & Khan, M. (2019). "Media Consumption in Rural Areas and the Digital Divide in Pakistan." *Digital Pakistan Journal*, 10(2), 22-35.

4.10.2 Media Censorship and Control

State and institutional control frequently limit the media's ability to contribute to socio-cultural change, which reduces the media's efficacy as a change agent. The distribution of content deemed politically or culturally sensitive is frequently restricted in Pakistan, including Karak, due to state control over contentious subjects like minority issues or women's rights is restricted by this censorship. Freedom of expression is suppressed when digital platforms are regulated through laws and social media app bans, which fragment the information ecosystem. Journalists and content producers frequently engage in self-censorship out of fear of criticism from conservative organizations or authorities. This is especially noticeable in Karak when it comes to the scant attention given to important social issues and progressive movements. Biased reporting and a reduction in the range of viewpoints are the outcomes of media ownership being concentrated in the hands of a small number of influential people or businesses. Such authority has the potential to silence grassroots voices and reinforce narratives that support elite interests.

4.10.3 Digital Divide

Even though digital media is becoming more widely available, Karak still has a sizable technology and media literacy gap that prevents fair socio-cultural change. Karak's rural communities frequently lack the infrastructure required to engage in the digital revolution, while urban areas enjoy greater access to digital devices and internet connectivity. Due to societal norms and financial limitations, women and low-income groups encounter additional obstacles that restrict their capacity to effectively access and utilize media. The capacity to critically interact with content is compromised by

low media literacy, even among those who have access to digital platforms¹²². Many users find it difficult to separate reliable information from propaganda or false information, which encourages the spread of fake news and pointless debate. By favoring those who have access to media and information technologies, the digital divide exacerbates already existing socio-economic disparities¹²³. The media's capacity to change marginalized communities in Karak is constrained by this discrepancy.

4.11 Conclusion

A thorough grasp of how media affects many facets of life, from political and economics to cultural and social structures, can be gained by researching the media's role in socio-cultural transformation in District Karak. The media is a dynamic instrument that both transforms and reflects changing social norms by influencing attitudes, promoting behavioral changes, and fostering discussion of important topics. Its effects are not without complications, though, offering Karak residents both opportunities and difficulties.

Karak's political awareness and engagement have been greatly aided by the media's capacity to connect and inform. Social media, radio, and television have become platforms for community mobilization and information dissemination. Media has increased political participation by bridging the divide between citizens and governance, especially among the younger population. The media's ability to serve as a catalyst for constructive change is further demonstrated by its support of social causes like gender equality, education, and environmental preservation. However, the

¹²² Zubair, M. (2018). "Impact of Global Media on Local Culture: A Case Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *Journal of Cultural Studies*.

¹²³ Yousafzai, Z. (2021). "Digital Media Consumption in Rural Pakistan: The Case of KPK." *Journal of Media Studies*.

effectiveness of the media is limited by censorship and biased reporting, which frequently limits its ability to represent a range of viewpoints and touch on delicate subjects.

Media has brought about both cultural disruption and preservation. The preservation of Karak residents' sense of identity and pride has been facilitated by the regional media's portrayal of Pashtun customs and values. At the same time, media exposure to other cultures has resulted in cultural hybridity, which combines traditional customs with contemporary influences. Although cultural experiences are enhanced by this hybridity, indigenous customs and values run the risk of being undermined, especially as younger generations follow international trends. This dichotomy emphasizes the necessity of a well-rounded strategy, making sure that cultural heritage is not sacrificed for modernization.

In Karak's economy, the media has created new opportunities for development and entrepreneurship. People can now market local goods, engage in e-commerce, and access remote work opportunities thanks to the growth of digital platforms. The media has helped diversify the local economy by boosting tourism and raising awareness of local resources. The inclusive potential of these opportunities is limited by unequal access to technology and media literacy, which makes the digital divide a serious problem. Targeted investments in digital infrastructure and education are necessary to close this gap and empower underserved communities.

Another crucial aspect of this change is how the media shapes gender norms and empowers women in Karak. By questioning conventional roles and showcasing the contribution of women across a range of industries, the media has helped to advance discussion about gender equality. Notwithstanding these advancements, conservative opposition and the underrepresentation of women in positions of leadership underscore

the continuous fight for equality and inclusivity it will take a concentrated effort to develop more inclusive media narratives that support progressive change and speak to local contexts to overcome these obstacles.

There is a complicated interaction between reinforcement and challenge in the media's impact on moral and religious values in Karak. Spiritual guidance and community cohesion have been facilitated by religious programming on radio and television. On the other hand, because digital media is global, it has brought in different viewpoints that occasionally go against conventional wisdom, causing conflict within the community. Navigating this dynamic requires finding a balance between embracing diversity and maintaining religious identity.

In conclusion, the media has a significant but complex role in the socio-cultural transformation of District Karak. In addition to offering advantages like economic growth, cultural exchange, and community empowerment, it has also brought about problems like inequality, censorship, and cultural deterioration. It is crucial to address these issues through inclusive policies, investments in digital literacy, and the promotion of diverse and locally relevant content if we are to fully realize the potential of media for sustainable development. Karak can successfully negotiate the challenges of modernization while maintaining its cultural integrity by cultivating a media environment that embraces innovation while honoring tradition.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

5. Introduction

The current study was carried out to highlight the Media and Socio-Cultural transformation from Karak KP Pakistan.

5.1 Study sites and participations

The current study was based on mixed-method study including questionnaires and interviews from village Khurram Muhammad Zia and Karak city KP. The sampling was done in a week of December 2024 and May 2025.

For questionnaires, the age group of participants was (16-20) and (21-25). A total of 100 students were selected out of which 50 were male and 50 were female.

For interviews, the age group of participants was about (21-25), (26-30), and (31-35). A total of 40 people were selected out of which 20 were male and 20 were female. 10 out of both were teachers and 10 were students.

5.2 Data Collection

Data was collected by questionnaire (Appendix I). It was composed of 5 sections (A-E) containing 25 questions in total and 5 questions in each section. These were composed of the following aspects.

5.2.1 Media Consumption Patterns/Habits

This section contained questions like traditional media, social media, time spent, and representation on cultural/traditional, primary purpose (Appendix I-section A). It was represented in Table 5.1 and Fig 5.1.

Table 5.1: Media Consumption Patterns/Habits

Questions	Option A F+M=T	Option B F+M=T	Option C F+M=T	Option D F+M=T	Option E F+M=T
Access of Traditional Media Sources	10+20=30	8+6=14	16+8= 24	14+12=26	2+4=6
Digital or Social Media Platform	6+8=14	2+4=6	20+12=32	22+24=46	0+2=2
Time Spend on Social Media per day	12+4=16	14+4=18	10+16=26	6+18=24	8+8=16
Representation of Social Media on Cultural and Traditional Values	8+16=24	14+22=36	4+2=6	22+8=30	2+2=4
Media Platforms primary purpose	2+14=16	12+10=22	28+4=32	6+22=28	2+0=2

F=Female, M=Male, T=Total

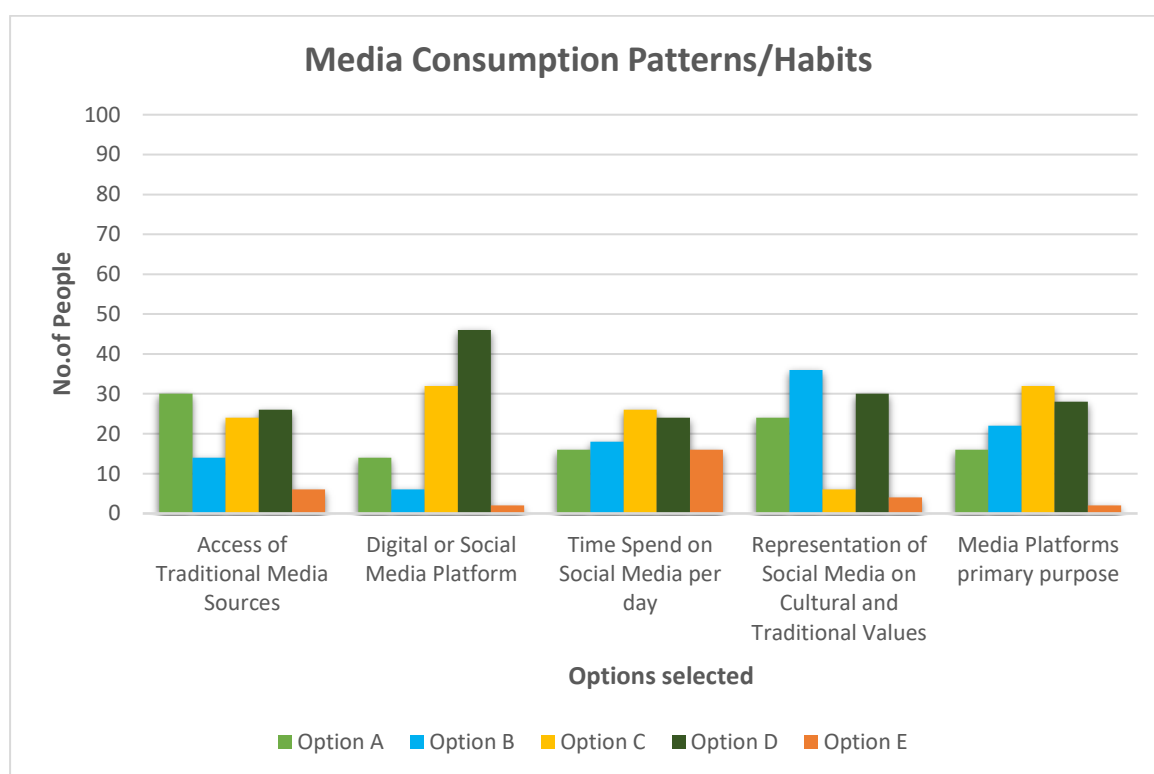


Fig 5.1: Graphical Representation of Section A- Media Consumption

The survey is targeting the most prevalent user groups revealed key media consumption trends. Traditional media is accessed daily by 30% of people, with 20% male and 10% female users. YouTube is the most popular digital and social media platform, used regularly by 46%—comprising 22% females and 24% males. Social media usage for 1–2 hours daily was reported by 26%, including 10% females and 16% males. Notably, 36% believed social media content reflects the cultural values and traditions of Karak, with 14% female and 22% male. Additionally, 32% identified education as the primary purpose for media usage, with a significant gender gap: 28% female and only 4% male.

5.2.2 Perception of Cultural Representation in Media

This section contained questions like portrayed in social media, changes in past few years, role of media in influencing cultural change, local culture representation in National media, misrepresented media coverage (Appendix I-section B). It was represented in Table 5.2 and Fig 5.2.

Table 5.2: Perception of Cultural Representation in Media

Questions	Option A F+M=T	Option B F+M=T	Option C F+M=T	Option D F+M=T	Option E F+M=T
Portrayal in Social Media	20+26=46	4+6=10	18+14=32	6+2=8	2+2=4
Changes in representation of Cultural Practices	22+26=48	16+16=32	6+2=8	4+6=10	2+0=2
Media Role in influencing Cultural Change	20+14=34	4+8=12	10+16=26	10+8=18	6+4=10
Local Culture representation in National Media	4+16=20	12+24=36	20+2=22	4+6=10	10+2=12

Misrepresentation of Cultural elements in Media	12+16=28	0+12=12	2+8=10	10+8=18	26+6=32
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F=Female, M=Male, T=Total

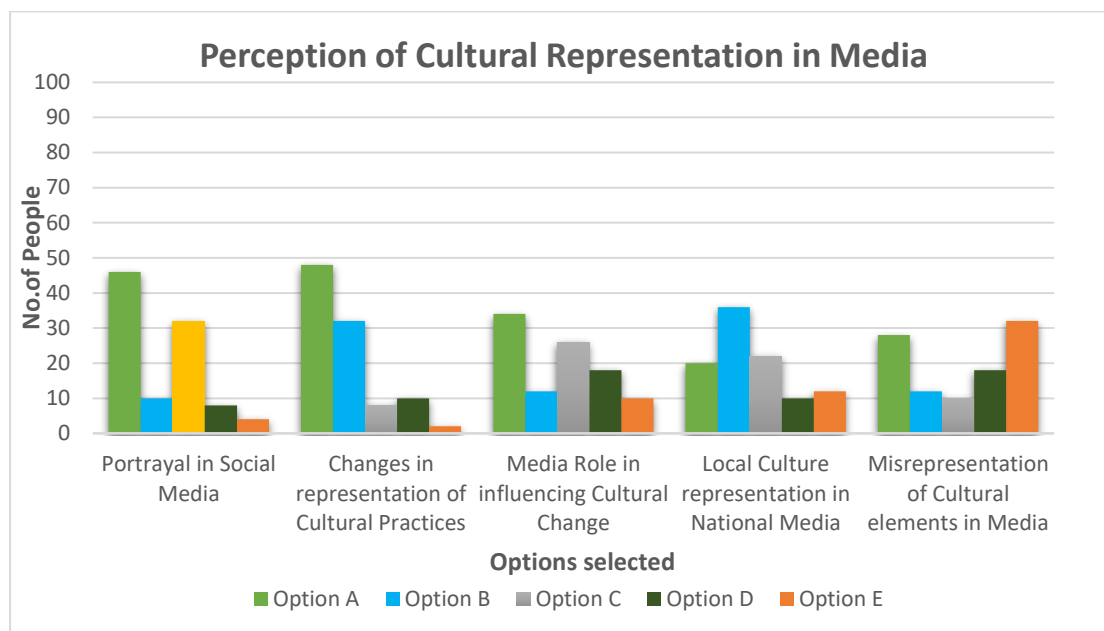


Fig 5.2: Graphical Representation of Section B- Perception of Cultural

The survey results reflect varied public perceptions of media's impact on cultural representation in Karak. About 46% of people believe Karak is portrayed positively on social media, with 20% female and 26% male respondents. Additionally, 48% noted that social media has influenced the way cultural practices are represented, with 22% female and 26% male agreement. A total of 34% believe social media plays a role in driving cultural change, including 20% women and 14% men. When it comes to national media, 36% expressed mixed views on its portrayal of local culture, with 12% female and 24% male. Furthermore, 32% felt that social roles in Karak are often misrepresented in media coverage—an opinion shared by 26% of women and 6% of men.

5.2.3 Perception of Media Influence

This section contained questions like social media influence cultural practices and traditions, changes in cultural practices in community, watch local television channels, influence of social media on youth, media promotes modern or global culture practices over traditional ones (Appendix I-section C). It was represented in Table 3.3 and Fig 3.3.

Table 5.3: Perception of Media Influence

Questions	Option A F+M=T	Option B F+M=T	Option C F+M=T	Option D F+M=T	Option E F+M=T
Social Media Influence on Cultural Practices	2+8=10	6+8=14	6+22=28	26+8=34	10+4=14
Changes in Cultural Practices	18+24=42	0+2=2	24+16=40	4+8=12	4+0=4
Local Television Channels Watch time	14+14=28	12+8=20	20+18=38	2+8=10	2+2=4
Social Media Influence on Youth	10+18=28	18+12=30	6+6=12	14+12=26	2+2=4
Media Promotion of Global Culture over Traditional	30+18=48	10+16=26	10+2=12	0+10=10	0+4=4

F=Female, M=Male, T=Total

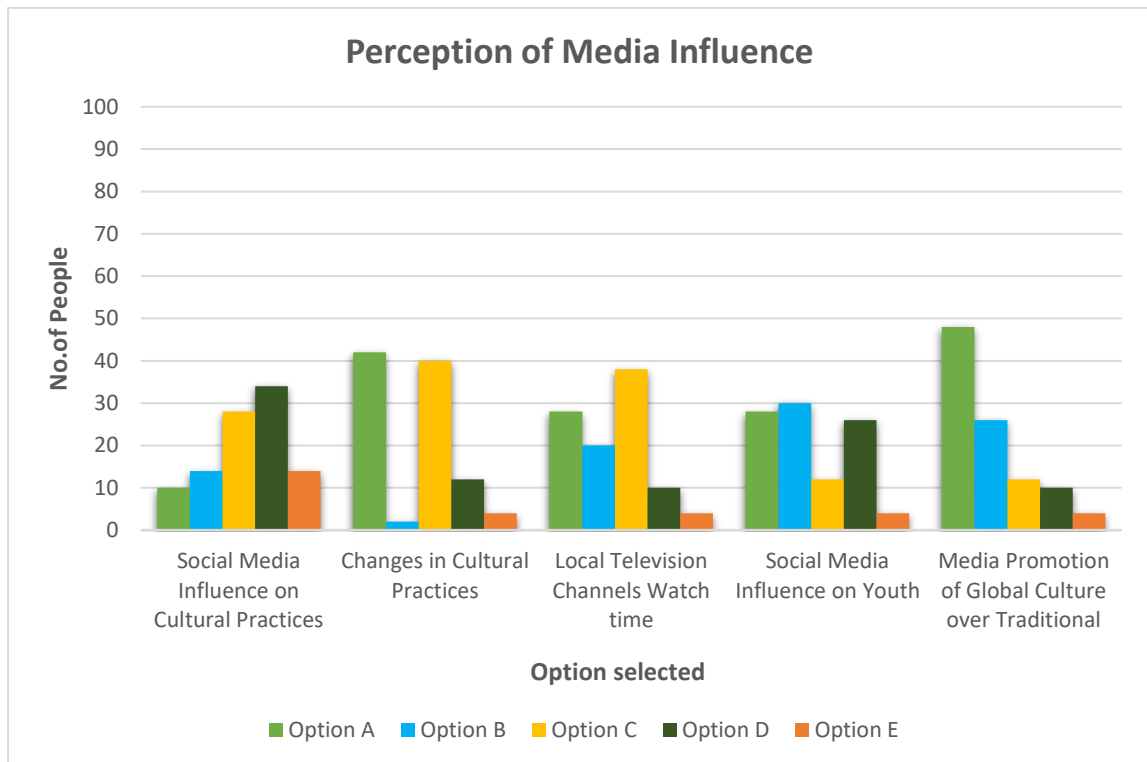


Fig 5.3: Graphical Representation of Section C- Perception of Media Influence

The survey highlighted significant perceptions regarding social media's impact on cultural practices in Karak. About 34% of respondents believed social media influences cultural practices, with 26% female and 8% male. Additionally, 42% noticed cultural changes due to social media, including 18% females and 24% males. Local television viewership was moderate, with 38% watching occasionally—20% females and 18% males. 30% people were of the view that indicated that social media has a somewhat positive influence on youth, with 18% female and 12% male agreement. Moreover, 48% of participants felt that media promotes global or modern culture over traditional values, including 30% female and 18% male.

5.2.4 Impact of Media on Cultural Identity

This section contained questions like types of media content that had the most significant impact on cultural transformation, media impacted senses of cultural

identity, exposure to global media content influenced cultural identity, media encouraged elements of other culture, continuous exposure to non-local diluted cultural identity (Appendix I-section D). It was represented in Table 5.4 and Fig 5.4.

Table 5.4: Impact of Media on Cultural Identity

Questions	Option A F+M=T	Option B F+M=T	Option C F+M=T	Option D F+M=T	Option E F+M=T
Media Impact on Cultural Transformation	16+12=28	30+20=50	2+10=12	2+4=6	0+4=4
Media Impact on Cultural Identity	4+26=28	20+4=26	12+1=14	10+8=18	4+10=14
Global Media Influence on Cultural Identity	10+32=42	14+8=22	8+0=8	10+10=20	8+0=8
Media Encouragement in Adaption of other Cultures	16+18=34	16+18=34	12+12=24	3+2=4	4+0=4
Non-local Content and Dilution of Cultural Identity	10+22=32	16+18=34	16+4=20	4+4=8	4+2=6

F=Female, M=Male, T=Total

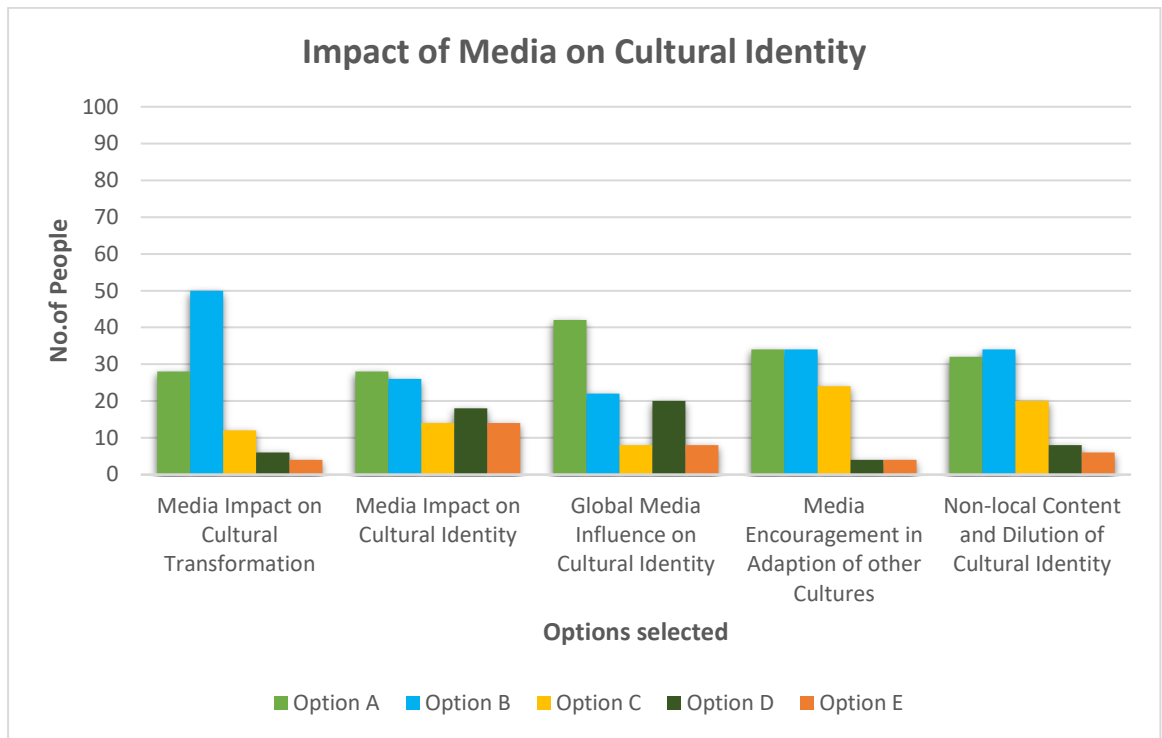


Fig 5.4: Graphical Representation of Section D- Impact of Media on Cultural Identity

The survey findings reveal strong public sentiment about media’s role in cultural transformation. 50% of the respondents believed entertainment media has the most significant impact, with 30% female and 20% male agreement. While 28% felt media strengthened cultural identity—primarily males (26%) compared to only 4% females. 42% observed that global media has greatly influenced the cultural identity of the younger generation, including 32% males and 10% females. Additionally, 34% believed media encourages adoption of foreign cultural elements over traditional ones, with a near-equal gender split (16% female, 18% male). Another 34% felt that non-local content has diluted cultural identity, with 18% female and 16% male respondents sharing this view.

5.2.5 Language and Identity

This section contained questions like the importance of language in preserving cultural identity, digital media impacted the use of local languages, comfortable with blending

of traditional and modern elements, media plays a role in shaping the linguistic preferences of people, consumption of media content in native language compared to National or International (Appendix I-section E). It was represented in Table 5.5 and Fig 5.5.

Table 5.5: Language and Identity

Questions	Option A F+M=T	Option B F+M=T	Option C F+M=T	Option D F+M=T	Option E F+M=T
Importance of Language in Cultural Identity	28+24=52	10+12=22	6+2=8	4+8=12	2+4=6
Impact of Digital Media on local Language	20+36=56	6+0=6	6+4=10	16+10=26	2+0=2
Blending of Traditional elements in Media Content	10+14=24	18+18=36	6+8=14	12+8=20	4+2=6
Media Role in Linguistic Preferences	14+18=32	12+16=28	16+8=24	4+4=8	4+4=8
Media Content Consumption in Native Language	8+6=14	4+10=14	14+16=30	16+10=26	8+8=16

F=Female, M=Male, T=Total

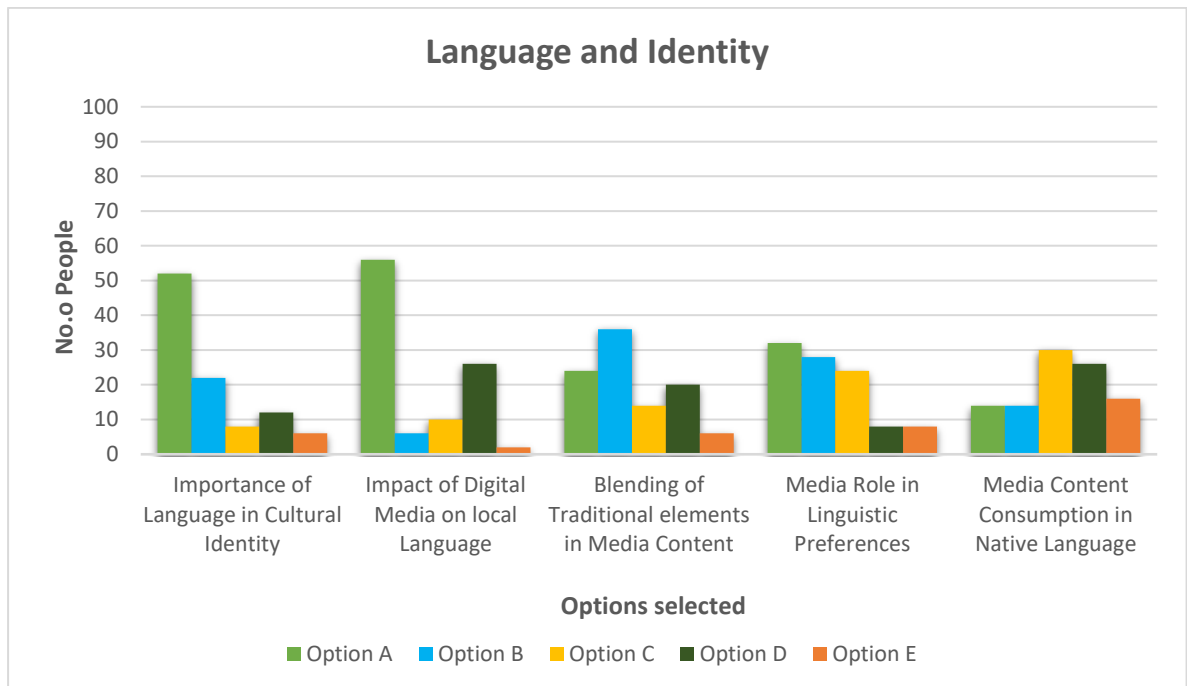


Fig 5.5: Graphical Representation of Section E- Language and Identity

52% prevalence of people thought that language is extremely important in preserving cultural identity out of which 28% were female and 24% were male —emphasizing its importance. A majority (56%) believed digital media significantly impacts local languages, notably 36% male and 20% female. 36% were comfortable with the fusion of traditional and modern elements in media, evenly split between genders with 18%. Furthermore, 32% felt media strongly influences linguistic preferences, including 14% females and 18% males. Only, 30% reported consuming media exclusively in their native language, with 14% female and 16% male respondents.

5.3 Data collection (Interviews)

A total 40 people were selected for interview from village Khurram Muhammad Zia and Karak city KP. Out of total 40 people 20 were male and 20 were female. The interview was done in a week of December 2024 and May 2025. Data was collected by interviews (Appendix-X). It was composed of 8 sections (A-H) containing 16 questions

in total and 2 questions in each section. These sections were composed of the following aspects.

5.3.1 Media Consumption Habits and Perception

This section contained questions like media platforms used most frequently and media consumptions habits based on which type of content (Appendix-X section A).

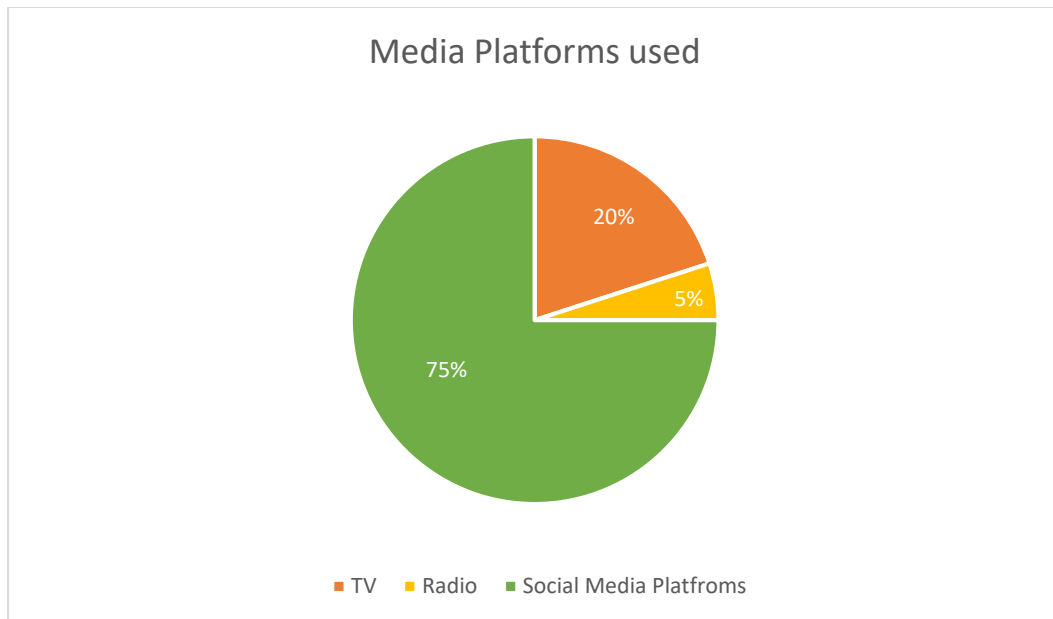


Fig 5.3.1a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section A- Media Platforms used

In regards to the media consumption habits/patterns, it was observed that 75% (n=30) people used the social media platform, 20% (n=8) used TV and 5% (n=2) used radio. Out of these number of male were 16, 4 and 2 whereas the number of female were 14, 4 and 0 respectively.

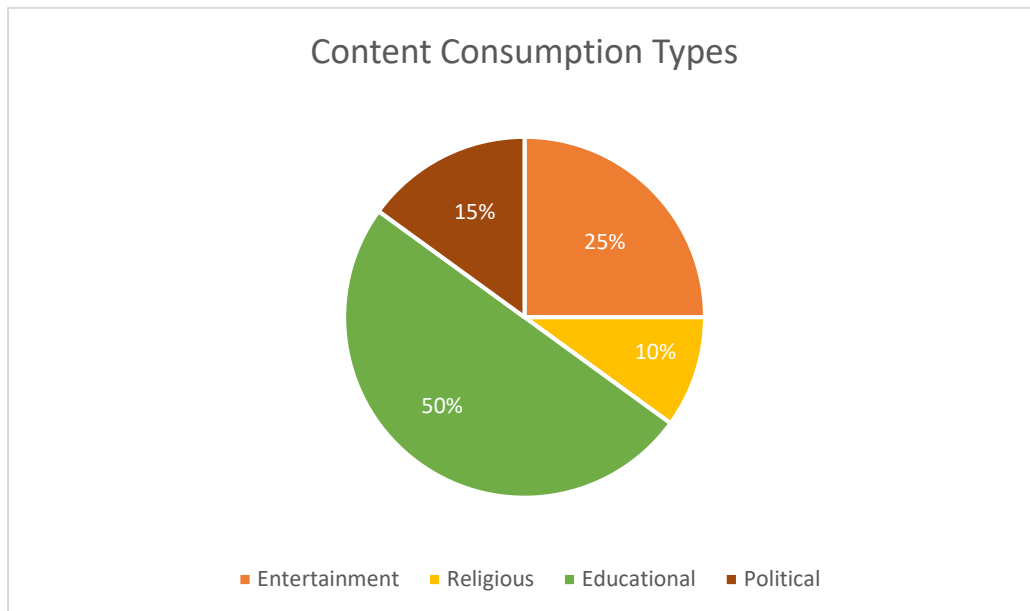


Fig 5.3.1b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section A- Content Consumption Types

The opinion of people regarding the media content consumption types was that 50% (n=20) people used social media platforms for the purpose of education, 25% (n=10) for entertainment, 15% (n=6) for political purposes and 10% (n=4) for religious knowledge. Out of these number of male were 10, 6, 4 and 2 whereas the number of female were 10, 4, 2 and 2 respectively.

5.3.2 Media Preference

This section contained questions like media sources usage, local or national media for understanding issues about culture (Appendix-X section B).

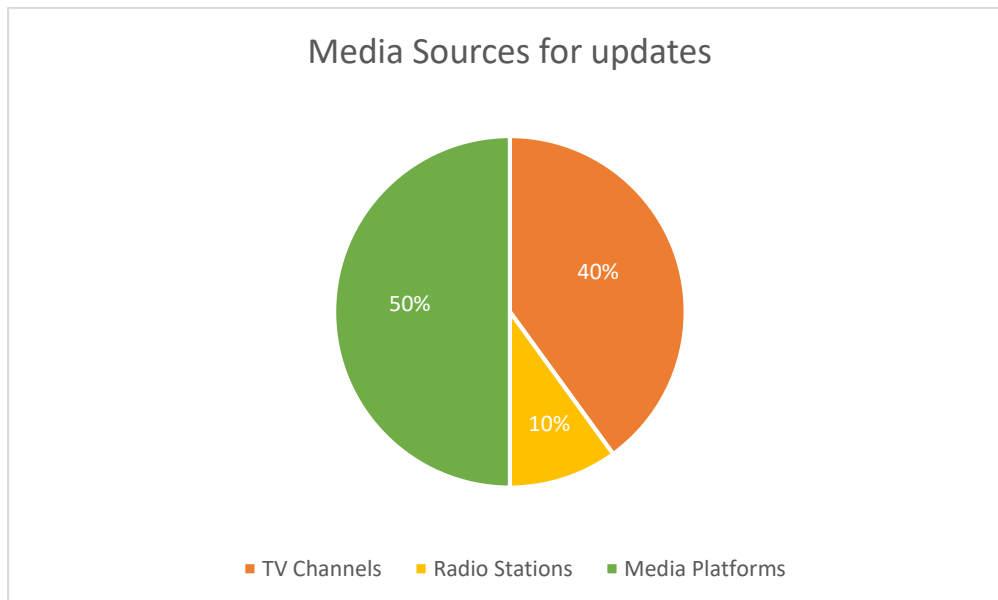


Fig 5.3.2a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section B- Media Sources for updates

The opinion of people regarding media sources for update was that 50% (n=20) people were using social media, 40% (n=16) people used TV channels and 10% (n=4) of people still use radio stations. Out of these number of male were 10, 8 and 4 whereas the number of female were 10, 8 and 0 respectively.

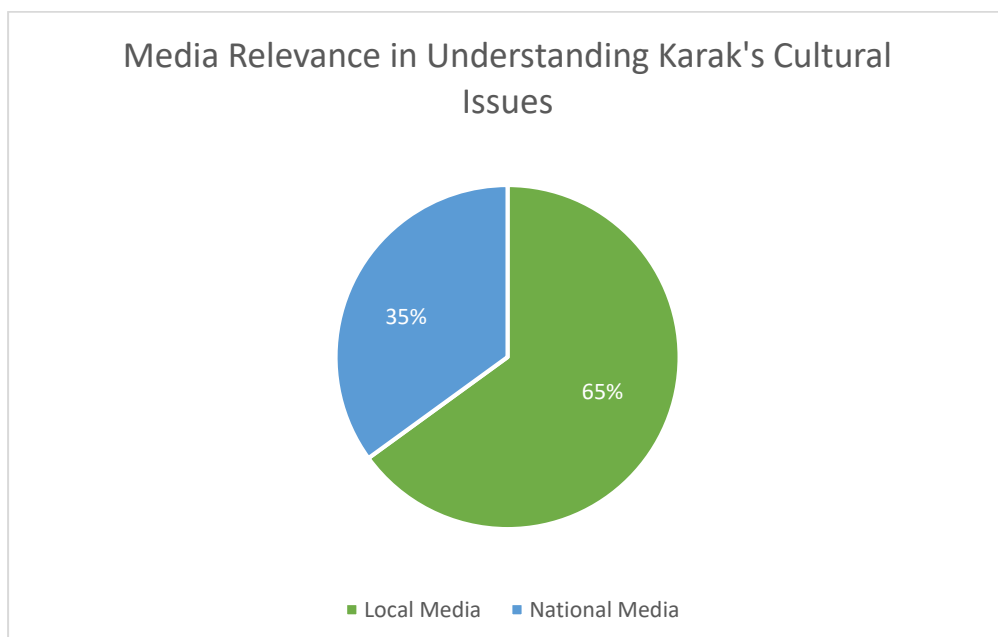


Fig 5.3.2b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section B- Media Relevance in Understanding Karak's Cultural Issues

65% (n=26) people were in the favor of National media, thinking that it is more relevant for understanding the issues which affect Karak culture while 35% (n=14) people thought that local media platforms are more relevant. Out of these number of male were 14 and 10 whereas the number of female were 12 and 4 respectively.

5.3.3 Role of Traditional verses Digital Media

This section contained questions like traditional media comparison to digital media, digital media and stronger impact in shaping views and attitude (Appendix-X section C).

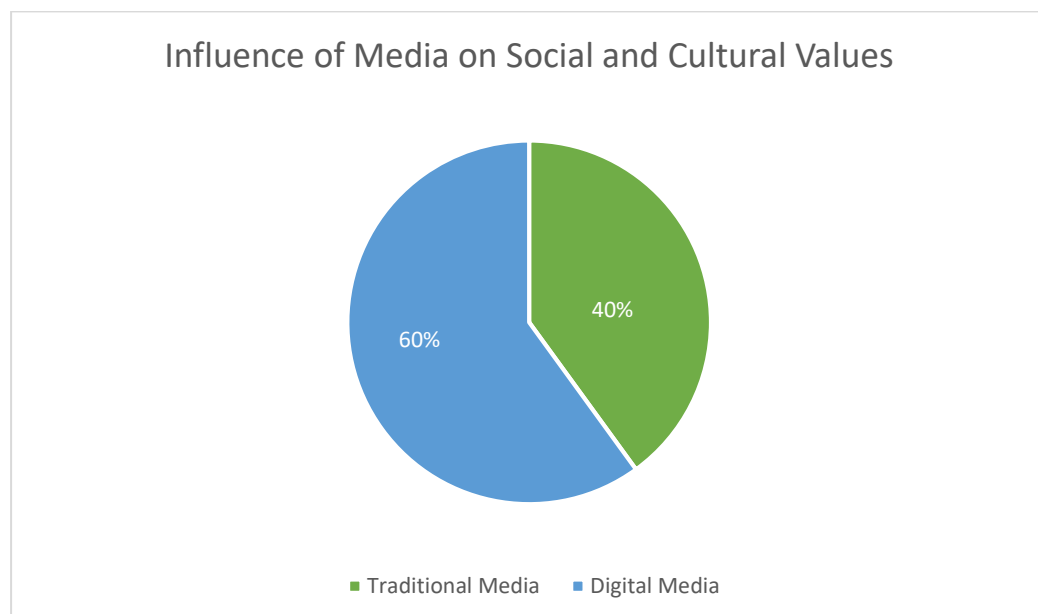


Fig 5.3.3a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section C- Influence of Media on Social and Cultural Values

It was observed that 60% (n=24) people perceived that digital media (social media, online news) have influenced more on cultural values and social practices as compared to traditional media while 40% (n=16) people thought that traditional media (like TV, radio, and newspapers) have more influence. The number of male and female were equal in both regards i.e. 12 and 8 respectively.

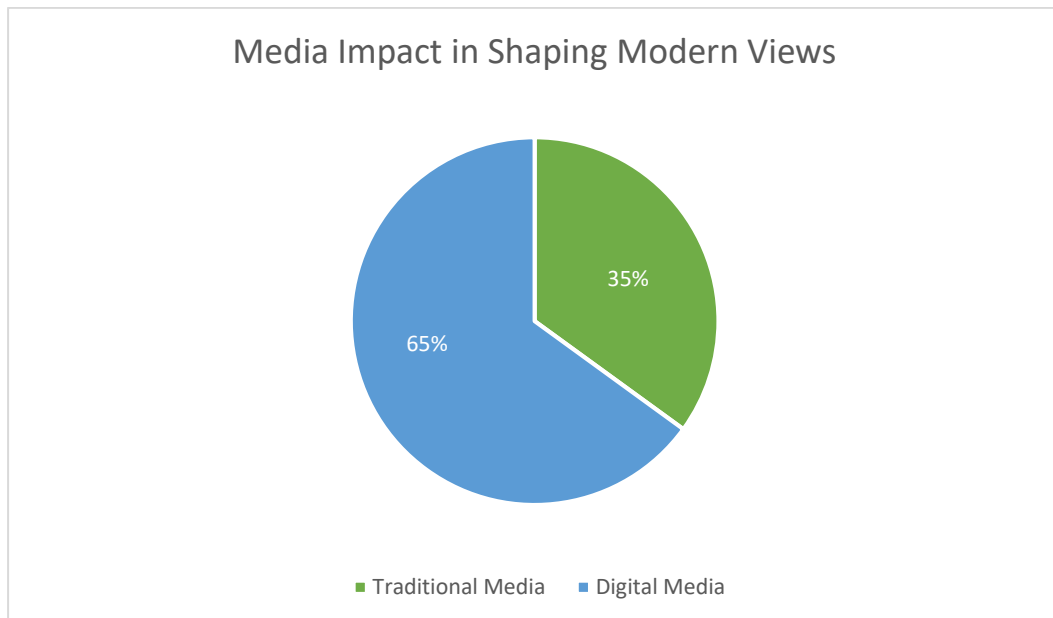


Fig 5.3.3b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section C- Media Impact in Shaping Modern Views

The opinion of 65% (n=26) people was that digital media has a strong impact on shaping modern views and attitudes while 35% (n=14) people thought that traditional media has a stronger impact. The number of male were 14 and 8 whereas female were 12 and 6 respectively.

5.3.4 Perception of Cultural Transformations

This section contained questions like media influenced the traditional cultural practice and values, and whether media brought positive and negative changes to cultural identity (Appendix-X section D).

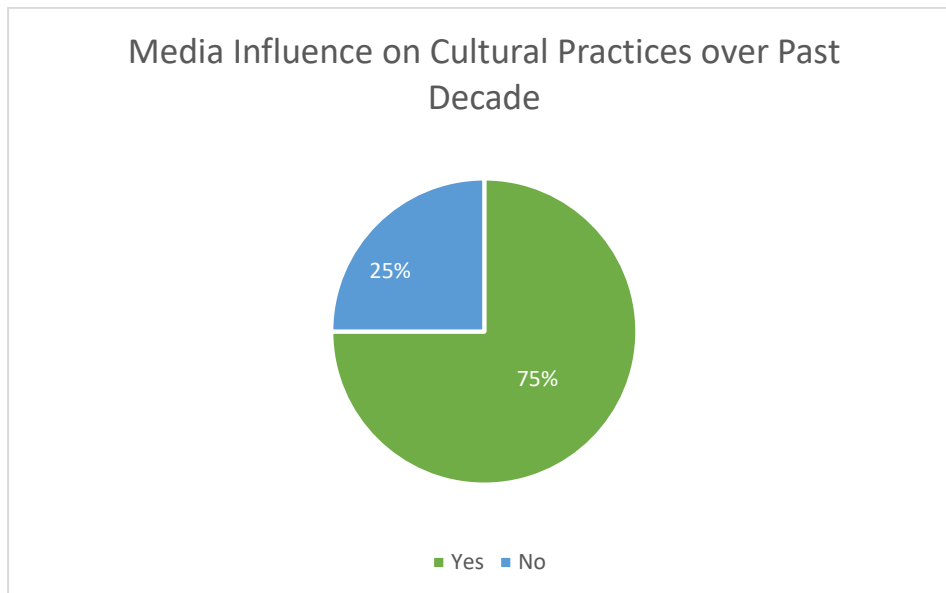


Fig 5.3.4a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section D- Media Influence on Cultural Practices over Past Decade

75% (n=30) of people agreed that media has influenced the traditional cultural practices and values of over Past Decade while 25% (n=10) people didn't agree with this statement. The number of male were 16 and 4 whereas female were 14 and 6 respectively.

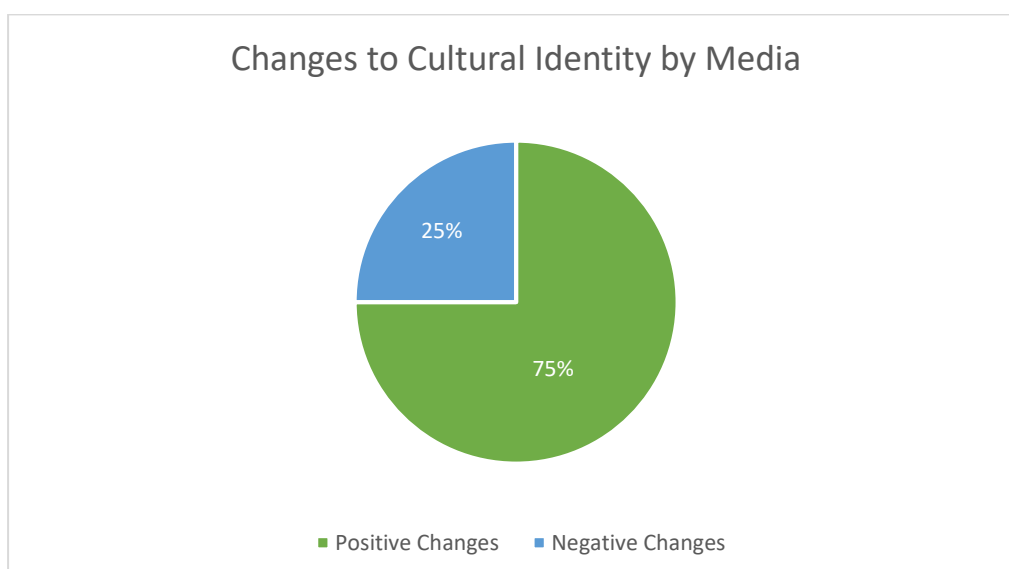


Fig 5.3.4b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section D- Changes to Cultural Identity by Media

75% (n=30) people thought that media has brought a positive change to the cultural identity while 25% (n=10) people still thought that the media brought a negative change to the cultural identity. The number of male were 18 and 6 whereas female were 12 and 4 respectively.

5.3.5 Perception and Attitudes

This section contained questions like attitude towards traditional cultural values and practices, and media role in shaping younger generation attitude (Appendix-X section E).

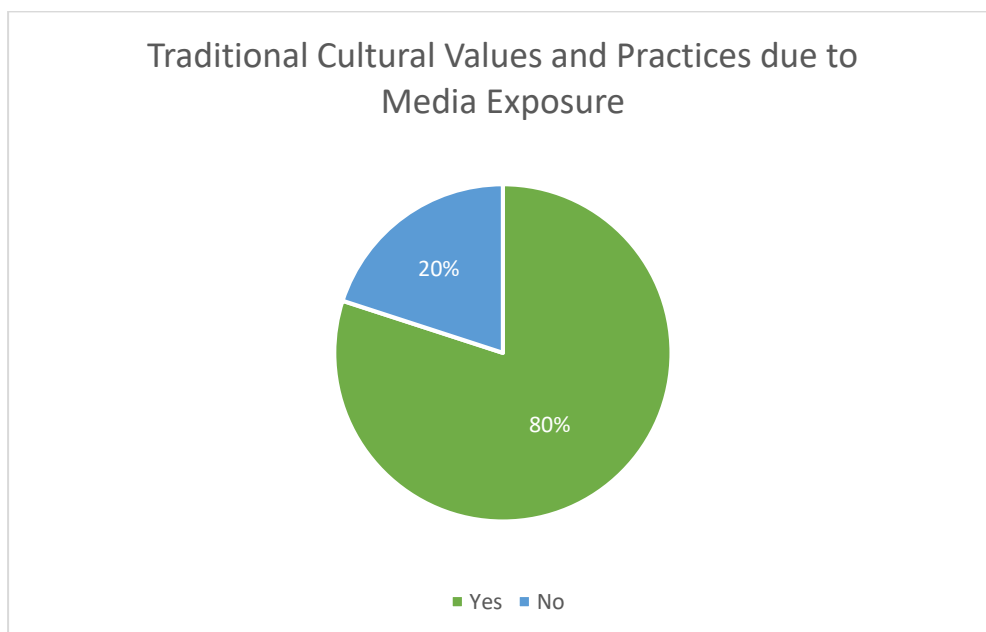


Fig 5.3.5a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section E- Traditional Cultural Values and Practices due to Media Exposure

The 80% (n=32) people had the opinion that due to media exposure, the attitudes towards traditional cultural values and in practices have been changed while 20% (n=8) people did not think so. The number of male were 14 and 4 whereas female were 18 and 4 respectively.

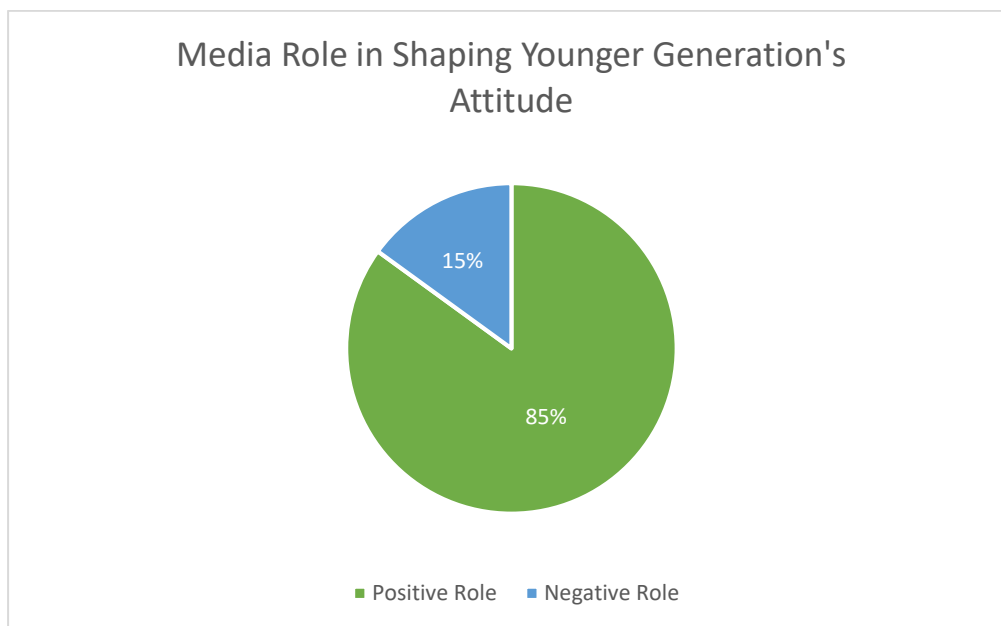


Fig 5.3.5b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section E- Media Role in Shaping Younger Generation's Attitude

85% (n=34) people perceived that media play a positive role in shaping younger generations attitudes towards local traditions and cultural identity while 15% (n=6) people thought that its role is negative. The number of male were 16 and 2 whereas female were 18 and 4 respectively.

5.3.6 Social Changes

This section contained questions like media contribution in social changes and media influence younger generations on traditional social structures (Appendix-X section F).

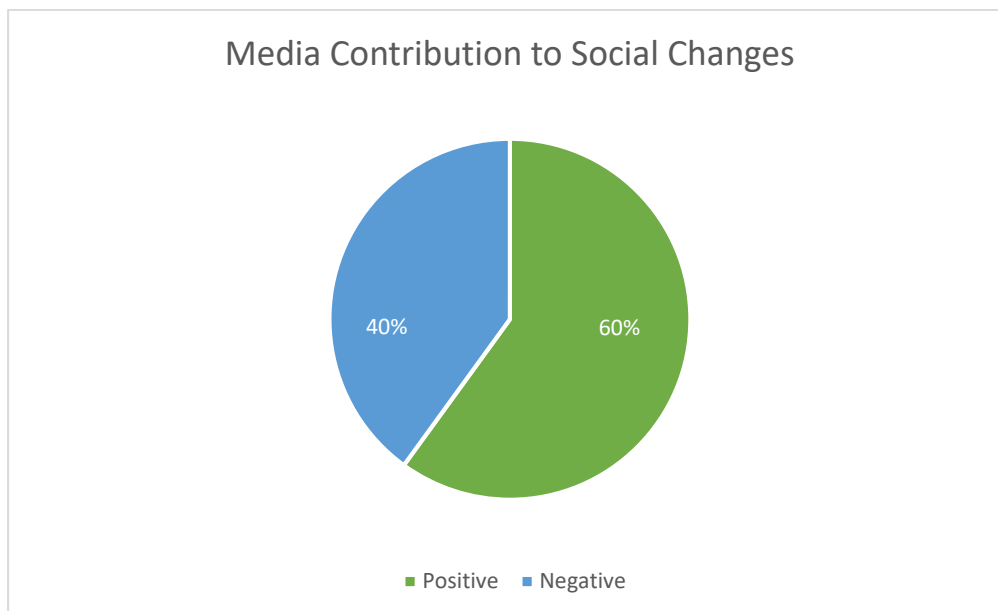


Fig 5.3.6a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section F- Media Contribution to Social Changes

60% (n=24) people thought that media contributed positively to social changes, such as shifts in family roles, gender norms, or community values while 40% (n=16) people thought that media has a negative role. The number of male were 12 and 6 whereas female were 12 and 10 respectively.

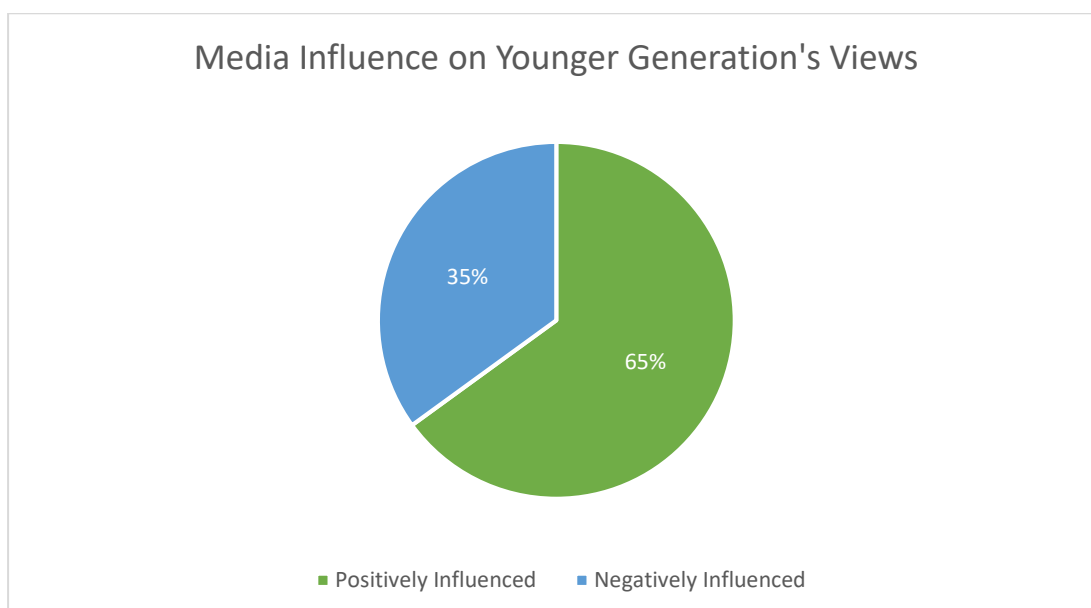


Fig 5.3.6b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section F- Media Influence on Younger Generation's Views

65% (n=26) people believed that media has positively influenced younger generation's views on traditional social structures and relationship within the community while 35% (n=14) people believed that media has brought negative changes. The number of male were 12 and 6 whereas female were 14 and 8 respectively.

5.3.7 Influence of Globalization and Urbanization

This section contained questions like globalization portrayal and its effect on cultural practices and urbanization influence on the values, tradition or social norms (Appendix-X section G).

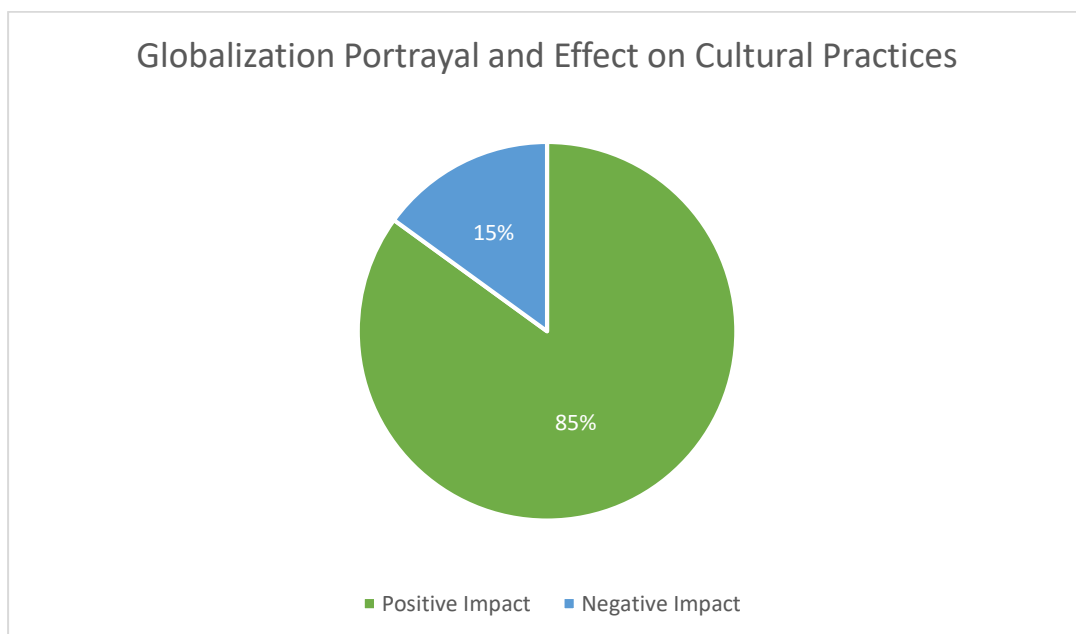


Fig 5.3.7a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section G- Globalization Portrayal and Effect on Cultural Practices

85% (n=34) people were of the view that globalization portrayal on media has positive impact on cultural practices and lifestyles in Karak while 15% (n=6) people thought that this impact is negative for traditional lifestyle. The number of male were 16 and 2 whereas female were 18 and 4 respectively.

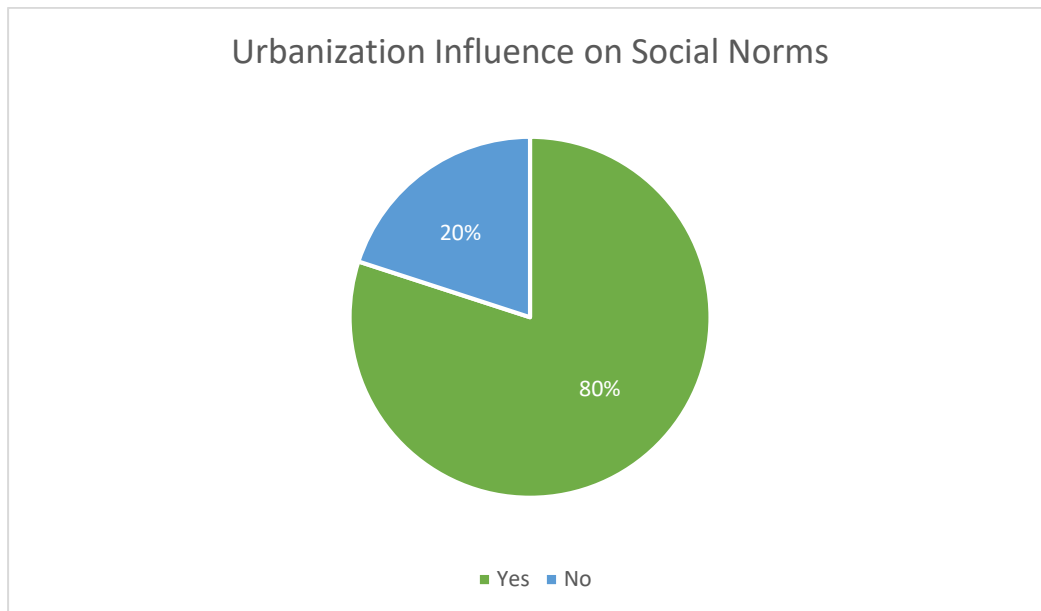


Fig 5.3.7b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section G- Urbanization Influence on Social Norms

80% (n=32) of people believe that yes media urbanization played a vital role in changes of values, traditions, or social norms while 20% (n=8) people thought that it has no significant effect. The number of male were 16 and 4 whereas female were 16 and 4 respectively.

5.3.8 Future Directions

This section contained questions like envisioning the role of media in shaping cultural identity over the next decade and changes in the cultural values through media representations and influences (Appendix-X section H).

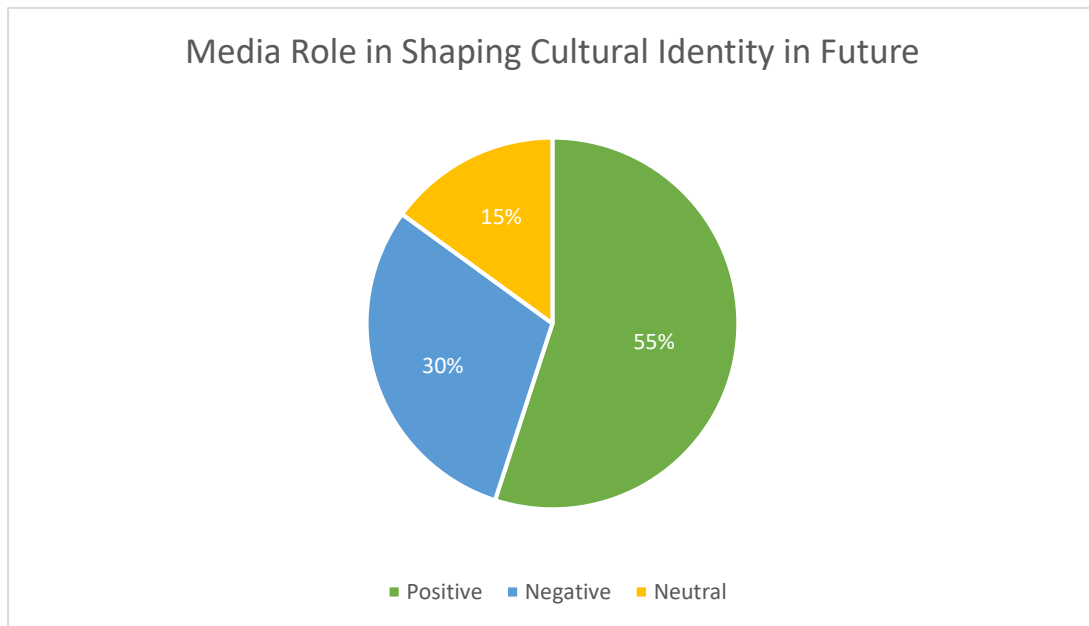


Fig 5.3.8a: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section H- Media Role in Shaping Cultural Identity in Future

55% (n=22) people believed that media will bring a positive change in shaping the cultural identity of Karak over the next decade, 30% (n=12) people had a negative response while 15% (n=6) people were neutral. The number of male were 10, 6 and 2 whereas female were 12, 6 and 4 respectively.

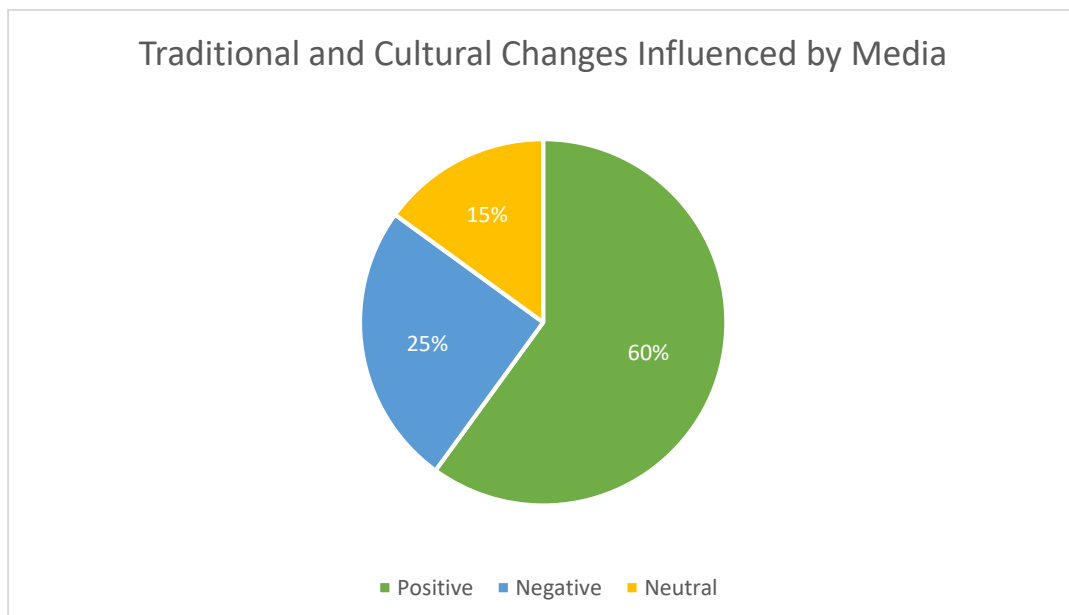


Fig 5.3.8b: Graphical Representation of Appendix-X Section H- Traditional and Cultural Changes Influenced by Media

60% (n=24) people wanted to see more positive changes in a media platform to represent the culture and values of Karak, 25% (n=10) people were not in the favor of media influence and 15% (n=6) of people had a neutral mindset where they did not give an exact view about media. The number of male were 12, 4 and 4 whereas female were 12, 6 and 2 respectively.

5.4 Limitations and Future prospects

The study covered the village Khurram Muhammad Zai and Karak city KP. The duration of study was one week in December 2024 and May 2025. The limitations of the study include the time constraint and sample size. Only one village and one city was included and also only two main attributes were taken; media and socio-culture. The study can be done including more areas, large sample size and multiple attributes in future.

Conclusion

The study was conducted to investigate the media and socio-cultural transformation in KP by taking a case study of Karak. A total 140 people were selected including 70 male and 70 female. The number of people selected from rural and urban were kept same. The sampling was done in a week in the month of December 2024 and May 2025. Data was collected by questionnaire (Appendix I) and interviews (Appendix-X).

Firstly, questionnaire (Appendix I) contained the factors including media consumption patterns/habits, perceptions of cultural representation in media, perception of media influence, impact of media on cultural identity, language, and identity. A total of 100 students were selected out of which 50 were female and 50 were male. The age group of participants was (16-20) and (21-25). In female students 24 were from age group (16-20) and were students of F.Sc whereas 26 were from age group (21-25) and students of BS. In male students 32 were from age group (16-20) and were students of F.Sc whereas 18 were from age group (21-25) and students of BS. The prevalence obtained showed that media has greatly influence the life of everyone as the percentage of male and female was nearly equal everywhere. It showed that media and especially social media has greatly influenced the personal, social, cultural and educational life of people. It has become a necessity and many people take its use and impacts positively. But this is also obvious from the survey that it had affected the cultural and traditional values to a great extent and had mix the modernism and globalization in the traditional values of people and areas.

Secondly, interviews (Appendix-X) contained the factors including media consumptions perception/habits, role of traditional vs digital media, perception of cultural transformation, perceptions and attitude, social change, influence of globalization and urbanization and future direction. A total of 40 people were selected

out of which 20 were female and 20 were male. Out of 20, 10 were teacher and 10 were students in both female and male. The age group of participants was (21-25), (26-30) and (31-35). In female teachers, 6 were from age group (26-30) and 4 from age group (31-35) while 10 students of BS were from age group (21-25). In male teachers, 5 were from age group (26-30) and 5 from age group (31-35) while 10 students of BS were from age group (21-25). The prevalence obtained showed that media has greatly influence the life of everyone as the percentage of male and female was nearly equal everywhere. It showed that media and especially social media has greatly influenced the personal, social, cultural and educational life of people. Social media has the highest prevalence of all and it's been used for education, updates, political and religious news. Also people were of the view that digital media has more impact than traditional media. Media has changed the attitude of people towards social values and culture and has greatly impact the young generation. Although many people had a positive view regarding media, some had negative also as it is influencing the cultural and traditional values. Media should promote the cultural and traditional values on national as well as local level so that the young generation remain connected to their diverse roots.

Karak, a district in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, stands at a crossroads between tradition and modernity. Its cultural identity, deeply rooted in Pashtun tribal traditions, is undergoing profound transformations due to globalization, migration, education, and media influence. The district's heritage—shaped by centuries-old tribal structures, Islamic values, and customs like *melmastia* (hospitality), festivals, and marriage rituals—faces both preservation challenges and adaptive pressures. While traditional systems such as the *Malik* governance structure and *Pashtunwali* (the Pashtun code of conduct) remain influential, modernization is gradually reshaping social hierarchies, gender roles, and economic structures (Ahmed, 2020; Sultan, 2019).

This duality highlights the resilience of Karak's culture while exposing its vulnerabilities to external forces. The interplay between tradition and modernity is not unique to Karak; similar trends have been observed in other Pashtun-dominated regions, where urbanization and digital media accelerate cultural shifts (Khan & Yousafzai, 2021). This paper explores these transformations in depth, analyzing the impact of migration, media, education, and economic changes on Karak's socio-cultural fabric. It also examines the challenges posed by modernization and proposes strategies for sustainable development that honor tradition while embracing progress.

Karak's socio-political landscape has long been dominated by tribal structures, with the Khattak tribe playing a central role. The *Maliks* (tribal leaders) traditionally governed through consensus, resolving disputes and managing resources according to *Pashtunwali*, which emphasizes honor (*nang*), hospitality (*melmastia*), and justice (*badal*—often translated as revenge but also encompassing restorative justice) (Ahmed, 2013).

However, the authority of *Maliks* has diminished due to formal governance structures, urbanization, and the influence of state institutions (Yousaf, 2019). While they still hold sway in rural areas, younger generations increasingly question their absolute authority, particularly as education and media expose them to alternative governance models.

Despite these changes, tribal affiliations remain strong, shaping identity, social cohesion, and political allegiances. Research by Lindholm (1982) highlights how tribal systems in Pashtun societies act as stabilizing forces, even amidst external pressures. In Karak, tribal identity continues to influence marriage alliances, conflict resolution, and local politics. However, economic mobility and migration are gradually weakening rigid tribal boundaries, leading to a more fluid social structure.

Marriage in Karak traditionally serves as a means of reinforcing tribal and familial bonds. Arranged marriages, often within the tribe, are accompanied by elaborate rituals and significant dowries (*walwar*). However, economic changes and migration have introduced new dynamics. Financial pressures and exposure to urban norms have led some families to reduce dowry demands (Ahmed, 2013). Younger generations, influenced by media and education, increasingly advocate for self-choice marriages, though these remain controversial in conservative circles (Ali, 2022).

Festivals like *Eid*, *Jashn-e-Karak*, and *Nowruz* reinforce communal bonds and Pashtun identity. Hospitality (*melmastia*) remains a cornerstone of social interaction, symbolizing honor and respect (Barth, 1959). However, commercialization and urban influences are altering these practices. Urban migrants often blend traditional festivals with modern entertainment, such as music and digital media (Hussain, 2021). The rising cost of hosting large gatherings has led some families to scale back traditional hospitality (Iqbal, 2018).

Pashto is central to Karak's identity, but Urdu and English are gaining prominence due to education and media. This linguistic shift reflects broader cultural changes. Younger generations often code-switch between Pashto, Urdu, and English, particularly in digital communication (Rahman, 2006). Pashto-language media (e.g., AVT Khyber, Pashto YouTube channels) help preserve the language but compete with Urdu and English content (Afridi, 2020).

Islam profoundly influences Karak's social norms, from daily rituals to legal frameworks. Mosques and madrassas serve as community hubs, while religious leaders (*Ulema*) shape moral and ethical standards (Metcalf, 2002). However, interpretations of Islam are evolving. Traditional clerics emphasize strict adherence to *Sharia*, while younger, educated populations advocate for contextual interpretations (Bunt, 2018).

Religious programming on TV and radio reinforces orthodox views, but social media exposes youth to diverse Islamic discourses (Durrani, 2022).

Karak's society has historically been patriarchal, with men as breadwinners and women as caregivers. *Purdah* (veiling) and gender segregation are strictly observed in rural areas (Khattak, 2023). Rising literacy rates empower women to seek employment and challenge restrictive norms (Zeb, 2019). TV dramas and social media showcase working women, inspiring younger generations (Hussain, 2021). Migration and inflation force many households to rely on women's income, altering traditional roles (Iqbal, 2018). Despite progress, resistance persists, particularly in conservative rural areas where gender equity is seen as a threat to cultural values.

Agriculture and livestock remain economic mainstays, but migration—both internal (to cities like Karachi) and international (to the Gulf)—has transformed Karak's economy. Fuel consumerism, education, and healthcare but also create dependency (Gazdar, 2003). Migrants bring back new lifestyles, challenging traditional consumption patterns (Ali, 2022). Demand for branded goods, smartphones, and modern housing reflects global influences (Razaq, 2021). Wealth disparities grow as remittance-receiving families outspend others, creating tensions (Wazir, 2020).

Older Generations rely on radio (e.g., Radio Pakistan) and TV (e.g., PTV Pashto) for news and entertainment (Afridi, 2020). Youth prefer social media (Facebook, YouTube) for connectivity and global content (Pew Research Center, 2021). The challenges which are faced include National media often stereotypes Karak as backward, ignoring its progress (Shinwari, 2021). Also poor internet access limits media's transformative potential (GSMA, 2020).

Karak's cultural evolution exemplifies the tension between heritage and progress. While modernization brings opportunities, it also risks eroding traditions. Policymakers

must expand internet access and media literacy programs, encourage Pashto content creation to preserve linguistic identity, involve *Maliks* and clerics in development initiatives to ensure cultural continuity and invest in female education and vocational training. Karak's future hinges on a balanced approach—honoring its Pashtun legacy while embracing sustainable progress.

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Appendices

Appendix I

QUESTIONNAIRE

“Media and Socio-Cultural Transformation in Pakistan: A Case study of District Karak”

Note: This questionnaire is a requirement to fulfill the Thesis of MPhil Pakistan Studies

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Education: _____

Answer the following questions according to the best of your knowledge.

A. Media Consumption Patterns/Habits

1. How often do you access traditional media sources (TV, radio, newspapers) in District Karak?

a) Daily b) Several times a Week c) Once a Week d) Rarely e) Never
2. Which of the following digital or social media platforms do you use regularly?

a) Facebook b) Twitter c) Instagram d) YouTube e) Other (please specify)
3. How much time do you spend on social media per day?

a) Less than 30 minutes b) 30 minutes to 1 hour c) 1-2 hours d) 2-4 hours e) More than 4 hours
4. Do you feel that the content on social media represents the cultural values and traditions of District Karak?

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Uncertain d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree
5. What is the primary purpose for which residents of Karak use media platforms?

-
- a). News b). Entertainment c). Education d). Social interaction

B. Perceptions of Cultural Representation in Media

1. In your opinion, how is District Karak portrayed in social media (TV, newspapers, etc.)?
a) Positively b) Negatively c) Neutral d) Not sure
2. Have you observed any changes in the representation of cultural practices due to social media over the past few years?
a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Uncertain d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree
3. . Do you believe that social media has played a role in influencing cultural changes in District Karak?
a) Yes b) No c) Mostly d) Sometimes e) Never
4. To what extent do you feel that your local culture is accurately represented in National media?
a). Very accurately b). Somewhat accurately c). Neutral d). Somewhat inaccurately
e). Very inaccurately
5. Which cultural elements do you think are the most misrepresented in media coverage of District Karak?
a). Traditional and customs b). Religious practices c). Language and dialects d). Gender role e). Social roles

C. Perception of Media Influence

1. To what extent does social media influence cultural practices and traditions in District Karak?
a) Not at all b) Slightly c) Moderately d) Significantly e) Very Significantly

-
2. Have you noticed any changes in cultural practices in your community due to social media influence in District Karak?
a) Yes b) No c) Mostly d) Sometimes e) Never
 3. How often do you watch local television channels in District Karak?
a) Never b) Rarely c) Sometimes d) Often e) Uncertain
 4. How do you perceive the influence of social media on the youth of District Karak regarding their cultural identity?
a). Strongly positive influence b). Somewhat positive influence c). Neutral d). Somewhat negative influence e). Strongly negative influence
 5. In your opinion, does the media promote modern or global cultural practices over traditional local ones in District Karak?
a). Strongly promotes Modern/Global culture b). Somewhat promotes Modern/Global culture c). Neutral balance between both d). Somewhat promotes local culture e). Strongly promotes local culture

D. Impact of Media on Cultural Identity

1. In your opinion, what type of media content has the most significant impact on cultural transformation in District Karak?
a) News b) Entertainment (e.g., dramas, movies) c) Educational Programs d) Documentary Programs e) Satire Program
2. How do you think the media has impacted your senses of cultural identity in District Karak?
a). Strengthened my cultural identity b). Somewhat strengthened my cultural identity c). Neutral, no significant change d). Somewhat weakened my cultural identity e). Weakened my cultural identity

-
3. To what extent do you believe that exposure to global media content (movies, TV shows, social media) has influenced the cultural identity of the younger generation in Karak?
 - a). Greatly influenced
 - b). Moderate influenced
 - c). Neutral
 - d). Slightly influenced
 - e). No influence at all
 4. Do you feel that the media encourage you to adopt elements of other cultures over your own traditional culture?
 - a). Strongly encourages
 - b). Somewhat encourages
 - c). Neutral
 - d). Somewhat discouraged
 - e). Strongly discouraged
 5. Do you think that continuous exposure to non-local content (e.g., International TV shows, films) has diluted the cultural identity of District Karak's residents?
 - a). Yes, significantly
 - b). Yes, moderately
 - c). Neutral
 - d). No, only slightly
 - e). No, not at all

E. Language and Identity

1. How important is language in preserving cultural identity in District Karak?
 - a) Extremely Important
 - b) Important
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Less Important
 - e) Not Important at all
2. Do you think media, especially digital media has impacted the use of local languages in District Karak?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Uncertain
 - d) Never
 - e) Not sure
3. Are you comfortable with the blending of traditional and modern elements in media content in District Karak?
 - a) Very Comfortable
 - b) Comfortable
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Uncomfortable
 - e) Very Uncomfortable
4. To what extent do you believe that media plays a role in shaping the linguistic preferences of people in District Karak?

-
- a). Very strongly influenced b). Somewhat influenced c). Neutral, no significant influenced d). Slightly influenced e). Does not influenced at all
5. How often do you consume media content in your native language (Pashto) as compared to National or International (Urdu, English)?
- a). Always in my native language b). Mostly in my native language c). Neutral balance between both d). Mostly in National/International languages e). Always in National/International languages

Thank You

Appendices

Appendix X

Interviews Question

“Media and Socio-Cultural Transformation in Pakistan: A Case study of District Karak”

Note: This interviews question is a requirement to fulfill the Thesis of MPhil Pakistan Studies

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Education: _____

a) Media Consumption Habits and Perception:

- Which media platforms (TV, radio, social media, etc.) do you most frequently use, and what content or programs are you most interested in consuming on these platforms?
- How do your media consumption habits vary based on the type of content (e.g., news, entertainment, religious, educational), and what motivates you to choose one platform over another?

b) Media Preferences:

- Which media sources (e.g., TV channels, radio stations, social media platforms) do you prefer for keeping updates on news and cultural content, and why?
- Do you find local or national media more relevant for understanding issues affecting Karak's culture? Can you share why you prefer one over the other?

c) Role of Traditional vs Digital Media:

-
- How do you perceive the influence of traditional media (like TV, radio, and newspapers) compared to digital media (social media, online news) on cultural values and social practices in Karak?
 - Do you feel that digital media has had a stronger impact than traditional media in shaping modern views and attitudes in Karak? If so, can you share examples of these shifts?

d) Perception of Cultural Transformation:

- In your opinion, how has media influenced the traditional cultural practices and values of Karak over the past decade?
- Do you feel that media has brought about positive or negative changes to the cultural identity of Karak? Could you provide examples to explain your view?

e) Perceptions and Attitudes:

- How has your attitude towards traditional cultural values and practices in Karak changed due to media exposure?
- What is your perception of the role media plays in shaping younger generations' attitudes towards local traditions and cultural identity in Karak?

f) Social Changes:

- How do you think the media has contributed to social changes, such as shifts in family roles, gender norms, or community values, in Karak?
- In what ways do you believe media has influenced younger generations' views on traditional social structures and relationships within the community?

g) Influence of Globalization and Urbanization:

-
- In what ways do you think globalization, as portrayed in the media, has affected cultural practices and lifestyle in Karak?
 - Has urbanization influenced values, traditions, or social norms in Karak?
How do you feel the media has played a role in these changes?

h) Future Directions:

- How do you envision the role of media in shaping the cultural identity of Karak over the next decade?
- What changes would you like to see in how media represents and influences the culture and values of Karak in the future?

Thank You