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| KEYWORDS                                                                                                           | ABSTRACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| Tangir Valley; ethnography; village institutions; communal resources; pastoralism; Gilgit-Baltistan                | <p>This paper presents an ethnographic study of village institutions, communal resources and pastoral life in Tangir Valley, Diamer District, Gilgit-Baltistan. It draws on repeated ethnographic fieldwork beginning in 2000, supplemented by follow-up telephone interviews conducted in 2025 and 2026. The study includes key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, informal conversations, and visits to villages, nullahs and pastures. It documents the division of Tangir into Roms and villages and discusses local institutions and functionaries, particularly the <i>Jirga</i>, <i>Justero</i> (<i>Yustero</i>), <i>Kul</i>, <i>Zaitu</i> and <i>Wai Segalo</i>. It also considers customary distinctions between ownership and use rights and the indigenous distribution of communal resources through <i>Dookar</i> and <i>Dalo</i>. Pastoral practices, including the seasonal movement of livestock to <i>nullahs</i> (side-valleys) and pastures and the celebration of <i>Gape Khushle</i> on the safe return of shepherds and their herds, further reveal the close relationship between livelihood and collective village life. The paper argues that village institutions, customary authority, communal resources, and pastoral practices in Tangir Valley are interconnected parts of a locally rooted system through which communities have traditionally organised village affairs, managed shared resources, and maintained their relationship with the surrounding landscape.</p> <p> 2026 Journal of Social Sciences Development</p> |
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Introduction

Tangir (Fig.1) is a mountain valley in Diamer District, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, known for its distinctive social organisation, customary institutions, and local resource-management systems. My association with the valley began in 2000, when I first visited Tangir after travelling through

Chilas, Gobarabad and Darel. Before that visit, I knew little about Tangir's culture, history and heritage. What began as a short journey gradually became a longer engagement with the valley and its people.

During my first visit in 2000, I met several oral historians and knowledgeable residents who introduced me to Tangir's social and cultural life. Among them was Master Saeed-ur-Rahman of Faruri village, then headmaster of the local primary school. His knowledge of the history and heritage of Tangir and Darel, and his enthusiasm for documenting them, greatly influenced my interest in the two valleys. I subsequently travelled with him to villages and remote *nullahs*, where I collected information about local customs, lineages, traditional political organisation, social relations, natural resources, myths, legends and historic places.



**Fig.1. Tangir Valley (photo by the author, 2019).**

Over successive visits, I conducted fieldwork from Lorak, the first village of Tangir, to Koranga, the last settlement in the valley. These journeys brought me into contact with people from different castes and settlements. During my ethnographic fieldwork, I observed how village institutions functioned in everyday life. After Master Saeed-ur-Rahman died in 2006, I continued my work with the help of other local interlocutors, particularly Hazrat Zahid Khan of Dargali Bala. Conversations with Sher Zaman of Dargali Bala, Hazrat Jan of Mushke, and Salim Khan of Sobo Kot further enriched my understanding of pastoral practices, traditional institutions, and the valley's social history.

The main objective of this paper is to understand how village institutions, communal resources and pastoral practices are interconnected in Tangir Valley. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, it focuses on the division of the valley into Roms and castes; the roles of the Jirga, Justero (also called Yustero), Kul, Zaitu, and Wai Segalo; customary ownership and use rights; indigenous systems of resource distribution; and practices associated with livestock and seasonal grazing. Particular attention is given to how these institutions and practices work together in organising village affairs, managing shared resources and connecting communities with the surrounding landscape.

## Review of Literature

Tangir and Darel have attracted the attention of travellers, writers and scholars who documented various aspects of the social organisation, history and culture of the mountain communities of the upper Indus region.

Early accounts of Tangir appear in the writings of Biddulph (1880), Stein (1928) and Schomberg (1935). A detailed account was provided by Stein, who travelled through Darel and Tangir in 1913 and later published his observations in *Innermost Asia* (1928). Schomberg (1935) compared Tangir with Yasin, noting its broad plains and cultivated fields while drawing particular attention to its forests. He also observed that people lived in scattered houses rather than in fortified villages.

Later, Jettmar (2002) provided particularly important ethnographic material on the two valleys. Drawing on visits made in 1955 and 1958, Jettmar discussed the social and economic organisation of Tangir and Darel and described communities that historically lacked hereditary rulers. Villages and valleys were organised through local political arrangements that distinguished them from the neighbouring principalities of the region (Jettmar, 2002). His account provides an important historical point of comparison for understanding the social organisation of Tangir recorded during later fieldwork.

Sökefeld (2002) later discussed Tangir within the political setting of the northern frontier, focusing particularly on the rise of Pakhtun Wali and his relations with the British authorities in Gilgit. Based largely on colonial archival records, he traces Pakhtun Wali's emergence as a political authority in Tangir and the extension of his influence to neighbouring valleys. His study also provides useful historical material on local political organisation and the difficulties the British faced in dealing with Tangir and other communities where centralised political authority was largely absent.

An important contribution to the study of traditional institutions and natural-resource management in the region was the IUCN study *Customary Laws Governing Natural Resource Management in the Northern Areas* (Bilal et al., 2003). The study documented customary laws governing forests, pastures, water and other natural resources in what was then known as the

Northern Areas. It showed that customary laws continued to regulate access to and use of communal resources alongside statutory arrangements. Particularly relevant to the present study is its discussion of tribal forests and local institutions in Darel and Tangir.

My early ethnographic work in Tangir was subsequently published in a study of decorated wooden coffins and grave railings in Tangir and Darel (Kalhor, 2008). Although that paper focused on funerary traditions, it also recorded aspects of Tangir's social organisation and communal life. It discussed the Jirga and Justero, the Zaitu and Wai Segalo, and their respective responsibilities in village affairs and managing natural resources. The study also recorded communal forests and pastures, distinctions between ownership and use rights, the distribution of natural resources through Dookar and Dalo, the share known as Shik, and customs associated with livestock and pastoral life. This earlier documentation provides an important ethnographic foundation for the present study, which brings these institutions and practices together for closer examination.

My subsequent research in Tangir and Darel expanded to include material culture, oral history, social organisation, religious history and changing village life. Later work recorded surviving wooden funerary monuments and their association with particular settlements and local histories (Kalhor, 2019b). Research in Darel also documented changes in social and material life associated with migration, education and increasing contact with towns and cities outside the valley (Kalhor, 2019c). Although these studies focused on different aspects of cultural life, they provided a broader ethnographic background for understanding communities in Tangir and Darel.

Long-term engagement with local oral historians has been particularly important to this research. In Tangir, work with knowledgeable residents of Darqali Bala and other settlements provided information on village histories, social relations, pastoral practices and the cultural landscape (Kalhor, 2020a). Research in Darel and Tangir also documented hunting and the social position traditionally accorded to hunters and shepherds. Communal hunting, meat distribution, and customs associated with hunters' return further show how livelihood practices were embedded in wider community relations (Kalhor, 2020b).

Kalhor (2021b) subsequently documented Tangir's traditional social institutions through fieldwork beginning in 2000. This work recorded the organisation of natural resources, indigenous systems of resource distribution and pastoral practices associated with moving livestock between settlements and grazing areas. It also discussed local categories such as Haiti, Dalo, Kothi and Shik and documented Gape Khushle, associated with the safe return of shepherds and their herds. Another study based on fieldwork between 2000 and 2020 examined Tangir's religious history and heritage through conversations with village intellectuals and oral historians, and recorded information on genealogies, population movements, social organisation, ownership rights, and relationships among different social groups (Kalhor, 2021c). The present paper draws

these strands of earlier research together, with particular attention to village institutions, communal resources and pastoral life.

Ethnographic and heritage research in neighbouring valleys also provides a useful comparative setting. In Sazin valley, settlement history and the distribution of Shin communities reflect historical connections across the Indus and with Tangir and Darel (Kalhoro, 2019a). Fieldwork in Harban similarly recorded a social landscape inhabited principally by Shin, Yeshkun and Kamin communities and documented settlements, agricultural land and cultural traditions within the wider Indus-Kohistan region (Kalhoro, 2021a). Such neighbouring valleys should not be treated as socially identical to Tangir. However, they provide useful comparative evidence for understanding the wider regional setting in which communities, settlements and customary practices developed.

Research elsewhere in Gilgit-Baltistan provides a broader context for understanding these arrangements. Schmidt (2004), writing about the Central Karakorum, showed that agricultural land, pastoral resources and irrigation water are governed through locally recognised rights, rules and institutions. His study is particularly useful in distinguishing common-property regimes from open access and in showing that access to and use of communal resources may be governed by clearly defined rights and customary regulations. This distinction is relevant to Tangir, where communal ownership of forests and pastures does not necessarily give all social groups identical rights over those resources.

Studies of customary laws in Gilgit-Baltistan have similarly drawn attention to the continuing importance of local institutions in regulating land, forests, pastures and water. Dad and Abbas (2017) discuss customary laws in relation to livelihoods and development in Gilgit-Baltistan and show how locally recognised arrangements continue to influence access to and management of natural resources. Such arrangements vary between communities, but collective responsibility and customary rights remain important features of resource governance. This regional perspective provides useful context for understanding institutions such as the *Zaitu* and *Wai Segalo* in Tangir, where particular individuals are entrusted with responsibilities for forests, grazing, crops, water and irrigation channels.

Research on Darel and Tangir has also examined the relationship between mountain livelihoods and forest resources. Hussain et al. (2014) examined the socio-economic conditions of communities in the two valleys and their implications for sustainable forest-resource management. Their study highlights local dependence on forests and other natural resources and draws attention to land tenure, access rights and community participation. It offers an important resource-management perspective on Tangir and Darel. However, it gives less attention to the everyday functioning of particular customary institutions and the local terminology through which resource rights and responsibilities are organised.

Pastoralism provides another important context for understanding the relationship between livelihood and natural resources in the mountain valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan. Hameed et al. (2022) show that pasture-based livestock raising remains an important component of mountain livelihoods and that herding practices involve the seasonal use of grazing grounds at different elevations. In Tangir, livestock raising similarly connects settlements with *nullahs*, grazing grounds and high-altitude pastures. The ethnographic material from Tangir, however, also highlights the social practices surrounding these movements and the customary institutions that regulate access to communal resources.

Existing scholarship describes the historical social organisation of Tangir and Darel, customary natural-resource management in Gilgit-Baltistan, common-property resources, forest-based livelihoods, and mountain pastoralism. My earlier ethnographic writings have documented particular aspects of Tangir and neighbouring valleys. Less attention, however, has been given to bringing together the everyday relationship between village authority, resource rights, local functionaries, indigenous systems of resource distribution and pastoral life.

Institutions and categories such as the *Justero*, *Kul*, *Zaitu*, *Wai Segalo*, *Rom*, *Dookar*, *Dalo*, *Toli* and *Shik* provide a closer view of how village organisation connects to communal resources and livelihood practices.

This paper brings these strands together through ethnographic material collected during repeated field visits to Tangir beginning in 2000, supplemented by follow-up telephone interviews in 2025 and 2026. Building on my earlier documentation of the valley, it considers village institutions alongside communal ownership and use rights, indigenous systems of resource distribution and pastoral practices. This approach provides a closer understanding of how village organisation, customary authority, livelihood and landscape are connected in Tangir.

## **Ethnographic Fieldwork and Methods**

The ethnographic material presented in this paper is based on repeated field visits to Tangir Valley beginning in 2000, supplemented by follow-up telephone interviews conducted in 2025 and 2026. My fieldwork involved travelling through the valley's main settlements, from Lorak to Koranga, and visiting remote *nullahs* and pastures. During these visits, I used key informant and semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and informal conversations to collect information about village organisation, castes and sub-castes, traditional institutions, natural resources, pastoral practices, and local traditions. Participant observation was particularly useful for understanding village life and observing how people interacted with their social and physical surroundings, while key informant and semi-structured interviews allowed me to discuss particular institutions, practices and local histories in greater detail.

Much of my early understanding of Tangir came through Master Saeed-ur-Rahman of Faruri village, with whom I travelled to different parts of the valley. He introduced me to local histories

and traditions and accompanied me to several historic places and remote *nullahs*. One such journey took us to Gachhar nullah, known for its lake. Travelling with local residents and spending time in villages helped me not only document places but also understand how people related their histories, customary practices, and social institutions to the landscape.

After Master Saeed-ur-Rahman died in 2006, I continued collecting ethnographic information with the help of Hazrat Zahid Khan of Dargali Bala and other knowledgeable people in the valley. In 2009 and again in 2019, I interviewed Sher Zaman of Dargali Bala, particularly about pastures, *nullahs*, herding practices and customs associated with livestock. I also had lengthy discussions with Hazrat Jan of Mushke and Salim Khan of Sobo Kot. Their knowledge helped me understand aspects of Tangir's social and pastoral life that observation alone could not explain.

The fieldwork developed over many years rather than in a single research period.

Repeated visits and returns to particular villages and places allowed me to continue earlier conversations, conduct further interviews and compare information collected from different interlocutors. Participant observation, interviews and informal discussions, together with repeated visits to villages, *nullahs* and pastures, form the ethnographic basis of the material presented in this paper.

Some of the information collected during earlier field visits was subsequently verified through telephone interviews with knowledgeable residents of Tangir in 2025 and 2026. These follow-up conversations were particularly useful for clarifying details and confirming the continued relevance of some of the institutions and practices documented during earlier fieldwork. They also provided an opportunity to compare earlier ethnographic observations with more recent information from the valley.

## Ethnographic Findings

### Tangir Valley: Social and Spatial Setting

Tangir Valley is traditionally divided into four *Roms*, a local division associated with territory and the distribution of natural resources. Lorak-Diamer forms the first *Rom*, Sheikh-Rim the second, Jaglot the third, and Gabbar the fourth. Each *Rom* contains several villages, and each village has its own local organisation. At the village level, the *Justero* is an important figure in managing local affairs.

Tangir's population is socially diverse. Six major castes—Shins, Yeshkuns, Doms, Kamin, Gujjars and Pathans—live in the valley. Shina is widely spoken, while Domaki and Pashto are also spoken among particular communities. Alongside these groups are Kohistanis, including Ban Khari and Kon Shari, as well as Sayyids and other communities who have settled in different parts of the valley.

Settlement patterns vary from village to village. Gujjars and Sayyids are found mainly in Koranga Bala and Pain, Phapat, Khamikot and Darkali Pain. Different lineages of Kohistanis and Swati Pathans, including Akhundkhel, Sahibzade, Kon Shari, and Madakhel, live in Gali Pain, Baskomal, Jagi Gali, Gali Bala, and Jaglot. Local accounts trace some of these communities to different valleys of Kohistan, Kabalgram, Yagi at Kala Daka and Swat. A few families from Sazin Valley in Upper Kohistan also live in Tangir.

The division into *Roms* and villages provides an important setting for understanding social life in Tangir. Villages are not simply places of residence; they are also units through which local affairs and natural resources are organised. The relationship between village organisation, social groups and customary institutions becomes particularly visible in the work of the *Jirga*, *Justero* and *Kul*.

### **Jirga, Justero and Kul: Traditional Institutions**

Traditional institutions continue to play an important role in the everyday life of the people of Tangir. Each village has its own council, locally known as the *Jirga*. Its members are influential men who represent their respective lineages, while the *Justero* serves as its head and looks after village administrative matters. The *Jirga* provides a local forum where the village and its people discuss and settle matters.

One of the *Jirga's* main responsibilities is settling disputes. These may concern natural resources, murder cases and other issues that affect individuals, families or groups within the village. When a matter requires closer attention, the *Jirga* forms a *Kul* or committee, to handle it. The *Kul* works under the *Jirga's* supervision, ensuring decisions are carried out and assigned work is properly completed.

The role of the *Kul* is not confined to disputes. It also takes responsibility for activities of collective concern to the village. Historic mosques, for example, come under its care. Working under the *Jirga*, the *Kul* supervises their repair and renovation and also helps build new mosques. The historic mosque of Khamikot was renovated under this arrangement about two decades ago. These activities show that the *Jirga* and *Kul* are involved not only in resolving disputes but also in matters concerning the village's shared heritage and collective life.

The *Jirga* system is thus deeply embedded in Tangir's social organisation. Its authority is closely connected with other village-level institutions responsible for particular aspects of communal life. Among these are the *Zaitu*, who look after village resources, and the *Wai Segalo*, who manage water and maintain channels.

### **Zaitu and Wai Segalo: Indigenous Resource Management**

After the *Jirga*, another important traditional institution in Tangir is the *Zaitu*, or village warden. The *Zaitu* works under the *Jirga* and is responsible for the management of village resources. His role brings him into matters that are closely connected with the everyday livelihood of the community, particularly agriculture, grazing and the use of forests.

The *Zaitu* regulates crop harvesting and prevents premature fruit plucking. He also keeps a check on free grazing, the collection of fuelwood and the cutting of forests. His responsibilities also extend to managing alpine forests. In this way, the *Zaitu* oversees resources used by different households but important to the village as a whole.

Another local functionary manages water: the *Wai Segalo*. Like the *Zaitu*, the *Wai Segalo* is a man of repute in the village and works under the *Jirga*. His main responsibility is to manage water and maintain channels. This is an important task in a valley where agricultural land depends upon the proper distribution and movement of water through village channels.

The *Zaitu* and *Wai Segalo* therefore have different but closely related responsibilities. While the *Zaitu* is concerned with crops, fruit, grazing, fuelwood and forests, the *Wai Segalo* looks after water and irrigation channels. Both work under the authority of the *Jirga* and form part of the customary arrangement through which Tangir manages village resources.

### **Communal Resources, Ownership and Use Rights**

Each village in Tangir has its own communally owned pastures and forests. Customary laws govern access to these resources. Some groups possess ownership rights, while others have the right to use the resources. These distinctions form an important part of the local system through which forests, pastures and the benefits derived from them are shared among different groups.

In much of Tangir, three groups or castes—Shin, Yeshkun and Kamin—have ownership rights over the forests, while Pathans, Gujjars, Doms, Syeds and Kohistanis have use rights. The situation differs somewhat in the Jaglot area, where Pathans, Sayyids, and Doms also hold ownership rights. Rights over communal resources therefore vary within the valley and are shaped by local customary arrangements.

Tangir also has an indigenous system for distributing shares from communally owned natural resources. The benefits or royalties obtained from these resources are distributed according to customary laws. The share is first distributed to the *Dookar* (comprising one or two villages) and then redistributed to the *Dalo* (comprising one, two, or three families; no predetermined number of families in this redistribution system). The man who receives the full share is locally called *Toli*. Women traditionally receive half of the total share, known locally as *Shik*.

A different arrangement operates in neighbouring Darel. In Somigal and Phuguch villages of Lower Darel, the distribution of resources or money follows the sequence of *Haiti*, *Karo* and *Bound*. In Upper Darel, the system follows *Haiti–Dookar–Kothi*. These local variations show that customary systems of resource distribution are not uniform even between neighbouring valleys.

### **Agriculture, Livestock and Pastoral Economy**

Agriculture and livestock raising are the two main sources of livelihood in Tangir Valley. Wheat, maize, potato, and green beans are the major crops, while livestock forms another important part of the local economy. Considerable time and labour are devoted to the care of animals, and

herding remains closely connected with the use of village pastures and the more distant grazing grounds located in the *nullahs*.

Pastoral life follows the seasonal movement of livestock between the villages and grazing areas. Apart from pastures close to the settlements, shepherds take their herds into different *nullahs* where grazing grounds are available. These movements are an important part of livestock raising in Tangir and connect village life with the surrounding mountain landscape. According to Biddulph (1880), Tangir and the neighbouring valley, Darel, are celebrated for the number and fine quality of their flocks and herds. Large numbers of sheep are here annually reared for sale to the inhabitants of the neighbouring valley.

Livestock raising is also associated with local customs and collective practices. Two occasions are particularly important: the departure of the herds for the pastures and their safe return. On both occasions, women prepare food that is distributed throughout the village, accompanied by prayers for the safe departure or return of the shepherds and their animals. The shepherds' safe return with their herds is locally celebrated as *Gape Khushle*.

These practices show that livestock raising in Tangir is not confined to livelihood alone. The departure and return of the herds involve households and the wider village community, bringing pastoral activity into the settlement's social life.

### **Nullahs, Pastures and Seasonal Grazing**

Pastoral activity in Tangir extends well beyond the grazing grounds close to the villages. Shepherds also take their livestock into the *nullahs*, where several pastures are located. These grazing areas are associated with different villages and form an important part of the valley's pastoral landscape.

Among the *nullahs* used for grazing are Bulnogh, Gachhar (Fig. 2), Burel, Gufer, Jodas, Maheechar, Chogmoon, Goregah, Baro Das, Chhaltoo, Pai, Chhasi, Sarogah, Gulgah, Kiregah, Bathret, Khachelogah, Kotogah, Moudar, Shal, Iskorgah and Darogah. These places provide grazing grounds where shepherds take their livestock from their respective villages.



Fig. 2. View of Gachhar Nullah, Tangir Valley (Photo by the author, 2000).

Satil meadow (Fig. 3), situated at the head of the valley, has a somewhat different position within this pastoral landscape. It is a communal pasture used by the people living in Gabbar Rom. Its communal use reflects the wider system of shared access to pastures and natural resources that continues to shape pastoral life in Tangir.

The *nullahs* and pastures are therefore closely connected with the livelihood of the people of Tangir. They form part of a landscape in which livestock raising, village territories and customary access to natural resources are linked. Understanding these grazing areas also helps place pastoral practices within the wider social and spatial organisation of the valley.



Fig. 3. Satil meadow, Tangir Valley (Photo by the author, 2001).

## Discussion

The ethnographic material from Tangir points to a system in which village organisation and the management of communal resources are closely connected. The *Jirga* occupies a central position, but authority is not concentrated in a single institution. The *Justero*, *Kul*, *Zaitu* and *Wai Segalo* have different responsibilities in village life, ranging from dispute settlement and collective work to managing forests, grazing, crops and water. Their roles are best understood in relation to one another and to the wider organisation of the village.

These findings add local detail to earlier accounts of Tangir and Darel. Jettmar (2002) highlighted the distinctive social and political organisation of the two valleys and the absence of hereditary rulers. The material presented here brings the discussion to the village level and shows how locally recognised institutions and functionaries exercise authority. The *Jirga* handles collective affairs and disputes, while the *Kul* is formed to undertake specific responsibilities. Its involvement in repairing and renovating historic mosques is especially revealing, as it shows that

collective responsibility extends beyond dispute settlement to shared religious and cultural concerns.

Natural-resource management provides another setting in which these institutions operate. The IUCN study documented the importance of customary arrangements in governing forests and other natural resources in Darel and Tangir (Bilal et al., 2003). Later research also highlighted the relationship between local communities, land tenure, access rights and forest management in the two valleys (Hussain et al., 2014). My fieldwork adds an ethnographic dimension to these studies by recording the particular village functionaries through whom some of these arrangements operate. The *Zaitu* regulates matters concerning crops, fruit, grazing, fuelwood and forests, whereas the *Wai Segalo* is concerned with water and irrigation channels.

The *Wai Segalo's* role also places Tangir within the wider context of customary water management in Gilgit-Baltistan. Dad and Abbas (2017) note the continuing importance of customary arrangements in the management of land, forests, pastures and water in the region. In Tangir, a recognised village functionary maintains channels and manages water. Such an arrangement is particularly important in an agricultural setting where cultivated land depends on the distribution of water through village channels.

The distinction between ownership and use rights further complicates the idea of communal ownership. Schmidt (2004) has shown elsewhere in the mountain regions of Gilgit-Baltistan that common-property resources are governed through locally recognised rules of access and use. Tangir provides its own example of this principle. Forests and pastures may be communally held, but this does not mean that every group possesses the same rights. The distinction between ownership and use rights among Shins, Yeshkuns, Kamins, Pathans, Gujjars, Doms, Sayyids and Kohistanis, together with the variation recorded in Jaglot, indicates that rights are locally defined and may differ even within the same valley.

The distribution of benefits through *Dookar* and *Dalo* adds another dimension to this customary system. These are not simply terms for dividing resources; they connect the distribution of benefits with recognised social units within the village. The differences recorded in neighbouring Darel, where other categories such as *Haiti*, *Karo*, *Bound* and *Dookar* are used, are equally significant. They suggest that communities living in neighbouring valleys have developed their own arrangements for organising access to and distributing the benefits of communal resources.

Pastoral life connects these institutional arrangements with the wider landscape. Hameed et al. (2022) discuss the importance of mountain pastures and seasonal grazing for livestock-based livelihoods in Gilgit-Baltistan. In Tangir, the movement of herds between villages, nullahs and higher pastures forms part of this broader mountain pastoral economy, but the field material also reveals its social dimensions. The preparation and distribution of food when herds leave and return, prayers for their safety and the celebration of *Gape Khushle* bring households and the wider village into the pastoral cycle. Satil meadow and the numerous grazing *nullahs* similarly

show how particular communities are connected with different parts of the landscape through customary access and use.

What emerges from the Tangir material is therefore not a collection of separate institutions and practices, but a locally organised relationship between village authority, resource rights, livelihood and landscape. Terms such as *Jirga*, *Justero*, *Kul*, *Zaitu*, *Wai Segalo*, *Rom*, *Dookar*, *Dalo*, *Toli* and *Shik* are particularly important because they show how people in Tangir themselves distinguish responsibilities, social units, and rights over communal resources. Their documentation through long-term ethnographic fieldwork provides a closer understanding of village life than considering political organisation, resource management, or pastoralism separately.

## Conclusion

This study has documented the relationship between village institutions, communal resources, and pastoral life in Tangir Valley through ethnographic fieldwork spanning many years. The *Jirga*, *Justero*, *Kul*, *Zaitu* and *Wai Segalo* form part of a locally rooted system through which village affairs and shared resources have traditionally been organised. Their responsibilities connect dispute settlement and collective work with the management of forests, pastures, crops and water.

The ethnographic material also reveals the importance of locally recognised rights and categories in understanding communal resources. Ownership and use rights vary among social groups, while *Dookar*, *Dalo*, *Toli* and *Shik* form part of an indigenous vocabulary through which resource distribution is organised. Pastoral practices extend these relationships into the surrounding landscape. The use of *nullahs* and communal pastures, together with *Gape Khushle* and other practices associated with the departure and return of herds, connects livelihood with village life and collective participation.

A key contribution of this study is the local detail captured through repeated field visits, key informant interviews, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and later follow-up telephone interviews with people with detailed knowledge of Tangir's history and traditions. Recording institutions such as the *Jirga*, *Justero*, *Kul*, *Zaitu*, and *Wai Segalo*, along with local categories of resource sharing and pastoral practices, contributes to a fuller ethnographic understanding of how community, livelihood, and landscape are connected in Tangir Valley.

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